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2019
BS-LM1A
History

February 04,

Readings in the Philippine

The Cry of Balintawak

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Introduction

It is undeniable that the Cry of Balintawak did happen as it sparked the Revolution against the Spanish rule yet up until today the controversy as to where and when that historical event happened remains a subject for debate.

Raging controversy

Teodoro Agoncillo emphasized the tearing of cedula of a thousand Katipuneros as the start of the nationwide Philippine Revolution.

Since the erection of a monument to the Heroes on September 03, 1911, the Cry of Balintawak was then celebrated every 26th of August.

General to the public, Balintawak has been cited as to where the Cry of Balintawak took place. Although there may have been massing of Katipuneros in Kangkong, the revolution was launched elsewhere.

Conflicting accounts

Pio Valenzuela had different versions of the Cry. In September 1896, Valenzuela stated before the Olive Court, that Katipunan meetings took place from Sunday to Tuesday or 23 to 25 August at Balintawak.

Valenzuela asserted in 1911 that the Katipunan began meeting on August 22 while the cry happened on August 23 at Aponolio Samson's house in Balintawak.

From 1928 up to 1940, Valenzuela stayed firm that the Cry of Balintawak took place on August 24, 1896 at the house of Tandang Sora in Pugad Lawin, which is situated near Pasong Tamo Road. A photograph of Gregoria de Jesus, Bonifacio's widow and other Katipunan members including Valenzuela was published in La Opinion in 1928 and 1930 and was then captioned as having been taken at the place where the Cry happened on August 24, 1896 at Pasong Tamo.

The Philippines Historical Committee, a research team identified the precise spot Pugad Lawin as part of Sitio Gulod, Banlat, Kalookan City. In 1964, the NHI (National Historical Institute) referred the place of the Cry as Tandang Sora's on August 23.

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The Pugad Lawin Marker

In 1962, Teodoro Agoncillo together with the UP Student Council placed a marker at the Pugad Lawin site, Seminary Road in Barangay Bahay Toro behind Toro Hills High School, the Quezon City General Hospital and the San Jose Seminary. According to him, the house of Juan Ramos stood there in 1896 while Melchora Aquino was situated at Pasong Tamo.

In August 1983, Pugad Lawin in Barangay Bahay Toro was inhabited by squatter colonies.

Cartographic changes

Spanish historian, Sastron, mentioned Kalookan, Balintawak, Banlat, and Pasong Tamo. Daang Malalim, Kangkong, and Pugad Lawin were not classified as barrios and even in the Spanish and American maps, only Kalookan and Balintawak were marked.

Balintawak was separately distinct from Kalookan and Diliman.

Maps issued by the government in 1956, 1987, and 1990, confirmed the existence of Bahay Toro but the Pugad Lawin was not mentioned there.

As per the government, Balintawak is no longer part of the Quezon City but has been replaced by some barangays, Barrio Banlat comprises Barangay Tandang Sora and Pasong Tamo. Bahay Toro remains intact.

Writer and linguist Sofronio Calderon, conducting research in the late 1920s on the toponym "Pugad Lawin," went through the municipal records and the Census of 1903 and 1918, could not find the name, and concluded that "Isang...pagkakamali... ang sabihing mayroong Pugad Lawin sa Kalookan." (It would be a mistake to say that there is such as Pugad Lawin in Kalookan.)

Sofronio Calderon

What can we conclude from all this?

First, that "Pugad Lawin" was never officially recognized as a place name on any Philippine map before Second World War. Second, "Pugad Lawin" appeared in historiography only from 1928, or some 32 years after the events took place. And third, the revolution was always traditionally held to have occurred in the area of Balintawak, which was distinct from Kalookan and Diliman.

Therefore, while the toponym "Pugad Lawin" is more romantic, it is more accurate to stick to the original "Cry of Balintawak."

Determining the date

The official stand of NHI is that the Cry took place on 23 August 1896. That date, however, is debatable.

The later accounts of Pio Valenzuela and Guillermo Masangkay on the tearing of cedula on 23 August are basically in agreement, but conflict with each other on the location. Valenzuela points to the house of Juan Ramos in Pugad Lawin, while Masangkay refers to Apolonio Samson's in Kangkong. Masangkay's final statement has more weight as it was corroborated by many eyewitnesses who were photographed in 1917, when the earliest 23 August marker was installed. Valenzuela's date (23 August) in his memoirs conflict with 1928 and 1930 photographs of the surveys with several Katipunan officers, published in *La Opinion*, which claim that the Cry took place on the 24th.

The turning point

What occurred during those last days of August 1896? Eyewitness accounts mention captures, escapes, recaptures, killings of Katipunan members; the interrogation of Chinese spies; the arrival of arms in Meycauyan, Bulacan; the debate with Teodoro Plata and others; the decision to go war; the shouting of slogan; tearing of cedulas; the sending of letters presidents of Sanggunian and balangay councils; the arrival of civil guard; the loss of Katipunan funds during the skirmish. All these events, and many others, constitute the beginning of nationwide revolution.

The Cry, however, must be defined as that turning point when the Filipinos finally rejected Spanish colonial dominion over the Philippine Islands, by formally constituting their own national government, and by investing a set of leaders with authority to initiate and guide the revolution towards the establishment of sovereign nation.

Where did this take place?

The introduction to the original Tagalog text of the *Biyak na Bato* Constitution states:

Ang paghiwalay ng Filipinas sa kahariang España sa patatag ng isang bayang may sariling pamamahala't kapangyarihan na pangangalang "Republika ng Filipinas" ay siyang layong inadhika niyaring Paghihimagsik na kasalukuyan, simula pa ng ika- 24 ng Agosto ng taong 1896...

The Spanish text also states:

La separacion de Filipinas de la Monarquia Española, constituyendose en Estado Independiente y soberano con Gobierno propuio, con el nombre de Repulica de Filipinas, es en su Guerra actual, iniciada en 24 de Agosto de 1896...

(The separation of the Philippines from the Spanish Monarchy, constituting an independent state and with a proper sovereign government, named the Republic of the Philippines, was the end pursued by the revolution through the present hostilities, initiated on 24 August 1896...)

These lines- in a legal document at that – are persuasive proof that in so far as the leaders of the revolution are concerned, revolution began on 24 August 1896. The document was written only one and a half years after the event and signed by over 50 Katipunan members, among them Emilio Aguinaldo , Artemio Ricarte and Valentin Diaz.

Emilio Aguinaldo's memoirs, *Mga Gunita ng Himagsikan* (1964), refer to two letters from Andres Bonifacio dated 22 and 24 August. They pinpoint the date and place of the crucial Cry meeting when the decision to attack Manila was made:

Noong ika-22 ng Agosto, 1896, ang Sangguniang Magdalo ay tumanggap ng isang lihim na sulat mula sa Supremo Andres Bonifacio, sa **Balintawak** , na nagsasaad na isamng mahalagang pulong ang kanilang idinaos sa **ika-24 ng nasabing buwan**, at lubhang kailangan na kame ay mapadala roon ng dalawang kinatawan o delegado sa ngalan ng Sanggunian. Ang pulong aniya'y itaon sa kaarawan ng kapistahan ng San Bartolome sa Malabon, Tambobong. kapagkarakang matanggap ang nasabing paanyaya, an gaming Pangulo na si G. Baldomero Aguinaldo, ay tumawag ng pulong sa tribunal ng Cavite el Viejo... Nagkaroon kami ng pag-aalinlangan sa pagpapadala roon ng aming kinatawan dahil sa kaselanang pagdararanang mga pook at totoong mahigpit at abot-abot ang panghuli ng mag Guardia Civil at Veterana sa mga naglalakad lalung-lalo na sa mag pinaghihinalaang mga mason at Katipunan. Gayon pa man ay aming hinirang at pinagkaisahang ipadalang tanging Sugo ang matapang na kapatid naming si G. Domingo Orcullo... Ang aming Sugo ay nakarating ng maluwalhati sa kanyang paroonan at nagbalik din na wala naming sakuna, **na taglay ang sulat ng Supremo na may petsang 24 ng Agosto**. Doon ay wala naming sinasabing kautusan, maliban sa patalastas na kagugulat-gulat na kanilang lulusubin ang Maynila, sa Sabado ng gabi, ika-29 ng Agosto, at ang hudyat ay ang pagpatay ng ilaw sa Luneta. Saka idinugtong pa na marami diumano ang nahuli at napatay ng Guardia Civil at Veterana sa kanyang mga kasamahan sa lugar ng Gulod ...

(On 22 August 1896, the Magdalo Council received a secret letter from Supremo Andres Bonifacio, in **Balintawak**, which stated that the Katipunan will hold an important meeting on the 24th of the said month, and that it was extremely necessary to send two representatives or delegates in the name of the said Council. The meeting would be timed to coincide with the feast day of Saint Bartolomew in Malabon, Tambobong. Upon receiving the said invitation, our President, Mr. Baldomero Aguinaldo, called a meeting at Tribunal of Cavite el Viejo...We were apprehensive about sending representatives because the areas they would have pass through were dangerous and was a fact that the Civil Guard and Veterans were arresting travelers, especially those suspected of being freemasons and members of Katipunan. Nevertheless, we agreed and nominated to send a single representative in the person of our brave brother, Mr. Domingo Orcullo... Our representative arrived safely at his destination and also returned

unharméd, **bearing a letter from the Supremo dated 24 August.** It contained no orders but the shocking announcement that the Katipunan would attack Manila at night on Saturday, 29 August, the signal for which would be the putting out of the lamps in Luneta. He added that many of his comrade had been captured and killed by the Civil Guard and Veterans in Gulod...)

The first monument to mark the Cry was erected in 1903 on Ylala Street in Tondo, in front of the house where Liga Filipina was founded. The tablet cites Andre Bonifacio as a founding member, and as "Supreme Head of the Katipunan, which gave the first battle Cry against tyranny on August 24, 1896."

The above facts render unacceptable the official stand that the turning point of the revolution was the tearing of cédulas in the "Cry of Pugad Lawin" on 23 August 1896, in the Juan Ramos's house in "Pugad Lawin" Bahay Toro, Kalookan.

The events of 17-26 August 1896 occurred closer to Balintawak than to Kalookan. Traditionally, people referred to the "Cry of Balintawak" since that barrio was a better-known reference point than Banlat.

In any case, "Pugad Lawin" is not historiographically verifiable outside of the statements of Pio Valenzuela in the 1930s and after. In Philippine Historical Association round-table discussion in February this year, a great granddaughter of Tandang Sora protested the use of toponym "Pugad Lawin" which, she said, referred to a hawk's nest on top of a tall sampaloc tree at Gulod, the highest elevated area near Balintawak. This certainly negates the NHI's premise that "Pugad Lawin" is on Seminary Road in Project 8.

What we should celebrate is the establishment of a revolutionary or the facto government that was republican in aspiration, the designation of Bonifacio as the Kataastaasang Pangulo (Supreme President), the election of the members of his cabinet ministers and Sanggunian and Balangay heads which authorized these moves met in Tandang Sora's barn near Pasong Tamo Road, in sitio Gulod, barrio Banlat then under the jurisdiction of the municipality of Kalookan. This took place at around noon of Monday, 24 August 1896.

It is clear that the so-called Cry of Pugad Lawin of 23 August is an imposition and erroneous interpretation, contrary to indisputable and numerous historical facts.

The centennial of the Cry of Balintawak should be celebrated on 24 August 1996 at the site of the barn and house of Tandang Sora in Gulod, now barangay Banlat, Quezon City.

That was when and where the Filipino nation state was born.

All our textbooks, following a resolution from the National Historical Commission, state that the spark of the Revolution started with a cry, followed by the tearing of cedula led by Andres Bonifacio in Pugad Lawin, Quezon City.

Other contenders to the historical site include Bahay Toro, Kangkong, Pasong Tamo, Banlat depending on the primary source being cited.

The date declared by the National Historical Commission as the start of the Philippine Revolution – August 23, 1896 – is but one date proposed, the others being August 20, 24, 25, and 26, 1896.

Teodoro A. Agoncillo said that Bonifacio scheduled a general assembly of the Katipunan for August 24, 1896, the Feast of San Bartolome, in Malabon. This date was chosen to enable Katipuneros to pass security checkpoints carrying their bolos because Malabon is famous for manufacturing a long-bladed weapon called “sangbartolome”.

Bonifacio and his men were in Balintawak for Kangkong on August 21, and on the afternoon of August 22 in Pugadlawin, and in the yard of Juan Ramos, son of Melchora Aquino. There they listened to Bonifacio’s speech then later on tore their cedula.

Teodoro Agoncillo cited Pio Valenzuela, a close associate of Bonifacio, as his primary source to convince the National Historical Commission to move the traditional date from August 26 to August 23 and transfer the site from Balintawak to Pugadlawin.

In Wenceslao Emilio’s five-volume compilation of historical documents, Archivo del Bibliofilo Filipino, Valenzuela’s signed testimony before Spanish interrogators dated September 1896 stated that the Cry of Balintawak was held in Balintawak on August 26, 1896 but years later, in his memoirs published after World War II, he stated that the Cry was held in Pugadlawin on August 23, 1896. Agoncillo explained that the September

1896 statement was extracted under coercion and therefore could not be considered as reliable.

Guillermo Masangkay declared in 1932 that Balintawak was the place and August 26, 1896 as the date.

In 1928, Gregoria de Jesus Nakpil, widow of Andres Bonifacio, wrote a short autobiography, entitled "Mga tala ng aking buhay", where she stated that the Cry of Balintawak took place in Pasong Tamo, a place in Caloocan, on August 25, 1896.

Julio Nakpil, the composer of Katipunan and the second husband of Gregoria de Jesus, in his handwritten notes on the Philippine Revolution in the National Library under Teodoro M. Kalaw in 1925, wrote "Bonifacio uttered the first cry of war against tyranny on August 24, 1896." He remembered that "the first cry of Balintawak was in August 26, 1896 in Kangkong, adjacent to Pasong Tamo, within the jurisdiction of Balintawak, Caloocan, within the province of Manila."

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