

THE CHINESE IN THE PHILIPPINE REVOLUTION

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LITTLE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE Philippine Chinese in the revolution, or its effects upon them. Yet the Chinese played an integral, if sometimes ambivalent, part in the upheaval around the turn of the century, and the relation of the Chinese community to those among whom they lived was profoundly affected.

The careful, detailed study of all aspects of this situation remains as an interesting challenge to scholars with access to Spanish and Philippine documents. But English-language sources provide many clues to the direction such investigation might take, and the following is an attempt to present some of the conclusions derived from a survey of these sources, offered as a modest introduction, in the nature of an appetizer, to a neglected subject.

DEVELOPMENT OF ANTI-CHINESE PREJUDICE

After the expulsion of the bulk of the Chinese population by the Spanish in 1766, a period of relative stability in Chinese-Spanish relations followed. The Chinese were limited to about 5,000 in a total population of around 3 million, enough to carry out the economic functions in trade and the crafts the Spanish found essential, but not enough to be a threat physically.¹ After the turn of the century, the Philippines moved gradually from a subsistence to an export economy, and around the middle of the nineteenth century, the Spanish conceived a desire to further develop the Philippine economy. The Chinese were seen as a key element in this development, and once more immigration was encouraged. By the 1880's the Chinese population had soared to nearly 100,000.² As the Chinese were freed of restraints on immigration and mobility with the country, they spread through the Philippines, displacing many of the mestizos³ who dominated wholesale and retail

¹ Edgar Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850-1898*, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1965) pp. 146, 147.

² *Report of the Philippine Commission to the President (1900)* Vol. II, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1900) p. 442; Edgar Wickberg, "The Chinese Mestizo in Philippine History," *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, March, 1964, p. 90.

³ "Mestizo" will be used to mean "Chinese Mestizo," i.e. one with a mixture of Chinese and native Filipino ancestry, usually through a Chinese male and a native woman, originally. The term "Spanish mestizo" will be used to specify the corresponding mixture of Spanish and native blood.

trade, driving them into landholding and the production and gathering of export crops. Less well-to-do *mestizos* took up crafts and other trades more like those of the native Filipino than those of the Chinese.

Before this unprecedented immigration in the mid-nineteenth century, most of the few Chinese in the Philippines had clustered around the several urban Spanish settlements, notably Manila, to which they provided trade goods and services neither the natives nor the Spaniards could or would provide. In a predominantly rural native population, few thus had much contact with the Chinese, and conflict was further minimized by the fact that the Chinese rarely performed services that were also performed by the natives. Though the Filipinos generally supported the Spanish against the Chinese, what anti-Chinese sentiment existed appears to have been related to the natives' cultural identification with the Spanish, such as it was, in connection with Catholicism, and not to economic conflict.⁴

But as immigration grew and the Chinese took advantage of their new mobility within the country to spread into Luzon and to some of the southern islands, they became distinctly more noticeable. From 1847 to the 1880's, the total population increased by a factor of less than two, while the 100,000 or so Chinese, still less than two per cent of the population, were 15 times as numerous in the 1880's as they had been 40 years earlier. Everywhere they moved into new fields becoming coolies and coolie-brokers, wholesalers and retailers, artisans and exporters. And everywhere the Chinese competed, usually with great success, against those who had taken advantage of their absence after 1766 to carve out their own places in the Philippine economy. As noted above, they took over retailing from the *mestizos*. They competed for manual labor as coolies against the growing urban class of natives in Manila; and even the increasing flow of Spaniards, attracted from the homeland by the prospect of taking a share of the great growth, came into conflict with the skilled and aggressive Chinese businessman. Now for the first time the anti-Chinese feeling grew from an economic base and became nationwide.⁵

A cholera epidemic in 1879, in which the highly mobile Chinese were suspected of having acted as carriers, and perhaps an attempt by the Spanish to use the Chinese as scapegoats in the face of growing rebelliousness among the natives, may have contributed to anti-Chinese feeling as well, along with the economic depression in Manila in the 1880's. By the eve of the revolution in 1896, a group of merchants and manufacturers in Manila was petitioning the Spanish government for a suspension of Chinese immigration and asking that they be barred from

⁴ Edgar Wickberg, "Early Chinese Economic Influence in the Philippines, 1850-1898," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. XXXV, No. 3, Fall, 1962, pp. 276, 277.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 278-285; Wickberg, *The Chinese*, pp. 147-150.

manufacturing and commerce. Their views, they said, “. . . they believe to be an echo of the people.”⁶ No one wanted to see all the Chinese leave, an exporter resident 24 years in Manila told the first Philippine Commission as war went on a few years later: “Everybody wants his own Chinaman, but I don’t think they generally make good citizens.”⁷

And among those who shared this view, not the least convinced were many of the Chinese mestizos, descendants of immigrants who had faced similar prejudice a generation or two before, now members of a new class that took for its own Catholic and Hispanicized values that perpetuated that prejudice. “. . . as Filipino nationalism developed, the leaders who declaimed against the Chinese most violently had almost invariably Chinese blood in their veins.”⁸

FEELINGS TOWARD THE CHINESE IN THE REVOLUTION

When the revolution began in August 1896, the Chinese in Manila were immediately concerned for the safety of Chinese laborers working with the Spanish army, and stories circulated in Manila that the revolutionaries intended to kill all Spaniards and all Chinese.⁹ The American commander intercepted and forwarded to Washington a document purporting to be from a high insurgent official, addressed to his troops and instructing them that only Philippine families should be spared, all others, of whatever race, to be “exterminated without any compassion after the extermination of the [Spanish] Army of Occupation.”¹⁰ The document was widely circulated as proof of the insurgents’ disregard of the standards of civilized warfare, and it was only somewhat later that its authenticity was shown to be suspect.¹¹

In fact, Emilio Aguinaldo, with one eye on the rest of the world in hopes that support for the uprising would be forthcoming, was at great pains to discourage any act that would reflect on his government’s ability to maintain order. Shortly after Admiral Dewey had defeated the Spanish fleet at Manila Bay in May, 1898, Aguinaldo issued his first major proclamation. He called on his people to justify American support (which he still believed at that point was for Philippine independence rather than American interest) by refraining from pillage and robbery. “The lives and properties of all foreigners shall be respected,

⁶ Quoted in *Report of the Philippine Commission to the President (1900)* Vols. I, III, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901), (in U.S. Senate Documents, No. 138, 56th Cong., 1st Sess.), p. 152.

⁷ *Report*, Vol. 55, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

⁸ Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Southeast Asia*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 625.

⁹ Wickberg, *The Chinese*, p. 232.

¹⁰ Quoted in E. S. Otis, *Annual Report of Major General E. S. Otis*, (June, 1898-August, 1899), (Manila, P.I., 1899), p. 182.

¹¹ *Facts About the Filipinos*, Vols. I-X, (Boston: Philippine Information Society, May 1-Sept. 15, 1901), Vol. I, No. 6, July 15, 1901, p. 36.

including in this denomination the Chinese and all Spaniards who have not directly or indirectly contributed to the bearing of arms against us," he wrote.¹² Aguinaldo's hand-written instructions to bolo-carrying troops in Manila the following January, a month before fighting broke out between the Filipinos and Americans, included a similar warning, mentioning the Chinese specifically.¹³ Even the constitution of the "Revolutionary Government," promulgated in June, 1898, included a specific provision against robbery and arson, of which the Chinese and the Spanish religious were the most prominent victims, though without mentioning either group by name.¹⁴

The political documents of the revolutionaries seemed to reveal the gradual growth of an idea of citizenship independent of race in the republic-to-be. The Tagalog proclamation of 1897 called for "legal equality for all persons,"¹⁵ and looked forward to a government in which "the most able, the most worthy in virtue and talent, may take part *without distinction of birth, fortune, or race.*" The constitution promulgated in January, 1899, by the first representative congress of the revolutionaries, provided for citizenship as "Filipino" for foreigners obtaining certificates of naturalization, and also for those establishing residence for two years in one place, "having an open abode and known mode of living, and contributing to all the charges of the nation"¹⁶ not particularly exclusive standards, even for the often-mobile Chinese. A number of the provisions for civil rights (protection against unlawful search, arrest, etc.) specifically included in their coverage "foreign residents" as well as the constitutionally defined "Filipino."

Nevertheless, there was ample reason for one contemporary observer to note that "under a native government the lot of the Chinese is not likely to be a happy one."¹⁷ In view of the widespread economic conflict between the Chinese and all classes of Filipinos, it is logical that the revolutionaries would consider trying to stem the immigration that led to the conflict. Aguinaldo, en route home from the exile in Hong Kong that followed the truce with the Spanish in 1897, stopped off in Singapore. On the basis of an interview with the revolutionary leader, the *Singapore Free Press* in May, 1898, under the heading, "Aguinaldo's Policy," included a provision that under an independent government with temporary American protection "safeguards [be] enacted against

¹² *Ibid.*, Vol. I, No. 3, p. 93.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, No. 6, p. 36.

¹⁴ John Foreman, *The Philippine Islands*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), pp. 599-606, quoted in.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 542, 543.

¹⁶ Quoted in *Communications between the executive departments of the Government and Aguinaldo*, etc., Senate Document No. 208, 56th Cong., 1st Sess., (in Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 56th Cong., Vol. XII, 1899-1900, No. 3854), p. 108.

¹⁷ Foreman, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

an influx of Chinese aliens who would compete with the industrial population of the country."¹⁸

Where the revolutionary leadership, dealing with the Chinese more or less in the abstract, could afford a certain degree of benevolence, the common people might be expected to react somewhat differently. The native Filipino laborer, beginning to develop a sense of the nationalism that had been at first confined to the upper, educated class, used to seeing the Chinese holding a central position in labor and commerce and apparently prospering, suddenly conscious that what he is learning to value as his heritage the Chinese has always rejected—this Filipino revolutionary may in fact have thought, as the wealthy and powerful Chinese businessman Carlos Palanca (Tan Quien-sien) told the Philippine Commission, that the Chinese should "cut off their queues and join" the revolution.¹⁹ In any case, the violence against the Chinese which began almost from the first minutes of the revolution was probably more an expression of old antagonisms given new license by unsettled conditions, than an expression of revolutionary policy, either encouraged or condoned by the leadership. It would be understandable, however, if the distinction were lost on those Chinese unfortunate enough to be its victims.

Thus, the great expansion and spread of the Chinese population in the second half of the nineteenth century laid the base for a kind of anti-Chinese sentiment different from what had existed before, based now on economic rivalry. These sentiments were common within the classes that provided both the leadership and the rank-and-file of the revolution.

Yet in the formal programs and declarations of the revolution there was little of the institutionalized anti-Chinese expression one might expect. The Spanish friars, whose extensive role in civic and social matters provided much of the stimulus to revolution, probably seemed the more logical focus for the rising sentiments of nationalism, when a personalized enemy was needed for ideological or psychological reasons.

In addition, the Chinese benefited from the attempts of the revolutionary leaders to prevent civil violence as part of an effort to create an overall impression of order and control in hopes of securing recognition for their government from other nations. It seems likely that the rhetoric of the leadership, which included a number of general statements of universal equality, helped prevent the kind of systematic slaughter of Chinese that the natives had participated in under the Spanish in previous centuries. Given the prevailing sentiment among the revolutionaries, such massacres might well have been repeated during the revolution if any encouragement from the higher leadership had been

¹⁸ Quoted in *Facts*, Vol. I, No. 2, May 15, 1901, p. 16.

¹⁹ *Report*, Vol. II, p. 278.

forthcoming. Nevertheless, even without official legitimation, violence born of prejudice and conflict claimed many Chinese as its victims, as we shall see in more detail.

CHINESE ATTITUDES TOWARD OTHERS

Many Chinese in the Philippines had found it expedient to secure Spanish protection. Tan Quien-sien became a Catholic under the patronage of Col. Carlos Palanca y Gutierrez, and Francisco Osorio, father of the mestizo revolutionary martyr, Francisco Osorio, was one of many Chinese who took Spanish citizenship.²⁰ This (earnestness) of civic and cultural loyalty to Spain facilitated the business dealings to which active Chinese merchants naturally aspired. Palanca served as a sort of Spanish representative in the Chinese community, which he dominated through most of his life, overseeing tax collection and intervening with the authorities on behalf of Chinese involved with the law.²¹ Osorio procured supplies for the Spanish arsenal at Cavite.²²

Such activities, no doubt multiplied many times by the participation of other members of the Chinese community, put the Chinese in a somewhat compromised position when it came to considering supporting the revolutionaries. In addition, even among those Chinese most closely allied with the Spanish there were limits to the commitment to Spanish culture; increasing numbers of Manila Chinese toward the end of the century, for example, sent their children back to China to be educated (including Palanca himself, whose mestizo son became a Confucian scholar.) "The more Chinese one became, the more likely one was to challenge Spanish claims of cultural superiority with like claims of one's own."²³

As the revolution went on, the attitude of the Chinese, their military neutrality by then confirmed by non-participation, was probably typified by Palanca's statement to the Philippine Commission: business was slow, especially for coolies; "As soon as everything is settled there will be more work and they will be able to get more." The 8,000 to 10,000 coolies in Manila's Chinese population of 40,000 to 50,000, though many were employed by the Americans, may well have looked forward to the end of the revolution.²⁴ General Otis judged that the Chinese favored stable government to facilitate trade, and lacked any patriotic inclinations, a combination which rendered their conduct "anomalous." "Within our

²⁰ Wickberg, *The Chinese*, pp. 199, 200, and F. N. P. 156.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

²² Arsenio E. Manuel, *Dictionary of Philippine Biography*, (Quezon City: Filipiniana Publications, 1955) pp. 296-298.

²³ Wickberg, *The Chinese*, pp. 148, 168, 200.

²⁴ *Report I*, pp. 153, 154; *Report II*, p. 442. The estimate of the number of coolies was given the commission by the Chinese sugar exporter and general importer, A.R.M. Ongeakwe, a 22-year resident of Manila. (*Report II*, p. 219).

military lines they are ardent friends of the Americans," he wrote, "and beyond, a good many are apparently active insurgents."²⁵

In Manila, however, a working relationship was quickly established between the Chinese and the American troops, who were moved from the center of the city after a few days to occupy and protect Binondo, the seat of Chinese commerce in Manila. Chinese small business did a brisk trade with the American innocents abroad, supplying all the necessities of life, including souvenir hats and relics from burned-out churches.²⁶ Bigger businessmen as well were quick to take the opportunity to serve the Americans in some of the same ways they had served the Spanish. It would not have escaped them that the American force was larger, and as the months passed, richer than the relatively small Spanish garrison had ever been. The Manila Chinese businessman, A.R.M. Ongcakwe, confirmed for the Philippine Commission that the Chinese community was "very friendly" to the United States.²⁷

As time went by, Chinese reservations about the Spanish way of life must have been reinforced by the precipitous decline of Spanish power, first in the face of the surprisingly determined and effective revolutionary forces, and later before the onslaught of the Americans, whose numbers and wealth at such a distance from their own shores signified their arrival as a full-scale world power.

Many among the Chinese masses had felt directly or observed first-hand the anger of the native Filipino masses, with whom they were in direct economic competition, expressed in revolutionary violence, and some Chinese were certainly conscious of the growing alienation from their Chinese heritage of many Chinese mestizos among the revolutionaries. Their own alienation from revolutionary politics provided the Chinese with the conditions for a neutrality that made possible commerce with both sides; and all commerce, disrupted by wartime conditions, would be facilitated by the restoration of order. The Americans, in addition to being the most likely force to restore such order, were a major new source of business and employment.

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Business. The ubiquitous Carlos Palanca (Tan Quien-sien) would almost seem to have been at the dock when the American forces arrived.

²⁵ Otis, *op. cit.*, p. 57. General Otis may well have confused, or lumped together, Chinese and mestizos. It should be kept in mind that to a non-professional or careless observer the distinction between a Chinese mestizo who lived and worked with Chinese, and a full-blooded Chinese, would not be apparent. To some, presumably, a mestizo living and working among Filipinos might still seem a Chinese.

²⁶ Foreman, *op. cit.*, pp. 400, 621; William Thaddeus Sexton, *Soldiers in the Sun*, (Harrisburg, Pa.: The Military Service Publishing Company, 1939), p. 54; Frederick Funston, *Memories of Two Wars*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), p. 209.

²⁷ *Report*, II, p. 219.

He built the Americans their first set of rattan-and-bamboo barracks, at a cost of \$32,000. They were pleased sufficiently to contract for another set, this time at \$42,000; the cost of materials had gone up, the quartermaster said.²⁸ This was not, however, Palanca's first commercial effort of the revolution. When Aguinaldo was setting up his revolutionary government, Palanca approached a friend of the insurgent leader about the possibility of an opium monopoly.²⁹

Palanca was not alone among Chinese (and certainly mestizos, as well) doing what must have been profitable business with the Americans. The quartermaster paid \$30,000 for steam launches named Lee Fat, Kar Shun, and Com King.³⁰ Buildings were needed to house American troops and their equipment; almost a quarter of the monthly rentals of \$18,000 went to Chinese or mestizos.³¹

Certainly one of the largest war-time business stimulated by the arrival of the Americans was the supplying of labor. The Americans decided early to hire labor almost entirely by contract, and the Chinese coolie-brokers had available disciplined and industrious gangs of workers ready for hiring.³² More than 108,000 was spent in the 10 months ending in June, 1899, for the hiring of coolie and native labor, the equivalent of 270,000 man-days at the common rate of 40 cents a day (some of it probably went for carabao-cart drivers, at more than \$1 a day). A large part of this money must have gone into the pockets of Chinese coolie-brokers, as well as the coolies themselves.

The carters transported supplies and ammunition from the Cavite arsenal to troops at the front. Others unloaded coal, worked as boatmen and litter-bearers, and served as laborers repairing the railroad from Manila to Malolos. Before a bridge could be constructed to carry an engine to the other side of the river, coolies pushed railroad trains loaded with supplies for troops in San Fernando. Surveying their efforts both as skilled and unskilled workers, the quartermaster said, "... it is difficult to see what could be done without the Chinese..."

Wearing tags so the Americans could keep track of them, many of the laborers serving at the front must have come under fire regularly, from almost the beginning of the fighting. Danger and difficult conditions in the field were not the only unpleasant aspects of the war they endured; an American officer with the "disagreeable job" of burying the dead found a quartermaster with Chinese laborers to take it off his

²⁸ Otis, *op. cit.*, appendix D, pp. 62, 64.

²⁹ Jose Alejandrino, *The Price of Freedom* (Manila, 1949), pp. 227, 228, cited by Wickberg, *The Chinese*, p. 201.

³⁰ Otis, *op. cit.*, appendix D, p. 69. Only the names of the vessels indicate probable, not confirmed, Chinese ownership.

³¹ By name, Otis, *op. cit.*, appendix D, pp. 35, 36.

³² Except where otherwise noted, details of the following discussion are from the Depot Quartermaster's annual report, in Otis, appendix D, pp. 5-67.

hands.³³ And the contract to clean cesspools and remove sewerage from the American quarters was held, of course, by the Chinese. In such unheralded ways, and innumerable others, did the lowly Chinese immigrant make possible the prosecution of the war, and added to the fortunes of some of his predecessors as immigrants.

Chinese were also involved on the revolutionary side, though generally on a smaller scale. Some collected lead scraps, including beer-bottle seals, melted them into bars, and sold them to the revolutionaries, who cast them into desperately needed rifle ammunition.³⁴ Others made bolos for the more primitively equipped revolutionary forces, until the American provost-marshal intervened.³⁵ Chinese also provided the manual labor to build a large part of the extensive system of trenches the insurgents built around Manila before fighting began with the Americans.³⁶

Military. Against the background of general Chinese neutrality, commercial service to the Americans, and small-scale or at most forced contribution to the revolutionary cause, the extraordinary career of Hou A-p'ao, leader of the Manila Triad Society, stands out in stark contrast. When the revolution began against the Spanish in 1896, the Triad Society (*T'ien Ti Hui*) under Hou A-p'ao came into the open for the first time; Hou offered himself and 3,000 supporters to General Aguinaldo to fight the Spanish.³⁷

Hou, who was said to have married a sister of Aguinaldo,³⁸ was active as a military leader against the Spanish (though it is not clear whether any significant number of other Chinese fought in the revolution), and went to Hong Kong with Aguinaldo after the truce with the fading Spanish regime at the end of 1897. When fighting resumed against the Americans a little more than a year later he returned to the Philippines with Aguinaldo, cut off his queue, and led force in Albay province until well into 1900, when it became obvious the revolution could not succeed. General Otis called him "one of the ablest insurgent general officers,"³⁹ and he set up a foundry in Cavite to supply the revolutionary forces, but it was as a fund-raiser that he was best known. He ranged through Albay (now Legaspi) soliciting (some said extorting) contributions from the residents, including many Chinese. Over five months in a town of 13,000 he raised \$8,000, at least half or probably all of which was

³³ Funston, *op. cit.*, p. 309.

³⁴ James A. LeRoy, *The Americans in the Philippines*, Vol. I, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, the Riverside Press Cambridge, 1914), p. 244; Memorandum of a[n American] Secret Agent," quoted in *Facts*, Vol. I, No. 10, Sept. 15, 1901, pp. 23, 24.

³⁵ Otis, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

³⁷ Wickberg, *The Chinese*, p. 202.

³⁸ *Report II*, p. 19.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, appendix, Exhibit 1, p. 423.

contributed by Chinese residents. In a later five-month period he sent the revolution treasury, it was said, some \$200,000.⁴⁰

It was as neutrals, seeking business opportunities on both sides, that the Chinese played their major role in the revolution, a role which grew when the Americans arrived. As contractor and entrepreneur, as laborer and carter, the Chinese made it possible for the Americans to fight a type of war to which they were not well-adapted, in a strange and debilitating climate. The Chinese came under fire and did many of the war's dirtiest jobs; but they did them not out of any interest in the politics of the revolution, but in the hope of reaching the goal of financial security that had brought them to the Philippines in the first place. The advent of the Americans was greeted by the Chinese not mainly for any political reasons, but because it held out a possibility of the peace and vigorous resumption of commerce which were prerequisite to that financial security.

The career of Huo A-p'ao is notable in this context because it seems to have been unique for a Chinese. It made him part of a revolution which often, though more in the violence it allowed than in the violence it directed, took the Chinese as its victim. He became, as Wickberg says, "not a Chinese leader, but a Filipino leader;" this was at a time when to be a "Filipino leader" was either to encourage or to tolerate, by inclination or by necessity, the expression of anti-Chinese sentiments. Under these conditions few other Chinese chose to take the course Hou followed.

PREJUDICE, VIOLENCE, AND THE CHINESE REACTION

Murder, Extortion, Flight. It is characteristic that in the opening days of the revolution against the Spanish, Chinese were among the first victims; in the first 10 days of fighting, before the Spanish governor-general had even signed a declaration of war on the rebels, a number of Chinese were waylaid and killed in the outskirts of Manila.⁴² Mobs in Camarines and Bulacan slaughtered Chinese, 30 in one town, 20 in another, sometimes on the orders of insurgent commanders, sometimes apparently on their own initiative. In the Visayan island of Samar, an insurgent general ordered all Chinese killed in a number of coastal towns. Itinerant Chinese traders moving through the interior disappeared.⁴³ An American businessman, asked by a member of the Philippine Commission how he would deal with Chinese when fighting subsided, said,

⁴⁰ LeRoy, Vol. II, p. 101, F.N.

⁴¹ Wickberg, *The Chinese*, p. 203.

⁴² LeRoy, Vol. I, p. 90.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102; LeRoy, Vol. II, p. 186; Otis, pp. 54-55; Dean C. Worcester, *The Philippines, Past and Present*, (Vols. I, II) (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1914), Vol. I, p. 214.

"I don't know how many will be left when this war is over."⁴⁴ Carlos Palanca closed one Commission meeting with the gruesome story of a Chinese cloth-peddler stabbed and beaten to death in a provincial town, and appealed for protection by the provost-marshal.⁴⁵

Other Chinese kept their lives but became victims of various forms of extortion. Chinese storekeepers in Bikol were forced to pay \$75,000 for the return of their property. Others in Albay province were made to "contribute" cloth for uniforms and provisions, in addition to \$5,000. Nevertheless, General Paura complained a week later that the insurgents had killed 13 Chinese, wounded 19 more, and "ruined a number of others."⁴⁶ The Chinese suffered from the Spanish as well: provincial governors and parish priests had numerous suspects arrested, often indiscriminately, and shipped from all over the country to Manila, where they were unloaded onto the docks in cargo nets like bales of abaca. More than 4,000 prisoners (including a number of prominent mestizos, and probably some Chinese) filled the jails to overflowing.⁴⁷

Although they suffered widespread looting and destruction, the Manila Chinese merchants escaped what would have been the devastating effects of the American bombardment of the city; the Binondo section was undamaged by the shelling. The Iloilo merchants were similarly fortunate, though not necessarily because of a petition they submitted to General Otis. Rather, the Americans didn't find it necessary to bombard the city; the insurgents, fleeing as the Americans landed, set fire to the native section of the city, but the "foreign inhabitants" were spared.⁴⁸ Others were not so lucky: after the Chinese had been driven from their section of Cebu, it was bombarded by a cruiser, caught fire, and was "totally destroyed;" undisciplined insurgent troops in the northern Luzon commercial center of Tuguegarao inflicted "incalculable" losses on the Chinese merchants.⁴⁹ Bandits, too, (although the distinction between "bandits" and "insurgents" was lost on many observers and difficult to make in many cases), robbed numerous other Chinese.⁵⁰

In the face of such unbridled force, against which the Spanish, even if they had wanted to, could not protect them, many Chinese fled.

⁴⁴ *Report II*, p. 89.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

⁴⁶ LeRoy, Vol. I, pp. 279, 338; *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 172; Worcester, p. 214.

⁴⁷ Charles Burke Elliott, *The Philippines—To the End of the Military Regime*, (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1916), p. 193; Foreman, p. 522.

⁴⁸ Moorfield Story and Marcial P. Lichauco, *The Conquest of the Philippines by the United States, 1898-1925*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, The Knickerbocker Press, 1926), p. 130; Foreman, p. 616; *Correspondence Relating to the War with Spain and Conditions Growing Out of the Same, Including the Insurrection in The Philippine Islands and the China Relief Expedition, Between the Adjutant-General of the Army and Military Commanders...* (April 15, 1898, to July 30, 1902), 2 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902), Vol. II, p. 903.

⁴⁹ Foreman, pp. 551-553; Worcester, p. 176.

⁵⁰ W. Cameron Forbes, *The Philippine Islands*, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1928), Vol. I, p. 223; Worcester, p. 162.

They converged on Manila in large numbers; many of those who could afford it went on to Hong Kong, and among the most wealthy, some went to Europe and elsewhere. A British firm running steamer service charged \$8 for passage to Hong Kong before the battle of Manila Bay, \$50 for cabins. After the Americans wiped out the Spanish fleet and war seemed imminent between the revolutionaries and the Americans, the cost of deck passage went up to \$20-30, and cabins were \$125. In the first four months of fighting, 5,000 Chinese went to Hong Kong, some five per cent of the entire Chinese population.⁵¹

Growth of "National Consciousness." As the effectiveness of social institutions declined along with Spanish power in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the Chinese were thrown increasingly on their own resources. Broadly based organization developed within the Chinese community to perform new functions for its residents, where before only the secret societies and clan or commercial groups had functioned. Community-wide charitable projects were begun; later a Chinese cemetery and hospital were built to fill needs the larger community was either unable or unwilling to fill for the Spanish were increasingly unable to protect them, drove the Chinese to think more of protecting themselves. As the sense of what Wickberg calls "national consciousness" developed (as opposed to nationalism directed toward China) within the community, it was paralleled by a growing sense of "Chineseness." Many Chinese, as we have seen, sent their mestizo children to China to be educated, and there was a growing tendency to think of China as a homeland.

The Chinese of Manila came to look to the Ch'ing administration for protection, requesting periodically in the last two decades of the century that a consulate be established or that gunboats be sent for their protection. Community leaders developed political relations with the Ch'ing, and when the outbreak of the revolution in 1896 brought an increase in anti-Chinese incidents, the question arose again. China asked that Great Britain be made agent for the Philippine Chinese; the Spanish agreed. The British then negotiated with the Spanish or revolutionaries for redress of Chinese complaints. After the Americans entered the picture, the Chinese communicated directly with Washington. When fighting began in February, 1899, the Chinese government asked the Americans for protection for Chinese in the Philippines; later it interceded on behalf of a shipload of Chinese from Amoy who had run afoul of the exclusion laws hastily imposed by the military administration.⁵² The revolution served to speed and consolidate the significa-

⁵¹ Wickberg, *The Chinese*, p. 119; Foreman, pp. 518, 575, 585; *Report II, Testimony of William A. Daland*.

⁵² *Correspondence*, Vol. II, pp. 901, 1073.

tion and identification with China that had begun in the latter part of the century.⁵³

DISRUPTION IN BUSINESS

As in most wars, there were times and places during the revolution at which business continued as usual, or perhaps even better than usual. Despite the fears of some foreign officials, trade in Manila continued in full swing in the early month of the war, through the end of 1896. During their short interregnum control of the port, the revolutionaries were restrained from interfering with trade by the considerable duties they collected; the same was true in Iloilo, where direct trade continued with Singapore and the China coast, as well as Manila, from where ships were also sent to the nearby ports. In much of this trade the Chinese, as brokers and distributors on all levels, participated. The disruption of coastwise trade by the war distorted demand in some areas, a situation which a Chinese merchant with substantial stock or good connections would be in good position to take advantage of. Another sort of trader in a good position to seize such opportunity was the smuggler; he was often Chinese. The inflation that came with the war must have affected a wide range of commodities; the price of an *arroba* of *vino del piez*, the wine made from the sap of the nipa palm, went from about 60 cents before the war to \$1.87 later; distilling *vino del piez* was an activity dominated by the Chinese.⁵⁴ Such effects of the war were felt nowhere more strongly than in the rice industry, which Chinese also dominated. The disruption of shipping and the distorted demand made trade in rice, the major staple of the Philippine diet, an area of vast opportunity. Chinese rice traders, already strongly placed in the business, were able to collect export products and deliver rice throughout the Philippines, even under wartime conditions; fortunes were made between 1896 and 1902, and the Chinese probably emerged even more dominant in the rice trader than before.⁵⁵

As we have seen, however, the disruptive effects of the war on trade, and especially on those Chinese participating in it, were not limited to the disruption of supplies and the distortion of demand. Revolutionaries looted and destroyed Chinese businesses; bandits robbed them and threatened their owners. Large merchants and the wealthy were made victims of extortion; small merchants, trekking through the interior with their goods on their backs, disappeared forever. Many Chinese, including some who formed vital links in the highly articulated

⁵³ Except where noted the discussion above of the growth of "national consciousness" is based upon Wickberg, *The Chinese*, pp. 147, 168, 203-204, 232.

⁵⁴ Foreman, p. 526; Otis, p. 117; *Facts*, Vol. I, No. 5, July 1, 1901, pp. 17-19; *Facts*, Vol. I, No. 8, Aug. 15, 1901, p. 33; *Report* II, p. 271; Frederic H. Sawyer, *The Inhabitants of the Philippines*, (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, and Company, Ltd., 1900), p. 161.

⁵⁵ Wickberg, *The Chinese*, p. 103.

Chinese commercial operations, fled to Manila or left the country. Many businesses were affected by the absence of clientele or labor: the opium business disintegrated in the two years before the Americans put an end to it entirely; Chinese-run iron mines in Bulacan closed down.⁵⁶ On the basis of the limited but suggestive specific evidence available, Wickberg concludes, “. . . it is likely that the Philippine revolution caused a breakdown of many of the economic networks built up by the Philippine Chinese, systems which had to be rebuilt after order was restored.”⁵⁷

THE CHINESE AND THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

The Chinese for the most part had good reason to welcome the American regime. Among the first actions of the Americans was the suspension of the bulk of the special taxes the Spanish had relied on for revenue, including a special tax on Chinese.⁵⁸ The gradual re-establishment of order made it possible to begin reconstructing the commercial life of the country and their own mechanisms of participation in it. The American philosophy of government, quite different from that of the Spaniards, created an approximation of free-enterprise equality in the economy that gave free rein to the Chinese skills and energies. The need for bribery was reduced by such measures as open bidding on contracts; the establishment of a civil service reduced the role of personal relations in securing protection and other services. Probably no other element in the Islands has profited more directly [than the Chinese] from the changes that have been wrought there since 1898,” Hayden concluded,⁵⁹ more than four decades later.

Nevertheless, American policy did not welcome the Chinese. When the Americans occupied Manila three months after the Battle of Manila Bay, Chinese who had left the country began returning. General Otis, probably influenced by the American experience on the West Coast and the resulting exclusion laws a few decades before, and perhaps by the sentiments of American businessmen in the Philippines, applied the United States law against Chinese immigration a month later. The Chinese consul in Hong Kong was notified that only Chinese who could prove previous residence in the Philippines would be admitted. The only immigrants to be admitted were teachers, students, merchants, Chinese officials, or “travelers for curiosity or pleasure;” registration procedures for visitors and immigrants, always lax under the Spanish, were to be tightened.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ *Report II*, p. 272.

⁵⁷ Wickberg, *The Chinese*, p. 123.

⁵⁸ Otis, appendix Q, p. 2.

⁵⁹ Joseph Ralston Hayden, *The Philippines, A Study in National Development*, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1942), p. 695.

⁶⁰ Elliott, pp. 438-439; Foreman, p. 622; *Correspondence*, Vol. II, pp. 791, 1074; Otis, pp. 24, 54-56.

The "Chinese question" was one of the central issues for the Philippine Commission, which arrived in late 1899 to prepare for the post-war period. The Commission heard witnesses who for the most part advocated exclusion of the Chinese. In 1902 Congress extended the United States law to cover the Philippines, continuing the policy of exclusion General Otis had initiated earlier under military authority.

The effects of the American exclusion policies are not clear. From 1889 and 1893, records of Chinese arrivals and departures showed an excess of 36,250 arrivals. From 1899 to 1903, American records showed an increase of only 8,624.⁶¹ The first census under American occupation found 40,000 Chinese in the Philippines in 1903, a very large decrease from the 100,000 generally accepted as the Chinese population before the war,⁶² though perhaps acceptable as accurate in view of the exodus of each new generation into the mestizo-Filipino group, as well as the flight inspired by the revolution. In any case, by 1909 the Chinese population was 120,000, an increase whatever its size, probably due primarily to illegal entry through Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago in the south and the tip of Luzon in the north.⁶³

Summary

The revolution in the Philippines came at a decisive time in the history of the Philippine Chinese. The Chinese, when the revolution came, were simultaneously moving toward a degree of economic success unmatched by any they had achieved before and experiencing a social isolation and prejudice of a new kind from the society within which they lived. They compensated for this isolation by developing social mechanisms of protection and a sense of their special identity as Chinese, but in the process they held themselves apart from the rising sentiment of nationalism and the political ideas, with their roots in the West, that fuelled the new century's first popular revolution in the East.

Their participation in the revolution itself reflected these developments. Unlike the *mestizos*, whose growing economic and cultural identification with the native Filipino put them often on the side of the revolution, the Chinese, increasingly conscious of an identity that was essentially alien to the Philippines, were seen increasingly as alien by Filipinos. And as "aliens," they began to feel violent expressions of the resentment that was an element, though not a crucial one, of the new self-conscious Filipino political and cultural identity. Thus their participation in the revolution was characteristic of their separateness; though there were exceptions, the Chinese were politically neutral. Their participation in the revolution was an extension of their partici-

⁶¹ Purcell, p. 621.

⁶² Wickberg, "The Chinese Mestizo," p. 90; *Report II*, p. 442.

⁶³ Purcell, p. 625.

pation in the life of the Philippines, as an essential and ubiquitous element in economic and commercial activities.

The new economic atmosphere created by the Americans, even while the war continued, proved particularly congenial to the Chinese, who recovered quickly from the deprivations of war and reestablished their disproportionate influence in the commerce of the Philippines. In spite of the restrictions on immigration set up by the Americans, the Chinese community grew and prospered. They benefited by the change from a paternalistic and personalistic government to the more universalistic administration of the Americans, which reduced the need for bribery and personal connection and provided new economic links with the United States that spurred the economy.

It is, of course, impossible to say what might have happened to the Chinese and the Chinese mestizos without the revolution; perhaps the same outcome would have proceeded more slowly from a more placid development of the Philippines. The revolution accelerated a process that had already begun, the Philippine Chinese becoming more Chinese, the Philippine Chinese mestizo becoming a Filipino, until today, as Purcell says, ". . . the Filipino politician who finds himself impelled to declare that 'something must be done about the Chinese' is very likely to proclaim by his eyes and by the bone structure of his face that one or more of his ancestors was Chinese."⁶⁴

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⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 634.

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