



Research Article

The Siege and Fall of Lipa according to Chapters 1-5 of Recuerdos de un Prisionero de los Tagalos by Dr. Santos Rubiano Herrera (1871-1930): Translation and some notes

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an annotated English translation of the eyewitness account in Spanish of Dr. Santos Rubiano y Herrera – a Spanish physician detailed as a Medical Officer of the Spanish assigned to Calamba in 1898 – of the outbreak of Filipino-Spanish hostilities in Lipa, the siege of Lipa by Filipino forces on June 7, 1898, and the surrender of the local Spanish government to the Philippine Revolutionaries by June 18, 1898. The translators employ the historical-critical method, corroborating assertions with other extant documents, as well as socio-cultural-historical and linguistic criticisms, to further shed light on the life and times of the author, which impact on these memoirs being translated. The writers cross-checked their translations with Spanish, Filipino-Spanish, and Spanish-American colleagues as well. There is a decreasing number of Filipinos able to work with the Spanish language, and even less who can navigate through historical documents written in 19th century Castilian Spanish, so as the first English translation of Dr. Rubiano’s first-hand account of the Battle for Lipa, this translation work contributes significantly to the collection of historical accounts of the Philippine Revolution that will be accessible to both history scholars and the public in general. It is particularly beneficial to the city of Lipa, the province of Batangas, and the Philippine nation, thirsty for details of its past, and to the wider English-speaking international community interested in 19th century Philippine history and the Philippine Revolution in particular. The writers offer important historical critiques on local, regional and national levels as well.

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

When and where the Philippine Revolution precisely began remains unclear. 1

What is clear is that on the 30th of August 1896, the first major Battle between the forces of Bonifacio and the Spaniards took place in San Juan del Monte, later known as the Battle of Pinaglabanan. On that day, the Spanish colonial government then declared a state of war and placed Manila and the provinces of Bulacan, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, La Laguna, Cavite and Batangas under martial law (de Achútegui

& Bernad, 1972). The Spanish government immediately ordered mass arrests of those who were connected to the Katipunan and the reformist movements. Some were thrown into prison, or exiled to foreign lands, and others, foremost among them Dr. José P. Rizal, were executed.

To avoid further hostilities between Spanish military forces and the revolutionists, the combatants signed the Pact of Biak-na-Bato. Although this treaty signed in Hong Kong in December 1897 brought Emilio Aguinaldo and his top officials into self-imposed exile, it did not really end the war.





And within two months, on February 14, 1898 to be exact, Aguinaldo and the *Hong Kong Junta*ⁱⁱ denounced the Spanish government's non-compliance with the pact, making the situation even more difficult for Spain (Ileto, 2017).

On April 23, 1898, Aguinaldo associated himself with the Americans in Hong Kong and had committed himself to them in their battle against Spain, while the United States, in return, agreed to provide him with weapons and logistical support to revive the revolution in exchange for his acceptance of tutelage in the operations, and an acknowledgment of a promise of autonomy in the islands pending the granting of independence, but without specifying when (Blanco Andrés, *Revolución y Guerra Contra España*, 2016).

On May 3, 1898, the rebellion broke out once more, spreading rapidly in a very short time. The Spanish authorities garrisoned provincial towns and deployed small detachments of the light infantry (*cazadores*) and the constabulary (*guardias civiles*) to protect the town centers from rebel attacks (Ileto, 2017).

Aguinaldo's return on May 19, 1898 onboard the American troops' cruiser *McCulloch* and the imminent war of Spain with the U.S destabilized immensely Spanish colonial rule in the Philippines (Blanco Andrés, *Filipinas, 1898: El Final del Imperio Español en Asia*, 2017).

Immediately thereafter, the Archbishop of Manila Bernardino Nozaleda organized a Council of Defense. The newly named Governor-General Basilio Agustín y Davila faced the difficult task of keeping the Philip-

ippines under the sway of the Spanish crown. Out of desperation, he immediately organized the *Asamblea Consultiva Filipina* (Filipino Consultative Assembly), composed of 18 members of mostly reform-minded Filipinos to advise him on political, economic and social matters, and the new *Milicias Filipinas* (Filipino volunteer militias), who were hastily given arms and handed over with excessive confidence to former leaders of the Revolution of 1896-1897 such as Baldomero Aguinaldo, Artemio Ricarte, and Mariano Trias, who occupied the commanding ranks of the militias in their respective towns.ⁱⁱⁱ Aguinaldo was even offered the position of Chief of the Armed Forces of the Militia with the rank of Brigadier General of the Filipino Army. By May 22, 1898, 14,000 Filipinos were already enlisted into the militia. It was hoped that these two bodies would win the people's support in the approaching battle against the Americans. However, all of Governor-General Agustín's efforts to keep the Filipinos on the Spanish side were too late.

The Spread of the Revolution

On May 24, 1898, Aguinaldo issued several decrees, announcing the resumption of war with Spain. On May 29, 1898, almost all towns in Cavite revolted against Spain. The revolution occurred quickly in the Southern Tagalog region and many Spanish soldiers were captured. Brigadier General Leopoldo García Peña, head of the Spanish forces in Cavite, and together with his 900 men surrendered to the ex-commanders of the Militia, Artemio Ricarte and Mariano Trias, in San Francisco de Malabon (now General Trias).



By this time, the rebellion's progression seemed unstoppable. On June 7, 1898, up to 14,000 of the men recruited and armed by the Spanish government switched *en masse* to the revolution. Governor-General Basilio Agustín "lost what he had gambled" in the creation of the Filipino army as "the Spanish troops surrendered to the militia that they had organized and armed" (Corpuz, 2005).

While the revolutionary troops were still fighting the resistant Spanish forces in the other towns, Aguinaldo proclaimed the independence of the Philippines from Spain in Kawit, Cavite on June 12, 1898, and proceeded thereafter, with the formation of his government.

The Revolution Comes to Batangas

Like those of Cavite and Manila, the provinces of Batangas and La Laguna took up arms at the announcement of Aguinaldo's arrival in 1898, leaving the detachments of Spanish troops and volunteers isolated from each other and attacked by masses of indigenous Filipino forces, now better armed than before the promulgation of the Pact of Biak-na-Bató, since the Americans gave Aguinaldo a large number of rifles and ammunition, and the deserters (militiamen, soldiers and *guardias civiles*) had the corresponding Spanish weapons (Más Chao, 1997).

The days following Aguinaldo's return in May 1898, marked the Spanish forces successive defeats and surrenders. Given the compromised nature of the situation, i.e., the possibility of massive desertion from the colonial armed forces, Colonel Juan

Rodríguez Navas y Carrasco, who accidentally took over the command from Brigadier General Leopoldo García Peña, ordered the concentration of the smaller detachments on top of those of a certain importance, in an attempt to have all of them have at least one hundred men, at the head of the battalion equivalent to three companies and in Lipa, where the colonel had his command post, to have about five hundred men. In spite of these measures, the fate of these detachments was the same as that of those in Cavite, since they were isolated, with no news from the outside, and with no other means than their rifles. Only the garrison of Lipa, which since May 29 began to be hostile, managed to hold out for some more time, due to its larger numbers (Más Chao, 1997).

Unfortunately, the revolts that took place in the other towns in the province were not recorded. Only the accounts of Lipa and that of Batangas were retrieved. The Augustinian Friar Joaquin Durán in his book *Episodios de la Revolución Filipina* gave an overview of what the Spaniards in Batangas experienced during this period:

Faced with such imminent danger, the Parish Priests, warned by their respective parishioners, abandoned the parishes without Spanish garrisons, some taking refuge in the capital city of the province and others in Lipa where Colonel Navas was with his soldiers. Those received by the Batangas detachment advised the Civil Governor Vicente Vila later on to build adequate and sufficient entrenchments to contain the insurrectionists that were growing powerfully and to get reinforcements from Cavite and La-Laguna. As usual, the enthusiasm of the parish priests shone, in



comparison to the incomprehensible indifference of the Authorities, who did nothing to face squarely, with some hope of success, the dangers raised by the traitors against the national cause. Further, Governor Vila responded with an unseemly refusal to the noblest desires, expressed by the Religious, to exchange the breviary for the rifle and the habit for the military uniform. [He] tenaciously resisted accommodating such legitimate and lofty aspirations called for by patriotism and duty (*Durán , 1900*).

He also criticized the conduct of the Spanish troops who, without any resistance, surrendered easily to the Revolutionary Army (*Durán , 1900*). The Spanish forces in the provincial capital of Batangas under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Julian Blázquez surrendered on June 10, 1898 to General Eleuterio Marasigan of Calaca (*Dery, 2005*).^{iv}

In the light of these considerations, how stunted and degenerated was the conduct of Lieutenant Colonel Julian Blázquez, military commander of the Batangas capital. Five hundred soldiers were defending that plaza and, sad to say! after two days of cowardly negotiations, in which there was no skirmish whatsoever, they meekly surrendered to the revolutionary whims. Is this worthy, is it decorous for the good name of the homeland? Surely, on witnessing that shameful act in which five hundred soldiers surrendered like a herd of lambs to undisciplined troops, the sacred ashes of our ancestors would be filled with indignation against the authors of such a degrading capitulation. Return to your glorious tombs, illustrious men! Do not call as sons of yours those who through timidity and cowardice profaned with their actions the memo-

memory of the indomitable Hesperia (*Durán , 1900*).

The Central Place/Significance of Lipa in the Revolution

As social awareness and political consciousness emerged in the 19th century Spanish Philippines, a radical change became necessary. The Lipeños, touched by the Enlightenment through their education and empowered by their wealth, would later figure in the reformist and anti-friar movement in Batangas. Many of Lipa's liberal sons sowed the seeds of national consciousness such that the Spanish government placed Batangas province under martial law during the outbreak of the 1896 revolution. Many of the leading and educated (the ilustrados) men in the province were arrested that year.^v An anonymous writer for the defunct newspaper *El Renacimiento* avows that the Lipeños were at odds with their Cura Párroco, the Spanish Augustinian Friar Benito Baras (Parish Priest of Lipa, 1865-1894):

“At that time, (March 6, 1885), the parish priest of such an important town was Fr. Benito Baras, an Augustinian who had lived in the Philippines for a long time, with a bitter character, and to whom all the most notable people in the town had been in disagreement with. No one who had any common sense wanted anything to do with him. The Olaguivels, the Aguileras, the Solís, the Losadas, the Katigbaks, and so many other families, in other words, all those who were respected because of their intelligence or their social position, deeply despised him. He (Fr. Baras) reciprocated by calling them *filibusteros*^{vi}” (*Anonymous, 1908*).”

Lipa, being a former Villa^{vii} and General Headquarters of the Spanish Brigade of the South, became one of the pivots of the revolution against the Spanish colonial government, and it was also one of the last strongholds in the war against the United States.^{viii} Lipa's vaunted wealth also helped sustain the resistance campaign against the American occupation (May, 1991). The occupation of Lipa by the revolutionary forces was necessary as Laygo (1899) asserts that without the capture of the town, the enterprising spirit of the Batangueño would not have embarked on the adventurous operations of the Visayan Islands, and the total reconquest of the South would have been greatly delayed.^{ix}

“With these artilleries (taken from the Spanish force), we had sent and armed expeditions to Mindoro, Tayabas, Laguna, Ambos Camarines (Norte and Sur), Albay, Sorsogon, Panay, and other Southern Islands. With the weaponry that we have taken from the enemy in Batangas and in this town (Lipa), the flag of our Republic is still hoisted in almost all the towns of the Visayan Islands, and in spite of the fact that the Americans have occupied some of its points; with those weapons, we have defended the so-called Islands, the integrity and independence of the archipelago against the Spanish power and today we defend them against the ambitious Yankee... With some of these weapons, we guard the coasts of Southern Luzon from Batangas to Albay and through these, our brothers defend the line from Balong-Bato to Taguig to prevent the enemy (American troops) from advancing and entering our islands and beautiful provinces of the South.” (Laygo, 1899)

The Immediate Context of Rubiano

Dr. Santos Rubiano Herrera (*See Appendix II A. Fig. 1*), serving in the Light Infantry (*Cazadores*) Battalion no.14, was part of the small column of Spanish troops who escaped the revolutionaries' attack of Calamba on June 1, 1898. They marched on their way to Santo Tomas at the order of Coronel Juan Rodríguez Navas, the commander of the Spanish forces of South Luzon. Here, the Spanish troops held a Council of War and decided to retreat to the town of Batangas, the capital of the province. When they began to march, a short stop in Lipa became necessary. Despite the insurgents always in sight and a considerable convoy of sick and wounded, they began the march, but on June 7, 1898 upon their departure from Lipa, the revolutionary forces attacked them with heavy firing while they were still within the city limits. Dr. Rubiano remained with the group as they were forced back to the main plaza during the final siege and surrender of the city.

This is where the translation begins and ends: an eyewitness account from the first volley of fire on the Spaniards in Lipa, from the Filipino revolutionary forces on June 7, 1898, to the formal surrender and final march out of the Lipa plaza of the Spanish colonial government on June 18, 1898.

The Publication of his Work in Spanish

This translation work directly takes up Chapters One to Five of Dr. Santos Rubiano Herrera's memoirs collectively entitled, “*Recuerdos de un prisionero de los tagalos*,” (Eng. “Memoirs of a prisoner of



the Tagalogs”), published in four different issues of the Spanish magazine *Nuestro Tiempo*: Issue Number 106, Chapters 1- 4, published October 1907; Issue Number 108, Chapters 5- 8, published December 1907; Issue Number 110, Chapters 9-12 published February 1908; and Issue Number 117, Chapters 13-16, published September 1908, and compiled by the *Biblioteca Nacional de España* in Madrid (National Library of Spain). There is no editorial remark from *Nuestro Tiempo* as to why the documents were published. What is known is that *Nuestro Tiempo* was an early 20th-century Spanish magazine, issued monthly, which published stories and articles about arts, sciences, politics, and economics. The *Recuerdos* of Dr. Rubiano was actually under the Sciences category. There is no existing introduction or background on the publication of Dr. Santos Rubiano Herrera’s memoirs in the said magazine. (See *Appendix I for the original Spanish text of Chapters 1-5*)

The Value of the present work in English

Dr. Rubiano’s memoirs have never been translated into another language and the narrative in Spanish has never been mentioned in any Filipino accounts of the Revolution. Working on these *Recuerdos*, which have been hidden away in the National Library of Spain for over a century, the present work in English presents to scholars and the public in general an insightful eyewitness of the fateful events in Lipa in 1898, between the 7th and 18th of June – an eventful week that sealed the fate of the Spanish colonial government in Batangas. The translation into English is the best solution to the problem and challenge of accessing original texts in Spanish of the late nineteenth century – early

twentieth century Philippines, especially those texts of great historical interest in the light of the turmoil, and the success, as well as challenges and setbacks of the Philippine Revolution. The greater the number of translations, the more accessible primary sources about the Philippines and the Philippine Revolution begun in 1896 will be.

The research value of these translations is incalculable, in view of the dynamic nature of historical research on the arrival of Spain on our shores. While there are many Spanish speakers globally, the capacity of Filipinos to understand the language has become more and more limited. And thus, many historical documents written by Filipinos and Spaniards alike, are less and less accessible to 21st century Filipinos. This, despite the high level of interest in Philippine historical accounts, especially as the 500 years of Spanish-Filipino relations were recognized in 2021. There is a lot at stake in access to primary sources, especially today in the digital communications modalities, and where more and more disinformation and even historical revisionism is being noted. But Filipino historians and other writers are hampered with the language barrier. And yet, no one but Filipinos may bother to translate materials about the late nineteenth-century situation in the Philippines. In a manner of speaking, it is as if the Filipinos will not do it, no one else will do it for them.

And of the few who may be able to translate, fewer still will have the grasp of the bigger context of the 19th-century Philippine situation, as well as the skills and competencies needed in the discipline of history and the analytical tools of the historical-critical meth-



od, and socio-cultural and literary criticism.

World War II practically destroyed Lipa's tangible heritage. There is a need to rebuild libraries and other repositories of knowledge. Archival records, memoirs, and old photographs help a city and a people and nation to access their valuable past, understand themselves better today, and may even show the way to the future. More so if these are well-written narratives written in another tongue, and made accessible through faithful translations.

Further, the province of Batangas needs educational materials for teaching contextualized history. The project will pioneer the production of such materials, for use by the educational sector in its syllabi of local history, under the auspices of the Center for Batangas Studies of De La Salle Lipa.

These insightful historical accounts are windows to the soul of a people. Accounts on the eve of nationhood, even more so, and in the case of Lipa, especially because it had a central role, not only in the Philippine Revolution begun in 1896, but also in the Philippine-American War that continued in Batangas province well after President Aguinaldo had surrendered.

B. Objectives

The general objective of this work is to provide another primary source to the compendium of sources on the Philippine Revolution, focusing on a local level – the siege and surrender of Lipa. Considering that the Philippines' Quincentennial Celebrations (500 years)

were held in 2021, the work of the translation of Dr. Rubiano's memoirs with the theme, "Victory and Humanity", takes on special significance because not only does it give an insight into the high morale among the revolutionary fighters, and the loyalty shown to the Revolutionary Forces led by General Aguinaldo, but it also narrates the behavior of the native Filipino forces in victory, characterized by magnanimity and kindness toward the conquered.

Together with other researchers elsewhere, the ultimate goal of the research project is to contribute further to the body of primary sources and materials for Philippine Studies, and to be a source for Philippine educators, following the government's directive to institutionalize the teaching of local culture and history.

The first specific objective is to provide an accurate English translation to a valuable, detailed eyewitness account of a historical event. Written in Spanish, the account is practically inaccessible to most Filipinos today. Hence the present English translation. Eventually, a Filipino translation will be worked on.

Another objective is to successfully publish pioneering research output under the auspices of the Center for Batangas Studies of De La Salle Lipa, and thus, to make that research Center of De La Salle Lipa a resource for the city of Lipa in the latter's growth and development programs, e.g. undertaking the re-commemoration of the June 18 event celebration in Lipa, possibly even with a reenactment of what transpired in the exact locations where it happened. With this study and others like it, the Lipa City Government may be able to request the National Histori-



cal Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) to install a historical marker along Plaza Triangulo.^x

This work also hopes to encourage diligence and dedication among local historians and researchers to dig deeper into the annals of our local history, and to retrieve, and make accessible through translations, vital narratives of our history as a nation.

C. Current problem addressed

The present problem being addressed is three-fold: 1) obtaining primary sources; 2) rendering accessible through translations, such sources written in a foreign language; and 3) contextualizing raw data provided by primary sources, into the “big” picture of the Philippine Revolution, which is a continuing task for historical research. The proposed project addresses the problem by 1) obtaining a primary source for translation, which is a Spanish text from the 19th century; 2) providing an accurate English translation of the selected text; and 3) providing annotations and cross-references to other documents, especially other primary sources.

D. Framework of the Solution

Being a first-hand account set in the specific time frame between the newly-achieved victory of the Philippine Revolution against Spain, and the coming of the Americans to abort it and install another colonial power, Dr. Rubiano Santos’ narrative is a huge panoramic window into our past, showing a wide vista of crucial Philippine history.

This is the ultimate priceless and timeless value of the current translation work. A well-written historical account of a witness is a primary source, and thus extremely valuable to the work of writing history. And the current translation finally makes it available to the English-speaking audience. The work of translation has an intrinsic tension between, on one, doing a literal translation, or translating the material directly, and letting it “speak for itself” as much as possible, and on the other hand, to understand the context in which the original was written, and guided by other historical facts and circumstances, to “interpret” the original text, based on what it meant to convey, into another language that is not only readable, but also consistent with other known historical data, and in a language that “makes sense” to the reader.

The researcher of history has that framework helped by hindsight - particularly factual history, that is already generally agreed upon by other historical studies. That is the operative framework: producing a translation that is substantive and faithful to the original, in both its formal and functional equivalents, and set it within the historical-cultural contexts of the turn-of-the-century Philippines and its Revolution.

While the current paper focuses on the surprise attack on Lipa and its eventual surrender, details of which are covered in the first five chapters, a longer version which includes all the other chapters until Chapter 16 will be published later. The published translation will stand for itself, while at the same time, will always be provisional until further discoveries shed light on events and further clarify the facticity, historicity, and value of the translated narrative.



MATERIALS AND METHODS

The primary task was translating from 19th-century Castilian Spanish (the source language) into contemporary international English (the target language). This will be done in three stages. The first stage of translation will be a literal translation, or a formal equivalent, of the original Spanish text, into its English equivalent. This lets the text “speak for itself” at a first level.

The second stage of translation was subjecting the draft text in English to socio-cultural-historical and linguistic analyses. This process involved a review of the nuances of the Spanish language used in Spain and the social-cultural-historical contexts in which it was used, particularly in the Philippines within the dynamic relations of the colonizer (Spain) people and the colonized peoples (native or *indio* population) and all types of collaborators (the local ruling class and the *criollo* or *mestizaje* population) in between, relative to the use and understanding of the Spanish language, and how this is to be conveyed into English as accurately as possible. The original sixteen chapters were published for a Spanish audience, and the translators unlocked how it is to be understood by Filipinos today, albeit in English. Particular attention is directed to whatever implicit references or meanings are present but left unsaid, as well as to prevalent practices, perspectives, opinions, and biases of that time, reflected in language. The nature of the account needs to be unlocked, for instance, with the knowledge of specific military terms used at the time. The narrative also has to be understood in the context of the Philippine Revolution that begun in 1896, and the facts and emotions

present at the time, from both cultures - Spanish and *indio* Filipino – because the material invariably reflects Dr. Rubiano’s take on the events that unfolded. Another challenge was to understand the references to literature and the arts since Dr. Rubiano’s texts have many allusions and figures of speech that reflect his background in the humanities. In this second stage, the writers remain indebted to Alfonso Novillo Aranda FSC (Madrid, Spain) and Victor Franco Alonso FSC (Manila, Philippines), and Edwin Agustín Lozada (San Francisco, CA, USA) who collaborated generously in unlocking and suggesting translations for problematic phrases.

At this stage, decisions of interpretation - of what the original text wished to convey as meaning – were made that impact on the emergent English text, giving it further tone, texture, and color. The authors take full responsibility for this interpretation, and the original texts in Spanish can be consulted, to engage the critical reader actively. The original source text will begin to express in the target language what it really meant to convey, beyond the formal translation. With the consideration of the two cultures and their linguistic relations, the translation gains more and more dynamic equivalences.

A third and last stage in the process was the application of historical critique. The draft is subjected to a test of historical consistency - using the historical-critical method. The details of the narrative are checked with known and conventional historical data. And annotations of the text are introduced, especially where there are confirmations or contradictions with other independent sources, accounts, and cross-refer-

ences.^{xi} A rich, composite document then emerges from the research project. This present work is the first part of a bigger project, at the conclusion of which, the 40-page document of 29,807 words originally composed in Spanish will be rendered in English for access by the wider community of historians and academics, the people of Lipa, the people of the Philippines, and other interested parties.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results

Chapter I. June 4, 1898: Colonel [Juan Rodríguez] Navas^{xiii} (See Appendix II A. Fig. 2), the commander of the provinces of Batangas, Tayabas and Laguna whose official residence was in Lipa, was undertaking the march to Santo Tomás, the midpoint of the Bay-Taal military trail (from lake to lake), because he had received official information that the small Pintado Column^{xiii} had been unable to break the insurgents' siege of Calamba^{xiv} ([said insurgents] having already taken Biñan, Santa Rosa and Cabuyao). On June 1, the Pintado column succeeded in reaching the entrance to the town, but was forced to withdraw because it had lost a third of its men (20 injured and 6 dead), and night had already fallen.

Before leaving Lipa, the Colonel had ordered all regular forces dispersed in the three provincial capitals, except those in Batangas, to converge in Santo Tomas, where the Commander was headed with the 70 [Spanish] men stationed in Lipa, plus the two remaining (judicial) employees who were there. In Santo Tomás, he would confer with the chief of the appointed trail, Commander [Francisco] Vara de Rey^{xv}

(See Appendix II A. Fig. 3), to adopt the appropriate course of action.

The departure from Lipa, given the circumstances, was due to dire misgivings about the situation that was fast approaching.

Rumors of an uprising, which had already begun in Cavite with the breakup of the squadron, were spreading everywhere; and bearing in mind how the news of success is the best fuse for easily ignited imaginations, plus the inevitable effect of the excited and romantic proclamations already scattered to the four winds, it was evident that no native, whether near or far, dared to defend Spain's name, not even in Lipa itself, which until then had not been reputed to be insurrectionist.^{xvi}

It was necessary to re-group (forces) quickly, bringing together the largest possible concentrations; and so, the march to Santo Tomas had to be undertaken, leaving "loyal" Lipa to its voluntary Militia. And Lipa looked on the ill-omened exodus with the warped curiosity of many of its inhabitants, the bitter anxiety of some and the profound sadness of a very few.

The romantic, furtive tears of several emotional *Tagalas* (women being creatures of piety), whose hearts warned of the coming catastrophe, weeping over it (to this day). And the inevitable began to be fulfilled.

Between Lipa and Santo Tomas lies Tanauan. At this point, a section of rural guards (from the strategic blockhouse of Alaminos) and a company of the 74th



regiment, from Taal, joined the Colonel. At the entrance to Tanauan, 40 natives, stirred to rebellion by Sergeant Castellart, had deserted the same regiment, [bringing] along with their weapons. While lunch was being prepared in Tanauan, 10 more soldiers disappeared, with their rifles and ammunition.

When the Colonel arrived in Santo Tomás, he learned from Vara de Rey and the local Militia Commander, [Eustacio] Maloles (brother-in-law of the ringleader Malvar)^{xvii} (*See Appendix II B. Fig.6*), of the seriousness of the situation.

Spies were sent in all directions, provisional defense works were carried out (since it was said that we would be attacked soon), the telegraphic wire from the stations of Bañadero and Calamba which had been cut, was bundled up, and a War Council was convened.

We all felt a vague and apprehensive anxiety, which in very serious situations arouses deep instincts of self-preservation. Although outwardly nothing was to be observed, for we were all familiar with the vicissitudes of war, even the less sharp-sighted man among us did not fool himself, and foreseeing what lay ahead, was aware of the critical circumstances we were in.

The Council was held in the parish priest's office, convent house (rectory), the strongest and the most strategically located in the town, which served as the mandatory lodging for the troops.

The Colonel, standing up and speaking rapidly in a serious manner and somewhat disjointedly – a natural consequence of the burden of so many responsi-

bilities, explained the situation to us, which was, in short, as follows. The information that has reached us is that the land ahead of us^{xviii}, towards Manila, is now in the possession of the insurrectionists, who forced our troops to surrender. These are the towns of Indang, Biñan, Santa Rosa, Cabuyao and Calamba. The road to these towns, according to serious reports, was cut off and trenches had been dug, (the revolutionaries) having taken advantage of the prevailing rains to form formidable ditches. The land behind us^{xix}, towards Lipa, was known to have been swayed by the speeches of Aguinaldo but had not yet taken up arms.

For any plan he might devise, he could have at his disposal only a hundred European men and some one hundred and thirty natives, a large number of whom had to look after the handicapped, composed of twenty wounded and thirty sick (individuals).

Three plans could be developed: to head for Manila by the routes that led to Santo Domingo, and from there, passing through the north of Santa Rosa and Biñang, to go through El Desierto,^{xx} to Parañaque or Guadalupe.

Given the composition of the column, two and a half days were needed for this plan. We could also cross the forest, at the foot of the Maquiling^{xxi}, join the army of Santa Cruz of La Laguna, in a very difficult and almost exploratory march of two long days. And, finally, we could go to Batangas, a sea port, a town easily defensible, and where we could store all the supplies to survive and defend ourselves that we could gather along the way to that point. In addition, our contingent would be reinforced with the detach-



ment of San Pablo, which would be notified in due time.

The Council (meeting) was brief: the last plan was agreed upon by a majority, since for the first one there would be, in addition to the presumed obstacles, the possibility of finding ourselves, after having attained our objective, and after close combat, reaching Manila and facing the American armed forces with our forces already converted into a weak convoy guarding the wounded (combatants). Someone expressed the idea of abandoning them; but, on our very honor as military, not even the final objective of our undertaking, could justify such a crime (heroism, I was going to say), we still had enough time left, before deciding on such sacrifices, to put our resistance to the test with hopes of better results. The laws of the most elementary morality and of the most demanding patriotism prohibited an immolation that, more than heroic, would simply be the consequence of an inopportune military engagement.

As for the second plan, the route to be followed was not safe either, and we knew that a dangerous ambush was being prepared for us.

Fortunately, or sadly, it was the third plan that was carried out and set into motion by the Colonel's final decision.

On the afternoon of June 4, before setting out for Batangas (a march which was to be interrupted by a few hours at Lipa), the Colonel ordered the disarming of the entire indigenous troop, which was around half the force. The fact spoke for itself! The de-

fensive action was beginning at all costs. Not only did we have to fight in reduced numbers, but we had to cleanse all possibility of betrayal from the small group (of natives), who were already aware that they would be facing all manner of sacrifices and dangers.

As is the case with every soldier, but more so among the Tagalogs and other similar groups, the prestige of the one in charge, in all its senses and aspects, carries a lot of weight. The natives clearly saw, by their close natural contact with the people of the towns, the way things were unfolding, over which floated a tangible atmosphere of disobedience to Spanish authority, fanning the flames of the idea of defection. Thus, because the chief was aware of this symptom, he ordered the disarmament of the remaining indigenous armed force, in order to avoid a situation in which, due to the circumstances they would abandon their flag and their oath, (In other words,) at least they would not take with them the rifles and the ammunition that they would use against us.

And cautiously, as was the case, the disarmament was prepared... A sinister spectacle, which has been forever engraved in my mind!

Undoubtedly, the most basic intuition of a military chief prompted such a measure of foresight under those circumstances. But, even supposing, as is natural, that those poor consciences were lacking in the categorical imperative of patriotic sentiment, it was undeniable that they served as brave soldiers under our flags in Mindanao and Jolo; that they were wounded in bloody combat, for which a cross on their chest and a bonus in their pay were prizes, and that perhaps



some of them felt love, perhaps incognizant love, but intimate and deep love, for the name of Spain, for the red and yellow flag of their regiment, for their officers, for some superior, for the uniform they wore or the number of their regiment, a symbol of their pride in the pastimes of the garrison.

With what dark colors I imagined the tremendous blow that would be suffered by anyone who realized the gravity of the fact!

At the sound of the bugle, all the indigenous soldiers who belonged to the 74th Infantry Regiment, the spent Rural Guide Battalion and the *Guardia Civil* (Civil Guard) formed on the esplanade fronting the convent. While they were doing a headcount, the European soldiers collected guns and ammunition, moving them to the first floor of the convent^{xxii} from the ground floor, where the Filipinos were quartered.

Anyone who has lived a military life will understand how the footsteps of the soldiers and the friction and collisions of carriages and rifles would resound in the soul when they were moved hurriedly and with undisguised caution by soldiers who understood well what was involved.^{xxiii}

After the operation, which was quick, the Colonel arrived before the formed and unarmed troops, accompanied by the lieutenant of the Filipino *Guardia Civil* (Civil Guard), Señor Juan Carmona. He blurted, “*Attention!*”, and somewhat moved, he said, more or less, which in summary follows, translated later into Tagalog by the said lieutenant:

“Soldiers! You have seen how many of our comrades, committing villainous action, have abandoned us and gone over to the enemy. I value your fidelity now more than ever. Fearing that deceitful promises might lead you to treachery, I have taken back your weapons. You are free to go wherever you wish, if you have commitments. Those of you who remain with us will enjoy their rations, their benefits, and the affection of their Colonel.”

The next morning, we began the march to Batangas.

Not a single soldier from among the disarmed troops of the day before, left us! They still went on, of their free will, despite the danger and were as disciplined as before.

I marched on, thinking of the power of suggestion and many other things.

Chapter II. The Four Militia Commanders: The column was divided into two sections: the advance guard section, with the impedimenta^{xxiv} (soldiers wounded on June 1st in Calamba, and the sick, and food and ammunition supplies), and the rear section, with the bulk of the forces, commanded by Colonel [Juan Rodríguez] Navas.

The first platoon left Santo Tomás at four o’clock in the afternoon on June 5, commanded by Captain Blas García, of the 74th [regiment], and the first lieutenants Rodríguez and Alamañac, plus the doctor who is writing these accounts.



Among the 19 wounded, we had eight who were seriously injured, one of them being first lieutenant Don Atilano Calle, with a fractured right leg from a bullet wound. Everyone had to be carefully attended to in order to minimize any pain or complications.

We arrived at Tanauan at 5:00. The town was deserted. The Parish Priest, the kind and elderly Fr. José, had fled days before. *Kapitán Colás* (former *governadorcillo* D. Nicolás González (See Appendix II B. Fig.7), recently appointed Commander of the Militia), needed for assistance in the march, was... absent. The telegraphic line to Batangas, intermittent, and the sky.... cloudy. The march resumed after a short break.

A sort of restlessness, suspicion, and fear could be observed in the faces that surreptitiously peeked out of the windows of the “*bakaos*”^{xxv} of the barrios. (One need not have been an expert to make this observation.)

Our wounded and sick, calm and very well settled in carts.

Lieutenant Calle, carried on an improvised stretcher, without fever and lively, with his right leg comfortably in a cast. In the transport service, the indigenous soldiers recently disarmed by the Colonel helped, without emotion.

The Taal Volcano^{xxvi}, a few kilometers away from us, and always to our right, as we walked, was erupting at that time, and with its fumes, filled the air with a fine dust that made the skin greasy, and left everyone in a foul mood. From time to time, as the road rose

or the right flank cleared, we would see the smoking fissure of Pluto’s forge...

Would the anger and hatred that began to ignite above spread *below*? Taking exploratory precautions, the small column passed the barrios of Luta and Payapa^{xxvii}, which were strategically situated for an ambush.

Shortly after crossing this last barrio, a magnificent horse at full gallop, mounted by a ragged rider, suddenly appeared in the advance guard. Lieutenant Alamañac, their Commander, arrested the suspect, who was found with a few *anting-anting* (amulets or bullet-stoppers); and concealed within which one would have discovered, by prying open with a knife, a piece of paper filled with manuscript, which the faithful courier swallowed as soon as he was challenged.

After five minutes, our prisoners were three, for the one mentioned was joined by two more riders, already of a more respectable demeanor, but certainly no less deceitful.

It was thought best to stop at the sitio of Sambat, so-called precisely because it is the crossroads between the road to Batangas and San Pablo (Laguna), through Alaminos, it was thought appropriate to stop. We were half an hour away from Lipa, and we knew nothing of conditions regarding personal security. The sky had cleared; the infirmary was still doing well. The vanguard officer^{xxviii}, two mounted soldiers, and I, went ahead by order of the chief, Captain García, to cautiously explore the entrances to the town and their state of mind.

Without any (further) obstacles, we were at the convent (rectory) of the aforesaid Villa^{xxix}, at nine o'clock. The parish priest, Fray Domingo Laprieta^{xxx-} (See Appendix II A. Fig.5), who, even while anticipating the catastrophe, refused to flee on time, could not conceal the anxiety on his face. The telegraphist (J. Araullo) who had his office there, was no less agitated, visibly surprised to see those who had left to conquer now returning in retreat.

At half-past ten, the wounded and sick were resting in the magnificent convent mentioned above, and the ammunition was secured.

Suddenly, the voices and the noise of the troops woke us up at 12 o'clock. It was the rear section, with the colonel, who, warned that a surprise was in store for him if he were to spend the night in Tanauan, had to advance the march; and even the extreme rear was forced to exchange light fire shortly after leaving the said town.

It is said that the honor for such a brilliant attack was given to the aforementioned former *gobernadorcillo*, Don Nicolas Gonzalez, recently appointed Commander of the Militia, as a reward for his acknowledged loyalty, so soon after betrayed.

Less might have been expected from his counterpart, Don Eustacio Maloles, Malvar's brother-in-law and recruited by the insurrection, but nevertheless, he spontaneously returned the 30 rifles of his Militia to Colonel Navas, for fear that they would fall into the hands of the insurrection. This gallant action was later often suppressed in his "official role" as Revolution-

ary Governor of Tayabas.

On the morning of the 6th, the planned march to Batangas was to resume. Two things prevented it: waiting for San Pablo's detachment, which, were we to join them, would also have reinforced us, and the hesitation in choosing between the two roads that lead from Lipa to Batangas.

It was worth considering. We were informed by reliable sources of the presence of the enemy on the road to San José (something like the main road), on which there had been built strong entrenchments: the first, in the Barrio of Banay-Banay, half an hour from Lipa. We had no information about the other road, that of Ibaan, except the certainty that it was a craggy road, impractical even for the wagons of the countryside.

And so, while the problem was being studied and the regiment from San Pablo was arriving, some parapets and trenches were erected on the passageways of the convent and church, which had both been converted into barracks and a hospital.

I took advantage of that situation to amputate Lieutenant Calle's leg, an operation that was carried out straightaway, and which allowed the one operated on to preserve his life, which was then in such great danger, and despite subsequent life-threatening events, (he) is still alive today in good health in Vizcaya.

Throughout that day there was a profound silence in the town, interrupted only by our soldiers, enjoying the urban landscape from such a distinguished Villa.

Almost all the residents had fled to their houses in the countryside. Only some of the elite and leading families of the town, travel-ready and trusting in the speed of their horses, stayed behind out of curiosity.

The Presidente municipal^{xxxii} (town mayor) summoned by the Colonel, was only able or willing to give vague reports of what was going on in the surrounding area.

The Commander of the local Militia, Don Bernardo Solis^{xxxiii} (*See Appendix II B. Fig.8*), also visited him, and must have sensed a bad situation when he believed that the most proper action (and noble, in fact) was to return to the representative of Spain the 30 rifles that were given to him to defend Spanish sovereignty.

Dr. [José] Losada^{xxxiii}, the provincial health officer, was also there to see the Colonel, but, like those before him, could give any news other than that of the entrenchment of Banay-Banay.

The houses of the Roxas brothers [Baldomero and Sixto]^{xxxiv} were open that day, but I still don't know if it was out of courtesy or fear.

The store of the Spaniard Fernandez quickly sold out all its stock of groceries and "beverages". I still don't know why I bought eight bottles of cherry brandy.

When afternoon came, they received news that insurgents from Cavite were entrenched in Sambat, bolstered by our deserters and men from Tanauan.

These communicated with those who occupied San José and the environs of the road to Batangas.

I later learned that our best confidants were the most loyal spies of the insurrectionists, who knew our plans inside out, although they, in fact, had little to add.

Night fell and the detachment from San Pablo did not arrive. We began to suppose that, since they had enough time to receive and execute the command that was sent, the enemy would have besieged the detachment. We prepared to march the following day, leaving them to their fate.

That night the sky cleared up, and it was immaculate. And the moon showed its whitest face, but roused gloom within us. And that pale light penetrated deep into our souls, and we felt, some more, others less, the baleful howls of sadness and superstition.

Morbid fantasies raised frightening thoughts in the imagination, resurrected from previous readings, memories of historical catastrophes mixed with ideas of impossible feats; and at the same time, we heard the moaning of a mother or a little groan from a bride; and amidst these memories appeared the clear vision of long-forgotten places and only God knows what recollections from the hidden recesses of the mind. One must confess that the moon is a good mnemonic agent, to the pleasure or displeasure of those who behold it.

The officers of the headquarters finished their meager dinner, the digestion of which was hastened

by the worrisome undertaking.

After dinner, Luis Rivera, Lipa's Public Prosecutor, *velis nolis*^{xxxv} of the aforementioned headquarters, and I were talking philosophically^{xxxvi} at the convent's front balcony. And we could see at quite a short distance, Mount Malarayat, which connects with the great Makiling to the north, and the majestic Banahaw to the south. And we saw the three, cut-out and gigantic, cast their shadows impassively over our horizon.

The humid breeze of the forest stirred our thoughts, which in my friend, dogged worrier that he is, evoked all the black fissures of his deep personal pessimism.

He already saw how unsustainable and desperate our situation was (that of Spain in the Philippines), due to the total defection of the country, and many other things that his sharp mind easily analyzed... But he did not imagine how close we ourselves were (twelve hours!) to the beginning of that black calamity that his skepticism and clairvoyance foresaw.

I viewed the situation as somewhat less precarious. With a few casualties, we would manage to reach Batangas; there, with strongly entrenched positions on the land, and the sea on the other side, no one, unless he were willing to die, would dare to approach us; and, prepared with munitions of muzzle and war, we could resist the sieges of the enemy and of hunger for a long time. In total... four... five... six months, and eventually the end of the war one way or another. One way or another! No one could tell how it would end!

The only telegraph that we could have would be

the one delivered by the spirits...

Eleven o'clock at night would be when my friend Rivera, an excellent musician, capable of perceiving slight dissonances between noises, thought he heard the sound of a distant bugle.

After three minutes, we distinctly heard a noise that roused our attention coming from the depths of the nearby forest; but not towards our left, in the direction of the road to San Pablo, as our impatience had led us to expect.

Another prolonged *tatariiii*!^{xxxvii} followed by the password of Battalion Number 12, could be heard closer, and was answered by our most forward trench. Shortly afterwards, the commander of the trench called out a curt "Halt!" to the approaching force.

The command followed, "Who's there?", which was answered by a strong and full voice: San Pablo's detachment!

The leader of those who were arriving went forward, was recognized, and shortly after, the 70 men who comprised the detachment, ten of them sick, entered the convent; because of the thick forest, they had managed to evade the enemy's surveillance, stealthily guided by the Commander of the San Pablo local Militia and four of his men... What a great march!

The behavior of the said Commander, whose name I regret not remembering, seemed strange.

The food was prepared for the new arrivals, and



as much food as possible was given to the militiamen, who had spontaneously offered to save the detachment in Lipa, eluding inconvenient (perilous) encounters, while exposing themselves to the cruelties of revenge.

As they were about to leave for San Pablo, and while bidding adieu to the Coronel, the commander wanted to hand over four rifles of the militiamen, but the Spanish Colonel, acknowledging the nobility of the act, told him to take them along with him, and wished he had other, more effective defenses available to hand over in acknowledgment of how noble indeed their wonderfully accomplished deed was.

The guard assembled as the Commander left, and after a few hugs, those (escorts) of San Pablo soon disappeared into the mountain path.

Chapter III. An interrupted march: Upon the arrival of the detachment from San Pablo, despite the news that the road to Batangas via San José was cut off and barricaded, this was the route chosen for the march the following day (June 7, 1898).

After reveille (bugle call), the newly built provisional defenses were dismantled. The chief dedicated the morning to studying the most favorable arrangement of the column and acquiring provisions, of which Lipa could provide little more than cattle. From the military storehouse, all the stocks were extracted, which consisted of the usual boxes of biscuits, flour, cans of sardines, chorizos, and a few other items; everything in relatively small quantities.

The requisitioning of transport conveyances (carts,

carabaos, wagons, and horses) was difficult, because, even if stocks were abundant, only a few gave them voluntarily, and those open to helping a defeated military force were but a handful.

These were not times for dilly-dallying^{xxxviii} and [yet], neither shortcomings nor distractions can be held against our troops. There was someone who spoke to the Colonel of the need for high-value hostages for the greater peace of mind of the column, given the lack of confidence we had, even in the *principales*^{xxxix}; but our chief, who, among other defects, suffered from a kind of medieval chivalry that was counterproductive because it was uncalled for, to be honest about it, did not see clearly what was happening around him and did not take all the necessary precautions as required in such cases.^{xl}

At half-past one in the afternoon, all that was missing was the organization of the carriages, wagons, and hammocks and so that the whole column would be ready to go. In the great atrium of the church, the motley components of that particular caravan were huddled: the European soldiers with Mauser in their arms, the natives with the pole or the stretcher handle, a few countryside folks, two friars, and several women, each taking care of the cart or wagon where their most indispensable equipment was kept, a small herd of sickly calves, some boxes with provisions of ammunition and weapons of war in several boxes, all on groaning axles, and up to six horses harnessed *ad libitum*^{xli}, and neighing in restlessness and hunger.

Fear was stronger than curiosity and the absence of the residents (or neighbors) was glaring. I must

mention, however, Dr. [José] Losada, Señor [Bernardo] Solis and the [Baldomero and Sixto] Roxas doctors, who accompanied us in the convent until twelve o'clock... Only the Chinese, those sad sparrows of humanity, lay fixed and motionless on their doorsteps, more afraid of leaving their shops than their bodies.

Since that year almost all the military units were in a state of precipitous dissolution, as if everything were being prepared (one has to believe in destiny!) for an unavoidable catastrophe, so was it also that the majority of our light infantry soldiers were neither in their companies nor with their former officers, nor were they in the battalions whose numbers they carried. The soldiers were mostly waiting for their leave or repatriation because they were sickly, when we were surprised by the events, and the officers by their transfer. I myself should have passed the medical review and be reassigned as a doctor on duty at the Manila hospital that month. And that's how it was for everyone...and everything!

In addition, that military zone had been downgraded a short time before (from a General to a Colonel); but there were still personnel who were attached to the old command: The Captain-Secretary, a commanding officer, the escort and several orderlies. The supplies team and the infirmary swelled the non-combatant contingent with two more officers, nurses and orderlies. From that perspective, the "military corps" had a huge belly and head, and thin and dwindling limbs.

It was time to leave. At 2 o'clock in the afternoon, a selected section, with two officers (Lieutenants del

and Zaragoza) and Captain [Ángel] Rodríguez del Barrio (*See Appendix II A. Fig.4*), left as a reconnaissance and advance party.

Excessively confident in the loyalty of the Lipeños and not suspecting the tremendous daring of the enemy (nothing stays the same in life as is true in the realm of the physical, psychic and moral), the three infantry officers rode their horses at the head of the column, courageous, and determined.

The others followed in rows on either side of the road.

It was at the end of the Calle Real (*See Appendix II D. Fig.13*), some six hundred (600) meters from the convent, when the order to march was given to the rest of the column. Suddenly, at that moment, we were all surprised by extensive and continuous gunfire, as if Lipa had become a thunder box.

Much in the same way children's "Jack-in-the-Box" toys surprise, windows opened and insurrectionists appeared everywhere.^{xlii}

The bullets crossed in all directions and the non-stop clicking of the firearms seemed like a theatrical performance.^{xliii} (Even) The strongest edifice topples down with a surprise like that.^{xliiv} What followed was indescribable confusion. At this point, our leader was coming down the steps of the convent to mount his horse.

The voices of the helpless (sick, wounded women); the whinnying and mooing of the livestock, which



were struggling to escape from the enemy; the running of the soldiers to occupy strategic positions upon orders of their officers; and all the while scrutinizing the enemy's hiding places to blur their aim and line of fire, made those first minutes of the bloody struggle that ensued, a time of confusion and unspeakable tumult.

It soon became apparent that the successes of boldness are diminished by haste; for by arranging, as they did, all the houses in the town as barricades, they were able to annihilate us unhurriedly and without the need of anyone giving orders. There was more noise than there were casualties. The shooting was mainly directed at the vanguard; but rather than expecting to separate it from the others, it was to break that advance group, such that, the initial burst of fire left four dead and six wounded, there was, nevertheless, time to recover and attack the houses from which the shots were coming, the center of which was the house of Don Manuel Luz^{xlv}, and even to dislodge them, causing them numerous casualties.

It was a tough battle; brave men who, with bare chests, and the speed and sureness of their shots, had to silence the guns which in greater numbers spewed fire to the right, left, above, behind, and in front. For those positioned in the upper-level windows, however, they adjusted their aim higher when shooting, and... with better results.

The one who stood out in greatness of spirit, in noble warlike courage, was Lieutenant del Rio, a beardless Galician, just out of the Academy. His horse, that of his companion Zaragoza's and Captain Rodriguez's

were killed after the first shots, miraculously saving them.

It did not take long to send a reinforcement to the vanguard, which was supposed to have been seized or annihilated.

Meanwhile, the shooting continued to rage everywhere.

The church and the convent were quickly reoccupied with the *impedimenta*^{xlvi} (baggage) and the vantage points were quickly fortified...

The dead and wounded of the vanguard arrived, and the departure was suspended, in so doing, deciding to remain in Lipa...

The enemy was ousted from several of the main houses near the convent, from which they could engage in hostilities at close range; but because the perimeter of the town was very big, because its streets were relatively wide, and because a great number of houses were stone houses, it was not possible to extend the boundaries of our defenses beyond the streets near the convent, and only some distant ones were occupied, because they constituted a serious and continuous threat. In a very short time, trenches were built at all the entry points that opened up to the plaza, and all our positions were secured, but with soldiers who could not expect to be replaced.

There forever! There until taken away, either dead or wounded! They could not be relieved or moved... And locking up ourselves solely in the convent and



the church itself would have been a mortal necessity, because we would (otherwise) have been burnt alive!

The tower of the convent, the belfry, the dome of the church and its high and low windows, the sacristy, and everything that could offer a secure point of attack, were garrisoned with selected shooters. And indeed, with excellent, although temporary results, for the most immediate houses from which we were being fired at with impunity at first, immediately fell silent with their shots.

In order to communicate with the shops of the Chinese, where we could find food, a covered path was built from the orchard of the convent, coming from the military infirmary, which cut through the Calle Real.

The nave of the church and its transept were converted into a hospital, and the beds in the convent from the military infirmary were used. On one side were the wounded, and on the other, the sick.

Señor Espallargas^{xlvii}, the temporary doctor, and I, could not keep up with the constant demands of our work. Fortunately, there was plenty of medical equipment, although we could not be too generous with some of the more usual items.

The family of Captain Pintado remained housed in the choir loft, wherein the corner where the organ was, they set up their sleeping quarters, and they dedicated themselves to watching over us, praying rosaries aloud night and day... Sometimes I thought we had nuns in the choir.

Reverend Fathers Garcés^{xlviii} and Laprieta had such forlorn faces that I began to feel badly about it.

The third officer, Martin, of the military administration, who was in charge of the supplies, was advised to give no more than half a ration to everyone. The officers were ordered to watch the ammunition, trying to make good use of every cartridge, and not to answer the frenzied fire that the enemy was making in spurts, accompanied by a lot of shouting and periodic attempts to attack.

At six o'clock in the afternoon, we had settled into our positions, which we had to maintain throughout the night; the tasks had been distributed; the meals were ordered, and the most advanced posts were relieved; and the Public Prosecutor, who was talking in the hall of the convent, was invited to sit at the piano that Father Laprieta used to play, and he made us listen to the Royal March, which, outside the country and on solemn occasions, resonates sounds deep in the soul. We all stood up and listened to it. And at that moment, the evening twilight took on a very religious meaning... It was a call to prayer!

Afterwards, someone asked for the Cadiz March (the Slandered One!), and loud and boisterous notes resounded the same happy notes that in other latitudes filled our anxiety with happy thoughts...

Long live Spain!

Chapter IV. Plaza under Siege...!: In fact, on June 7 we were besieged, not so much by the enemy, but by ourselves, giving the word, "besieged", a pure-



ly empirical meaning. We were “under siege”, that is to say... we had to remain in that place, because no other option was viable. And we had to fight as long as we could, fortifying our personal resistance to maintain defenses that made us less vulnerable and more capable of resisting.

A count of the ammunition and food in stock that day would have augured badly; and more than anything else, the memory of the infamous dictum about every besieged plaza, which, if our besiegers, and later those of Tayabas and Santa Cruz (Laguna), had considered, would have rendered their ammunition more useful, and sent fewer souls to purgatory.

After the great nervous tension of the 7th day, a state of tranquility came over our spirits which was a precursor of the deep sighs, like those other deceptive “tranquilities” which reign at the center of the cyclonic furies. Everyone who was able to sleep that night, for as long as they could, slept deeply and serenely, a phenomenon very much to be observed in similar cases, as is the immense astonishment that assails them on waking up to such a startling situation. We adjusted to the new state (of things), and each one, without doubting the efficacy of his own efforts towards the overall objective, gave himself over to his task. I admit that in the first days of the siege, my dark pessimism of the previous days was transformed into a feeling of indifference towards the future, a kind of amblyopia^{xlix} (blindness) towards what tomorrow may bring, which gave me a beneficial tranquility, and which was perhaps due to the fact that I was fighting where there was only one wounded, plus the continuous hustle and bustle of my medical and surgical

responsibilities, which demanded the improvisation of medicines, rapid therapeutic execution, and great attention to judgment, robbing me of time for other considerations and working favorably for me.

And in everyone who was entrusted with a service that absorbed their activities (and almost all of them did), there was a similar interest in the future. Each one was frenetically enthusiastic, even in insignificant tasks: they were keen to hear and monitor those in charge of the trenches, the watchman, the sentry...; the one who lifted barricades sweated profusely; the one who fired the shots took aim purposefully; officers came and went from one place to another, following orders; they made steamed food for those who needed few calories, and those who buried the ones who were going to the other world, displayed equal faith in their work as were those who were praying for our continuation in this world.

And perhaps we all thought, in the carrying out of our tasks, that the final outcome depended on each one fulfilling his assigned duty. To what end? There was no end but the honest fulfillment of duty... “*And, in the light of truth, thy bondman let me live*”, as Wordsworth said.

On the 8th day, early in the morning, a reconnaissance of the enemy’s positions was made, and the enemy was dislodged (at the cost of two wounded) from the house of Señor Solís, which, being in the same row as the patio of the convent, had made many important tasks impossible. Bautista’s house, on the same block as the church, was also taken over, and due to the haste, its walls were not fortified, and which,



being made of wood, were shot at by the enemy, and soon four of our men were wounded, one of them the brave Corporal Ontiveros, with a fracture and a split in a parietal bone. At ten o'clock in the morning, a negotiating delegation appeared, sent by the ringleader Oruga, inviting us to surrender; they were sent away.

When we arrived at the end of the concealed road that put us in safe communication with the neighboring Chinese shops, a requisition of supplies was made, keeping in mind to leave out anything that was not necessary. I had the honor of being a thief that day, going voluntarily to look for anything in the apothecary's shop (a little further up the Chinese houses) that would be useful for my infirmary. There wasn't much that I took; chloroform alone would have been enough, and even today I boast of my crime (for which I almost asked for an honorable cross much later), for through it, I prevented the suffering attendant to need surgical operations.

On the 9th day^{li}, a Spaniard with a white flag arrived at the most forward trench in Calle Real (the main street). On seeing him enter the convent and identifying himself as a sailor (navy man), I imagined, hallucinating, that he was a daring messenger who, crossing the insurrectionist camp, brought us orders to resist as much as possible, thus revitalizing our dim hopes.

Illusions! The negotiator, who was bringing the surrender terms of the ringleader Paciano Rizal, the older brother of the ill-fated doctor [José Rizal], had been captured a few days before on the banks of Taal Lake, with other companions of his, when they were

disembarking to get provisions from the boat Amalia, a warship on that lake.

It was the message of the overrated insurrectionist general of the already "heroic" defense (they judged based on the casualties they had) of Lipa and his brave Colonel. As was his custom, our ringleader was not going to be outdone in eloquence; and he replied in equally flowery speech that "the heroism had not yet begun". Perhaps the Colonel had other personal motives, as compelling as his noble gallantry, for having continued to be in charge and not surrendering Lipa until the very end, in case the ringleader (Paciano) Rizal, and perhaps his brother-in-law Pantaleón Quintero, were still among the besiegers.

As the negotiator showed a strong desire to remain among us, even risking possible retributions from his commanders (from the revolutionary camp) the two prisoners we had were exchanged for our compatriot.

On that day, we made an exit on the right of the front of the convent, in the direction of the town of Rosario, where the enemy had fled in great numbers, although, however great their ardor, it was of little use, for (it could) not even reduce our strength or increase the number of our casualties; and, moreover, they were menaced by the church and the tower marksmen.

But we had to know what was behind this strategy... And it turned out that there was none. This is always the strategy of revolutionaries without direction: a childish thing. But the same thing that happens to children who throw sticks at fruits on a tree can happen to them: if they are ripe, they fall anyway but



not because of their efforts.^{lii}

Stubbornly, that day, they made three or four “charges” on that side, to the sound of a bugle... With a phenomenal roar, the mob fired on the convent, “advancing” to the nearest crossroads, where our bullets met them. They retreated, and returned, and came back again. And this cycle went on. I began to believe that, knowing the weak point of our resistance, the attackers intended to reach it. But where and how were they going to attack the church? Well, on that side, the only breach on that solid wall was the side door (barricaded with enormous stones), and the main door was equally defended, with more shooters hidden behind each window (some guides who couldn’t escape had armed themselves).

Nevertheless, when such a racket and such firing (which produced a shower of leaden bits in the church) was heard on that side, I almost came to believe that they were going to assault us, and I feared for my infirmary. But, fortunately, the attacks, being at first tremendously loud, were gradually decreasing, eventually becoming lighter.

The dawn of Day 10^{liii} began with splendid weather, without any clouds to dull the sky, and only a few shots, at great intervals, reminded us of our state of war. The colonel ordered a reconnaissance of the front section of the convent, without any success, except to know that on that side “there was no enemy (around).” Shortly afterwards, Lieutenant Linares, went out that way, with twenty men, with sufficient firepower.

What a motley crew in the infirmary, which was

formerly the house of God! In the beginning, respect for the sacred character of the place held us back with some restraint; later on, necessity brought about familiarity, and, while no altars or other holy things were desecrated with base needs, the presbytery was turned into an area for the health personnel, the baptismal chapel into an operating room, and the baptismal font into a table; the sacristy was turned into a temporary morgue, the area behind the altarpiece into the permanent residence of a melancholy official, and the chair of the Holy Spirit into the splendid bedroom of a part-time doctor, whom neither the Fatherland nor humanity recognizes as a son.

A lot of gunfire was heard in the distance, which made us think that this troop had been involved in a bloody battle, in which, we were going to receive, as was to be expected, the worst part. It was not so. It was a glorious display of audacity, although in the end with absolutely no effectiveness. The “sorties” (as these operations are commonly called in the besieged areas), when they tend to go hand-in-hand with the army that goes or can go in to help, or when they weaken the military might of the enemy through skirmishes, have a certain logic. Our sorties, if they did not fit any of these categories, were nevertheless, necessary, to release the pent-up restlessness...that was bursting to express itself.

The enemy did not expect such a maneuver. Believing that we had been so bloodied, they did not anticipate awakening to this and were so surprised throughout the northern and western parts of the town that the people there gathered fled in haste, not caring for the wounded and dead whom they abandoned.



Seven days later, there were homes that housed corpses piled on top of each other that no one had attended to. Lieutenant [Antonio López] Linares^{liv} went victoriously through that enormous sector to the outskirts, bringing with him as trophies of victory some rifles, local canons (*lantacas*), and flags. He had only three slightly wounded.^{lv}

A gap in the storm clouds of our sadness opened up; but through it, a sinister light entered, the trembling of the dying flame, the glow that wraps around conscience with the chill of the heroic act. We are all gradually involved in partial combats or because of the morbid poison, (we) gradually fall and fall...

Two emissaries were sent that day to... Manila, with reports giving an account of our situation. The civilian guards (*Guardias Civiles*) fled that night, but the corporal remained with us. And even if I get ahead of myself, to be truthful, I should say something about the truth, what eventually happened, for after four days, he refused to abandon them, and nobly, the corporal followed their example and also left.

On the 11th ^{lvi}, the enemy resumed fire, which continued relentlessly. At two o'clock in the afternoon, we still did not have a single slightly wounded person, when, while I was busy with my patients, an urgent call came from the choir, with the unpleasant news that the Colonel and the Commander had (both) been wounded...

And I found the chief on the steps of the bell tower, where he was going for the first time to take a look at the overall view of the surroundings, dazed by the

the hemorrhaging of small arteries ruptured by the penetration of a Remington Freyre-Bull bullet, which, fracturing the left humerus in its upper third section, had lodged between the bone splinters and the soft tissues opposite the point of entry. Miraculously, a large artery, the injury of which would have resulted in almost instantaneous death, was not involved.

I thought the wounded man was a victim of delirium brought about by trauma (although not usually occurring this early) when I heard him happily repeat this refrain: "*Oh, what a bargain! The fish fell in the net!*" But no, he was in his right mind.

It was that shot, which saved him from the burden of so much responsibility; it was joy and not sorrow.

The constant pain anesthetized the immense moral pain that his neurotic temperament from which he was suffering. We transferred him to the bathroom, the most secure and most adequate place. I then treated Commander Vara de Rey, who was wounded in the soft tissues of his left shoulder by a fragment of the same bullet, which, after having bounced from and been distorted by a bell, did its destructive work.

Although Navas was not one of the chiefs who at one time knew what it is to be followed and loved, when the news of the event spread, however little each one of us thought of the genius of the leader, for our future, it was, as one could imagine, an accident that had a very unnerving impact on everyone.

The next day, I performed the amputation on the upper third section of the arm. I did not sever at the



joint, even though I was at risk of leaving an annoying stump for the future, but to please the wounded man, who with his eternal good mood, begged me to leave “something amusing on his shoulder.”

A solemn moment, the first of all the bloody surgical interventions carried out in the quiet ambiance of the hospital! But to operate on the leader, you must concentrate and do so with total focus like that of ours, on the critical instrument that is to bring about the salvation of your comrades, and, in addition, on the whole generous man who perhaps sees in an accidental death a “solution,” and when he cheerfully and in final farewell offers you a hidden secret of his soul, then tell me if, like me, even though you may boast of being experts, you would not invoke the name of God when putting the sharp steel on the flesh.

Chapter V. *Hic Hispania fuit*^{lvii}: To add to the misfortunes, on the night of the same day that the Colonel was amputated (June 13, 1898), a nasty surprise from the enemy caused us five casualties. A few of them surreptitiously sneaked into the house defended by Lieutenant Don José Rodríguez (of the 11th Light Infantry Battalion), and upon being discovered by our troops, our men had to defend themselves frenziedly. The one who gave the order to fire was ill-advised since the darkness of the night allowed us to be betrayed by our own bullets... Four natives were found dead by the reinforcements that were sent. Of our casualties, three seriously wounded and two dead; of these one was the Lieutenant, with his skull in several pieces like a badly cut-up melon (a disrespectful but graphic comparison), and at various sections, deep cuts in his left forearm.

According to a popular saying, calamities never happen singly. As soon as a nucleus appears, be it physical or moral, destructive or constructive, of anything dynamic, it forms a zone of attraction that struggles to expand itself, and... I say this because that day we were visited by typhus... or some similar illness, because if it were not called that, it would be difficult to name the result of the organic and psychic exhaustion, which poisons man with its own residual poisons.

It had become a frequent sight to see emaciated soldiers arriving at the infirmary, starving from lack of food and sleep, and complaining of everything and anything. Some were quickly transformed, by the influence of a compassionate substance, stimulated or protected by sweet Morpheus!^{lviii}

Out of three surgery patients in the church, I found two in the morning, with a contracted lower jaw ... Tetanus! I exhausted the supply of chloral and other resources; but it didn't take long for the tetanus victims to go to the garden, the common grave, that was waiting for us.

Things were taking a turn for the worse. That day rations were cut to a third. Another trip was made in search of provisions, with scanty results

On the 15th, the number and frequency of enemy fire increased, and there was more noise than usual in their positions. It seemed that they had received considerable reinforcements.

On the 16th day, they redoubled their *rapideos* (the

name given by the insurgents to the...use of a lot of ammunition and the consequent uproar). At two o'clock a loud bang was heard, like a small explosion, perceived by many as cannon fire. And there was not much speculation needed, as another and similar booms banished all doubts. The huge hole that opened up in the front wall of the convent after the fourth shot erased all doubts if any. As it was getting dark, a big projectile entered my infirmary at the level of the choir rail, producing an enormous detonation. The Torres family, from Batangas, who were taking shelter behind the organ, practically disappeared. My wounded and sick (patients) were no longer so calm. Luckily, the shells did not explode upon landing.

The increase in our casualties was alarming. The defenses had been reduced, leaving only the main ones staffed, because there were no men; there were some ninety-plus men or so casualties in the infirmary, either wounded or sick and some twenty of them so bad they were destined already for the other world...

At midday, an individual with a white flag appeared in the northernmost trench. And at great risk, but calmly, he arrived at the convent. It was Don José Olaguivel, brother of [Don Juan] Olaguivel, from Lipa, a gracious gentleman, known to many of us, who, forced to leave the town, and living in the countryside, was sent by the Commander of the besieging forces, in other words, by Señor [Eleuterio] Marasigan (*See Appendix II C. Fig. 9*), a young lawyer from Calaca (Batangas).

In spite of the acknowledged sincerity of the emissary, some doubted him and even construed him as a

spy. The noble gentleman said what he knew and what he was told to say. In short, what had come to pass.

Batangas surrendered the day before, almost without firing a shot, turning over about four hundred rifles. Cavite, with San Francisco de Malabón^{lix}, Silang, Imus, Indang, etc., had been in the hands of the insurrectionists for some weeks (already); the same for all the towns along the shores of Laguna; General Leopoldo Peña, Colonel Diego Pazos, Lieutenant Colonel Nadera and many other officers were prisoners. And most importantly, the insurrectionists possessed enormous war supplies.

Moreover, the American troops were already spreading along the coast of Cavite; the Spanish troops, who were reaching Zapote, had been spread over Manila. The besiegers would be no less than five thousand, and every day more people arrived having scented the looting of Lipa.

Two days earlier they received two pieces of modern artillery (of the Ordoñez brand, which the brave Lieutenant Valera had to surrender in Imus).

Those who did not know Señor Olaguivel, nor could see beyond their noses, thought the latest news to be implausible, or a ruse of the enemy.

Those of us who knew the Filipino gentleman (may he rest in peace) before and after, and were cognizant of his honesty, dismissed all suspicion of trickery.

Commander Vara de Rey, following the chain of



command, had taken charge of the troops.

The emissary was told that the situation of the garrison would be reviewed and that the answer would be communicated the following day. And the firing continued. The news brought by the negotiator chilled our hopes. Had we not received it, we might have died like the citizens of Numancia^{lxi} (suicidal defenders), putting our faith in the impassive sphinx of an enigmatic tomorrow.

The ferment of discouragement grew among us more subtly, even among those willing to “fight to the death,” who, with such words, perhaps hid their despair. But, even as the futility of our best efforts began to be clear to almost all of us, no one showed growing despair or anything of the sort. On the contrary, two officers and a civilian employee had previously settled their consciences sacramentally, willing to die as good Catholics.

A leader with the energy and discretion of Vara de Rey understood how far one could go; that the glory that might be acquired by the casual survivor of the unequal struggle that would follow (class B, num. 4) was certain death, without the consoling visions of faith in the efforts, nor the lustrous patriotic resignation of those who were to succumb... Ah! how many times will you hear them say with a theatrical gesture... “I took up such-and-such a position.” “I killed so many of the enemy’s men!” “And then you will realize what fertilized the ground on which the sacred laurel was obtained!”

the thought, perhaps even the furtive idea confirming his impotence...The threshold of suicide comes within view.

Among the troops, it was said that some soldiers were somewhat reluctant to remain as cannon fodder.

Vara de Rey knew at all times how to fulfill all his duties with perfect honor, without cheap hypocrisy.

For that night, he secretly summoned the Officers to a Council of War, making the necessary preparations so that everyone could personally attend, without abandoning their tasks.

Precautions were taken so that the troops would not find out. The Commander explained our situation and the talking points of the negotiator. Everyone knew that with a quarterly ration, we could go on shooting for three or four more days, and that there were about six rounds still available for unloading on the plaza. Close to half of the force was in the infirmary, which meant that on that same day, our territory was narrowed down even more. The Commander’s presentation was followed by a deadly silence.

Soon, Captain Rodríguez and another officer were of the opinion that another foray should be launched before considering negotiations, and no one dared to object or add anything. A vote was taken in favor of negotiations, and all the fifteen or so members said, “No”. It was then the turn of a non-combatant officer of the Corps to speak.

What a horrible twist for the brave military man,

As he stood up to explain his vote in favor of ne-



gotiation, he trembled as if shaken by a violent shiver; such was his emotion. Ripping off his shoulder pads, the hallmark of his position, and holding them in his hand, he said to the Council:

“If you take my words for cowardice, give me a rifle and the most dangerous position on the perimeter. Señor Comandante: are we to give greater glory to those who remain, at the expense of the blood of sure victims? The duty of all has already been fulfilled. Let us not deny the Motherland sacrifices, nor our pride. You have complied with the Orders, which is our code. These are not our lands; the catastrophe of the Motherland is widespread; its tutelary angel has closed its wings. Many of you are young and enthusiastic, and Spain should not indulge in the barbarous, useless holocaust of your lives.

And those poor wounded and sick, just as numerous as the healthy ones, are exposed to die like trapped dogs, and not like you, who would knowingly sacrifice yourselves. Think again. Let’s talk to these people. Let us ask for a 48-hour truce, in which time, perhaps... God will surprise us all. If there are among them educated and honest people (and they should strive to be such if they consider themselves saviors), let us go for a proper surrender; since honor has already been preserved.”

[There was a] Religious silence. Vara de Rey, deeply moved, asked the Council, in a soft voice, for its decision. It was agreed to negotiate... A white flag was placed at the top of the tower, and without abandoning our positions, nor letting them approach us (since some groups were already heading towards the

convent), the three Officers elected by the Council left for the enemy camp, and they were the following: The Captain of Infantry Don Angel Rodriguez del Barrio, the Lieutenant of Artillery (Cavalry Squadron^{lxii}) Don Francisco García Saavedra^{lxiii}, and the second medical officer Don Santos Rubiano, the author of these accounts.

At two o’clock in the afternoon of June 17, we went, with revolvers and sabres in our belts, to the Barrio of Sabang, where we were told that General Marasigan was stationed.

Starting from the bridge at the entrance to Lipa, and ending at the house of Narciso Umali, which was occupied by the revolutionary leader, there were mixed groups and revolutionary forces of all types and attire, with a surprising variety of weapons and well equipped with ammunition.

With childlike curiosity, we gazed at the motley mob as we passed by, but we were not harassed, not even with gestures, on the way.

We arrived at the headquarters. Fine officers, most of them dressed in *rayadillos*^{lxiv}, showed, by the quality of their sabers and revolvers, that they had profited from the capture of the Arsenal of Cavite. There were very few Lipeños and non-combatants, more were the Caviteños and the scoundrels of the surrounding area and other provinces. All of them were reserved and did not dissimulate their delight, which they displayed more by the coldness of their countenance.

While the General was on his way, we had a



friendly chat with someone we knew. Captain del Barrio was, of the three, the most familiar with the province; the toughness of his character and his aggressive temperament did not serve him well in the midst of those incongruous pleasantries, nor did he care for it either, and so in that first meeting of ours he began predicting deception (time would tell) and managed to somewhat ruin the (executive) Committee, which perhaps in good faith, others wanted to carry out with courtesy.

Marasigan appeared (a young man and good looking), he greeted us appropriately, and as soon as our answer to his message was presented, he told us that he would appoint three negotiators who would deal with us. We said goodbye, to return the following day with the conditions that we would agree to. Both combatants, in the meantime, would continue occupying their respective positions, resuming the shooting in those places where new attacks were launched or defensive measures were needed.

Almost to the credit of our Officers, I must say that they hardly knew anything about how to go about a surrender. They found little *ad hoc* literature, but with the Military Code and Order, they already had the basics of an honorable formula; this was submitted to deliberation that night, and with slight revisions, it was approved. The next morning, going to the insurgents' quarters, we spoke with Don Cipriano Kalaw, Don Gregorio Katigbak (*See Appendix II C. Fig. 10*) of Lipa, and Don Luis Luna (*See Appendix II C. Fig. 11*) of San José. They agreed to our conditions, only objecting that the priests La Prieta and Garcés^{lxv} were not going to be considered prisoners of war.

In short, the conditions were as follows: All the combatants were to remain prisoners of war of the Philippine Revolutionary Government. The wounded and the medical personnel were not included "in accordance" with the Geneva Conventions; neither were the civilian employees or the aforesaid priests mentioned prisoners; and they were free to go wherever they wanted.

The revolutionary government was obliged to maintain an infirmary in Lipa for the wounded and the sick who could not be transported. The less serious ones would start their march to Batangas with the surrendered soldiers as prisoners, which would leave Lipa at 4:00 p.m. on the 18th, with bugles signaling the start of the march, carrying rifles on their shoulders, and the insurrectionist troops would render them military honors. The weapons would be handed over to a Philippine Commission on the outskirts of the town, and the rest of the disabled individuals who remained in the convent would be turned over to the same Commission. The Officers would keep their revolvers and sabers, and their horses (there were three in this case).

A preliminary act was signed by the negotiators and at 3 p.m., which was the time of the surrender, another duplicate act was signed by General Marasigan and Commander Vara de Rey.

And a local poet wrote the following year [1899], commemorating the glorious date [June 18th], when the American liberating guns had already razed Malolos, the capital of the Philippine Republic:



“Ah! Oppression fell and the frailocracy as well;
they fell with sarcasm and curse,
and a fledgling nation,
after a prolonged exclusion,
rose up, emitting illumination.”

And then, a little remorseful.

“Other rumors
from far away come,
That perhaps make the heart grieve.”

B. Discussion

As the narrative opens, we see that there is more and more chaos in a country that is in the throes of a full-scale revolution. Spain continued to sustain losses; the Revolutionaries continued to gain ground. After just about a month from the declaration and resumption of war by the Philippine Revolutionary Forces, the province of Cavite is totally captured, provincial communication with the central Spanish government in Manila is cut off and the ragtag Spanish armed forces suffer massive desertions and massive loss of resources and supplies. The remaining European Spanish forces are demoralized and many principal towns in the provinces of Laguna, Batangas, and Tayabas fall into the hands of the Filipino revolutionaries. The Filipino militia of these provinces, originally conscripted to the Spanish army to fight the American troops, deserted to the revolutionary ranks.

Rubiano points out that the Spanish forces sent out to repulse the Filipino forces laying siege to Calamba cannot even enter that town, and have nowhere to go

but to retreat southwards, to Sto. Tomás. That is where the retreating forces of Pintado have to regroup and need the “rescue” forces of Colonel Navas, based in Lipa, or the hunter will become the hunted.

The Council of War that took place in Sto. Tomas on June 4, 1898 had three plans for the reconcentration of forces – one, to head north, via Sto. Domingo and to Manila via Las Piñas, Zapote, Parañaque; two, to head east to Sta. Cruz, Laguna; and three, to retreat south to the town of Batangas. They took the third option. They abandoned the first and second options: the first plan, to go to Manila would have been impossible for there would be an inevitable encounter with the American forces, already blockading the capital. Battling with the American troops would lead to more casualties and wounded. Rubiano notes that they already had a lot of *impedimenta* (the sick and wounded soldiers). As for the second option, there was a possibility of ambush en route to Sta. Cruz. Juan Verd Sastre, a lieutenant colonel who was part of the San Pablo detachment, in his diary, dated June 4, 1898, reports that “there was news that there have been some encounters of the revolutionaries with some Spanish detachments that were reconcentrating in the said town.”

The Spanish forces led by Coronel Juan Rodríguez Navas did not initially defend Lipa because they were already aware that the town would soon be occupied by the Filipino revolutionary forces and it offered bad conditions for defense especially because of the difficulty of being rescued by reinforcements from Manila. The only hope they had was to march to the capital of the province, Batangas, which was still not occupied by the revolutionaries during the first days



of June 1898. The town being in a coastal location and having a seaport was also strategic for they could still resist a bit longer while waiting for help from the Spanish squadron that they were told would soon sail towards that point. All their plans collapsed though, and they surrendered Lipa in a week's time. But that is getting ahead of the story.

With his keen powers of observation, Rubiano qualifies and quantifies, at the onset of his narrative, the reaction of Lipa's inhabitants to the "rescue mission" launched from Lipa: many were curious, some were bitterly anxious, and very few were sad, to see the Spaniards go. The stage of the drama is set; Spain has outworn the welcome rug in its sole Asian colony, it is only a matter of time before the curtain closes, and the general mood is one of gloom and foreboding, as the fires of the Revolution spread.

And so, they marched to Sto. Tomás and met up with the Pintado forces. And returned to Lipa with the combined forces, obtained provisions for the final retreat and march to the seaport of Batangas, set for two o'clock in the afternoon of June 7.

The combined forces of Navas and Pintado return to Lipa from Sto. Tomás on June 6, 1898. Rubiano writes in Chapter 2 that Don Eustacio Maloles, General Malvar's brother-in-law, returned 30 rifles to Colonel Navas, on the latter's retreat to Lipa from Sto. Tomas, "for fear that they would fall into the hands of the insurrection". Those thirty rifles could have helped the Revolution a lot, but Maloles did not steal them when he could have. Rubiano writes further that Maloles was eventually appointed as Revolutionary

governor of Tayabas. Looking at this "gallant" act, Rubiano considered Maloles as having honor, not betraying the Spain he was serving at the time for the forces he was to join shortly after. However, what is eye-catching is the note that the Maloles act was "often suppressed in his official role as Revolutionary Governor..." later on – in other words, there was an effort to whitewash potentially treasonous acts against the new Republic – if this whitewashing happened on a grand scale in the emergent nation, then it would have been difficult to flush out the turncoats and traitors eating the nation like termites from within -- giving credence to the assertion by some historians that the Revolution had some trusted leaders among them who were less than truly convinced and deeply dedicated to the cause of the new Republic... so much so that some would say that the Revolution was ultimately betrayed by its own people, who shifted sided when the going went tough, nipping in the bud the aspirations of freedom of a people and denying the nascent Republic the fruits of its hard-earned battlefield victories and negating the sacrifice and death of its would-be heroes.

The note of Rubiano in Chapter 2 on the offer of Don Bernardo Solis to turnover to the Colonel Navas "the 30 rifles that were given to him to defend Spanish sovereignty" upon the latter's arrival in Lipa on June 6 speaks of the honor of the man, who would not betray the trust of Spain, but also speaks of the lost opportunity for more firepower for the Revolutionaries. Historically, the Philippine upper class has often determined how events will further unfold; this is an example of the management of change, rightly or wrongly.



Yet, the siege of Lipa, when it comes, was a total surprise to the Spaniards. Rubiano's account ("*Excessively confident in the loyalty of the Lipeños and not suspecting the tremendous daring of the enemy...*", Ch. 3) reveals to us the surprise they had when it began with an attack on Spanish troops and civilians who were just starting their march to the capital of Batangas to make their last stand there, on the afternoon of June 7. They had totally misread the belligerent sentiments of the citizens of Lipa, whom they thought were still loyal to Spain for various reasons and would let them go on their way.

The attack happened at the worst possible time for the Spanish troops in Lipa. They were in the wrong place and the wrong time. Many, including Rubiano, were coming from different regiments, waiting for reassignments, and so the group was a motley group, and it was most likely that they were disorganized and unprepared. Rubiano notes, "... that year almost all the military units were in a state of precipitous dissolution, as if everything were being prepared (one has to believe in destiny!) for an unavoidable catastrophe." (Chapter 3)

We may also ask, that considering how critical the situation was, and how their plan was shattered because of the June 7th attack, and the information that came later that week that Spanish forces in Batangas had surrendered, why did the Spaniards keep resisting and defending their position at the rectory of Lipa? From Rubiano's account, it took four negotiating parties from the Filipino revolutionary camp for the Spanish troops to surrender Lipa. The courage shown by the Spanish troops, despite the foregone

conclusion of defeat, is admirable but also inevitably desperate and increased the loss of lives. They hoped against hope, that Spain would not abandon them for long and that reinforcements would soon help them repulse the Filipino revolutionaries. There was none forthcoming. The wise words of an unnamed soldier giving his two cents' worth in the June 16 emergency meeting in the rectory are recorded by Rubiano for posterity: "These are not our lands; the catastrophe of the Motherland is widespread; its tutelary angel has closed its wings. Many of you are young and enthusiastic, and Spain should not indulge in the barbarous, useless holocaust of your lives."

With the weather conditions of that time, a lot of the Spanish soldiers got sick, which reduced the number of their combatants. It was during the rainy season that the battles took place. To add to their woes, they are visited with some sickness similar to typhus in the makeshift infirmary, and for some of the wounded, fatal tetanus set in (See Chapter 5.) With the sick soldiers, casualties, exhausted supplies of ammunition and food, the commander in charge Teniente Coronel Francisco Vara de Rey and the council of officers he gathered in a meeting, decided to negotiate and finally surrender (Diario del Teniente Coronel Juan Verd Sastre, 1899).

Further, the local Spanish government does not seem to have grasped the full gravity of the situation. For one, as we see in the Rubiano account, the Revolution was not just an uprising of the poor, but rather, supported by friends of Spain among the socio-economic upper class of Lipa, with whom Spain had ruled, profited, and dined and wined. Second, Ru-



biano constantly refers to the revolutionaries as mere insurrectionists, rebels, who would not succeed when faced with the full force of Spain, when the reinforcements arrived (but they never did). It seems that when General Marasigan entered the scene, after emissaries from General Paciano Rizal had come earlier, Rubiano begins to understand that the Revolution is more organized than he had ever imagined. He also notices that the enemy forces received reinforcements – after the rectory is hit by cannonballs – and when they finally meet at the negotiation table, he notes that the enemy has uniforms, probably obtained from the captured Spanish arsenal in Cavite. In short, there is coordination among the southern command – Cavite, La Laguna, and Batangas. Third, perhaps typical of the Spanish troops elsewhere in the country, the group that he was with did not know that as they marched north that the provinces of La Laguna and Cavite were practically in the Filipinos' hand and that they would have to retreat to the south. And when they decided to go south, they were surprised to learn that the capital of Batangas had already surrendered to the Filipinos. Fourth, it seems the Spaniards did not also know their native troops... Rubiano grieves the humiliation of their native troops when they were asked to surrender their arms, which they did meekly, but takes note that none of them abandoned their Spanish regiment, nor treated them as enemies, or killing them all at night. The Filipino soldiers remained loyal to them to the end, although he counts about three that eventually deserted them.

We can sense from the Rubiano account that in June 1898, there was still no inkling of trouble between the allies: the emergent Republic of the Phil-

ippines and the ally the Revolutionary Government thought they had an honorable pact with: the United States, the emergent colonial power. At the time of the siege of Lipa, all Spain knew was that they were fighting two forces, one had completely surrounded them, the other lending unqualified military support. Very shortly after their capitulation to the Filipinos, the Spaniards would learn that America had betrayed the newly victorious Filipinos, and in the case of Rubiano and companions, the question of their release as prisoners of the Filipinos had to factor in the new equation: the Filipino-American War.

Rubiano's observation about priests-members of religious orders bears comment here. He mentions the terms of surrender to the Filipinos in Lipa, and notes that one of the conditions that came from the Spaniards is that two friar priests of the Augustinian order (Fr. Domingo de la Prieta and Fr. Felix Garces) are to be released. This displeases the Filipino Revolutionary negotiating party (Don Gregorio Katigbak, Don Cipriano Kalaw, and Don Luis Luna) whose members know that they took up arms and actively supported Spain's war efforts. The revolutionary officers feel they should be taken as prisoners since protocol from the high command (General Aguinaldo himself) had specified that all those actively involved, i.e., those that took up arms directly in the war, including priests and religious, and captured by Filipino forces, were to be treated as prisoners. Their premise was correct, since the friars who returned to Spain were accorded Military Honors (Pérez, 1901, p. 595).

On a deeper level, that incident regarding friars to be held as prisoners of war may reflect the lingering



anti-friar sentiment among Filipinos. The Spanish-Filipino journalist Joaquin Pellicena Lopez (1901, pp. 26-28) notes that the Filipino revolution was not actually against Spain but it was against the friars because they condemned the Filipinos' willingness to progress.

Hence, for some reason, the surrender terms of Lipa were an exception. What would have merited the exception? What was the extent of the involvement and support of the priests and religious for the Spanish government? There are still so many questions and areas for studies that should be undertaken on the role of the Spanish "missionaries" during the Spanish-Filipino War.

Rubiano was a medical doctor, and that is perhaps why we have quite a detailed, factual narrative of people, place, and events – from the medical procedures he employed on the wounded and on those needing surgery – to the positions of troops and movements – to the details of the discussions of the War Council – to speeches of people, what people wore and how they carried themselves in public.

He was also a man of letters – that is seen in his frequent use of Latin expressions, his reference to literature and to music, his many references to Spanish history (see "... Numancia", Ch. 5), his use of figures of speech (see "... sphinx...", Ch. 5). In the other translated chapters not included in this paper, Rubiano also reveals a familiarity with Tagalog and quotes persons speaking in that language *verbatim*.

Rubiano was also a psychologist – and this is an-

another valuable contribution since, through his work, we get an idea of what the Spaniards facing inevitable defeat at the hands of the Filipinos thought and felt during a siege, e.g. thoughts of suicide, resentment against their mother country Spain, coping mechanisms while being holed up in the rectory/convent house. (See Chapter 4 in particular.)

Rubiano mentions that the Spanish troops built a covered path from the Church grounds to the Chinese stores where they were to get supplies. It seems the Chinese were apolitical businessmen and kept their stores open to combatants and civilians alike. In one instance, Rubiano refers to them as "... sad sparrows of humanity ..." – and we do not know what to make of it, but this phrase is directly followed by a comment about them less willing "to leave their stores than to leave their bodies", meaning, they preferred to continue commercial activity even if they may get hit or killed in the crossfire. The racial relations in the Philippines between Spaniards and the Chinese is yet another area for further study.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Dr. Santos Rubiano's *Recuerdos de un Prisionero de los Tagalos* is not just a literary work of the author but a valuable historical reference and a great addition to the meager sources on the Philippine Revolution in Southern Tagalog. Rubiano being a military doctor present during the events on the Siege of Lipa in 1898 and as a military psychologist adds value and reliability of his accounts as a primary source document. The memoirs of Dr. Rubiano gives clarity and color to a dry historical narrative on the Philippine Revolution with his vivid details, record of times, dates, the



specific names of people who were involved or who were present during the Siege, and what they thought and felt.

The accessibility of these memoirs through an English translation would hopefully spark more interest in studying Philippine-Spanish historical relations. This translation project would also encourage local history institutions and organizations, students, and Philippine history enthusiasts alike to dig deeper and uncover more information in bringing to light more accounts like Dr. Rubiano’s memoirs presently obscured in archives and libraries.

In closing, we recall one author declaring, “Street names are more than markers of history. They are like history—silent reminders of what we were, and usually an indictment of what we have become (Ocampo 2021)”. Lipa City once memorialized the two historical events in the Siege of 1898 by naming two main streets in the city center (*población*) as *Calle 7 de Junio* the day when the Filipino revolutionaries began to attack the Spanish forces marching to the town of Batangas and *Calle 18 de Junio*, the day when the Spanish forces honorably and peacefully surrendered to the Filipino revolutionaries. These street names can still be heard among the old folks but with the passing of time their significance has been forgotten due to the lack of information (e.g. books, historical markers) about these meaningful events, change in local politics, and sadly, ignorance of history. With the publication of the translated work, Lipa’s lost history in the Philippine Revolution of 1898 can begin to be retrieved in earnest. Certainly, by reading Dr. Santos Rubiano’s *Recuerdos de un Prisionero de los Taga-*

los (Memoirs of a Prisoner of the Tagalogs), Filipinos would have access to a primary source and become more familiar with, and be reminded of, that epic battle between the valorous Spaniards and the passionate and determined Filipino revolutionaries fighting for their right to independence—that happened in Lipa 124 years ago.



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