

Debate
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Bad History: The Cry of Pugad Lawin Philippine history is too often composed of mythic moments based on shoddy scholarship, influenced and often in service of political ideology. Today, as with many 'historical' days, is a perfect example of that. The 'traditional' narrative where the gallant Katipunero's, now revolutionaries, gathered together on August 23rd, tore up their cedula, and raised a great passionate cry for independence!... Is untrue. Unsubstantiated by period documents and reports, only found in the memories of Pio Valenzuela. A man whose infamously changeable memory is wholly unreliable for scholarly work (sans third party corroboration). The most prominent proponent of the Myth of the Cry of Pugad Lawin is, naturally, Teodoro Agoncillo. Because of the sheer adulation, bordering on hero worship, that his questionable scholarship is accorded his rendition of the Cry has been inscribed almost verbatim as truth. 'Truth' as conceived in Philippine history is usually far different from reality. To avoid getting too deep into the nuances of

historiography, suffice it to say contemporary accounts of those early days post-discovery of the Katipunan and leading up to that first defeat at the hands of the Spanish on August 26 paint a far different picture than what we know. Nick Joaquin lyrically questioned the Cry and accurately pointed out the weakness in trying to so heavily weight an event that did not have much period resonance: "One difficulty is that the participants in the event didn't know they were uttering the "Cry of Balintawak" or whatever it properly is. That phrase was coined in a time when historical subtlety was becoming fashionable...We are looking for an idea we ourselves created." That actually is the crux of the historical issue (or a contrived controversy as Soledad Borromeo-Buehler called it): The Katipuneros at the time really did not consider the act of tearing up their cedula as anything important; that is born out by the variety of dates put forth by various Katipuneros who were in attendance. The fact is cedulas were torn up, but it was not the central purpose behind the gathering by any means. The contemporary Filipino, or at least those who were trying to create a mythical and romantic Bonifacio, needed it. Instead, the far greater likelihood is that the Katipuneros in 1896 were more worried about discovery and prosecuting a revolution against Mother Spain. August 19 is when we note the formal public discovery of the Katipunan, though

there is evidence that they were privately known by the Spanish government prior. Bonifacio had already begun the process of organizing the various factions and leaders of the Katipunan together to once and for all decide whether to raise a revolt or not. Their discovery accelerated that process, so much so that the Katipunan was not quite prepared. The relative disorder, and that first loss to the Spanish on August 26, speak to that. As an aside, the historical shifting of importance away from that first loss to the fictional Cry of Pugad Lawin, might very well be purposeful on the part of some of our historians. A way to cover up certain obvious failures; to replace them with moments of romantic grandeur. The reliance of Agoncillo on Valenzuela's testimony is shoddy scholarship. Especially since Valenzuela's testimony is directly contradicted by revolutionaries, like Guillermo Masangkay, who were in attendance at the time. The days of August 22-26 were comprised of meetings, discussions, and decisions on how to move forward. Most curiously, Masangkay remembers Valenzuela being one of the members of the Katipunan who voted against going to war with Spain. A revelation that gives some insights into the later motivations of Valenzuela in reconstructing the events of the Katipunan. Be that as it may, three Katipuneros (Masangkay, Vicente Samson, and Francisco Carreon) actually remember cedula's being torn on August 26 in Kangkong, after a successful vote to go to war. It was later that same day that the Katipunan troops were defeated in a brief skirmish with Spanish troops. Borromeo-Buehler, in her exhaustive work "The Cry of Balintawak" sums it up nicely: "The so-called 'Cry of Pugad Lawin' is an invention. This conclusion is based on the total absence of any contemporary documentation on 'Pugad Lawin'...There is ample documentation on the tearing of cedillas and the initial encounter of the revolution. The chronology of those events therefore no longer hinges on the testimony of just one of the eyewitnesses." And that really is the sad part of this whole affair. By completely manufacturing history we have inevitably obscured the players who were involved. Very few of us remember Masangkay, even though he was one of the great Katipuneros.

Very few of us remember the bravery of those days and the resolve shown in marching out to meet the Spanish in combat.

Instead we are enthralled with a fictitious event with little historical resonance. By distilling the entirety of the Katipunan to a simple tearing of the cedula we inevitably forget the magnitude of their accomplishments and efforts. They remained hidden from the Spanish authorities for almost four years, all the while they effectively disseminated revolutionary thought and ideas.

Our understanding of history, and those seminal events in 1896, should not be based on some fictionalized account designed to give us a Hollywood moment; that ignores the complexities of the era, and trials and tribulations, and difficult decisions those men faced. In fact, by moving the tearing of the cedula back to its historically accurate position (August 26th) we get a sequence of events far more realistic, and even more resonant. Impassioned debate in the face of discovery, pleas for bravery and calls for courage, a final decision to strike against the Spanish, a simple revolutionary speech, the tearing up of the cedula, and a march to war. Stripping away Bad History eventually uncovers great history.

The Katipunan Ideology " A nation is born into freedom on the day when such a people, moulded into a nation by a process of cultural evolution and sense of oneness born of common struggle and suffering, announces to the world that it asserts its natural right to liberty and is ready to defend it with blood, life, and honor." When President Diosdado Macapagal signed Proclamation No. 28 in 1962 declaring June 12 as Independence Day, (replacing July 4) public attention suddenly shifted to the significance of the 1896 revolution. This revolution was not spontaneous; rather, the high point of a long struggle, punctuated by numerous but unsuccessful uprisings, until national consciousness was fully awakened by the public execution of Filipino priests, Gomes, Burgos and Zamora (Gomburza) in the aftermath of the Cavite Mutiny of 1872. Believed to be innocent, their death caused intense hatred of the Spanish friars and the emergence of Filipino activists like Marcelo del Pilar and Graciano Lopez Jaena,

whose work continued even as they fled to Spain to escape persecution. From Madrid was waged a pro-Filipino campaign for colonial reforms until worsening social conditions and unabated oppression bred a separatist movement that was the Katipunan. The Katipunan was for a long time, best remembered by school children in Gregorio F. Zaide's history textbook, for the so-called August 26, 1896 Cry of Balintawak—made momentous and dramatic by the mass tearing of cedula personal. Other historians like Teodoro Agoncillo, later challenged this claim (his version was August 23, 1896 at Pugad Lawin), and soon, as other accounts surfaced, the date and place of its actual occurrence became a national controversy. But the Katipunan was not just a cry for freedom. It was a national aspiration made flesh. It caught the passion of ordinary people, willing to stake their lives and overcome the dread of reprisals; believing that worse fate awaited their families if they did not stand up to face their oppressors. It was a secret society that had a formal hierarchy composed of a supreme council and local councils, and a ritual of membership often mistaken for Masonry. Moreover, it had an ideology embodied in its *Ang Kartilya ng Katipunan*, authored by Emilio Jacinto. Picture It was Andres Bonifacio who first formulated a code of conduct and to whom the Dekalogo ng Katipunan was attributed. But it was not published; instead, it was said that upon reading the Kartilya drafted by Jacinto, Bonifacio decided that it was superior to his Dekalogo, and adopted it as the official primer of the Katipunan. Emilio Jacinto, then became the chief theoretician and adviser of Bonifacio and later earned for him the title Brains of the Katipunan. Joining the Katipunan in 1894, he was the youngest member and nicknamed, according to historian Dr Isagani R. Medina

(1992), Emiliong Bata to distinguish him from Emiliong Matanda, or Emilio Aguinaldo. The Dekalogo had only ten points and dealt primarily with one's duties to God, country, family, neighbor, the Katipunan and himself. It spoke of honor, charity and self-sacrifice but warned of penalty to the traitor and disobedient. The Kartilya was longer, more literary and philosophical. It presented its concept of virtuous living as lessons for self reflection, rather than as direct prescriptions. It asserted that it was the internal, not the external qualifications that make human greatness. In the third statement, Jacinto defined true piety (kabanalan) as charity, love for one another, and actions, deeds and speech guided by judicious reasons ("talagang katuiran", literally, true reason). Written more than a hundred years ago at a time when the idea of nationhood was still a dream, **the Kartilya reflected a vision, "bright sun of freedom in the islands, spreading its light upon brothers and a race united."** The Kartilya can be better appreciated in its original Tagalog form because its essence was expressed using Tagalog syntax. It should also be appreciated within the context of the social and political environment of that colonial era, amid local traditions, spiritual beliefs, family concepts and ethnic diversity. In an article of the quarterly Sulyap Kultura (1996, National Commission for Culture and the Arts,) author Ed Aurelio Reyes cited Virgilio S. Almario, (2003 national artist for literature) from the latter's book, Panitikan ng Rebolusyong 1896. According to Reyes, Almario described three distinct sources of the Katipunan's philosophy or ideology: the Propaganda Movement, the great wealth of pre-colonial indigenous folklore, and the protest Christianity represented by the protest "Pasyon" and such proto-nationalist movements as Hermano Pule's (Apolinario de la Cruz, 1815-1841)

Cofraida de San Jose and the kapatiran-type (brotherhood) community organization around Mt Banahaw, San Cristobal and Makiling. The reference sources of the Kartilya included the French Revolution's "Rights of Man and the Citizen" (predecessor of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights), which Jose Rizal reportedly translated into "Mga Karapatan ng Tawo (Tao)" and was circulated in the Philippines shortly before the founding of the Katipunan. Other sources included passages from the protest "Pasyon," and elements from indigenous practices and bonds of kinship. Instead of simply reproducing Karapatan ng Tawo, Jacinto and Bonifacio adapted and changed it in order that it may be implanted more deeply into the minds and hearts of Katipunan followers.

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- Let's talk about our National History. I know many of you has no detailed knowledge about this so I did some research para naman medyo maka relate tayo ngayong araw na to... baka sakali... makita natin ang kahalagahan ng mga ipinaglaban nya... na sana lang ay hindi nga nasayang ang mga iyon... yung reference books ko ay hinalukay ko pa sa Baul ng tatay ko

Today is November 30, we are commemorating one of the important person in the Philippine history, Andres Bonifacio.

Who is the guy? (He's my Hero)

Bonifacio came out after the failure of the reform movement headed by Rizal and M. Del Pilar. This paved way for a more radical and more active lines.

He formed the Katipunan, a secret society which was founded at Tondo Manila, in a house on Azcarraga street then numbered 314, on July 7, 1892, the same date on which Rizal was decreed to be banished to Dapitan.

The secret society was popularly known as KKK which means "kataastaasan Kagalang-galangang Katipunan ng mga anak ng Bayan" (The Highest and the most respectable Association of the Son's of the People).

The two principal aims of the KKK as gathered from the writings of Bonifacio:

Unity of the Filipino people

Separation from Spain by means of Revolution

Rizal doubtless approved the first aim but refused to accept the second and this was the reason that he refused to go along with the "Katipuneros" (soldiers' of the Katipunan) and voluntarily surrendered that leads him to prison and death.

To achieve unity of the Filipinos, propaganda work must be done and this was through massive education and civic trainings of the Katipuneros. To that end, Bonifacio prepared his now well-known **Decalogue**, and Jacinto his famous "Kartilya ng Katipunan" (Primer of the Katipunan)

Here is an excerpt from the second paragraph of the Kartilya which states that;

“The object pursued by this association is great and precious: to unite in ideas and purposes all Filipinos by means of a strong oath and from union derive force with which to tear the veil that obscures intelligence and thus find the true path of Reason and Light”

The strong oath was documented and signed with the blood of the “Katipuneros” (blood compact). They swore at the Katipunan creed; To defend the oppressed, fight the oppressor even to the extent of supreme self- sacrifice.

Organization of the Katipunan

The Katipunan has 3 levels of authority:

Kataastaasang Sanggunian (The Supreme Council)
Sangguniang Bayan (The Provincial Council)
Sangguniang Barangay (Town Council)

It was founded in 1892 but Andres Bonifacio assumed the presidency in 1894

Table of Organization

President - Andres Bonifacio
Secretary - Jose Turiano Santiago
Fiscal - Emilio Jacinto
Treasurer - Vicente Molina

Executive Department (1896)

President - Andres Bonifacio

Secretary of State- Emilio Jacinto

Secretary of War - Teodoro Plata

Secretary of Justice - Briccio Pantas

Secretary of the Interior - Aguedo del Rosario

Secretary of Finance - Enrique Pacheco

Membership of the Katipunan

With Bonifacio as the Supreme leader, the society gains active followers in the provinces of Morong (Rizal), Cavite, Batangas, Laguna, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija and Tayabas. The number of Katipuneros has been estimated at 123, 000 in Manila and the surrounding provinces. Women also organized themselves into an Auxiliary of the Katipunan including the 29 relatives of the Katipuneros.

Ritual of the Katipunan

Katipunan also adopted some of the features and practices of the Masonry, such as conferring of degrees, secret ceremonies and symbolic names.

A first degree of the Katipunan was called "Katipun" meaning an associate and the sacred word was "Anak ng Bayan". A second degree member was called "Kawal", a soldier and the sacred word was "Gom-Bur-Za" which stand for Father Gomez, Burgos and Zamora. A member of the third degree was called "Bayani", a hero and the sacred word was

“Rizal”.

The symbolic name of Bonifacio was “May Pag-asa (There is hope), Emilio Aguinaldo as Magdalo and Emilio Jacinto as Pingkian.

The call to Arms

It was a lieutenant of the civil guard stationed in Pasig, who in July 5, 1896, reported in confidential writing to the Governor of Manila that persons coming from the capital and neighboring towns were enlisting men for an “unknown purpose” and that they were making recruits sign with their blood a pledge not to reveal, even under threat or death the purpose of the association and its intentions.

On August 19, 1896, the offices of the “El Diario de Manila” was forcibly searched by the “guardia civil” and lithographic stone with 2 blank receipts of the Katipunan was found including the By-Laws and other incriminating documents. This leads to multiple arrests of many suspects that ends up in their tortures and death.

The First Cry of Balintawak – The first cry of revolution

bonifacio-monument

On August 20, at the last series of meetings held in Kangkong, a barrio in Caloocan, Bonifacio and his followers plan and agreed to attack Manila on August 29, 1896. That decision marked the triumph of the

radicals under the leadership of Bonifacio and Jacinto. Resolved not to return home, the Katipuneros, as proof of their determination to break off their allegiance to Spain, tore up their “cedulas” (certificate of residence), shouting “Mabuhay ang Pilipinas!” (Long live the Philippine Republic)

That was the start of the Philippine revolution which took place in many parts of the land. Many Katipuneros had died in the battle for the sake of freedom and liberty. Bonifacio has fought for this purpose until the last breath of his life.

300 years of Bondage. Millions of Filipinos had lost their lives fighting for independence.

The Spanish is too proud to surrender to what they call idiots and stupid Filipinos. They rather surrender to Americans. And so it was done.

The history tells us who the real heroes are. ..who fought to liberate this land. It was clearly written but Bonifacio, was denied the title of a National Hero. My daughter asked me that same question. I said, maybe because Bonifacio is a radical person and must not be idolized by future generation. They want us to be meek and just pray and ask for God’s mercy. Not fight and bear the unbearable... and whoever raised his voice against the government must be silenced... legally...brutally.

The Cry of Balintawak still echoes in the wind. For every life that is wasted, for every leader who dies because of a word called “principle”. I wonder if

independence was really achieved because until this day, the Spanish styles of killings and tortures is still existing. Activists are killed. Organizations are busted. Workers are displaced. Unions are abolished.

The journey to freedom is long and hard. The price of bravery and principle is high.

The day of real freedom and independence still remains a dream...

References: History of the Philippines by Conrado Benitez

The Philippine Islands - by Dr. James A. Robertson, Blair and Robertson

>>> My dad's books from his very old collections...