

*The History
of the
Filipino People*

TADHANA

**Ferdinand
E. Marcos**

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PART THREE
TRANSITION
(1765-1815)

The Filipinas Islands, on account of their great extent, their advantageous location in the center of the commercial world of Asia, their considerable population, and the fertility of their soil—which is capable of yielding all the products which are grown between the two tropics—require from his Majesty's paternal government a carefully planned system of measures which shall strengthen their peace and internal security, and at the same time advance their agriculture, industry, and commerce to that high degree to which they have been destined by Providence.

—MANUEL BERNALDEZ PIZARRO,
Dictamen

PREFACE

The periods with which the first two books of Volume Two of "Tadhana" dealt each lasted a century—the first, "Encounter" (1565 to 1663), covering 98 years; and the other, "Reaction" (1663 to 1765), all of 102 years. In this third period ("Transition," 1765 to 1815), the events and personalities which comprise the historical scene are laid upon a vastly constricted span of 50 years. Only time, however, is compressed; the content of the drama itself suffers no similar diminution.

The contrast between the two earlier periods and the third is with respect to the phenomenon one may conveniently call historical leisure: the segments which encompass the scene from Legazpi's voyage to the withdrawal from Zamboanga, and from Koxinga to the British occupation meander at a relatively slow pace, perhaps an illusion created by distance both from the main

events which constitute the culmination of the nation-building endeavor and from contemporary perspectives. The "formation of the national community," the subject matter which provides the title of Volume Two, necessarily involved in the earlier years tentative, searching movements which stretched through two centuries. The momentum that this gradual development gathered would thus grow slowly in the perception, but not for long.

In the life of a people a sense of approaching destiny comes at some stage. For the Filipino people this sense of inevitability, of change and impending crisis growing progressively more imperative, may have begun in the second half of the eighteenth century. The sense of urgency would grow, and time and spirit would quicken, in the subsequent periods—"Transformation," a period of 57 years (1815-1872); and "Triumph," a mere 24 years (1872-1896). From the period covered by the present book, a time of enlightened reform and consequent economic and social growth, the people comprising the future nation would move more quickly, and with an evolving awareness of purpose, toward scenes and prospects which now loomed even larger. This interlude is marked by positive efforts by the monarchy to reestablish strong civil authority and dislodge the religious from their position of dominance, at home and in the colonies. Toward this end, reforms in the bureaucracy and in the economy are instituted. For the Philippines, these reforms, on account both of their success and their failure, have a peculiar significance.

Part III, "Transition," which concerns the passage from these reforms to their effects, attempts to depict the character of this period and its place in the struggle for national identity.

F.E.M.

Malacañang Palace
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THE PHILIPPINES IN AN AGE OF FERMENT

IN THE second half of the eighteenth century, explorers from the West discovered the Philippines anew and, like the Spaniards two hundred years earlier, were pleased with what they found. One of these voyagers on the Pacific, a man devoted to science and its hard-earned truths, surpassed the other discoverers with the lavishness of his praise. The Philippines, he wrote in the record of his numerous travels, is "the finest and most delightful country in the world."

The Frenchman Jean Francoise de la Pérouse had hardly given this rapturous verdict, however, than he also delivered a stern indictment. This marvelous country, he said in the same breath, had unfortunately been transformed by Spain into "the last that a man who loves liberty would wish to inhabit." The image he conjured of an oppressive and intolerant Spain was of course calculated to justify his suggestion that French rule be installed in place of the absolutist Spanish administration. But

at the time he depicted Spain in this fashion, de la Pérouse was obviously unaware of the whole truth. By then, unknown to him, even the tyrannical Spanish throne had been seized by the spirit of liberalism and reform that was taking Europe by storm.

It is therefore not quite true, as Ortega y Gasset once deplored, that Spain missed the "irreplaceable century" of Europe's Enlightenment, the eighteenth. Indeed, that "intense commotion" in Western man's spirit stirred her, with the advent of the Bourbon dynasty, from somnolence and decline under the last Habsburg king, Charles II, although it was not until the middle of the century, under the third reforming Bourbon king, Charles III, that truly earnest effort was made to forge a new Spain and thereby revive the Spanish will to imperial power.

With Spain's defeat in the Seven Years War (1756-1763), renewal of the Spanish state and society had become a matter of extreme urgency for the threatened people. And, as an "enlightened despot" cut from the same fabric as Catherine the Great of Russia, Frederick the Great of Prussia and Joseph II of Austria, Charles III could be trusted with such necessary restructuring of the realm—quite naturally, "all for the people, but not with the people." It was a task which would be carried out with exemplary devotion by his equally enlightened ministers and colonial bureaucrats who believed, like the Physiocrats and even Voltaire, that reform from above was the only expedient way the *ancien régime* could meet the demands for change then surging everywhere.

It was a reasonable enough view for such a rational age. All societies change and it was best that change should occur within the accustomed institutional framework and for the common good. Indeed, progressive England was there to be emulated, if one forgot her evolving parliamentary system and its source in the earlier Revolution that had taken Charles I's head only to spawn Cromwell and his republican dictatorship. As it happened, the reforming zeal of Charles III as well as the "magnificent delirium" of all the "great titans" of Spain's Enlightenment would be accorded only passing attention by the majority of Spaniards. There simply was no middle class, as there was in France, England or even the American colonies, which might not only give the grand design of Bourbon reform form and

content but also, as was subsequently done in the rest of Western Europe and the Americas, carry it to its logical end: revolution and the brave new world of the bourgeoisie.

In that profound sense, Ortega y Gasset was on the other hand right. Spain did not undergo her "educatory century." For her national history was manifestly responding to impulses different from those that agitated, in other ways, the rest of the nations of the West. In Unamuno's imagery, Spain's quixotic *ilustrados* were as the waves on the surface of the vast ocean, magnificent and often of great power and force, yet causing no turbulence to the eternal immobility of its depths, even if those waves in fact transform—perhaps too slowly for the limited span of our lives to perceive—the profile of continents. Nonetheless, the Caroline reforms in imperial administration, economy and commerce did restore to the Spanish empire its old grandeur. The resulting influx of continental bureaucrats and privileged colonists to the Americas exacerbated the latent conflict between the *peninsulares* and the American-born *creoles*, who were now themselves being absorbed into other historical processes, the incipient sense of nationalism in the Americas.

Up to 1790 at least, Spain's newly recovered greatness would be complete. The humiliation of 1763 was avenged with the country's alliance with France in support of the American war of independence, which gave back Florida and other areas at the Paris Treaty of 1783 while it conjured for the Latin American possessions the twin specter of republican ideology and colonial revolt. The Spanish empire reached its zenith, in any case, as its frontiers were rounded out to confront the Russians just north of San Francisco Bay and the Portuguese in the Rio Plata basin. At peace, well governed and prosperous, it would possess by 1790 "the greatest extent of territory it was ever to attain."

But a great ruler is not often followed by another as great and circumstances do not always concur to maintain a nation's integrity, much less its greatness. Charles III died in 1788 and, the year after, revolution broke out in France. The Great Catherine could thenceforth hold her empire together by simply desisting from her flirtations with radical philosophy. But the new Spanish King, Charles IV, would soon enough manifest his

weakness—not so much in relation to his own people, even then still devoid of revolutionary ardour, as to the troubled international situation created by the radicalization of the French Revolution since 1793 and the subsequent rise of Napoleon.

The Spaniards would not thus stage a revolution; but their American colonies did, some of them consummating their wars of liberation even before Napoleon would succumb to the Duke of Wellington in 1815 at Waterloo. Latin American secession was but a minor tragedy, however, compared to Spanish humiliation on the continent, as the country got caught in the crushing encounter between Britain and Napoleonic France. Finally outmaneuvered into casting Spain's lot with France, Charles IV, his minister Godoy (who was his wife's lover), and his son Fernando would intrigue intensely against one another for Napoleon's favors, only to see the kingdom delivered by the Emperor to his own brother Joseph and to lose to Nelson at Trafalgar in the Corsican's vain attempt to subdue the British "nation of shopkeepers."

Prostrate and betrayed by her own beloved dynasty (Fernando was dubbed quite undeservedly "el Deseado," the desired one), Spain would nonetheless prove to be Napoleon's undoing. In a powerful upsurge of united sentiment, sparked by the 1808 *Dos de Mayo* rebellion in Madrid into a series of spontaneous *guerillas* or "little wars" (the term dates from that epoch), the entire nation would rise against the French invaders. The ocean's depths would move; Sancho Panza would assume the aspect of Don Quixote and reveal the hidden sources of Spanish courage and pride, the popular wellsprings of nationality.

The French should have known better. For beyond all the human yearnings for *liberté, égalité, fraternité* that the French Revolution released, it was patriotism, transformed by foreign and royalist intervention as well as by anti-aristocratic ideology into the dynamic force of nationalism, which saved the Republic from the coalition of crowned heads at Valmy and in the subsequent other battles for the Revolution. Yet with respect to Spain, Napoleon, himself proud of his own Corsica's record of struggle for liberty, could not see why such a "vile and cowardly" people as the Spaniards should resist the forces of progress that he and his French armies had brought to Europe and mankind.

It was probably the painter Goya (1746-1828) who best fathomed his own people's more intimate thoughts. An enlightened or *ilustrado* intellectual, he knew quite well both what Goethe had recognized at Valmy and what Beethoven had believed when he composed the *Eroica*: the Revolution was the dawn of a new epoch in world history and Napoleon was its sun spreading rays across the continent. Yet, notwithstanding his appreciation of the Napoleonic phenomenon, this royal portraitist and French sympathizer (*afrancesado*) preferred to sympathize with Spain's national struggle and made probably the most passionate indictment of the French occupation through his sketches of the so-called Peninsular War, later published as a collection entitled "desastres de la guerra." In the end, however, all that the Spanish people obtained from the struggle was their "Desired One," Fernando VII, who forthwith proved himself the worst King ever to sit on the Spanish throne. His repressive regime "effectively prevented Spain's participation in the great intellectual and industrial revolution of the 19th century."

Each people suffers from its own illusions and discovers its own path to liberty. The succession of vigorous reform and confused indecision that characterized Spanish history between 1765 and 1815 certainly had its effects on the colonies, including the Philippines. But the colonial units—our own archipelago in particular—absorbed these effects each in its own way, in accord with the rhythm of its own history. The American colonies, which unlike the Philippines already possessed a middle class and were then evolving in quasi-independence, would explode in revolution and rapidly constitute themselves into national entities along the lines of the older prehispanic cultural continuities, the most prominent being Peru and Mexico. In the Philippines, however, the experiments at constitution-making in Spain as well as the breakup of her American Empire except Cuba caused no more than a ripple, meaningful to no one save the few *creoles* in our midst, themselves too little understood by the expanding *principalia*.

Almost at the same moment in Europe, the Russians were expelling the *Grande Armée* of the "little corporal" from Mother Russia, in what even Soviet historians still consider a "great patriotic War"—the first in fact before the more recent one Stalin waged against the Nazis. In the end, however, Russia

would fare no better with her rulers than Spain did. Certainly the Russians were very much less fortunate, then and thereafter, than their future rivals, the Americans. For the latter, who were constituted into a political unit after their own revolution had fetched the assistance of absolutist France and Spain, were now across the Appalachians to establish boundaries for their new nation, while the Yankee clippers scoured the oceans for commerce and trade. As for Britain, their ex-mother country, she simply continued to pursue the Industrial Revolution which added new strength to her drive to dominate Europe and the world at the expense of France and, subsidiarily, Spain and Holland.

There is indeed no way to deflect any nation from the course of its own history. Native reaction to the imperial adventures of European nations in Asia and Africa during the 19th and early 20th centuries proves the point in our time. Within Europe itself in the period that occupies us, the subject peoples of the Austrian and Ottoman empires—fired to an extent by the ideals of 1789 as well as the humiliation inflicted upon the Austrians by Napoleon and upon the Turks by the Russians—were already at the task of resurrecting their suppressed national identities. Of course, Poland would lay prostrate for most of the period, its final partition in 1795 among Russia, Prussia and Austria being confirmed with only some revisions in 1815 at the Congress of Vienna. Nonetheless, the spirit behind the peasant revolt led in 1794 by the veteran of the American Revolution and later honorary citizen of the French Republic, Tadeusz Kósciusko (1746-1817), continued to propel the struggle for national reunification. In Bohemia, the part that would later become Czechoslovakia, a disorderly peasant revolt resulted from Joseph II's attempt to reduce and regulate serf labor in 1774. That it was suppressed with the help of the local feudal lords who were themselves against the reforms did not prevent the birth of a national sentiment largely based on a common language and culture, with Dobrowsky and Jungmann giving to the Czech language its literary form in their newspapers, grammars and dictionaries. In Hungary, the same phenomenon developed more intensely, pushing the Magyars to impose their language on the subject Slavs and Romanians within their semi-autonomous kingdom. Among the Romanians, after the Russian thrusts across their

land to defeat the Turks and make them accept the loss of Crimea in the Treaties of Kutchuck Kainardji (1774) and Jassy (1792), the idea of a "Wallachian nation" took form among some boiars who declared in 1791 that they would rather perish than return to the Turkish yoke. Unfortunately they did return to Turkish rule; but their libertarian movement would now look to France for its ideology and to Russia for its practical realization.

Farther south in the Balkans, a Bulgarian monk named Father Pajsije would launch from Mt. Athos his *History of the Bulgarian Slavs* (1762) as "a clarion call to his fellow countrymen to recapture the greatness of their heritage." Thenceforth a whole body of literature would grow pressing for political independence as the prerequisite for the achievement of a Bulgarian national destiny. Towards the west, the South Slavs who were to constitute in the end modern Yugoslavia were likewise moving towards national emancipation. Pohlin's *Carniolan Grammar*, which launched the fight for the Slovene language and culture in 1768, was soon followed by other works of self-identification, like *An Attempt at a History of Carniolan and Other South Slavs in Austria* by Anton Linhart (1756-1795) and the poetical collections of Baron Ziga Zois (1747-1819) and Valentin Vodnik (1758-1819). In Vienna itself were published histories and newspapers which were of great influence to the later champions of national renaissance. But it was in Serbia that, under the leadership of Karagjorgje ("black" or "handsome" Geoge) Petrovic (1768-1817), the peasantry would rise against foreign rule and for national unification. With the help of his peasant army, Karagjorgje was in fact able to reestablish the Serbian state, if only temporarily. Finally, in Greece, Konstantinos Rhigas Velestinlis (1755-1798) preached struggle against the Turks to create a new Hellenic republic based on the principles of the French Revolution. To this political nationalism corresponded the cultural nationalism of Adamantios Korais who transmuted the language of his day into modern literary Greek. In the practical sense, bands of brigands (*kephtes*), more ideologically oriented than our own *vagamundos* and *remontados* would ever be, now coalesced in the mountains against the Turks; and emigrants in the West would organize the *Hetairie*, a patriotic society which Alexandre Ypsilanti would reconstitute right

in the enemy's lair in 1814 to prepare for the revolt that would lead to Greek independence less than a generation later.

Thus, in the Balkans and in fact in all of Eastern Europe—that “shatter zone” where the colonial endeavors of Holy Russia, the West and the Ottoman Empire collided—nations were aborning or resurrecting in the manner of the American colonies and, in less than three generations, also of the Philippines. Although its history is bound in many ways both to Spain and Latin America, our land nonetheless probably better resembled the lands of the Balkans in that the latter, too, were products of the meeting of East and West, although the direction of the impact was in the reverse. For with its occupation of the Balkans and the Danube area early in modern times, the Ottoman Empire may be said to have brought Asia into Europe as Europe moved into Asia from across the Pacific and beyond the Cape of Good Hope.

Now the tide had turned against Asia in Europe. Since Peter the Great, the Russians had been aiming to march upon the Porte to follow through the great Austrian victories at the end of the 17th century. Now in 1768 the Great Catherine unleashed her “Turkish War” and as a result obtained in 1774, at the Treaty of Kutchuk Kainardji, not only a foothold on the northern coasts of the Black Sea but also certain rights as protector of Orthodox Christianity in Constantinople. Russia was in close competition thereafter with Austria for the glory of helping liberate the Balkans and, incidentally, of getting warm-water ports while pushing back Asia across the Bosphorus.

Both Christian empires were of course peripheral to the revolutions that were transforming European economy and society between 1765 and 1815. Russia, in fact, had only recently opened its windows to the West. Her history was still distinctly her own and its direction would not be greatly affected by the West until quite late in the 19th century. For now, however, she and Austria would draw from progressive Europe not only the aristocratic version of the Enlightenment but also the increased technological capability for war and imperial expansion. Hence their superficial modernization in the manner of the Spanish Habsburgs and their more aggressive behavior in relation to the declining Empire of the Ottomans. It was this same borrowed

dynamism that propelled Russia in its continued thrust across Siberia and the Bering Sea into the Aleutians and Alaska, from where her merchants and soldiers would soon enough filter down towards San Francisco Bay. In 1799 the right to colonize and govern Alaska was given by the Emperor to the Russian-American Company, created a year earlier on the model of the highly successful Dutch, French, and British companies. Already in 1784, Gregor Shelikov had formally established in Alaska the first Russian colony in North America, which was then explored by adventurers in search of fur and profit, like the legendary Alexandre Baranov. In 1810 another colony was founded down south, some forty miles north of Bodega Bay in San Francisco. Then the Russians reached the Hawaiian Islands "while the United States was still licking the wounds of the War of 1812."

The Americans were not of course exactly inactive. John Jacob Astor embarked for Alaska at about the same time as Baranov—and for the same reason. Later, the Americans would supply goods from New York to the Russians in exchange for seal-skins and other products of the hunt. North America was at that time, however, only one frontier area of the shrinking world. For exploration and colonies, there were other areas, though these were still the preserves of Western Europeans.

Indeed, a new age of discovery and exploration was in full swing from the West, no longer simply for God's sake and in quest of gold and glory like the first, but now more in the Enlightenment's spirit of scientific inquiry. In 1766-1767 the English navigators Wallis and Cateret discovered Wallis, Tahiti and numerous other archipelagos in the neighborhood of New Guinea. Then, from 1766 to 1769, Louis Antoine de Bougainville (1729-1811), although armed with secret instructions from Choiseul to sound off the possibility of acquiring the Philippines for the French Crown, quite happily neglected to touch the coveted archipelago where Magellan died and thus completed the first French circumnavigation of the globe. Along the way, he explored Tahiti and discovered for the West the Samoas, the New Hebrides and Solomons. Not to be outdone, Spain would thrice send a vessel from Peru to lay claim to Tahiti, landing there two missionaries who were however forced to return on the ship's last trip in 1775. That same year, Juan de Ayala and Antonio

Maurell explored the coasts of North America, the latter leaving notes subsequently used by Cook for his voyages in the same area. From 1789-1794, the Italian skipper Alessandro Malaspina undertook for Spain a "politico-scientific" expedition in the Pacific, mapping, like George Vancouver for Britain, the North American coast before crossing the great Ocean for the Philippines, where one of the volcanoes on Negros Island has been named after him.

The voyage of J. F. de Galaup, Comte de la Pérouse (1741-1788) was, at the outset at least, more properly a scientific enterprise. La Pérouse visited not only the Easter Islands, Hawaii and Sydney in the then recently opened Australia but also the Marianas and our own land (1787), subsequently mapping out the littoral of Manchuria and Korea. Before his fatal shipwreck at Vanikoro in the Pacific, he would have the time to dispatch his journal and two secret memoranda to Versailles. One memorandum argued for the French conquest of Formosa while the other concerned the Philippines, where "monks and inquisitors direct the consciences of the people; spies look over all temporal concerns, and the Governor the most innocent actions." His indictment of Spanish, especially friar, rule was in contrast to his own praise, already mentioned, of this country's people and resources. It was an oblique suggestion to supplant Spanish tyranny and incompetence in the world's "most delightful country" with French altruism and efficiency.

Such benevolent concern would become the *leitmotiv* of French (and in general European) reports on the Philippines from the eighteenth century onwards. For now, however, de la Pérouse's main object was just to outstrip, at least scientifically, the famous voyages of James Cook (1728-1779), the greatest English navigator of the day. After charting parts of St. Lawrence River, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia from 1759 to 1767, Cook had been sent to the Pacific area by the Admiralty and the Royal Society to explore Tahiti and to observe the expected transit of Venus on June 3, 1769. It was the very same reason for which Guillaume Le Gentil de la Galaisière (1725-1792) had come to our shores even earlier, in 1766, on the *Buen Consejo*, the first galleon to link the Philippine colony directly with its "mother country" and Europe. The French scientist missed the transit of Venus, which he had come to observe, but more than made up for it by making probably the most thorough study concerning the Philippines in

the eighteenth century. Cook for his part quite naturally accomplished his double mission. While looking for the then fabled *terra australis incognita*, he also reached, surveyed and took possession of both New Zealand (late 1769) and the east coast of Australia (1770), which he named "New South Wales" and which became the first area of European settlement. Early in 1788, Sydney was founded there by Captain Arthur Philip with a number of British convicts. The two subsequent voyages of Cook took him through the southern latitudes back to the Pacific, where he again chartered and discovered new island groups until, like Magellan, he met his death in combat on a beach in Hawaii, that island world of a kindred Austronesian people.

With Cook's voyages and all the other expeditions into the Pacific from 1765 to 1815, the West finally completed the linking of the world oceans that had become its task since Magellan. The earlier ocean routes that had connected East and West before 1521 would now stretch across both the Atlantic and the Pacific to encompass practically all of the world's seas between the poles. In like manner, in the north, the ancient invasion routes across the Eurasian steppes on either side of the Urals would now extend beyond the Bering Sea into the North American continent, where Russia encountered not only Spain but England and the now independent thirteen colonies.

In terms of the continuing polarity between East and West, the routes of contact and expansion across Eurasia appeared less important in this age than the now extended routes across the oceans. In the end, the Russian drive for dominion would be hampered on these routes by the rival Western powers in North America and by the land mass of Imperial China in the Mongolian-Manchurian area. For China had not as yet lost her power to resist trespass—and even to expand. Like the contemporary Spanish Empire under Charles III, China under the Ch'ien Lung Emperor (1736-1796) had in fact the most extensive frontiers in all of her history, while her population increased from 184,504,493 in 1754 to 275,662,414 in 1796, shooting up thereafter to 374,601,132 in 1814, when Europe including Russia had only a little more than 200 million. Her weight was felt from Annam to Sinkiang ("new territories"), through Burma and Tibet, and to the Mongolian lands, whose conquest by the Ch'ing probably prevented the rise of a new Mongol empire. The Russians could