

with death, drowned in blood, every cry of pain, and misdeeds after misdeeds were committed.

The spirit of the people didn't allow itself to be thus intimidated, and though it had been awakened in a few hearts only, its flame, however, was spreading surely and fiercely thanks to the abuses and stupid tricks of certain classes to destroy noble and generous sentiments. Thus, when a flame puts on fire a dress, fear and confusion make it spread more and more, and every shake, every blow, is a blast of the bellows that serves to quicken it.

Undoubtedly during all this period neither were there lacking generous and noble spirits among the ruling race who stood for the laws of justice and humanity, nor mean and cowardly men among the subject people who aided in the debasement of their own natieland. But both classes were exceptions and we speak in general terms.

This is a sketch of her past. Let's understand her present. And now, what will her future be?

Will the Philippines remain as a Spanish colony, and in this case, what kind of colony? Will she become a Spanish province with or without autonomy? And in order to attain this status, what kind of sacrifices must she make?

Will she eventually separate from the mother country, Spain, to live independently, to fall into the hands of other nations or to ally herself with other neighboring powers?

It's impossible to answer these questions, for to all of them one can reply with a *yes* or *no*, according to the time one has in mind. If there's no permanent condition in nature, how much less there ought to be in the life of peoples, beings endowed with mobility and movement! So that in order to reply to these questions it's necessary to fix a limited space of time, and with reference to it, attempt to foresee future happenings.

Jose Rizal  
political & historical writings

## II

What will the Philippines be a century hence?

Will it continue to be a Spanish colony?

If this question had been asked three centuries ago when, at the death of Legazpi, the Malayan Filipinos began little by little to be disillusioned, and finding the yoke burdensome, tried in vain to shake it off, without doubt the answer would have been easy. For those who were enthusiastic about the freedom of their native land, for those indomitable Kagayanes who were animated by the spirit of the Magalats, for the descendants of the heroic Gat \* Pulintang and Gat Salakab of the Province of Batangas, independence was sure; it was only a question of mutual understanding and making a determined effort. However, for one disillusioned through sad experiences who saw everywhere disagreement and disorder, apathy and brutalization in the lower classes, dismay and disunion in the upper classes, there was only one answer and this was: Stretch out the hands to the chains, lower the neck to put it under the yoke, and accept the future with the resignation of a sick man who sees the leaves falling and has a premonition of a long winter among whose snows he can discern the brink of his grave. At that time disagreement was the cause of pessimism. Three centuries passed, the neck was getting accustomed to the yoke, and every new generation, born in chains, adapted itself better each time to the new conditions.

Well now, is the Philippines in the same condition as three centuries ago?

To the Spanish liberals the moral condition of the Philippines remains the same, that is, the Filipino Indios have not advanced. To the friars and their henchmen the people have been redeemed from savagery, that is, they

\* Gat was a Tagalog title prefixed to the name of a man who belonged to the aristocracy.

have progressed. To many Filipinos, their moral, their spirit, and their customs have degenerated, as all the good qualities of a people degenerate when they fall into slavery, that is, when they have gone backward.

Setting aside this appraisal in order not to depart from our objective, we are going to draw a brief parallel between the political situation then and that of the present to find out whether what was not possible at that time will now be possible or vice versa.

Let us discard whatever adherence the Filipinos might have to Spain. Let us suppose for a moment that between the two peoples there exist only hatred and suspicion, as Spanish writers allege. Let us admit the premises cackled by many that three centuries of Spanish domination have not succeeded to make the seed of affection or gratitude germinate in the heart of the Indio, and let us see if the Spanish cause has gained ground or not in the Archipelago.

Formerly, defending the Spanish standard in the Islands was a handful of soldiers, three or five hundred at most, many of whom were engaged in commerce and were scattered not only in the Archipelago but also in the neighboring countries, busy with the wars against the Muslims of the South, the English, and Dutch and incessantly disturbed by the Japanese. Chinese, and by this or that province or tribe at home. At that time the communication between Mexico and Spain was slow, infrequent, and difficult; frequent and violent were the disturbances among the powers that ruled the Archipelago; the treasury was almost always empty, the life of the colonizers depending on one fragile ship, the carrier of Chinese trade; at that time the seas in those regions were infested with pirates, all enemies of the name Spaniard, the navy defending this being an improvised one, manned very often by untrained soldiers of fortune, if not by foreigners and enemies, as was

the armada of Gómez Perez Dasmariñas,\* frustrated and captured by the Chinese rowers who assassinated him, putting an end to all his plans and ambitions. Nevertheless, despite such misfortune, the Spanish standard has remained aloft for more than three centuries and its power, though diminished, continues to govern the destinies of the Philippine Archipelago.

On the other hand the present situation seems to be rosy and golden, we would say, a beautiful morning compared with the tempestuous and agitated night of the past. Now the material forces of the Spanish government have trebled; relatively the navy has improved; the civil as well as the military branches are better organized; the communication with the Metropolis is quicker and more dependable; she no longer has enemies outside; her possession is assured; and the subject country apparently has less spirit, less aspiration for independence, a word that seems almost incomprehensible to her; at first glance everything then augurs another three centuries at least of peaceful domination and tranquil lordship.

However, over these material considerations soar invisible others of a moral character, much more transcendental and cogent.

The peoples of the Orient in general and the Malaysians in particular are notable for their sensitiveness; in them predominates a nice sensibility of feeling. Even today, despite the contact with Western nations, whose ideals are distinct from theirs, we see the Malayan Filipinos sacrifice everything, liberty, comfort, welfare, name, on the altar of an aspiration, of a vanity, be it religious, scientific, or of any other character whatsoever, but at the slightest injury to his *amour propre*, he forgets all his sacrifices and he never forgets the offence he believed he had received.

\*Governor general of the Philippines (1590-1593), killed while asleep by Chinese rowers of the galley on which he was embarked during his expedition to the Moluccas in 1593.

poison him to thwart his growth, and at his slightest protest, they become furious! The old semblance of justice, the holy *residencia*, has been abandoned. The chaos begins in the conscience. The affection shown to a governor general like La Torre becomes a crime under the administration of his successor and it's enough for a citizen to lose his liberty and his home. If the order of a chief is obeyed, as in the recent question of the admission of corpses in churches, that is sufficient cause later to annoy and persecute by all means possible the obedient subject. Duties, taxes, and contributions increase without any corresponding increase in rights, privileges, and liberties or an assurance of the continuation of the few existing ones. A regime of continuous terrorism and anguish stirs up the minds of men, a regime worse than an era of disturbances, for the fears that the imagination creates are generally greater than the real ones. The country is poor; it is going through a great financial crisis, and everybody points with their fingers to the persons who are causing the evil, and yet no one dares to lay their hands on them!

It is true that the Penal Code, like a drop of balsam on so much bitterness, has been promulgated; but of what use are all the codes in the world if because of confidential reports, trivial motives, anonymous traitors, any respectable citizen is banished, is exiled, without any trial? Of what use is that Penal Code, of what use is life, if there are no security of the home, faith in justice, and confidence in the tranquility of conscience? Of what use are all that scaffolding of names and all that pile of articles, if the cowardly accusation of a traitor can influence the timorous ears of the supreme autocrat more than all the cries of justice?

If this state of things continues; what will the Philippines be a century hence?

The storage batteries are charging little by little, and if the prudence of the government does not provide an outlet

for the complaints that are accumulating, it's possible that one day the spark would fly out. This is not the place to speak of the success that such an unfortunate conflict might have; it depends upon fate, upon arms, and on a million circumstances that men cannot foresee; but even if all the advantages were on the side of the government and consequently, the probabilities of victory, it would be a Pyrrhic victory, and a government should not want that.

If those who guide the destinies of the Philippines should persist in their refusal to grant reforms, in making the country retrogress, in going to the extreme in its rigorous repression of the classes that suffer and think, they will succeed in making them gamble away the miseries of an insecure life, full of privations and bitterness, for the hope of obtaining something uncertain. What would be lost in the struggle? Almost nothing. The life of large discontented classes offers no great attraction that it should be preferred to a glorious death. Suicide can well be attempted; but afterwards? Would there not remain a stream of blood between victors and vanquished, and could not the latter with time and experience become equal in strength, as they are already numerically superior to their rulers? Who says no? All the petty insurrections that had broken out in the Philippines had been the work of a few fanatics and discontented military men who, in order to attain their ends, had to resort to deceit and trickery or avail themselves of the subordination of their subalterns. Thus they all fell. None of the insurrections was popular in character nor based on the necessity of the whole nation nor did it struggle for the laws of humanity or of justice. Thus the insurrections did not leave behind them indelible mementos; on the contrary, the people, their wounds healed, realizing that they have been deceived, applauded the downfall of those who had disturbed their peace! But, if the movement springs from the people themselves and adopts for its cause their sufferings?

Therefore, if the prudence and wise reforms of our ministers do not find competent and determined interpreters among the rulers beyond the seas and faithful continuators in those called upon by the frequent political crises to occupy so sensitive a post; if the complaints and needs of the Filipino people are eternally to be answered with *the petition is denied*, inspired by the classes that thrive on the backwardness of the subject; if all just claims are disregarded and considered subversive tendencies, denying to the country representation in the Cortes and the right to protest against all kinds of abuses which escape the snare of the laws; and if finally the system so effective in alienating the people's goodwill, spurring their apathy by means of insults and ingratitude, will be continued, we can assure that within a few years the present state of things will be modified completely and inevitably. Today there is a factor which did not exist before. The national spirit has awakened, and a common misfortune and a common abasement have united all the inhabitants of the Islands. It counts on a large enlightened class within and without the Archipelago, a class created and augmented more and more by the stupidities of certain rulers who compel the inhabitants to expatriate themselves, to seek education abroad—a class that perseveres and struggles thanks to the official provocations and the system of persecution. This class whose number is increasing progressively is in constant communication with the rest of the Islands, and if today it constitutes the brains of the country, within a few years it will constitute its entire nervous system and demonstrate its existence in all its acts.

Well now, in order to block the road to progress of a people, the government counts on various means: Brutalization of the masses through a caste loyal to the government, aristocratic as in the Dutch colonies, or theocratic as in the Philippines; the impoverishment of the country;

the gradual destruction of its inhabitants; and the fostering of the enmity between the races.

The brutalization of the Malayan Filipinos has been shown to be impossible. Despite the black plague of friars in whose hands is the education of the youth, who waste miserably years and years in the classrooms, coming out of them tired, fatigued, and disgusted with books despite the censorship that wants to close all roads to progress; despite all the pulpits, confessionals, books novenae that inculcate hatred of all knowledge, not only scientific but even of the Castilian language; despite all that system, organized, perfected, and followed with tenacity by those who wish to keep the Islands in holy ignorance; there are Filipino writers, free thinkers, historians, chemists, physicians, artists, jurists, etc. Enlightenment is spreading and its persecution encourages it. No the divine flame of thought is inextinguishable among the Filipino people, and in some way or another it has to shine and make itself known. It is not possible to brutalize the inhabitants of the Philippines!

Can poverty arrest their development?

Perhaps, but it is a very dangerous measure. Experience shows us everywhere and above all in the Philippines that the well-to-do classes have always been the partisans of peace and order, because they live relatively better and might lose in case of civil disturbances. Wealth brings with it refinement and the spirit of preservation, while poverty inspires adventurous ideas, the desire to change things little attachment to life, and the like. Machiavelli himself finds dangerous this method of subjecting a people, for he observes that the loss of well-being raises more tenacious enemies than the loss of life. Moreover, when there are wealth and abundance, there is less discontent, there are less complaints, and the government, richer, has also more means to support itself. On the other hand, a poor country

is like a house where poverty exists; and moreover, of what use has the Metropolis of an emaciated and poor colony?

Neither is it possible to destroy gradually the entire population. The Filipino race, like all the Malayans, does not succumb to the foreigner as do the aborigines of Australia, the Polynesians, and Indians of the New World. Despite the numerous wars that the Filipinos had engaged in, despite the epidemics that visit them periodically, their number has trebled, like the Malayans of Java and the Moluccas. The Filipinos accept civilization and maintain contact with all peoples, and can live in all climes. Alcohol, the poison that exterminates the natives of the islands in the Pacific, has no sway in the Philippines; on the contrary, it seems that the Filipinos have become more sober, if their present condition is compared with that described by the old historians. The little wars with the inhabitants of the South consume only the soldiers, people whose loyalty to the Spanish flag, far from making them a danger, makes them precisely one of its strongest supports.

There remains the fostering of hostility between the provinces themselves.

This was possible before when communication between the islands was difficult and infrequent, when there were no steamships or telegraph, when the different provinces had their own regiments, and some of them were flattered by the grant of privileges and honors and some were supported against the stronger ones. But now that these privileges have been withdrawn, the regiments have been rearranged because of distrust, the people go from one island to another, naturally communication and exchange of ideas have increased, and realizing that they are all menaced with the same danger and their common sentiments are hurt, they become friends and they unite. It is true that their union is not as yet complete, but the measures of good government, the deportations, the oppression suffered by citizens in their towns, the mobility of government offi-

cial, the scarcity of schools, which brings together the youth of all the islands, who thus get to know each other—all these lead to national unity. The trips to Europe contribute also not a little towards unity, for abroad persons from the most distant provinces, from the sailors to the wealthy businessmen, seal their patriotic sentiments, and at the sight of modern liberties and the remembrance of their country's misfortunes they embrace and call themselves brothers.

In short, then, the advancement and moral progress of the Philippines is inevitable; it is fated.

The Islands cannot remain in their present condition without petitioning the Metropolis for more liberties. *Mutatis, mutandis*. (With the necessary changes.) To new men, a new social status.

To wish them to remain in their swaddling clothes is to risk that the so-called infant turn against his nurse and flee, tearing away the old rags that confine him.

The Philippines, then, either will remain under Spain but with more rights and freedom, or will declare herself independent after staining herself and the Mother Country with her own blood.

As no one should wish or hope for such an unfortunate rupture of relations, which would be bad for all and should only be the last argument in a most desperate case, let us examine the forms of peaceful evolution under which the Islands could remain under the Spanish flag without injuring in the least the rights, interests, or dignity of both countries.

### III

If the Philippines has to remain under Spanish rule, she must be transformed politically as demanded by the course of her historical evolution and the needs of her inhabitants. We have proven this in the previous article.

For this reason, the colonizing powers should be endowed with immense prudence and exquisite tact; and the fact that the government of the colonies in general and the ministry of the colonies in particular are considered schools for apprenticeship contribute notably towards the fulfilment of the great law that colonies declare themselves independent sooner or later.

Thus from that precipice peoples hurl themselves headlong while they bathe in blood and are soaked in gall and tears. If the colony has vitality, it learns to fight and improve itself in the struggle, while the Mother Country, whose survival in the colony depends on the peacefulness and submission of the subjects, weakens each time, and though she makes heroic efforts, at last, as her defenders are inferior in number and she has only a fictitious life, she ends by dying. She is like a rich sybarite who, accustomed to be served by numerous servants who work and plant for him, the day when his slaves refuse to obey him, as he cannot live by himself, has to die.

Vengeance, injustice, and distrust on one hand and on the other the sentiment of patriotism and of liberty, which will be awakened by these continuous struggles, insurrections, and uprisings, will end by spreading the movement and one of the two peoples has to succumb. The laxness will be brief since it would be equivalent to a much more cruel slavery than death for the people and to a loss of prestige disgraceful to the ruler. One of the two peoples has to succumb.

Spain, on account of the size of her population, the condition of her army and navy, her distance from the Islands, her little knowledge of the colony, and for fighting against a people whose love and goodwill have been alienated, has by force to yield, if she does not wish to risk, not only her other possessions and her future in Africa, but also her own independence in Europe. All this at the cost of much blood, many crimes, after mortal combats, assassinations,

conflagration, executions, hunger, destitution, and so forth. The Spaniard is brave and patriotic and sacrifices everything in favorable moments for the good of the Motherland; he has the boldness and determination of his bull. The Filipino does not love his country less, and though he is more calm, peaceful, and not easily excited, once started, he does not stop, and for him every fight means the death of one of the fighters; he preserves all the meekness and all the tenacity and fury of the carabao. Climate influences equally bipeds and quadrupeds.

The terrible lessons and the harsh teachings that these strifes have given the Filipinos have served to improve and strengthen his morale. Spain of the XV century was not the Spain of the VIII century. With their harsh experience, instead of engaging in the internal strife of some islands with others, as it is generally feared, the Filipinos will stretch out their hands mutually, like the ship-wrecked when they reach an island after a dreadful stormy night. Let them not say that what happened to the American republics will happen to us. These won their independence easily and their peoples were animated by a spirit different from that of the Filipinos. Besides, the danger of falling again into the hands of other powers, of the English or the Germans, for example, will compel them to be sensible and prudent. The absence of the preponderance of one race over the others will dissuade them from entertaining the mad ambition to dominate; and as the tendency of oppressed countries, once they have shaken off the foreign yoke, is to adopt a freer government, like a lad who comes out of school, like the oscillation of the pendulum, by the law of reaction, the Islands will adopt probably a federal republic . . .

If the Philippines obtain her independence at the end of heroic and tenacious struggles, she can be sure that neither England nor France, and less Holland, will dare to pick up what Spain has not been able to keep. Africa,

within a few years, will completely absorb the attention of the Europeans, and there is no sensible nation that, in order to get a handful of poor and war-stricken islands, would neglect the immense territory that the Black Continent offers—virgin, unexploited, and scarcely defended. England already has enough colonies in the East and will not expose herself to lose the balance of power. She will not sacrifice her Indian Empire for the poor Philippine Archipelago; if she cherished this ambition, she would not have returned Manila in 1763;\* she would have retained any point in the Philippines to expand little by little from there. Besides, why should the merchant John Bull allow himself to be killed for the Philippines when England after all is no longer the Mistress of the Orient,—when she has Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and others? Probably England will favor Philippine independence, for an independent Philippines will open her ports to her and grant her more commercial privileges. Moreover, in the United Kingdom there is a prevailing opinion that she has already too many colonies which are detrimental to and weakens much the Metropolis.

For the same reasons Germany will not want to run a risk, because her forces would be unbalanced and a war in distant countries will endanger her position in Europe. So we see that her policy in the Pacific as well as in Africa is limited to the easy acquisition of *territories which do not belong to anybody*. Germany avoids all foreign entanglements.

France has much to do and sees more future in Tonkin and China. Besides, France is not eager to acquire colonies. She loves glory but the glory and the laurels that grow on the battlefields of Europe; the echo of the battlefields of the Far East does not satisfy her thirst for renown because it is already lusterless when it reaches her. She has besides other duties at home as well as on the Continent.

\* Rizal refers to the Treaty of Paris, 10 February 1763, ending the war between England and Spain and the British occupation of Manila.

Holland is sensible and will be contented to hold the Moluccas and Java. Sumatra offers her a better future than the Philippines, whose seas and coasts are of bad omen for the Dutch expeditions. Holland goes about cautiously in Sumatra and Borneo for fear of losing them all.

China will consider herself lucky if she succeeds in maintaining her unity and is not dismembered or divided by the European powers engaged in colonizing on the Asiatic continent.

The same happens to Japan. On her north is Russia who covets and spies on her; on her south is England who has even introduced English as an official language in her country. She is moreover under such a European diplomatic pressure that she cannot think of colonial expansion until she can get rid of it, which will not be easy to achieve. It is true she is over-populated, but Korea attracts her more than the Philippines, and it is easier to take besides.

Perhaps the great American republic with interests in the Pacific and without a share in the partition of Africa may one day think of acquiring possessions beyond the seas. It is not impossible, for example is contagious, greed and ambition being the vices of the strong, and Harrison expressed himself in this sense over the question of Samoa; but neither is the Panama Canal open nor do her states have a plethora of inhabitants, and in case she openly embarks on colonial expansion, the European powers may not leave the way open to her, as they know very well that appetite is whetted by the first morsels. North America would be a bothersome rival once she enters the field. It is more-over against her traditions.

Very probably the Philippines will defend with indescribable ardor the liberty she has bought at the cost of so much blood and sacrifice. With the new men that will spring from her bosom and the remembrance of the past, she will perhaps enter openly the wide road of progress and all will



work jointly to strengthen the Mother Country at home as well as abroad with the same enthusiasm with which a young man returns to cultivate his father's farmland so long devastated and abandoned due to the negligence of those who had alienated it. Then the mines—gold, iron, copper, lead, coal, and others—will be worked again, which will help solve the problem of poverty. Perhaps the people will revive their maritime and commercial activities for which the islanders have a natural aptitude, and free once more, like the bird that leaves his cage, like the flower that returns to the open air, she will recover her good old qualities which she is losing little by little and again become a lover of peace, gay, lively, smiling, hospitable, and fearless.

This and other things besides can happen within one hundred years more or less. But the most logical augury, the prophecy based on better probabilities can fail due to insignificant and remote reasons. An octopus which clung to Mark Anthony's ship changed the face of the world; a cross on Calvary and a Just man nailed on it changed the morality of half of mankind, and nevertheless, before Christ, how many just men did not perish iniquitously and how many crosses were not raised on that hill? The death of the Just sanctified His work or made His teaching incontrovertible. A crag on the battlefield of Waterloo buried all the glories of two luminous decades, the whole Napoleonic world, and liberated Europe. On what fortuitous circumstances will depend the destiny of the Philippines?

However, it is unwise to trust in the fortuitous; there is an imperceptible and incomprehensible logic at times in historical events. It is to be desired that peoples as well as governments adjust themselves to it.

So we repeat and we shall always repeat, while there is time, that it is better to anticipate the wishes of a people rather than to yield to force; the first wins sympathy and

love; the second, contempt and indignation. Inasmuch as it is necessary to give to six million Filipinos their rights so that they would be Spaniards in fact, let the government grant them freely and spontaneously without insulting reservations, without irritating distrust. We will not tire repeating this while there remains a spark of hope; we prefer this disagreeable task to have to say one day to the Mother Country: "Spain, we have spent our youth serving your interests in our country, we have appealed to you, we have consumed all the light of our intellect, all the ardor and enthusiasm of our heart working for the good of what was yours, entreating you for a loving glance, for a liberal policy to insure the peace of our country and your rule over these devoted but unfortunate Islands! Spain, you have remained deaf, and wrapped in your pride, you have pursued your fateful way and you have accused us of being traitors, solely because we love our country, because we tell you the truth and we hate all kinds of injustice. What do you want us to tell our unhappy country when she asks us about the result of our efforts? Have we to tell her that, as for her sake we have lost everything—youth, future, illusions, tranquility, family—as in her service we have exhausted all the resources of hope, all the disappointments of our eagerness, she takes the remainder that is useless to us, the blood of our veins, and the strength that remains in our arms? Spain! Have we to say one day to the Philippines that you are deaf to her ills and that if she wants to be saved she should redeem herself alone?"

The author wrote these articles in Spain, hence the use of "there" in referring to the Philippines.

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