

CHAPTER XIII

OUR OWN COLONIAL PROBLEM

As one begins consideration of the problem which the Philippines have become for the United States it is worth remembering that independence advocates there can invoke history to point to a moral for their cause.

In 1776 it took as long to journey from London to the far-flung American colonies as in 1926 it takes to reach the scattered islands of the Philippine Archipelago from Washington. A century and a half ago English military and commercial interests had succeeded in dictating, with arguments which at the time seemed fairly valid, what policy the governing nation should exhibit towards the governed. The official American attitude in the Philippines seems now on the highroad to determination by similar factors.

In 1776 the Continental Congress stirred English Tories to mingled wrath and ridicule by asserting that "all men are created equal," that "they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights," that "to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed," and that "whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government."

Nowadays every move of the Philippine Legislature which is actuated by processes of reasoning, or sentiment, similar to those that animated the signers of our

Declaration of Independence, is for many Americans in the Islands a subject for sarcasm and mockery. Let us quote a typical editorial from the *Manila Times* (American owned and edited) as evidence. Entitled "Excess Baggage" and appearing in the issue of February 17, 1926, this sample—by no means an extreme example—ran as follows:

It is a paradox that our legislature takes itself so seriously, when legislatures in most countries have been abolished. The interparliamentary union of Europe now consists of Mussolini, Rivera, Hindenburg, and whoever is on top at the moment in France. It works out well, with Latins at least. Just when Italy and Spain have been pigeonholed as decadent, they take on a new lease of life. Latins do better with a dictator than with parliaments. Filipinos do too.

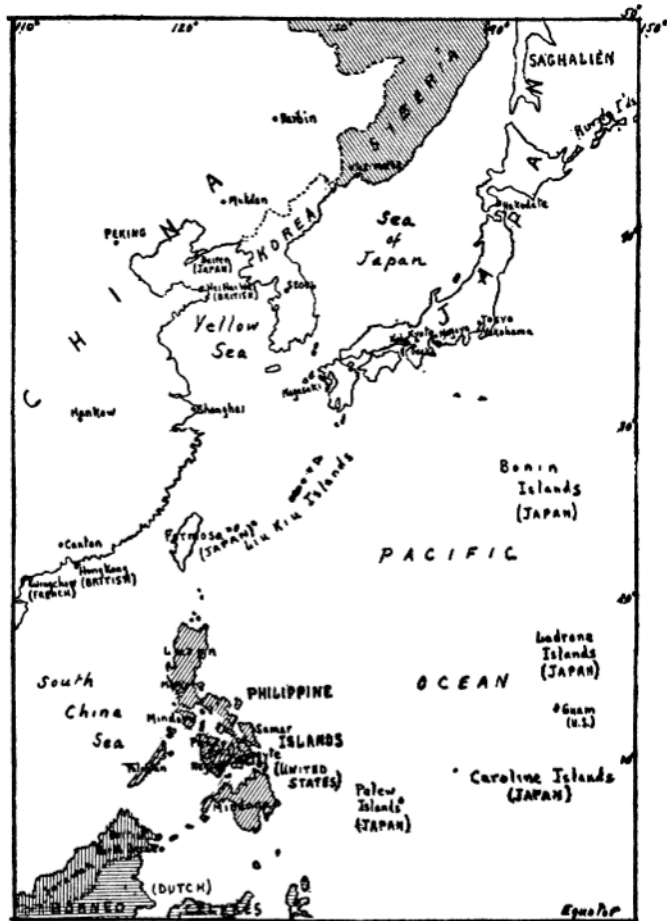
The purpose of these comparisons, it goes without saying, is not to try and force an historical parallel where none can legitimately be drawn. It is merely to illustrate, at the outset of our inquiry, that from the viewpoint of many Filipinos there is much that seems contradictory, hypocritical, and therefore doubly irritating in the way the heirs to the ideals of colonial America are handling America's first grave colonial problem. And this realization belongs at the beginning, for it is basic to the restiveness and sullen attitude now beginning to be apparent towards Americans in the islands.

Manila itself, a metropolis with a present estimated population of 315,000, is two days' leisurely steaming due southeast from Hongkong across the languorous South China Sea. Other places in the archipelago, however, are much closer to foreign territory. The northernmost island of the group is on the twenty-first parallel north latitude, only sixty-five miles from the Japanese territory of Formosa. The southernmost island, not five degrees north of the equator, lies only thirty miles east

of British North Borneo. The Philippine Archipelago, containing 7,083 separate islands, large and small, and extending 1,152 statute miles from north to south, is geographically the southern half of the great chain of islands paralleling the coast of Asia from Siberia to the equator. This key position athwart all Oriental trade routes gives to the Philippines strategic and commercial importance potentially greater than that possessed by Japan, forming the northern half of the aforesaid island chain.

It is easy to underestimate the size of our great dependency in the Far East. The total land area of the archipelago is 115,026 square miles, almost identical with that of post-war Italy, or with the combined areas (land and water) of the states of New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland. Luzon, the biggest island of the archipelago, is as large as Denmark, Belgium, and Holland combined. Mindanao, the second island in size, is about equal in area to Portugal. Ten of the Philippine Islands contain more than one thousand square miles each.

Compared with most of the adjacent countries, the Philippines are not thickly inhabited. The last official census (December 31, 1918) showed a total population of 10,350,640, and the present-day figures are probably not much in excess of 11,000,000. While this is a greater population than that possessed by Canada, and far greater than that of huge Australia, its density is much less than that of Japan, China, India, or the Dutch East Indies. At the same time it is worth remembering that the Philippines average about ninety-five persons to the square mile as against less than forty to the square mile in the United States. With the exception of the Chinese, of whom there are some 50,000 in the islands, controlling a very large proportion of all retail commerce, the foreign population is small. There are



THE FAR EAST

The map covers the area from 50° north latitude to the equator, and from 110° to 150° east longitude. Territory subject to white nations is shaded.

about 7,000 American civilians, less than 8,500 Japanese, 4,000 Spaniards and 1,000 English. People of other nationalities are negligible in number.

There are, however, close to a million Filipinos of mixed blood, known as Mestizos. Over half of these represent the Chinese admixture, while those with a considerable proportion of Spanish or other European blood come next in frequency. The American Mestizos are not yet a factor of considerable importance, not because such children are rare but because it is not yet a generation since the American annexation. There is little doubt that relative to total numbers the Chinese and Spanish Mestizos furnish a disproportionately high ratio of leaders in every line. The Chinese strain seems to contribute a business acumen and energy lacking in the pure Malay stock. The Spanish strain seems to provide a brilliancy and egoism which is often irritating to the less showy Anglo-Saxon nature. How the American Mestizo will turn out the future will show. In general this mixture does not appear very promising, though the furtive nature of the parental union rather than biological causes is probably responsible for this.

Much effort has been spent in trying to prove that the Filipinos are not a homogeneous race. The thesis is difficult to maintain, except in so far as the Mohammedan and semi-savage Moros are concerned. Whatever may be said against the Spanish policy in the islands the fact remains that three and a half centuries of Spanish rule both Christianized and unified the Malay population to a high degree. The Spanish churches, many of them beautiful old buildings, are still the focal point of civic life in towns and villages throughout the islands, and outside Manila the influence of the Spanish period is still much more pronounced than that of the American régime. The Moro problem and the different dialects prevalent in different sections are cited with

more energy than effectiveness to prove that the Filipinos are not to be trusted with a greater degree of self-governments. The former is diminishing in intensity every year, which is natural when one considers that the Christian Filipinos outnumber the Mohammedans more than twenty to one. And the language difficulty has been greatly exaggerated, most of the eighty-seven different dialects on which such stress is laid being very closely related to one another. At present, about one-quarter of the population reads or understands English, which in another generation will have become the universal language, with Spanish probably continuing as a second tongue among the educated for literary and social purposes.

On the character of the Philippine people the report of the Wood-Forbes Mission of 1921 is particularly valuable, because the general conclusions of this document cannot be called sympathetic to Filipino claims. In the section of this report dealing with national characteristics Governor-General Wood and former Governor-General Forbes, both firm advocates of retention, wrote as follows: ¹

The Philippine people possess many fine and attractive qualities—dignity and self-respect, as shown by deportment, complete absence of beggars, personal neatness and cleanliness, courtesy and consideration to strangers and guests, boundless hospitality, willingness to do favors for those with whom they come in contact. . . . They are happy and carefree to an extent seldom found among other peoples, keen to own their land, strongly attached to their homes and their children, proud of and devoted to their beloved Philippines; they are free from worries arising from international difficulties and responsibilities; they are refined in manner, filled with racial pride, lighthearted and inclined to be improvident, as are all peoples who live in lands where Nature does so much and people require so little. In many positions they have shown marked capacity and have done better than could reason-

¹The latter part of this section of the report is omitted, as points therein are covered elsewhere in this and succeeding chapters. Footnotes on the report are mine.

ably have been expected of an inexperienced and untried people. There are many holding high positions in the judicial, executive, and educational departments who would be a credit to any government. They are proud, as they well may be, of the advance they have made since the beginning of American control of the Islands, for it can be safely stated that no people, under the friendly tutelage of another, have made so great a progress in so short a time. . . .

They possess active minds, their children are bright and precocious and learn rapidly. The whole people have a consuming thirst for education, and, as is common among those who have had little opportunity and much hard work, there is a leaning towards the learned professions or occupations which do not involve severe manual labor, and a tendency to underestimate the importance of agriculture and the dignity of labor, and to overestimate the standing given by the learned professions.

Their support and aid in the building up of public education is beyond praise. They have sacrificed much that their children might be able to go to school, and the interests of an entire family are often subordinated to sending the selected member to a higher school or university. Schoolhouses are often constructed by voluntary contributions of labor, money, and material. There is a serious lack of educated public opinion, for as yet the Philippine public is not a reading public, and there is a lack of a strong independent press, although there has been a great advance in this respect during recent years, and there are several outstanding independent papers of great local influence. The daily total circulation of all Island papers is a little less than 140,000, and in the remote provinces people still depend largely upon the circulation of news by word of mouth.¹ The Philippine people are readily led by those who understand them. They make brave soldiers, and under good leaders make excellent troops. Due to the lack of a well-informed public opinion they are easily swayed by their leaders. As a result of generations of disregard for sanitary measures, they are still rather Oriental in their attitude toward diseases and questions of public health and sanitation. This indifference is being rapidly corrected.²

The Filipino woman is a strong and dominating influence in every home and community; she is modest, loyal and hard working, and while not much in evidence she is nevertheless always to be reckoned with. . . . The establishment of a large number of women's clubs, that concern themselves with hygiene and other civic matters, is a most encouraging sign of the times.

¹Total newspaper circulation now (1926) is estimated at 200,000. The literacy of the Filipino people is about 40 per cent, or more than twice as high as that of China.

²Under native health officers the death rate (17.5 per 1,000 in 1923) has been brought lower than that of Japan, Spain, or Italy.

But more important than the character of the Philippine people, in the eyes of many Americans, is the character of Philippine resources. It hardly needs to be stated that the campaign to nullify our repeated promises of eventual independence for the islands has intensified *pari passu* with appreciation of their commercial value. As yet, as the following foreign trade statistics for representative years indicate, this potential value is far from being realized:

U. S. Fiscal Year	Imports from U. S.	Other Imports	Total Imports
1905	\$ 5,761,498	\$25,114,852	\$ 30,876,350
1910	10,775,301	26,292,329	37,067,630
1915	22,394,381	22,085,480	44,479,861
1920	80,374,530	42,757,581	123,132,111
1925	64,466,117	52,765,548	117,231,665
1926	69,957,871	47,679,241	117,637,112

U. S. Fiscal Year	Exports to U. S.	Other Exports	Total Exports
1905	\$ 15,668,026	\$16,684,589	\$ 32,352,615
1910	18,741,771	21,122,398	39,864,169
1915	23,001,275	27,913,786	50,915,061
1920	84,186,048	68,195,193	152,381,241
1925	101,254,536	38,822,269	140,076,805
1926	102,831,205	38,213,225	141,044,430

The mineral resources of the islands, believed to be of sizable quantity in gold, coal, and iron, though deficient in nearly all other metals, are still a virtually unexploited field. The production of gold is at present most important, but the value of this mineral extracted was only \$1,330,000 in 1921, and \$1,711,000 in 1923. Coal production is second in importance among the mineral industries, yet is in fact virtually negligible. The entire island output during recent years has averaged little over 40,000 tons per annum, or about the same

as the production in four days of the Japanese-operated Fushun mines in Manchuria. Ten tons of coal are imported from Japan, China, and Australia, for every one produced in the Philippines. Iron mining is in a still more primitive and undeveloped state, with a total domestic cast-iron production valued at only \$25,000 in 1923. Whatever the future may hold for the development of Philippine mineral resources, and it is a future subject to scepticism, the present value of the islands in this direction is absolutely trivial.

When we turn to agriculture, which has been, is, and always will be the chief source of Philippine wealth, a more roseate prospect opens. The leading agricultural products, with their approximate value when ready for marketing, were in 1924 as follows: sugar, \$53,000,000; copra, \$29,000,000; abaca (Manila hemp), \$21,000,000; tobacco, \$6,000,000. The greater part of these products are exported. Rice, and to a lesser extent corn, takes more acreage than any of the above, but are altogether products of domestic consumption.

The Philippines rank tenth among the sugar-producing countries of the world; eighth in tobacco production; and first in the raising of coconuts, furnishing approximately one-third of the world's supply of copra. The natural monopoly of first-class abaca, an unequalled cordage fiber, is of great value to the islands. The lumber industry, also, is developing and beginning to show up in the export statistics. Yet on the whole the underdevelopment of agricultural and forest products is pronounced. In Japan, where not more than 20 per cent of the land is arable, practically every acre that can be brought under cultivation is being utilized. The situation in the Philippines is diametrically opposite. Of the 30,000,000 hectares¹ in these islands it is prob-

¹ A hectare equals 2.471 acres.

able that at least 50 per cent could readily be made highly productive, yet at present only about 3,700,000 hectares are under cultivation. An acreage half as large again as this consists of grass and open land, easily arable but quite untouched.

In sugar, for instance, the Philippine Islands, with three times the area of Cuba, achieve but one-tenth the production of the Caribbean country. Hawaii has 6,449 square miles as against the 115,026 square miles in the Philippines; has a population of 256,000 as against some 11,000,000 Filipinos. Yet Hawaii produces more sugar than the Philippines, for all that conditions in the latter are highly favorable to growth of the cane. In 1924, nearly ten thousand Filipinos emigrated to the sugar plantations of Hawaii, clearly indicating the maladjustment in the development of domestic resources. The question arises: Has any country in these crowded times the right to be as indolent in self-development as are the Philippines?

This is the vital question which has been made an outright issue by the increasing demand for, and the increasing cost of, rubber in the United States. And here, of course, the military argument coincides with the commercial. It does not worry the War Department that Filipinos should be indifferent about the development of their coal, their sugar-cane, their cocoanut and tobacco plantations. We do not need the Islands for the development of national self-sufficiency in these respects. But rubber is a vital element in modern warfare in which we are at present almost totally dependent on foreign countries. And the action of the British government in restricting the rubber output of British Malaya and Ceylon, and taxing all exports of rubber from these countries, has brought a strong commercial backing to the military viewpoint. It is to be remembered that the United States now consumes 75 per cent

of the world supply of rubber, and that 80 per cent of the world supply comes from British Malaya, adjacent to the Philippines.

The rubber potentialities of the Philippines are beyond dispute, and, as is indicated by the following table of the quantities and value of the product exported in recent years, production has already passed the experimental stage:

Year	Kilos Exported ¹	Value in Dollars
1913	139	173
1915	33,001	11,935
1917	29,829	40,099
1919	86,803	70,034
1921	40,627	12,850
1923	39,049	23,037
1925	140,827	87,428

While rubber can be grown, and economically grown, anywhere in the Philippines, the best area for the purpose is that lying between the fourth and eighth degrees north latitude, or below the typhoon belt. This area includes most of the great island of Mindanao, and the smaller islands of Basilan, Jolo, and Tawitawi, on the first-named of which several plantations are already operating. A pamphlet on rubber issued by the Philippine Department of Commerce says:

Mindanao combines all the qualities that make for a prosperous rubber-producing district. What is needed is an adequate supply of capital to make it so. Foreign and native capital should cooperate in exploiting this promising and profitable industry. We have the necessary labor supply for the purpose and there is no shortage of it, as many claim. Hundreds of Filipino laborers are emigrating to Hawaii every year, and there are now thousands of them in that country working in pineapple and sugar plantations. . . .

¹A kilogram equals 2.2046 pounds. Experts of the U. S. Department of Agriculture have estimated the potential rubber production of the Islands at 70,000 *tons* yearly. Even this figure, however, is slightly under one-fifth of the present annual consumption of raw rubber by the United States.

Land is also obtainable on liberal terms. The Insular Government leases¹ through the Bureau of Lands to any private individual, corporation, or entity parcels of land not to exceed 1,024 hectares (2,500 acres), at a payment of 3 per cent of the assessed value of the land, per annum. It is also selling land, not to exceed 100 hectares to a private person, and not to exceed 1,024 hectares to a corporation, from 10 pesos (\$5) per hectare and up, according to the locality and condition of the land. If a greater area is desired the Philippine Legislature may, by special legislation, authorize the sale of a greater area, or permit the lease of any amount of land owned by the insular government for a longer term of years, as was done in the case of the Mindoro Sugar Company.

In the above paragraph are summarized the most important features of the famous Philippine Public Land Law, approved November 29, 1919, and somewhat amended in 1925, which is at present arousing such bitter controversy. The overwhelmingly predominant Filipino attitude is that restrictions on the alienation of the enormous public domain² are essential, in order to prevent ruthless exploitation of the Philippine people. All the restrictions, it should be noted, are identical for Filipinos and Americans, corporations organized under the laws of other countries being prohibited from acquiring agricultural public land. The overwhelmingly predominant attitude of American business men in the islands, on the other hand, is that the limitation of corporate ownership to 2,500 acres is a prime factor in checking the investment of American capital and hampering the development of the islands. In the case of a rubber plantation, for instance, that limitation on acreage means that no single company can under the letter of the law hope to produce beyond a maximum of 500 tons annually. That quantity is insufficient to attract the big American rubber manufacturers.

¹ Leases may run for a period of twenty-five years, renewable for another twenty-five years or, in case of important improvements, for fifty years.

² Estimated at 63,000,000 acres, of which a large part is in Mindanao.

Quite naturally it follows that the Philippine Land Law, taken in conjunction with the potential American market for Philippine rubber, is now the most instrumental cause behind efforts to restrict Philippine autonomy. The argument is very simple: restrict or abolish the powers of the Insular Legislature and that body will no longer be able to restrict American business or to keep out an influx of cheap labor from China and the East Indies, as it does now by various restrictive laws. As the Journal of the American Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines phrased it recently: ¹

Let Congress . . . give us an actual unquestioned form of territorial government, with a Governor . . . preferably from the western part of the United States . . . who can look at a mountain and tear its guts out for the mineral it contains. . . .

The unforgivable crime of the Filipinos, from this American business viewpoint, is that they have not the faintest desire to see the "guts" torn out of their mountains, their forests, or their fields in order to please our Babbitts. Indeed, a fear of this ruthless, efficient "gut-tearing" civilization is shadowing the lives of the Filipinos and greatly contributing to the strength of the independence campaign among the educated classes. Nor is this fear on the part of a race which acknowledges itself lacking in physical stamina and enterprise a subject which can be dismissed by tabulation of the unquestioned material, educational, and social benefits which American sovereignty has conferred upon the Philippines.

A prominent Filipino doctor said to me one night as we sat beneath the Southern Cross gleaming over one of those menaced mountains:

We have seen how the red Indians, the Hawaiians, and the South Sea Islanders have successively succumbed to the pressure

¹ Issue of February, 1926, p. 6.

of your business, the iron march of your industrialism. For you the Philippine question is answerable in terms of more dollars and more national power. For us it is a matter of life or death.

We are the weaker race. We do not claim that our civilization is as efficient as yours. We do claim that American business has no right to mold our future regardless of all the conditions of our happiness, treating your pledges of the past like scraps of paper. That is why every educated Filipino supports those leaders to whom Americans like to refer slightly as our "politicians." That is why I gladly donate 10 per cent of my small salary to help maintain our Independence Mission in the United States.