

## **Filipino Press between Two Empires: *El Renacimiento*, a Newspaper with Too Much *Alma Filipina***

Glòria CANO\*

### **Abstract**

This article illustrates how important the Spanish press was in the Philippines during the last 30 years of Spanish colonial rule and the early period of American colonial administration. Using archival material from the period, it reveals how the American colonial administration complained that the newspapers in the Philippines were mainly political, a Spanish inheritance in the archipelago as many newspapers were founded in the Philippines in the 1890s of the nineteenth century after the law of press was passed in 1883. This article also emphasizes the political clout papers possessed and the threats that they posed to the new American administration. In particular, this article shows how newspapers such as *El Resumen* avoided censorship and dared to say what other parties did not. *El Resumen* was a voice for Philippine national hero Jose Rizal and what they published in "Our Wishes" were Rizal's wishes for his country. An analysis of articles in *El Resumen* demonstrates that the censorship of the press was attenuated and depended on the governor-general. Therefore, this article questions the influential argument in Philippine historiography about Spanish censorship of the press. *El Resumen* served as an example for other newspapers that were founded during the beginning of the American colonial administration such as *La Independencia* and above all *El Renacimiento*. As an organ of the Nationalist party, *El Renacimiento* came to exert real power in Manila that influenced the government. The journal waged brilliant battles, the most important from 1904 onwards in the form of public reports of abuses committed by the constabulary. In addition, in September 1906, the journal *El Renacimiento* criticized, through several articles, James A. LeRoy's statement about William H. Taft being "the best and most influential friend of the Filipinos." *El Renacimiento*, which had become a potent political force, had stated that Taft showed himself in public to be a friend of the Filipinos, while in private he considered them to be "childish." LeRoy felt annoyed with the journal and decided to write a long letter to *El Renacimiento* which was published in several supplements in January of 1907. As this article makes clear, LeRoy used his defense of Taft as an excuse to attack the enemies of American rule. In sum, *El Renacimiento* suffered real press censorship and was forced to close in 1908, leading to the demise of publications in the Spanish language.

**Keywords:** Spanish press, Filipino press, censorship of the press, freedom of the press,  
*El Resumen*, *La Solidaridad*, *El Renacimiento*

---

\* Departament d'Humanitats, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Edificio Jaume I (Campus de la Ciutadella), Ramon Trias Fargas, 25-27, 08005 Barcelona, Spain  
e-mail: gloria.cano@upf.edu

El águila, simbolizando libertad y fuerza, es el ave que ha encontrado más adeptos. Y los hombres, colectivos e individualmente han querido copiar e imitar el ave más rapaz, para triunfar en el saqueo de sus semejantes.

The eagle, symbolizing liberty and strength, is the bird that has found the most admirers. And men, collectively and individually, have ever desired to copy and imitate this most rapacious of birds in order to triumph in the plundering of their fellowmen.

“Birds of Prey” [*El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino Independiente* 30 October 1908]

## Introduction

In 1930 Joseph Ralston Hayden, in his introduction to the reissue of Dean C. Worcester's book *The Philippines Past and Present*, categorically stated that newspapers were primarily political organs, not business institutions.<sup>1)</sup> Hayden considered that their chief business was not the sale of news and advertising, but rather politics:

Editors were usually politicians, and there were no standards, either journalistic or political, to prevent them from using their news and editorial columns in whatever way seemed best calculated to advance their personal or group interests. [Worcester 1930: 52]

Hayden, like W. Cameron Forbes, believed this political trend of Filipino newspapers was due mainly to U. S. magnanimity that had duly brought freedom of the press and speech to the archipelago.<sup>2)</sup> This newfound freedom apparently differed from, or contrasted with, the rigid control and censorship perceived to be prevalent under Spanish colonial rule. As will be explored in this article, the binary opposition between U. S. freedom of press and speech and Spanish censorship is a mythogenesis. In fact, as this article will make clear, control of public opinion was more rigid under U. S. colonial rule than under the rule of the Spanish. Certainly there was Spanish censorship, but this was attenuated depending on the governor-general. In fact, as will be developed in the first section of this article, in 1857 the Spanish Administration ordered the *Reglamento de Asuntos de Imprenta* (Rules of Printing Matters). This text was in

---

1) Joseph Ralston Hayden (1887–1945) was a professor of political science, a specialist in Philippine politics and government at the University of Michigan. He also was vice governor of the Philippines in the 1930s. He wrote a bibliographical sketch and four additional chapters in the new edition of Dean C. Worcester's *The Philippines Past and Present* [1930]; he also wrote the book *The Philippines: A Study in National Development* [Hayden 1942].

2) William Cameron Forbes (1870–1959) was an American investment banker and diplomat. During the administration of President William Howard Taft, Forbes was governor-general of the Philippines (1909–13).

force until 1883, when the Spanish Liberal government passed the bill known as *de policía de imprenta o Gullón* (Printing Order or Gullón).<sup>3)</sup> This new law mitigated censorship, as is shown by the publication of the newspapers analyzed in this article.

These two laws were not as strict as the two acts passed by the U. S. Administration in 1901 with the object of repressing public criticism: the “Sedition” Act and the “Criminal Libel” Act. Section 8 of the Sedition Act stated that:

Every person who shall utter seditious words or speeches, write, publish, or circulate scurrilous libels against the government of the ... Philippine Islands, or which tend to disturb or obstruct any lawful officer in executing his office, or which tend to instigate others to cabal or meet together for unlawful purpose shall be punished by a fine not exceeding \$2,000 or by imprisonment not exceeding two years, or both in the discretion of the court. [Willis 1905: 160-161]

The truth is that from outside of the U. S. regime in the Philippines it was essential to control the sources of public information in the islands. This article illustrates the control of the press through a paradigmatic journal, *El Renacimiento*. This publication suffered from the strictness of U. S. censorship. It was denounced several times for sedition and libel, for condemning abuses committed by American officials against Filipinos, and for openly advocating the continuity of Spanish as the official language in the Philippines. The editors of *El Renacimiento* displayed their love of the Castilian language and were mostly *Hispanistas* who openly asked for independence, simultaneously criticizing the policies of William Howard Taft.<sup>4)</sup> Americans, particularly Dean C. Worcester,<sup>5)</sup> finally achieved their goal of silencing the newspaper and brought it to an abrupt close in 1908, after the publication of an editorial titled “Birds of Prey” (*Aves de Rapina*) that Worcester took to be an insult against his honor and goodwill.

The influence of U. S. historiography on the academe can be seen in the bibliographies that are still being used by historians working on the Philippines. Bibliographies such as *The American in the Philippines* written by James A. LeRoy [1914]; the 55 volumes of *The Philippines Islands* edited by Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson [1903-09]; and official

---

3) Gullón is the last name of Minister of Government Pío Gullón, who signed the Law of Printing under the Liberal government of Prime Minister Práxedes Mateo Sagasta (1825-1903).

4) In 1900 William Howard Taft (1857-1930) was appointed chairman of a commission to organize a civilian government in the Philippines, which had been ceded to the United States by Spain following the Spanish-American War and the 1898 Treaty of Paris. From 1901 to 1903, Taft served as the first civilian governor-general of the Philippines, a position in which he was very popular with both Americans and Filipinos. In 1904, he was appointed secretary of war. From 1909 to 1913, he was the president of the United States.

5) Dean C. Worcester (1866-1924) was an American zoologist, public official, and authority on the Philippines. From 1899 to 1901, he was a member of the United States Philippine Commission; thenceforth, until 1913 he served as secretary of the interior for the Insular Government of the Philippine Islands. In 1898 he wrote *The Philippine Islands and Their People* and in 1914 the two volumes of *The Philippines Past and Present*.

reports such as the Census of 1903, among others, have spread the idea that freedom of the press did not exist during the Spanish days. These books had a specific task: to furnish the black legend of Spanish colonial rule. Use of this bibliography has led to an absolute ignorance in relation to the press during Spanish colonial rule and under the U. S. Administration. As such, this article is a preliminary study of the Spanish press published in the Philippines during the last years of Spanish colonial rule. In addition, this article tries to revisit a specific issue of *El Renacimiento* because it was the voice of the nationalists and was able to speak out against the U. S. government.

### The Press during Spanish Colonial Rule

Joseph Ralston Hayden and W. Cameron Forbes were right when they asserted that the Filipino press was primarily a political organ. The idea of using the press as a political weapon was a Spanish legacy. Despite *press censorship* imposed by the Spanish government to which U. S. historiography has repeatedly alluded, Cameron Forbes stated, “in the Spanish days freedom of the press, of existing at all, was limited” [Forbes 1928: 71]. Yet, the last 30 years of Spanish colonial rule, as it will be explained, were witness to the publication of many newspapers in the Philippines.

I take as a starting point the “Glorious” Revolution (*La Gloriosa*), which took place in Spain in 1868. This revolution was a landmark in Spanish history as it introduced modernity. The Glorious Revolution dethroned the despised Queen Isabel II with the cry “No more Bourbons.” The period 1868-74 saw the construction of the democratic state, initiated by a democratic revolution. As such, the revolution of 1868 was a national movement that awakened the conscience of the country [Gies 1999: 3]. In sum, the events of 1868 brought about many political projects that needed a transmission of ideological content. Political parties tried to project their agendas and electoral programs to a wider audience. The freedom of press decree of 14 October 1868 spread as an absolute value, creating a freedom that contrasted sharply with the atmosphere of repression that lasted for the final two years of Isabel II’s reign. As such, editing restrictions on newspapers — be they conservative, liberal, or republican — were lifted [Bahamonde and Martínez 2001: 549].

This period saw the founding of numerous newspapers; in Madrid alone, more than 300 papers across the political spectrum emerged, offering unprecedented freedom. Many of the newspapers and journals became ideological battlefields and propaganda organs for political parties. Here, we classify the press into four groups: Catholic absolutists, conservatives, progressive unionists, and democrats.

The Spanish press devoted an unusual amount of attention to the Philippines during this period, especially when the minister for the colonies decided to reform the institutions of the archipelago. The news of the triumph of the Glorious Revolution reached Manila on 28 October 1868 [Sánchez Fuertes 1989: 419]. However, the journal *La Gaceta de Manila*, which was founded in 1861 and was the official newspaper of the Spanish government, did not publish the

telegrams related to the revolution and decided not to insert all of them [Retana 1895: 104]. This fact demonstrates that in spite of the freedom of the press decreed in Spain, the colonial government was not determined to concede that freedom in its colonies of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines.

It was not unusual for *La Gaceta de Manila* to conceal news, since from 1857 the press in the colonies had to follow the dictum of the *Reglamento de Asuntos de Imprenta* (Rules of Printing Matters). These rules were passed in the Philippines to control the production of the press [Cal 1999: 160]. They remained in force until 1883, when the greatest creation of newspapers in the history of the Filipino press was recorded. The censorship would depend on whether the government was liberal or conservative, and the *spirit of the law* is well defined in the first paragraphs of the preamble:

Profundamente convencido este Superior Gobierno de que sus cuidados y desvelos deben dirigirse con absoluta preferencia a prohibir todo aquello que pueda debilitar el principio religioso, base principal en que descansa el edificio social, así como a robustecer el principio de obediencia al Gobierno de S. M. Considerando que cierta clase de lecturas, atendida la sencillez y falta de ilustración de los fieles religiosos habitantes de estas Islas, pueden con el tiempo ser altamente perjudiciales y contribuir a enervar esos principios tan hondamente arraigados al presente. [*ibid.*: 161]

This Superior government is deeply convinced that its care and efforts must be addressed with absolute preference to prohibit all that might weaken the religious principle, the main foundation on which the social structure rests, as well as to strengthen the principle of obedience to the Government of His Majesty. This takes into account that certain readings, considering the simplicity and lack of education of the inhabitants of those islands, may eventually be highly detrimental and contribute to weakening these principles so deeply entrenched in the present.

The legal text had 51 articles divided into six titles: “De las impresiones en general” (On printing in general) (articles 1-12), “De los periódicos” (On newspapers) (13-28), “De la introducción de libros para el comercio” (On the introduction of books for commerce) (29-38), “De la introducción de libros para uso particular” (On the introduction of books for particular uses) (39-42), “De la introducción de estampas, telas y otros objetos con pinturas y grabados” (On the introduction of illustrations, fabrics, and other objects with paintings and engravings) (43-48), and “De las representaciones o comedias” (On representations or comedies) (49-51). The articles devoted to newspapers indicate how the authorities were afraid of their influence on readers.

To publish a newspaper, it was necessary to apply for a license that indicated in great detail its content. Newspaper publishers had to submit original manuscripts and galley proofs for prior censorship, and after printing they had to send a copy to the censor. Each newspaper had two censors in a permanent censorship commission. All these regulations highlight how insubstantial the press was during these years. In fact, until 1857 the press in the Philippines had

a very specific function: to instruct the people. The insignificance of the press changed dramatically during the 1880s, when the Liberal government passed a press law known as *de policía de imprenta o Gullón* (Printing Order or Gullón). To a certain extent, this law softened the *Reglamento de Asuntos de Imprenta*.

It would be impossible to analyze in one article the Philippine press from 1880 to 1898, since more than 100 papers relating to conservative, liberal, and nationalist trends were published. Wenceslao Emilio Retana y Gamboa in *El Periodismo Filipino Noticias para su Historia* mentions that four Spanish authors included in their works a brief history of journalism:<sup>6)</sup>

La intitulada *Memorias Históricas y estadísticas de Filipinas*, por D. Rafael Díaz Arenas: Manila 1855; *Compendio de la Historia de Filipinas* por D. Felipe María de Govantes: Manila 1877. Arrancan las noticias a partir de la fundación de la Ilustración filipina 1859; redúcense a consignar en qué año se fundaron los periódicos; pero en los más de los casos hay falta de precisión: Govantes omite algunas publicaciones. Y la obra de D. Francisco Javier Moya y Jiménez, *Filipinas en 1882*: Madrid, 1883. Inédita conozco una Memoria presentada por el Sr. D. Francisco Díaz Puertas en la Exposición de Filipinas celebrada en Madrid en 1887 titulase Ligeros apuntes sobre la Imprenta en Filipinas. [Retana 1895: 2-4]

*Memorias Históricas y estadísticas de Filipinas* (Historical Memories and Statistics of the Philippines), by Rafael Díaz Arenas: Manila 1855; *Compendio de la Historia de Filipinas* (Compendium of the History of the Philippines), by Felipe María de Govantes: Manila 1877. Govantes started with the creation of *Ilustración Filipina* (1859); he only records the years in which the newspapers were founded, but in many cases these are inaccurate. Govantes omits some publications. And Francisco Javier Moya y Jiménez's work, *las Filipinas en 1882* (The Philippines in 1882); Madrid, 1883. I know of an unpublished memoir presented by Francisco Díaz Puertas during the Exhibition of the Philippines held in Madrid in 1887 titled *Ligeros apuntes sobre la Imprenta en Filipinas* (Brief Overview of the Press in the Philippines).

In addition, in *El Periodismo Filipino* Retana included several appendixes on the history of journalism in the Philippines. These appendixes make clear what were the objectives of newspapers when they were first published in the Philippines. Appendix I collects J.T. Medina's "The First Newspaper in the Philippines," in which he considered that the emergence of journalism in the Spanish colonies obeyed different causes and took place in different periods.<sup>7)</sup>

6) Wenceslao E. Retana y Gamboa (1862-1924) is perhaps, since the nineteenth century, the most cited Filipinologist by historians and scholars dedicated to the study of the Philippines. Retana was well known in the Philippines, United States, and obviously Spain, thus becoming the historian and bibliographer *par excellence* of the time. In fact, he worked in the Philippines and established relations with prominent Filipinos.

7) José Toribio Medina (1852-1930) was a Chilean bibliographer and historian. He spent part of his life collecting sources to study the history of his country.

Termómetro fiel de la vitalidad de un país, un periódico es el reflejo de la sociedad en que nace, de las causas que le dan vida y de las necesidades a que responde. [*ibid.*: 532]

A true thermometer of the vitality of a country, a newspaper is the reflection of the society from which it emerges, the causes that give it life, and the needs to which it responds.

Therefore, for Medina, the emergence of the first newspaper was not a question of commerce or independence. It was a transmission of knowledge. Medina considered that the first paper published in the Philippines was founded in 1811 and that the content of this publication included information only from the metropolis. However, the Filipino physician and scholar Trinidad Pardo de Tavera categorically stated that the first newspaper of the Philippines, *El Noticioso Filipino*, was published in July 1821 [*ibid.*: 561]. Some authors have made a mistake with the title of this paper, calling it instead *El Noticiero de Manila*, yet it is worth noting that the term *noticiero* did not exist in 1821 and was included in the Royal Academy dictionary of the Spanish language only in 1869. Retana questions Pardo de Tavera by asserting that there were more journals before *El Noticioso Filipino*, such as *Ramillete Patriótico*, *El Filipino*, *Latigazo*, *El Filipino Noticioso*, all of them published in 1821.

Be that as it may, none of these newspapers dealt with political issues. We have to move toward 1880 and 1898 to find papers that served as media which, in spite of censorship, conveyed and heralded the opinions, views, sentiments, and positions of individuals and different sectors such as intellectuals, businesses, and the Church. We also come across opinion-centric newspapers, which focused more on views and opinions than on news. From 1880 to the collapse of Spanish colonial rule, the newspapers discussed topics such as politics, art, literature, fashion, religion, medicine, or justice, among others. These new interests, as mentioned above, were related to the press law passed in 1883 by the Liberal government. This law did away with censorship and special tribunals to judge crimes of printing. This law was not totally implemented in the Philippines, but up to a certain extent censorship in the archipelago was attenuated depending on the minister for the colonies and the general government.

As an example of the changes that took place, I want to highlight *Diariong Tagalog*, which emerged in 1882 in Manila. This was the first bilingual newspaper, and it can be considered as a predecessor of *El Renacimiento*. All the texts were written in Spanish and Tagalog, and this brought to the archipelago the new liberal atmosphere prevailing in Spain. The directors — the Liberals Francisco Calvo y Muñoz, member of parliament, and Francisco Bueno — defended the most liberal solutions for the country, such as that Filipinos could love the Philippines without despising Spain. *Diariong Tagalog* managed to merge into a single ideal both Filipino and Spanish interests.

Alongside *Diariong Tagalog*, the newspaper *La Opinión*, which had two relevant periods, was founded in Manila in 1887 [Retana 1906: 1628–1632]. This newspaper was political and literary. One of its directors was Benigno Quiroga, who belonged to the left wing of the Liberal Party. He arrived in Manila to reform anything that could be reformed, and the paper gradually

became the political organ of the Liberal Party, causing scandal among the reactionary subjects. Quiroga won the will of the Filipinos, procuring their subscriptions. This saw the paper become both Spanish and Filipino in orientation. *La Opinión* was the first newspaper in the Philippines that dared to go against the religious orders and became the first newspaper to be eminently political.<sup>8)</sup> According to Retana, *La Opinión* enjoyed absolute freedom [Retana 1895: 295]. However, the antagonisms as expressed in the paper against the religious orders were obliterated. Instead, the paper was remembered only in its second period, that is, as a conservative periodical defending the *status quo* of the religious orders under Retana and Camilo Millán's editorial board.

No doubt there are more examples, but I would like to note two journals that emerged the same year as *La Solidaridad* as the most consulted and cited papers *par excellence*. These newspapers were characterized by their popular nature. The first one is *El Ilocano*, the first genuinely Filipino journal, which came out in Manila in 1889 [Retana 1906: 1653-1655]. It was founded, run, and edited by Isabelo de los Reyes. It was also bilingual — Spanish-Ilocano — with an essentially educative trend and political sense. De los Reyes used simple language to instill valuable lessons and at the same time liberal teachings of redemption [Artigas 1909: 187]. He criticized the prevalent censorship of the press in the Philippines, although he was able to express opinions freely.

The other popular journal and the most important to emerge in the Philippines (in part because it can be considered as the alter ego of *La Solidaridad* and a true predecessor of *El Renacimiento*) was *El Resumen*. This nationalist newspaper, founded by Pascual H. Poblete and Baldomero Hazañas, played a critical and valiant role. Poblete translated Spanish and Tagalog texts and wrote the novel *Uliran nang Cabaitan ó Buhay ni Patricio Horacio* (A Model of Kindness or the Life of Patricio Horacio), in which he questioned and criticized the predominance of the friars in the Philippines. Furthermore, he was an insistent founder and collaborator of several newspapers. He founded and owned *Revista Popular de Filipinas*, which was also published in Spanish and Tagalog and disappeared in 1889. Then he decided to publish *El Resumen* and a newspaper written entirely in Tagalog titled *Patnubay nang Catolico* (The Catholic's Guide). Hazañas was a Spaniard who had lived in the archipelago since he was a child [Cal 1998: 29-30].

*El Resumen* was, first and foremost, a normal newspaper with the editorial occupying the front page. This editorial was almost always anonymous, although sometimes it carried Poblete's pseudonym, "Juan Tatoo." The most frequent byline was that of Javier Gómez de la Serna, a correspondent based in Madrid. The second and third pages focused on news about the archipelago. The last page was devoted to advertisements. In general, if we compare this

---

8) *La Opinión* disappeared in 1889, when Retana and Camilo Millán started to work in this newspaper. Retana was considered an anti-Filipino reactionary; and Millán was also an anti-Filipino, furious and reactionary. Obviously, Filipino progressives immediately canceled their subscriptions and the newspaper was shut down. See W.E. Retana, *Aparato Bibliográfico* [1906: entry 4498, 1628-1632].



newspaper with others we can highlight the abundance of Filipino news.

Retana asserted that Poblete demonstrated his political skills by recruiting Spanish writers in order not to come under suspicion. *El Resumen* celebrated Governor Despujol's policy of attraction, daring to say:

Filipinas y sus hijos sólo ansían la completa españolización del territorio, su progreso y adelanto y su equiparación y asimilación en derechos y deberes, dentro de justos y equitativos límites, a las provincias metropolitanas.... [Retana 1906: 1668]

The Philippines and their children only desire the complete Hispanization of the territory, its progress and advancement as well as the provisioning and assimilation of rights and duties within fair and equitable limits, in the metropolitan provinces....

It should be noted that *El Resumen* was the organ of La Liga Filipina, which was founded by Jose Rizal in 1892. It was a civic organization that had five main objectives: to unite all Filipinos as a whole, mutual protection when faced with any difficulty, defense against violence and injustice, promotion of education, and implementation of reforms [Retana 1907: 236]. For instance, if we analyze *El Resumen* during July 1892 we see that the journal was publishing all the events related to Rizal's deportation to Dapitan. On 10 July 1892 a long editorial appeared titled "Our Desires"; it was a kind of declaration of principles in favor of the Philippines and popular classes that was Rizal's own wish:

Amantes como el que más de progreso filipino, aspiración constante de nuestra publicación humilde; del avance, españolización y equiparación en derechos y deberes de esta provincia española a sus hermanas de la Península, ostentamos esos lemas, ufanos y orgullosos, levantando la frente muy alta.... Justicia severa y recta para aquel que voluntaria y libérrimamente, tergiversa legítimas aspiraciones y con sus actos hace escarnio de los sentimientos más arraigados en el corazón de este pueblo tan católico como español.... [Cal 1998: 35-36]

True lovers of Filipino progress, the constant aspiration of our humble publication; for progress, Hispanization and the provision of rights and duties of this Spanish province to our brethren in the Spanish Peninsula, we show off these mottos, exultant and proud, holding our heads up high.... Strict and honest justice for those who voluntarily and freely pervert legitimate aspirations and with their acts scoff at the feelings that are deeply rooted in the hearts of this people as Catholic as the Spanish....

On 13 July the journal stood by the same thesis, on 15 July there was no editorial, and on 19 July the journal got involved with the conservative newspaper *La Voz Española* because of an article concerning parliamentary representation of 1812. *El Resumen* did not hesitate to recognize the need for parliamentary representation in Madrid, and at this time the newspaper discussed the means to attain this end.

In sum, *El Resumen* acknowledged itself as openly belonging to the Compañía Mercantil e Industrial Hispano-Filipina. This company was probably a subsidiary of the Asociación Hispano Filipina of Madrid, which claimed reforms for the archipelago. The Asociación had as its organ of propaganda *La Solidaridad*. The Compañía was an anonymous society, mainly nationalist. This fact is important, since some members of the company belonged to La Liga Filipina: the businessman Jose A. Ramos and the lawyer Ambrosio Rianzares [*ibid.*: 38]. The most evident conclusion is that *El Resumen* dared to debate on political and social issues in the Philippines, issues that originated from two factions in the Manilan press. On the one hand we find *El Resumen*, *La Oceanía Española*, and *El Eco de Filipinas*, which defended Filipino parliamentary representation; and on the other we have *La Voz Española*, *Diario de Manila*, *Boletín de Cebú*, and *El Porvenir de Visayas*. It is essential to illustrate that *El Resumen* was fresh and vivid in the topics it carried and how it expressed itself. It was, in fact, a Spanish-peninsular style newspaper. No one had made such statements calling for progress for the Philippines, assimilation, and equality in rights and duties with Spaniards. In sum, *El Resumen* undoubtedly claimed assimilation and reforms for the archipelago. It seems there are too many myths and legends in the history of the archipelago about the censorship of the press during Spanish colonial rule.

In 1890 *El Eco de Filipinas* emerged, substituting for *La Opinión*. *El Eco de Filipinas* was edited by the conservative journalist Camilo Millán. And last but not least, it is worth mentioning *La Voz Española*, a conservative newspaper that appeared on 5 March 1892 — the day after *La Voz de España*, its homonym closed. *La Voz de España*, like *La Voz Española*, aimed to combat assimilationists and *politiquillos* (little politicians); at the same time, both periodicals championed the progress of the Conservatives' claims defending the friars [Retana 1906: 1639]. *La Voz Española* was run by the conservative journalist Federico Hidalgo, who categorically claimed “the Philippines by Spain and for Spain” [*ibid.*: 1691]. As seen above, *La Voz Española*, like *La Voz de España*, negated Filipino parliamentary representation but did ask for freedom of the press. *La Solidaridad* highlighted this fact by stating, “we are therefore in agreement with *La Voz de España* and we are glad that this conservative organ of the country is one of the champions of this freedom” [*La Solidaridad*, Madrid, 30 June 1891, N. 58: 299].

However, the most widely cited and consulted journal by historians was *La Solidaridad*, which was conceived in Barcelona in 1889.<sup>9)</sup> The collaborators of this journal were imbued with liberal, republican, and “autonomist” sentiments. The lawyer Pablo Rianzares was the first owner of the journal, and the first editor was Graciano Lopez Jaena,<sup>10)</sup> who was above all an

9) This section is a brief summary of a forthcoming paper titled “‘La Solidaridad’ y el Periodismo en Filipinas en Tiempos de Rizal (La Solidaridad and Journalism in the Philippines during Rizal’s Time).”

10) Graciano Lopez Jaena (1856–96) was a Filipino journalist, orator, and revolutionary well known for his important collaboration in *La Solidaridad*. He edited the journal in 1889, while it was published in Barcelona. He is considered the great orator of the Propaganda Movement. He was in touch with important Catalan journalists and politicians. In fact, he was a member of a Catalan institution called

orator, demagogue, and writer. Lopez Jaena was protected by acknowledged Catalan radical republicans and journalists such as Joan Sol y Ortega and Emilio Junoy, who would defend the Filipinos and their reformism until the end [Retana 1906: 1149].

In 1890 *La Solidaridad* moved to Madrid, since the Asociación Hispano-Filipina had been founded there and the collaborators of the journal felt that their political aspirations would find a wider audience in Madrid rather than in Barcelona. Lopez Jaena decided to remain in Barcelona, and in 1893 he edited the republican paper *El Latigo Nacional*. Marcelo Hilario del Pilar became the new editor of *La Solidaridad*.<sup>11)</sup> *La Solidaridad* was a journal written by Filipinos, but it is not clear whether it was “for Filipinos.” The cultural level of the journal, the high level of the language, and the political issues it tackled suggest that this journal was written for a Spanish audience. In fact, *La Solidaridad* was handed out to politicians and members of the Spanish parliament. Retana and his *La Política de España en Filipinas* did the same to counteract this Filipino journal.

It appears that the reformist discourse of *La Solidaridad* was not as extraordinary. *El Resumen* also played a similar role but in the archipelago, where the journal did not enjoy the same freedoms as in Spain. As a matter of fact, the journal is comparable with many other journals of the nineteenth century that became forums for political debate among liberal and conservative ideas. It was not rare to find in the Spanish press satires, parodies, and ironical treatments of the weaknesses of Spanish society — above all among the intellectuals and radicals. It was also quite common to read satires against the clergy. The anticlericalism of *La Solidaridad* was, in fact, a prevalent discourse in Spain at the turn of the nineteenth century. Actually, this was a typical Spanish-style newspaper, as some of its members had already written in Spanish Republican papers such as *El Liberal* of Madrid or *La Publicidad* of Barcelona. Republican and liberal periodicals such as *El Imparcial*, *El Liberal*, *El Globo*, *La Justicia*, *El País*, *La Publicidad*, *La Vanguardia*, *El Noticiero Universal*, and *El Suplemento* supported Filipino claims and *La Solidaridad*.

The historical prominence of *La Solidaridad* was really built up in the twentieth century for specific purposes, such as the minimization of Spanish reformism, the construction of stereotyped images of the Spanish regime, and, above all, the establishment of an evolutionist history that begins with the emergence of national consciousness in the pages of this newspaper.

*La Solidaridad* combated the conservative reactions by coming out with fierce criticism of the “apparent power of the friars.” This topic became a cliché during the twentieth century when American scholarship fostered this image. However, few scholars have noted the period

---

Ateneu Barcelonès. In this club, he learned about Catalan nationalism.

11) Marcelo Hilario del Pilar (1850–96) was a Filipino writer, journalist, satirist, and revolutionary leader of the Philippine Revolution and one of the leading ilustrado propagandists of the Philippines. He served as editor of the vernacular section of *Diarióng Tagalog*. From 1890 to around 1895, he edited the newspaper *La Solidaridad*. Like Lopez Jaena, he was in touch with Spanish journalists and politicians.

when the collaborators of *La Solidaridad* applauded the liberal ideas and the reforms implemented in the archipelago. In sum, the periodical was above all a political journal imbued with republican ideas. I have checked carefully the issues from 1889 to 1895 and have noticed that traditional historiography such as the report of the Schurman Commission and LeRoy's *The Americans in the Philippines* presented a distorted history of the Spanish regime by underscoring the power of the Church and denying the reforms. LeRoy wrote a long chapter devoted to the Spanish regime, with knowledge drawn from firsthand acquaintance. He had studied Spanish colonial history, and he furnished an important bibliography that did not question his arguments and suppressed the bibliography that mentioned any reform of Spanish colonial rule. In sum, Schurman and LeRoy were building up the dichotomies between the medieval Spanish regime versus the liberal and progressive U. S. Administration. They shaped what would become the stereotypical images of Spanish Administration in the Philippines. That is, despite the liberal and progressive people in Spain, the reforms were a dead letter.<sup>12)</sup> The reports of the commission and LeRoy focused on just the following three topics treated in the newspaper: the reiterative claim for parliamentary representation and Spanish intransigence toward it, antifriar feeling, and the defense against the denigration of the race. These topics gave form and authority to a certain image of *La Solidaridad* by picking up its accounts of a lack of public improvements, defects in the administration of justice, defects in public services (especially education), and above all the lack of progress provoked in part by the prevalence of the religious orders. What LeRoy, Worcester, and Forbes, among other scholars, failed to mention is that the periodical also applauded the reforms of Liberal governments, published the decree of Maura, and expressed a commitment to *Spanishness* and to Spanish political dynamism.

The real significance of *La Solidaridad* lies in the fact that its history was co-opted for specific ends by American and Filipino intellectuals. The Americans argued that *La Solidaridad* advocated reform instead of independence. This idea was crucial for the colonial construction of Philippine history, since the Americans could then justify their occupation of the archipelago by inferring that the educated Filipinos, or ilustrados, only wanted more self-government, not independence. The argument follows that since the ilustrados knew that the Filipinos had not come of age, they therefore needed the tutelage of a progressive nation like the United States. Filipino intellectuals, in turn, could identify in *La Solidaridad* "the germ of Filipino consciousness" that would ultimately lead to the attainment of national independence. The U. S. Administration deliberately omitted other journals published in the Philippines in order to shape the dark age of Spanish colonial rule. *El Resumen* and *La Opinion*, among others, defined

---

12) This discourse has been perpetuated. A clear example is *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia*. The chapter devoted to the Philippines furnishes the same stereotypic images of Spanish colonial rule. It is not rare to read categorical sentences such as "Whether liberal or conservative, pro-church or antichurch, pro- or anti-monarchy, Spain became a backwater, incapable of sustaining any policy that could win consensus ..." [Owen 2005: 151].

themselves as nationalist and liberal and asked for reformism. They also criticized the friars, as did *La Solidaridad*, but instead of being published in Spain they came out in the Philippines, which questions, to a certain extent, the censorship of the press.

### **Fictitious Freedom of the Press**

In 1898 Spain lost the Philippines, and a new colonial master, the United States, occupied the archipelago with new promises. The Americans had promised national independence, freedom of the press, and freedom of speech. These freedoms were a fact for a few months, and in this short period of time the paper *La Independencia* emerged. It became the first separatist newspaper and was subsidized by revolutionaries. In 1898, *La Independencia* stated:

Nosotros defenderemos la independencia de Filipinas porque es la aspiración del país que ha llegado a su mayor edad; y cuando un pueblo se levanta como un solo hombre para protestar, arma al brazo, contra una política de opresión e injusticia, manifiesta vitalidad y suficiente para vivir libre. Funcionan ya en el breve período de tres meses los organismos de la Administración y la Justicia... [Retana 1906: 1761]

We will defend Filipino independence because it is the ambition of a country that has come of age, and when a people rise as one to protest against a policy of oppression and injustice, they demonstrate enough vitality to live in freedom. The institutions of Administration and Justice were implemented in the brief period of three months....

*La Independencia* heralded the United States as “that great and strong country with which we are bonded by a sincere friendship ... they do not come here to make the war to any party, or to seize a piece of territory” [*ibid.*: 1762-1763]. These words implied that the Americans had made promises to the Filipinos, and that they presented themselves as saviors and champions of the freedom of oppressed countries. In fact, John Foreman in the second edition of his book *The Philippine Islands* [1899] devoted an entire chapter to Filipino insurrection against Spain. He explained in great detail the arrival of Emilio Aguinaldo in Singapore and his meeting with American Consul-General Spencer Pratt:

Emilio Aguinaldo and suite went to Singapore where they found Mr. Howard W. Bray, an Englishman and old personal friend of mine. The editor of the Singapore Free Press and Mr. Bray had become acquainted. The editor introduced Mr. Bray to the American Consul-General, Mr. Spencer Pratt, and Mr. Bray presented Emilio Aguinaldo to the Consul-General. The midnight meeting took place at “The Mansion,” River Valley Road, Singapore, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April, the day following the outbreak of American Spanish hostilities. The original idea in making Aguinaldo and the Consul-General known to each other was to utilize Aguinaldo’s services and prestige with the armed natives to control them and prevent reprisals when the American forces should appear before Manila. The result of this Singapore

meeting was that a “draft Agreement” between Consul-General Pratt and Emilio Aguinaldo was drawn up, subject to the approval of Commodore Dewey and subsequent confirmation from Washington. The essence of this provisional understanding was as follows, viz.: (1) Philippine Independence to be proclaimed.... [Foreman 1899: 567]

This information is significant as it categorically asserts that there was an agreement — one that, according to Foreman, was not only verbal but also written. Foreman was promptly denounced by Pratt for publishing this and other allegations in his book. Pratt was successful in pressuring Foreman to remove the “offending page and insert an apology” [Worcester 1900: 5]. Foreman published in the 1899 edition the same paragraph, but instead of mentioning a “draft agreement” stated that this extract was taken from an editorial of the Spanish journal *El Liberal*. “According to *El Liberal* newspaper of Madrid, dated the 28<sup>th</sup> June 1898 (which quotes from *El Día*), this date, as follow, viz.: — (1) Philippine Independence to be proclaimed” [Foreman 1899: 567].<sup>13)</sup>

*La Independencia* stated that the United States was not going to seize Filipino territory since its mission was bigger and generous. They strongly believed that they felt sympathy for their cause. However, after some months the Filipinos realized that the Americans had come to seize their territory and that they were not going to receive independence. *La Independencia* became a problem for the U.S. Administration, and the journal was suppressed and destroyed.<sup>14)</sup> In fact, this first issue of *La Independencia* was also extirpated from U.S. textbooks.

The second separatist newspaper was *La República Filipina*, which emerged in 1898. It was an organ of Pedro Paterno’s party and was also suppressed by the U. S. government.

### Emergence of *El Renacimiento*

Before talking of the emergence of *El Renacimiento*, it is necessary to understand the historical context of the journal. The Americans convinced the Filipinos to help them expel the Spaniards from the archipelago, promising them independence, and the Filipino government proclaimed its independence on 12 June 1898. At that time, a congress was constituted in order to write the regulations of the government; the regulations were founded on those of the Spanish Congress. As history has shown us, the Americans never accepted the Filipino Republic, and they denied any promise of independence. On 4 February 1899, American forces suddenly attacked Filipino lines. General Elwell Stephen Otis sent a cablegram to Washington explaining that the Filipinos

---

13) The paper *El Día* [28 June 1898, Núm. 6505] published an editorial titled “Orígenes del Pacto Yankée-Filipino” (Origins of the Yankee-Filipino Pact). In this article the newspaper categorically asserts that there was a draft agreement and Dewey could read this draft. According to this editorial, the archipelago would become a democracy (*Estado de derecho*).

14) *La Independencia* was destroyed by the Americans. The last issue was published on 4 February 1899. Clemente J. Zulueta had the whole collection.

had sparked the hostilities. What General Otis said in that cablegram has become the dictum of the truth, as Americans immediately reacted by ratifying by a narrow margin the annexation of the Philippines.

Americans claimed to protect and to become the guardians of Filipinos, and in order to get to know their subjects President William McKinley sent the first commission to the Philippines — the well-known Schurman Commission. This commission initiated the suppression of terms such as “colony,” “war,” “independence,” and “possession,” which henceforth became taboo. The U.S. Administration would hereafter be able to disguise its imperialist policy through a discourse of Americanization of a backward country and the implementation of the sacred principles of democracy. The most important task, no doubt, was to fulfill the promise of a future self-government, *when education would become general*.

Jacob Schurman and his commissioners came back to the United States with their categorical conclusions: the United States could not withdraw from the Philippines, since the Filipinos were *wholly* unprepared for independence. The great mass of the people were ignorant, with a vague idea of what independence meant. And the educated class “is clearly desirous of peace here” [Schurman 1900: 352]. The latter statement was one of the misrepresentations of the Schurman Commission, since the reports implied that most of the Filipinos welcomed U.S. rule and that the insurrection was over. This optimistic news was beneficial for McKinley, who was preparing for his re-election. He could then mobilize public opinion around the fact that he (as the representative of the United States) had won the “respect and affection of the inhabitants of the Philippines” [Salamanca 1984: 23].

The conclusions of the Schurman Commission made McKinley undertake the task of establishing a civil government in the newly possessed territories. Toward this end, he appointed a second Philippine Commission, designating William Howard Taft as its president. This new commission had a specific mission: to continue and perfect the work of organizing and establishing civil government already commenced by the military authorities, subject in all respects to any laws that Congress may enact [Willis 1905: 29].

The new Taft Commission brought with it a long instruction promulgated by McKinley, which among other things stated:

In all the forms of government and administrative provisions which they are authorized to proscribe, the commission should bear in mind that the government they are establishing is not designed for our satisfaction or for the expression of our theoretical views but for the happiness, peace and prosperity of the people of the Philippine Islands.... At the same time the Commission should bear in mind, and the people of the islands should be made plainly to understand, that there are certain great principles of government which have been made the basis of our governmental system which we deem essential to the rule of law and the maintenance of individual freedom.... [Forbes 1928: 442]

Words such as “happiness,” “peace,” and “prosperity” disguised the real purposes of the United States: an indefinite retention of the Philippines. The maintenance of individual freedom

became part of the democratic doctrine implanted in the Philippine islands in order to demonstrate that the Philippines had not prospered politically, economically, and socially, since the Spaniards did not believe in this principle. Taft carried out, in part, McKinley's instructions; and in 1902 the peace was signed. Taft won many Filipinos over with his *policy of attraction*, and his slogan "The Philippines for the Filipinos" was understood as the Filipinization of the archipelago. From 1902 to 1914 he would intervene in the archipelago — as governor, secretary of war, and president of the United States — and it was during these years that he tried to Americanize and democratize the islands.

Taft became a friend to the Filipinos thanks to his sympathy for the Filipino cause and his motto "The Philippines for the Filipinos." He captivated not only the so-called Americanists or collaborationists but also the nationalists. In fact, he allowed the establishment of political parties, although he recognized only the Federal Party [Taft 1902: 307–312]. According to an article written by Taft titled "The Political Parties in the Philippines," published in the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, "the Federal party was the only party which had organized committees in each province of the Archipelago and in all important towns among the Christian Filipinos" [*ibid.*: 309]. Taft devoted this article to praising the Federal Party, which included such Filipino ilustrados as Trinidad Pardo de Tavera, Benito Legarda, and José Albert. As a propaganda platform, this party had the newspaper *La Democracia*, founded in Manila in 1899. Its stated purposes were as follows:

La proclama publicada por la comisión americana el día 4 de abril último, no puede haber dejado indiferente a ningún filipino, y al considerar con detención aquel documento, cada cual ha tratado de adivinar sin duda alguna los beneficios que pudieran resultar a Filipinas de la soberanía americana que en él se declara...

Queremos la paz: somos filipinos y como tales deploramos que se derrame inútilmente la sangre de nuestros hermanos.... Creemos en los nobles propósitos de pueblo americano, y atendiendo al llamamiento de la comisión nos proponemos en La Democracia prestarle nuestra cooperación para el logro de las justas aspiraciones de nuestro propio pueblo. [Retana 1906: 1785]

The proclamation issued by the American commission last 4 April cannot leave any Filipino indifferent, and by considering carefully that document, each one has tried to guess no doubt the benefits to the Philippines that can result from the American sovereignty thus declared...

We want peace: we are Filipinos and as such we regret the bloodshed of our brothers.... We believe the noble purposes of the American people, and in accordance with the appeal of the commission we propose in *La Democracia* to give [the commission] our cooperation to achieve the just aspirations of our own people.

With these purposes, *La Democracia* would not be censored or persecuted as *El*



*Renacimiento* was. In fact, despite the split of the Federal Party from 1904 onward, the newspaper had a long life, running until 1917.

Taft recognized two more parties, although he gave them no importance. One was the Peace Party, based in the city of Manila. It had no organization outside of Manila “and were at present comparatively few in number” [Taft 1902: 310–311]. In addition to this party there was the Conservative Party, which was made up chiefly of Filipinos who sympathized more or less with Spain in the two revolutions. In this party there were nationalist followers, and as such, Taft demonized and discredited it claiming that members were hostile to the Americans and to the leaders of the Federal Party:

The tendency among them is always toward absolutism in the president of the town, in the governor of the province, and in the representative of the central government. [*ibid.*: 311]

Taft omitted the principal political body of the islands (in strength, though not perhaps in organization). This was the Nationalist Party, originally organized under the leadership of Pascual H. Poblete and Dominador Gómez.<sup>15)</sup> Some 200,000 members were originally enrolled in this party. In a platform adopted in 1902, the party set before itself the object of attaining as soon as legally possible an autonomous government resulting in independence. This party quickly became so obnoxious to the government that it was practically obliged to disband [Willis 1905: 178]. It was in this context that *El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino* emerged.

*El Renacimiento* was a nationalist journal founded at the very beginning of September 1901 with the intention of providing “the best writing of those which had risen in the Philippines” [Retana 1906: 1791]. It was run from 1903 by Fernando Maria Guerrero, who had previously been the editor, under the editorial board of Rafael Palma:<sup>16)</sup>

Hecho por filipinos, casi todos ellos de pura raza, *El Renacimiento* constituye la prueba más concluyente de la capacidad de los naturales de las Islas, no solo como escritores, sino como hombres de gran sentido político. Colaboran en este diario, el de mayor circulación del Archipiélago, las plumas más notables del país. [*ibid.*]

*El Renacimiento* constituted the most conclusive test of the capacity of the natives, not only as writers, but also as men with great political sense. The most outstanding quills of this country collaborate in this newspaper, which has the biggest circulation in the archipelago.

---

15) Dominador Gomez (1868–1929) was a physician, propagandist, labor leader, and legislator. He succeeded Isabelo de los Reyes as the Unión Obrera Democrática leader. He also collaborated in *La Solidaridad*.

16) Rafael Palma (1874–1939) was a Filipino politician, member of the Nationalist Party, journalist, and mason. He wrote for the newspapers *La Independencia*, *El Nuevo Día*, and obviously *El Renacimiento*.

Retana was right in asserting it was the fastest-growing newspaper in the Philippines. The influence of this journal upset the U. S. Administration because not only was it read by Filipino Spanish speakers but there was also a Tagalog edition, called *Muling Pasilang*. The latter was not merely a translation of the Spanish; the Tagalog edition also published articles for Filipinos. Lope K. Santos ran this edition [*ibid.*: 1798].

What is clear is that *El Renacimiento* bothered the U. S. Administration because it became a real power in Manila and was able to erode the government. The journal waged brilliant battles, the most important from 1904 onward: that was the public denunciation of abuses committed by the constabulary. The staff of *El Renacimiento* were accused twice of libel. The constabulary was from the beginning a military force in the essential meaning of the term. The act of 18 July 1901 provided for the organization of a force not exceeding 150 privates, 4 sergeants, and 8 corporals in each province. These men were to be directed by a chief of constabulary and four assistant chiefs, who were to be “peace officers,” with headquarters in Manila. The force was to be armed and uniformed in a suitable way, and paid out of the insular treasury. Its members were, when necessary, authorized to make arrests without warrants. From the outset, the commission was exceedingly explicit in denying that this force possessed any military character [Willis 1905: 122]. The constabulary was made up of U. S. and Filipino Military members. On 3 May 1905, *El Renacimiento* defined the members of the constabulary as follows:

En las instituciones como la constabularia abundan los “presentados” que al igual de los “secretos-bandidos” comenzaron por ser *tulisanes* antes de ser “detectives” y en la actualidad son señores constabularios provistos de un springfield del que muchas veces se sirven para amedrentar y atropellar a los vecinos pacíficos. A individuos como éstos de costumbres tan depravadas, no se debería confiar cargo alguno ni siquiera el de servir al pueblo, pues a causa de su ignorancia se convierten en el terror del pueblo. [“El Problema del Bandolerismo,” (The Problem of Banditry) *El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino Independiente*, 3 May 1905, Year IV, Núm. 195]

In institutions such as the constabulary there are many “meddlers” who, just like “secret-bandits,” started out as *tulisanes* (bandits) before becoming “detectives,” and in actuality they are members of the constabulary with a Springfield which they use quite often to intimidate and knock down peaceful neighbors. Individuals such as these, with their depraved customs, should not be trusted with any position, even that of serving the people, as owing to their ignorance they have become the terror of the people.

Apart from this open cause against the constabulary, the staff of *El Renacimiento* fought and mobilized in almost all provinces of the archipelago in order to achieve the continuity of Spanish as the official language. These two causes and the critiques to Taft in 1905 represented the beginning of the end for *El Renacimiento*. Retana, who collaborated in the journal, wrote:

*El Renacimiento* es la evocación del espíritu de Rizal: con un gran sentido político, sin apelar nunca ni a lo grotesco ni al escándalo, lucha tenazmente por los fueros de la Justicia, de la Libertad y de la Cultura pública. A diferencia de otros periódicos, *El Renacimiento* juzga con parsimonia todo lo tocante a los errores de los españoles, cuyo recuerdo no ataca; antes bien parece tener por ellos simpatía. [Retana 1906: 1792]

*El Renacimiento* is the evocation of Rizal's spirit: with great political sense, without appealing to the grotesque or scandalous, fighting tenaciously for the privileges of justice, freedom, and public culture. Unlike other newspapers, *El Renacimiento* parsimoniously judges everything relating to the Spaniards' mistakes, whose memory it does not attack; on the contrary, it seems to have sympathy toward them.

No doubt, the collaborators of *El Renacimiento* felt sympathy for the Spaniards since the directors — Fernando M. Guerrero, Teodoro M. Kalaw, and Rafael Palma — were real *Hispanistas* and lovers of the Spanish language who had no problem in praising Spanish culture [Kalaw 1950].

*El Renacimiento* received financial support from a number of prominent and influential Filipino Liberals. On its editorial staff were men of literary ability and political power such as Wenceslao Retana, Javier Gomez de la Serna, Dominador Gomez, Isabelo de los Reyes, and Felipe Calderon. As its name indicates, *El Renacimiento* was dedicated to the new birth of the Filipino people. Among its founders were Rafael Palma and Martin Ocampo, who declared that the publication's purposes were:

First, to bring about a mutual understanding between the constituted government and the people; Second to encourage the bent of young Filipinos for newspaper work; Third, to defend the interests and ideals of the Filipino people. [Worcester 1930: 53]

No doubt, if we carefully analyze the journal, we perceive that the third purpose mentioned was the dominant one in the actual conduct of the paper. During the nine years of the journal's existence, *El Renacimiento* was regarded by most Filipinos as a national institution. In fact, we can divide the nine years into two well-defined stages. The first covers 1901 to 1904, during which time the name of the newspaper was *El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino*; the second stage embraces the years 1905–08, in which the word "independent" was added to the title. The term was intended as a provocation, since independence was forbidden. The name *El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino Independiente* clearly demonstrates that the paper was not under the service of the U. S. Administration.

During the first years of the journal, there was a more or less tacit acceptance of the U. S. government. However, the journal discussed some sensitive issues, for instance, slavery in 1903. The U. S. Administration claimed that there was slavery in the Philippines, an argument that would emerge vehemently in 1913 to undermine and discredit the new policy of Filipinization

implemented in the archipelago by Democratic President Woodrow Wilson. *El Renacimiento* in its editorial “Slavery in Manila?” categorically denied the existence of slavery:

Los jueces americanos que no están aún al tanto de las costumbres filipinas, pueden juzgar de lo que se llama “esclavitud” por nuestras explicaciones. No hay tal esclavitud. [“¿La esclavitud en Manila?” (Slavery in Manila?) *El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino*, 5 January, 1903, Year II, Núm. 3]

American judges, who do not know Filipino customs, can consider what is called “slavery” through our explanations. There is no such slavery.

Perhaps one of the most important topics defended by *El Renacimiento* in 1903 was Taft’s continuance in the archipelago. As has been explained, at the very beginning Filipinos felt sympathy from Taft; therefore, it was not rare to observe in local publications statements such as if Governor Taft left the islands, the established order could be de-structured/de-constructed (*la prensa filipina pide continuación del mismo como garantía de paz y mejor éxito de la política americana en estas islas*): “The Filipino press asks for the continuance of Taft as a peacekeeper and for the better success of American policy in the islands” [“La marcha de Taft” (Taft’s March), *El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino*, 10 January 1903, Year II, Núm. 399]. The editors and collaborators of *El Renacimiento* believed in the benevolent assimilation of the U. S. Administration and that the Americans would concede independence in the very near future. Despite this, in the second stage, American officials accused the newspaper of attacking the government. In 1903, the collaborators of the journal trusted Taft’s words when he asserted that the United States had remained in the Philippines in order to educate and to prepare the Filipinos for self-government [“Una gran manifestación popular Mr. Taft,” (A Great Popular Demonstration Mr. Taft), *El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino*, 12 January 1903, Year II, Núm. 401].

Another issue arose in 1903: a campaign for the continuity of Spanish as the official language in the archipelago. This became an aggressive propaganda campaign in 1905. The campaign contradicted U. S. official history, which stated that only 10 per cent of the Filipino population could speak or knew Spanish. *El Renacimiento* shows us that a large part of the population spoke Spanish. In fact, on 12 May 1905 *El Renacimiento* published an editorial titled “El Castellano como lenguaje oficial” (Spanish as an Official Language). Filipinos presented to the U. S. Administration six reasons for which Spanish had to continue to be the official language. The most important are the following:

1. Que la lengua de un pueblo no se improvisa (The language of a people cannot be improvised).
2. Que los esfuerzos del Gobierno y el pueblo no han dado al inglés el carácter de generalización necesaria para ser oficial (The efforts of the government and the people have not given English the generalized character necessary for it to become official).
3. Que es indispensable una generación por lo menos, para asimilarse un idioma extraño (At least one generation is required to assimilate a foreign language).

4. Que la declaración del inglés como lenguaje oficial equivaldría a excluir prácticamente a los filipinos de sus actuales puestos (The declaration of English as the official language would mean practically excluding Filipinos from their current jobs).

["El Castellano como Lenguaje Oficial," (Spanish as the Official Language) *El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino Independiente*, 12 May 1905, Year IV, Núm. 202]

In sum, *El Renacimiento* decided to undertake a mission, to give voice to the people to express their popular will in favor of Spanish. It voiced the general need for the continuity of Spanish. This mission was fulfilled, and from this editorial onward the editors published a free range of opinions on the issue of the Spanish language. The campaign was generalized, and newspapers such as *El Grito del Pueblo*, *El Adelanto*, *El Mercantil*, *Libertas*, *La Democracia*, and *El Comercio* advocated for the continuity of Spanish as the official language.

In fact, Cayetano Arellano, who was the first chief justice of the Supreme Court of the Philippines under the American Civil Government, categorically stated that Spanish would be the language of that generation. He even confirmed that after Spain lost the Philippines, Spanish improved and in 1905 there were more Spanish-speaking literati than during the period of Spanish sovereignty ["Información de *El Renacimiento*. Opiniones sobre el Lenguaje Oficial," (Information from *El Renacimiento*. View on the Official Language) *El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino Independiente*, 19 May 1905, Year IV, Núm. 208]. The preeminence of Spanish continued, in spite of the aggressive policy of Americanization instituted by the U.S. government. In 1916, Henry Jones Ford was sent by President Wilson on a secret mission to prepare a report on the state of the Philippines. This report was never published, because he questioned the statistics based on school reports that indicated encouraging progress in the spread of English as the common language. Ford says, although he does not provide statistics, that this was fallacious. In the book Ford wrote about Woodrow Wilson, he made categorical statements such as the following:

As a matter of fact Spanish is more than ever the language of polite society, of judicial proceedings and of legislation. More people are speaking Spanish than when American occupation began, and indirectly the American schools have promoted that result.... Step by step the government has been forced to take action making practical admission of defeat on the language question. The postponement to 1920 is in effect an abandonment of the struggle to force English into use. [Ford 1916: 216-217]<sup>17)</sup>

Finally, in 1903 the collaborators of *El Renacimiento* subtly and elegantly denounced the first criticism of severe censorship implemented by the U. S. government. They complained that the constabulary was controlling the theaters in order to examine the scripts of plays. They wondered whether the Filipino Bill had been revoked, as this bill did not allow the limitation of

---

17) The journal *The Philippine Review* echoed Ford's book in an article titled "Ford sobre la situación Filipina" [1917: 43]. This journal was published in Manila in Spanish and English.

laws such as freedom of speech or freedom of the press or the right of peaceful meeting [“¿Censura Previa?” (Prior Censorship?) *El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino*, 18 February 1903, Year II, Núm. 430]. This bill had been really abolished, implementing instead the sedition act and the libel act.

In 1904, Taft gave a speech at Union Reading College titled “The Philippines for the Filipinos.” The Philippines for the Filipinos is the construction of Filipino history:

Filipinas para los filipinos es una doctrina que el honor de los Estados Unidos les exige a que se ponga en ejecución en estas islas. No solamente se le prometió a los filipinos cuando los americanos vinieron después de su llegada aquí durante la insurrección y a su terminación pero no creo decir demasiado cuando digo que la reiteración de la promesa como se demuestra en la legislación que pone en práctica dichos principios, hizo mucho para hacer efectiva la tranquilidad que gozamos en la actualidad en el archipiélago o un estado de paz que me atrevo a decir no ha sido jamás tan completa en la historia de las Islas desde que los españoles se posesionaron de ella. [“Filipinas para los filipinos,” (Philippines for Filipinos) *El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino*, 12 January 1904, Year III, Núm. 106]

Philippines for Filipinos is a doctrine that U. S. honor requires them [Filipinos] to implement in these islands. Not only was it promised to the Filipinos when Americans came during the insurrection and upon its termination, but I do not think to say too much when I reiterate the promise as demonstrated in the legislation that implements the said principles. This legislation did much to enforce the peace we enjoy today in the archipelago or a state of peace that I dare say has never been so complete in the history of the islands since Spain took possession of it.

Taft was ambiguous in his discourse by reiterating the promise of independence when Filipinos established a stable government, but he never stated openly when independence would take place, as privately he confessed that the Philippines would never be prepared for independence. However, it is worth noting the last sentence, in which Taft categorically stated that peace in the archipelago had never been so complete in the history of the islands since Spain took possession of them. This assertion is inaccurate and clearly propagandistic, since Parker Willis in his article published in *Political Science Quarterly* contradicted this argument:

The Spanish did in the Philippines and in many of their other colonies a work for which they have received scant credit at the hands of their “Anglo-Saxon” critics. In the Philippines their system of rule was much more acceptable to the natives during the greater part of their stay than is that of the Americans. There has been more profound dissatisfaction, more unrest and more military activity since the Americans took charge, than there was under Spanish rule. [Willis 1907: 105–128]

This was a universal opinion among the military and officials, and for the first time, the members of *El Renacimiento* did not trust Taft. In April 1904, they wrote an article titled “Some False Assessments.” They regarded the statement that Filipinos were polite and brave but

completely unready for self-government as hypocritical. However, Taft counterattacked *El Renacimiento* by denying Americans had limited liberties or had forbidden declarations of independence ["Algunas apreciaciones falsas," (Some False Assessments) *El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino*, 18 April 1904, Year III, Núm. 184]. "Some False Assessments" would not be the only editorial that would question Taft; later, in "Routine and Prejudice" the journal severely criticized Taft's discourse on a promise of independence, which would cause unrest and riots in the Philippines. *El Renacimiento* asserted the opposite and thought that a state of indefiniteness such as the Filipinos were suffering in 1904 was more dangerous ["Rutina y Prejuicio," (Routine and Prejudiced) *El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino*, 10 June 1904, Year III, Núm. 223].

In addition to these first critiques of Taft, *El Renacimiento* raised an issue in 1904 that would continue into 1905: denouncing the abuses committed by the constabulary. Not only did the constabulary arrest nationalist politicians such as Dominador Gomez and Vicente Lukban, but under the pretext that there was *ladronism* (acts of thievery) they were imprisoning and killing all those Filipinos who bothered them to implement the sacred principles of U. S. democracy. These Filipinos did not accept U. S. subjugation. Batangas was one of the provinces that suffered abuses at the hands of the constabulary:

Algunos oficiales constabularios destacados en mi provincia tienen la costumbre de ordenar a sus soldados que se vistan de *tulisanes* e ir por los barrios, para vigilarlos seguramente. Los constabularios vestidos de ladrones llegan de noche a las casas se presentan a los pobres vecinos intimidándoles para que les preparen comida y diciéndoles además que ellos (los constabularios) son soldados de Ricarte que Ricarte está acampado en Banahaw con algunos cabecillas más que se han librado combates y otras cosas por el estilo. ["El Orden Público en Batangas," (Public Order in Batangas) *El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino*, 23 February 1904, Year III, Núm. 114]

Some prominent officials of the constabulary in my province have a habit of ordering their soldiers to dress as *tulisanes* (bandits) and to go to the barrios in order to watch them closely. The constabulary dressed as robbers arrive at night in the houses of the poor neighbors, intimidating them in order to have food prepared for them and telling them that they [the constabulary] are Ricarte's soldiers and Ricarte is camped in Banahaw with some leaders who have fought battles, and other things like that.<sup>18)</sup>

The denouncement campaign against the abuses of the constabulary that began in 1904 intensified in 1905. In 1905, *El Renacimiento* changed its name to *El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino Independiente* and became more politically combative. In fact, the term "independent" was a direct provocation to the U. S. Administration, since this word was taboo and could create incalculable damage.

---

18) Artemio Ricarte (1866–1945) was a Filipino general during the Filipino Revolution and the Philippine-American War. He is considered the father of the Filipino Army. Ricarte is famous for not having made an oath to the U. S. government.

There were five topics raised by *El Renacimiento* in 1905 and 1906 that really annoyed the U. S. government: the denunciation of the constabulary, the exaltation of the continuity of Spanish in the Philippines, the question of the Filipino soul, the publication of a copy of the Memorial asking for the independence of the Philippines presented to Taft's party by Filipino citizens in 1905, and, last but not least, the complaints about Taft's double standards.

All these issues provoked the U. S. Administration, which started to persecute the journal. In June 1905, General Henry Tureman Allen took legal action for libel against *El Renacimiento*. General Allen was simply a puppet of the government, and under this libel lawsuit the U. S. government found the press campaign against the constabulary unjustified and accused the journal of partiality and vehemence ["La libertad de la prensa," (The Freedom of the Press) *El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino Independiente*, 16 June 1905, Year IV, Núm. 230]. On 30 June 1905 Fernando M. Guerrero, Martin Ocampo, and Lope K. Santos received the second libel lawsuit. The U. S. government, in order not to arouse suspicion that they were behind the reports, asked Lieutenant Lorenzo Ramos to bring legal action against the director and the editors of the newspaper. Officials started to accuse *El Renacimiento* of being hostile to the government. U. S. newspapers in the Philippines, such as *Cablenews* and the *Manila Times*, supported this accusation. For instance, *Cablenews* stated:

*El Renacimiento* no es honrado ni digno de apoyo. Su diaria difamación a la constabularia ha producido el asesinato, el robo y descontento. *El Renacimiento* se ha hecho para el ladronismo y para el odio al Gobierno de los Estados Unidos. ["Alrededor de nuestro proceso," (Concerning our Process) *El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino Independiente*, 13 July 1905, Year IV, Núm. 250]

*El Renacimiento* is not honest or worthy of support. Its everyday defamation of the constabulary has produced murder, theft and discontent. *El Renacimiento* has been constructed for *ladronism* and for the hatred of the U. S. Government.

The U. S. newspapers followed the trial against *El Renacimiento*, creating a divergence of opinion among republican journals which persistently accused *El Renacimiento* of being hostile. According to the Republicans, the staff of *El Renacimiento* would never accept U. S. dictum because they hated everything Anglo-Saxon and they were too Latin. Instead, the Democrats supported the newspaper and advocated independence for the Philippines. No doubt the Spanish press fully supported the newspaper, as Kalaw asserted in his book "*El Renacimiento*" *Libel Suit* [1950].

In 1906 LeRoy, Taft's brain, reacted to an editorial in *El Renacimiento* titled "No, Mr. LeRoy" [*El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino Independiente*, 18 September 1906, Year V, Núm. 13]. In this editorial, the journal denounced Taft's double standards—while in the Philippines, he had shown his sympathy to the Filipino cause. He accused Filipinos of being obstinately childish, and as such this article was simply an excuse. The U. S. government felt threatened by the publication of the Memorial asking for the independence of the Philippines on 29 August 1905.



This Memorial finished with a sentence written in capital letters: Immediate independence of the Philippines. The authors of the Memorial presented it before Taft's party, which had forbidden it. *El Renacimiento*, before this prohibition, decided to publish it. These facts angered LeRoy, who wrote a long letter to *El Renacimiento* in November 1906.

### **LeRoy and His Subtle Indictment against *El Renacimiento***

LeRoy's letter to *El Renacimiento* was an attempt to undermine the Spanish imprint by emphasizing the medieval character of Spanish rule. LeRoy wrote a counterargument to Felipe Calderon's *Mis Memorias sobre la Revolución Filipina* (Memories of the Filipino Revolution) published by *El Renacimiento* in 1907. Calderon had decided to publish these *Memorias* since he felt that Filipino students were forgetting their own history by learning a history of the Philippines from the perspective of the United States. LeRoy sought to neutralize collaborators or defendants of the newspaper, such as Henry Parker Willis, Pedro Paterno, Isabelo de los Reyes, Dominador Gomez, Felipe Del Pan, and Leon M. Guerrero.

At the end of 1906, LeRoy sent his letter to *El Renacimiento*. According to him, its main purpose was to reply to some ironic and sarcastic comments against Taft published in the newspaper. He specifically addressed the editorial "No Mr. LeRoy." The journal stated that Taft showed himself in public to be a friend of the Filipinos, while in private he considered them "distinctly childish, whimsically, often unreasonably childish, sometimes obstinately childish."<sup>19)</sup> LeRoy used his defense of Taft as an excuse to attack the enemies of U. S. rule and above all the most Latinized segment of the Philippine population. As such, his letter can be seen as part of the campaign to Americanize the archipelago. He was to emphasize the *dark age* of Spanish misrule, stating:

La verdad es que los que sostienen que el "alma filipina" está en peligro de su vida, ante el monstruo "Anglo-Saxonismo," son los que se han educado en moldes latinos y españoles, que prefieren la civilización latina, la literatura latina, las costumbres latinas, que si lean algo de los productos literarios o de la ciencia y política americana, inglesa y alemana, lo leen en la lengua española y en traducciones muy malas. Para esta clase de filipinos, todo lo que implique un cambio en la educación tradicional española, en la organización política y el procedimiento administrativo español, es malo en las Filipinas. [James A. LeRoy to *El Renacimiento* 1906: 3]

The truth is that those who supported the *alma Filipina* (Filipino soul) are in danger of their life, faced with the monstrous "Anglo-Saxonism," they are those who have been educated in the Latin and Spanish molds, who prefer Latin civilization, Latin literature and Latin customs and if they read

---

19) James A. LeRoy to *El Renacimiento*, Durango, México, 1 November 1906; published in supplements of *El Renacimiento* 17, 19, 22, and 24 January 1907 [Robertson, Manuscripts, Box 2, Folder Letters 1902-06].

American, English and German literature, science or politics, they read in Spanish and in bad translations. For this class of Filipinos, all that involves a change in the traditional Spanish education, political organization and administrative procedure is bad for the Philippines.

This excerpt is a subtle criticism of very influential Filipinos, those who LeRoy thought would never accept the U. S. language, culture, and institutions and had promoted the campaign of Spanish continuity.<sup>20)</sup> He was directing his criticism, first of all, at Fernando Maria Guerrero, editor of *El Renacimiento*, whom he considered egotistical and too grounded in a preference for Latin ways and Latin ideas. Guerrero had published editorials and given recognition to those whom LeRoy called “demagogues, vicious liars and mental weaklings as Sandiko or Isabelo de los Reyes sort” and Calderon, who had published “The Filipino Soul,” a very happy Filipino soul too Hispanized, which will never disappear [“¿Desaparecerá el Alma Filipina?” (Will the Filipino Soul Disappear?) *El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino Independiente*, 10 June 1905, Year IV, Núm. 225].

More than Guerrero and Calderon, however, LeRoy was targeting Del Pan, who was co-founder with Guerrero of a conservative nationalist party and who had been surreptitiously attacking Taft in the press. Del Pan’s family was Spanish, which made it all the more obvious that LeRoy was attacking the Spanish legacy itself. LeRoy’s second argument to discredit Del Pan and Guerrero concerned their clamor for independence. A third argument was built around the fact that Del Pan and Guerrero were in touch with some important anti-imperialists such as Parker Willis. *El Renacimiento* echoed Parker Willis’s book *Our Philippine Problem* [1905], a caustic criticism of the U. S. Administration. Roosevelt, knowing of Parker Willis’s critique of the constabulary, telegraphed General Allen and Commissioner Cameron Forbes in order to organize a conference. They invited Parker Willis to the meeting to discuss all the issues related to the constabulary. The result was the expulsion of thirty detectives of the constabulary [“Censura de la Constabularia en América,” (Censorship of the Constabulary in America) *El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino Independiente*, 17 November 1905, Year IV, Núm. 63].

LeRoy’s letter was no less than a lesson in history. He had always appealed to history in order to understand present conditions. However, this and other history lessons he gave were always just a means to support the idea that all of the United States’ problems were inherited from the old regime or were inherent in the Filipinos. LeRoy accused the Filipino newspapers of forgetting or ignoring the country’s more recent history, such as the revolt of 1896. Focusing on this revolt has its *raison d’être*. LeRoy wanted to make clear that this revolt was still reformist in character and that the Katipunan was a “minor French Revolution” on the part of the poor and ignorant masses.

The nationalists and their newspapers, such as *La Independencia* — which emerged again in 1906 with the same spirit as that of 1898 — and *El Renacimiento*, were claiming Andres

---

20) James A. LeRoy to William H. Taft, Durango, México, 6 February 1906 [Robertson, Manuscripts, Box 2, Folder Letters 1902-06].

Bonifacio as the model of patriotism during the revolt of 1896. Bonifacio was starting to become an icon of independence. He and the Katipunan were to become potent signs to attract the masses in the future, but at this point in time, when *El Renacimiento* and *La Independencia* were advocating for Bonifacio to be seen as a martyr and hero, Bonifacio was not part of the discourse of political rallies.<sup>21)</sup> In 1907, advocating for Bonifacio and the Katipunan signified a tacit refusal against U.S. institutions being imposed by the administration. The nationalists were complaining that the Americans had neglected Bonifacio from the beginning. They were right, since in their reports and in their official histories, the Americans considered Bonifacio and his adherents as the less-educated men of the insurrection. LeRoy was to underpin his history lecture with the following argument:

La verdad es que muy pocos Filipinos demuestran saber la historia de su país, aún de estos diez años pasados, y hacen continuamente los periódicos filipinos asertos en cuanto a los sucesos de 1896 y 1898 y 1899 que carecen enteramente de fundamento histórico. Yo no digo que Andrés Bonifacio no era patriota y, hasta cierto grado, que hizo bien en organizar el katipunan. Pero, en vez de los mal considerados elogios de Bonifacio que se oyen ahora constantemente, y de labios de Filipinos que le despreciaron a él en su vida y se renegaron de su causa, daría yo a recordar a los Filipinos que lo que predicó él era una guerra de razas, y el asesinato (no hay otra palabra por ello) de los blancos. Y antes de llamar su trabajo "glorioso" y de querer glorificar también la rebelión de 1896 como una legítima etapa en la verdadera Revolución Filipina, es decir, en la evolución hacia más libertades sociales y políticas, recuérdese que ninguna nación estable se ha establecido sobre el asesinato y el crimen como base. [James A. LeRoy to *El Renacimiento* 1906: 15]

The truth is that few Filipinos know the history of their country, even that of the past ten years, and Filipino newspapers continuously make assertions regarding the events of 1896, 1898 and 1899 which lack any historical foundation. I do not say that Andres Bonifacio was not a patriot as, up to a certain extent, he did well in organizing the Katipunan. Yet, instead of the ill-considered eulogies of Bonifacio,

---

21) In 1997, Glenn May published *Inventing a Hero: The Posthumous Re-creation of Andres Bonifacio*. He questioned the sources about Bonifacio used by some Filipino historians, beginning with Epifanio de los Santos and Manuel Artigas. He supports the argument that the writings of Artigas, *Andres Bonifacio y el Katipunan*, and De los Santos, *Andres Bonifacio*, honored the memory of an earlier anti-colonial struggle and transformed the life of the leader of that struggle into a classic heroic story "intended to build pride in things Filipino and keep alive the notion of an independent Philippines. By attempting to promote nationalist feeling in a colonial environment, they directly attacked the traditional order" [May 1997: 164]. This argument is valid when May assumes that they tried to attack the traditional colonial order. However, he is wrong in asserting that De los Santos and Artigas were promoting Bonifacio like a hero. Artigas's biography is from 1911, and De los Santos's is from 1917. The elevation of Bonifacio as hero and martyr came about as early as 1900, when the Taft Commission fostered a worship of Rizal. According to LeRoy, Bonifacio's adherents resented this and considered that Bonifacio was being "neglected." Bonifacio emerged again in 1906. LeRoy promoted a campaign to discredit Bonifacio.

which are now constantly heard from some Filipinos who despised him and renounced his cause, I would remind them that what he preached was a war of races and the assassination (there is no other word for it) of the whites. And before claiming his work was “glorious” and before glorifying the revolt of 1896 as a legitimate phase in the real Filipino revolution, that is to say, in the evolution toward more social and political freedoms, it must be remembered that no stable nation has ever been established on the basis of assassination and crime.

LeRoy bases his argument of the *war of races* in the documents published by Retana in *Archivo del Bibliófilo Filipino*. These documents were written by friars and the more conservative sector. General Ramón Blanco did not mention in his memoir any war of races. LeRoy was furnishing an important argument for future scholars: Bonifacio as a symbol of violence, armed insurrection and anger [Ileto 1998: 183]. LeRoy excuses Bonifacio's behavior by saying that this man had been educated in a *medieval atmosphere*. This is the picture of the long dark age of Spanish rule. By giving Spanish rule a layer of medievalism, LeRoy was subtly insulting the collaborators of *El Renacimiento*.

LeRoy continued his history lesson for Filipinos by arguing that if Admiral George Dewey had not helped them get rid of the Spanish yoke, the most reactionary party of Spain would have denied them any reform:

Si no hubiera intervenido E.U. en 1898 ¿en qué estado estarían los filipinos ahora? Los movimientos insurreccionales de 1898 habrían continuado, pero ¿qué esperanzas había de echar a España de las Islas? Y como resultado de las insurrecciones, los reaccionarios de España habrían podido, probablemente, restringir más las libertades y cortar las reformas ya comenzadas, bajo España.<sup>22)</sup>

If the United States had not interfered in 1898, what kind of state would the Filipinos be in now? The insurgent movement of 1898 would have continued, but what hopes were there to expel Spain? And as a result of the insurgencies, the Spanish reactionaries might have possibly further restricted the freedoms and stop the reforms already began by Spain.

The good Americans had liberated the Filipinos from the bad Spanish. The Filipinos could not complain. According to LeRoy, it was impossible for the Filipinos to have more freedom than that which they enjoyed under the U. S. regime. LeRoy was not giving a lesson in history, but he was constructing a new history by suppressing Filipino voices hostile to the Americans.

The next target of LeRoy's attack was the Malolos government. *El Renacimiento* and the different nationalist parties were claiming that the Malolos government had demonstrated its

---

22) LeRoy was trying to convince his Filipino friends about this argument. He wrote this letter to José Albert the same month and year he sent his letter to *El Renacimiento*. James A. LeRoy to José Albert, Durango, Mexico, 23 November 1906. [Robertson, Manuscripts, Box 2, Folder Letters 1902-06].

capacity for self-government and public order. Then, as now, they were ready for independence. This argument had already been put forward by *La Independencia* in 1898, and Calderon asserted it as well in his *Mis Memorias* [1907]. LeRoy could not entirely deny this fact. However, he argued that the insurrection was based only in the provinces around Manila and dominated by Tagalogs:

El relativamente buen orden público de 1898-99 no fue obra del gobierno de Malolos, sino resultado del carácter del Filipino, generalmente dócil y pacífico. Y esto no por si solo la capacidad del gobierno de Malolos para regir bien los destinos no solamente de unas cuantas provincias del centro de Luzon, sino de todo el archipiélago con sus diversos intereses, lenguas, etc. Hay otros requisitos muy importantes para el buen gobierno, a parte del orden público. [James A. LeRoy to *El Renacimiento* 1906: 18]

The relatively good public order of 1898-99 was not due to the government of Malolos, but the result of the Filipino's nature, generally docile and peaceful. This would not have demonstrated the capacity of the government of Malolos to rule the destiny of not just some provinces in the center of Luzon, but the whole archipelago with its diverse interests and languages, etc. There are other very important requirements for good government, aside from public order.

Furthermore, LeRoy pursued the old argument that the Americans had never promised independence to Aguinaldo during the meeting in Singapore. He discredited entirely Aguinaldo's 1899 account in *Reseña Verídica*:

Dewey y Anderson han negado muy terminantemente haber dicho al Sr. Aguinaldo las cosas que pone en sus bocas la *Reseña Verídica* del Sr. Aguinaldo. Yo supongo que él no escribió dicho documento, y prefiero entenderlo así, porque contiene la Reseña varias falsedades categóricas. [*ibid.*: 21]

Dewey and Anderson have categorically denied having said to Mr. Aguinaldo the things that Aguinaldo's *Reseña Verídica* quotes them as saying. I suppose that he did not write the said document and I prefer to believe so, because it contains several categorical lies.

LeRoy was very subtle in questioning Aguinaldo's words. He alluded to the misinterpretation of terms by Aguinaldo. What Dewey and the consul conceded to him was merely a future recognition of independence. LeRoy again was making an isomorphism, reading back into Taft's policy of a future independence. This future was to remain uncertain, according to LeRoy: "I think independence will take place after generations, but it will not be soon" (*Yo creo que se realizará la independencia Filipina antes de generaciones pero no será pronto*).<sup>23)</sup>

LeRoy did not say how many generations it would take before Filipinos could expect to gain their independence. The term "generations" here is completely ambiguous, although the following sentences clarify that independence would not come soon: "En vez de pedir más y

---

23) James A. LeRoy to José Albert, 23 November 1906 [Robertson, Manuscripts, Box 2, Folder Letters 1902-06].

más derechos, es tiempo de que los filipinos probaran su capacidad para usar los derechos y privilegios que tienen. Y no lo han probado todavía en el ramo municipal ni provincial” (Instead of claiming more rights, it is time that Filipinos show their capacity to use the rights and privileges they have. And for now they have not showed it in the municipal or provincial government).<sup>24)</sup>

LeRoy told Albert he did not know what might happen in ten or twenty years, but Filipinos in 1906 were not in any condition to carry on national life and maintain a national government.<sup>25)</sup> LeRoy was not as frank in his piece for *El Renacimiento* as he was in his correspondence, but we can see that Taft and LeRoy thought of holding the archipelago forever.

LeRoy wrote in *El Renacimiento* of the Spanish “dark age” in the Philippines. This time, instead of constructing history, he criticized and discredited some important people. The first one was Wenceslao Retana. LeRoy had a special aversion for Retana since the latter potentially represented a serious challenge to the arguments he (LeRoy) had constructed about the medievalism of Spanish rule until 1898. He accused Retana of being anti-Filipino and above all anti-reformist. He said that those who tried to keep alive the *latinismo* tradition in the Philippines had resurrected Retana in their desire to resist the changes brought about by the Americans.<sup>26)</sup>

Retana was to be the pretext for attacking two important leaders in the Philippines in 1906, for different reasons. The first one was Del Pan. LeRoy accused Del Pan of being Spanish or Mexican instead of Filipino and of being an anti-reformist in the Philippines, as Del Pan had been making innuendoes against Taft and the Federal Party and calling for independence. The second was Dominador Gomez. It seems that Gomez had a more relevant role than Del Pan since he was one of the *ciudadanos Filipinos* (Filipino citizens) who presented the Memorial to Taft asking for immediate independence. Gomez was a natural born leader and in 1906 was involved in organizing labor unions. He campaigned against the use of forced labor in La Laguna, pitting himself against the governor, Juan Cailles, who had been appointed by American officials. Cailles promoted an electoral campaign in order to ask whether forced labor should be used in La Laguna. Cailles needed the majority of votes in order to implement his project. Gomez began a campaign of agitation against the use of forced labor by appealing for the support of the proletariat. Cailles's party accused Gomez of sedition by inciting the masses to independence and rebellion. Governor Cailles did not get the votes for the implementation of forced labor, and Gomez was arrested. *El Renacimiento* echoed this fact and denounced Cailles, who had ordered the arrest of Gomez. The journal did not hesitate to protest against this arbitrary and illegal act. [“El Doctor Gomez. Su llegada a Manila,” (Doctor Gomez. His Arrival in Manila) *El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino Independiente*, 10 September 1906, Year VI, Núm. 6].

---

24) James A. LeRoy to José Albert, Durango, México, 23 November 1906.

25) James A. LeRoy to José Albert, Durango, México, 23 November 1906.

26) James A. LeRoy to Fernando M. Guerrero, Durango, México, 23 March 1905 [Robertson, Manuscripts, Box 2, Folder Letters 1902-06].

LeRoy justified Cailles's position on the labor issue by recalling that he had been an insurgent fighting for the Filipino cause. Dominador Gomez, on the other hand, had been in Cuba with the Spanish Army. LeRoy was presenting a contrast between a good Filipino and a bad Filipino.

Finally, LeRoy concluded his long letter by misrepresenting the Democratic Party and exalting the Republicans. The main purpose was to undermine the campaign of independence for the Philippines presented by Democratic candidate William Jennings Bryan, who had visited the Philippines and had been received as a hero. He said that the Republicans had always supported the independence of the Philippines in *an indefinite future*:

La verdad es que el Partido Demócrata no existe en realidad como un gran partido nacional, está tan desorganizado y dividido por personalidades y diversidades de criterio. Y aún si Bryan u otro candidato demócrata se eligiera presidente en 1908 (lo cual es mucho suponer), y tuviera mayoría en la Cámara de Representantes ¿qué podría hacer en el sentido de la independencia? [James A. LeRoy to *El Renacimiento* 1906: 3]

The truth is that the Democratic Party does not exist as a great national party and is disorganized and split by personalities and diverse criteria. If Bryan or another democrat candidate becomes president in 1908 (which is highly likely) and were to gain the majority in the House of Representatives, what could they do about the sense of independence?

LeRoy was discouraging Filipinos from thinking of immediate independence by misrepresenting the Democrats. Moreover, he distorted U. S. public opinion saying that most Americans had accepted the ongoing policy, meaning Taft's policy.

LeRoy's letter to *El Renacimiento* provoked a significant reaction in the Philippines. LeRoy had proposed divorcing the young Filipino nationalists from the old Hispanophiles:

It seems to me the time has now come when we should win over the best element among the radicals, the young men who have been led around by the nose too often by Isabelo de los Reyes and others, but who are honest enough and well-intentioned. In order to do this, they must be divorced so far as may be not only from men like Don Isabelo and his ilk, but also from some of the older men who are never going to like us and our ways, and who are at the same time too intellectually egotistical and too grounded in a preference for Latin ways and Latin ideas ever to accept, in their hearts our ideas.<sup>27)</sup>

LeRoy knew that to attract these radical young men, the U. S. Administration had to be reconciled with them and to convert them into a new political element. LeRoy achieved this aim by dismembering the Federal Party; suppressing key persons such as Pardo de Tavera, Legarda, and Albert; and discrediting egotistic and Hispanized elements such as Guerrero, Del

---

27) James A. LeRoy to William H. Taft, México, 6 February 1906.

Pan, De los Reyes, Barretto, and Lukban. This letter published by *El Renacimiento* marked the beginning of the end for the newspaper.

### “Birds of Prey”

LeRoy's letter was published in supplements of *El Renacimiento* on 17, 19, 22 and 24 January 1907. LeRoy had given arguments to put an end to the newspaper. Finally, in 1908, the journal was closed. LeRoy was too ill to continue to discredit *El Renacimiento*, and Taft, who was preparing his campaign for the presidency of the United States, decided Worcester would take over from LeRoy.

In 1908, *El Renacimiento* continued to denounce unscrupulous government officials. Following the same philosophy from 1901, on 30 October 1908 it published an editorial titled “Birds of Prey.” Worcester felt that the journal was explicitly attacking his integrity and reviled his reputation as a private citizen. He was said to possess “racial prejudices” against the people of the country in which he lived, and to be by “predilection a convinced anti-Filipino.” Worcester's scientific activities were pictured as laying a heavy burden upon the Filipino taxpayers without rendering any proportionate service to them. He was said to have used his official position to further speculation in lands. For all these issues, Worcester accused Martin Ocampo, Fidel A. Reyes (the author of the editorial), Teodoro M. Kalaw, Lope K. Santos, Faustino Aguilar, Leoncio C. Linquete, Manuel Palma, Arcadio Arellano, Angel Jose, Galo Lichauco, Felipe Barreto, and Gregorio M. Cansipit of libel. It was coincidence indeed that this new suit against the staff of *El Renacimiento* was presented just after it was definitely known in Manila that the Imperialists had triumphed in the U. S. elections. Taft was the new president of the United States [Kalaw 1950: 7].

Judge Jenkins pronounced sentence against the staff of *El Renacimiento* because he understood there was a paragraph explicitly alluding to Worcester:

He ascends the mountains of Benguet ostensibly to classify and measure Igorot skulls, to study and to civilize the Igorots but at the same time, he also spies during his flight, with the keen eye of the bird of prey where the large deposits of gold are, the real prey concealed in the lonely mountains and then he appropriates these all to himself afterward, thanks to the legal facilities he can make and unmake at will, always, however, redounding in his own benefit. [*ibid.*: 9]

All the staff were condemned, and some of them were in jail for six months. The court found that Worcester had sustained damages on account of wounded feelings, mental suffering, and injuries to his standing and reputation to the sum of thirty-five thousand pesos [Jenkins 1910: 24]. *El Renacimiento* and *Muling Pasilang* were forced to relinquish the hard task undertaken eight years before. The entire Spanish and Filipino press unanimously took up the part of the staff and defended them with great earnestness and sincerity:



The misfortunes of the Filipino press are also those of the Spanish press. Its victories are also ours, for the Filipino newspaper cannot deny its Spanish ancestry. Let us, therefore, promise to unite ourselves in tribulation, to help each other in adversity ... we cannot deny that the campaigns they waged are those of a nation desiring justice, seeking liberty demanding a blessing to which it has a right. [Kalaw 1950: 11]

All the newspapers echoed and showed their sadness because the alleged freedom of the press in the Philippines did not exist. We find an example of the said sadness in March 1910, when the newspaper *The Public* published an editorial titled "Farewell *El Renacimiento*." This paper asserted:

... the Americans came to these islands impelled (they say) by the love of humanity, and announcing that they brought with them liberty and prosperity; all in short, that an oppressed people dream of. For a moment, they believed that the hour of redemption was at hand. When the armed opposition of the people was overcome, and the Americans found themselves undisputed lords of the land, redemption became domination under the guise of preparing the Philippines people for self-government. [Zwick 1996]<sup>28)</sup>

For the U. S. Administration, *El Renacimiento* had become a real force. They considered, as LeRoy clearly stated in his letters, that in the hearts of the men who were the mainsprings of the periodical, a thoroughgoing hatred toward everything American appeared at regular intervals. To a certain extent, LeRoy and the U.S. Administration were right and *El Renacimiento* was a defender of Spanish culture and Spanish language. Teodoro M. Kalaw was a real *Hispanista* and a lover of the Castilian language. He was not afraid to show his gratitude to the motherland. In this sense, Spanish culture signified the preservation of the culture of the past and, by extension, of the Philippine culture.

Worcester fulfilled his aims, but he could not silence the critical voices against U.S. imperialism since another journal, *La Vanguardia*, was founded with the same combative spirit. American officials and scholars continued to carry out campaigns against Filipino newspapers so that future scholars could forget their past, in fact, the most combative past. Cameron Forbes tried to bring about this mission and in his book *The Philippine Islands* stated: "*El Renacimiento* and *La Vanguardia* which has taken the place of *El Renacimiento* is engaged in stirring up hatred of the Americans and trying to make trouble" [Forbes 1928: 74-75]. It seems that the U. S. Administration fulfilled its objectives, as these newspapers are now cited mainly through secondary sources.

---

28) "Farewell *El Renacimiento*." *The Public* 13 (March 25, 1910). <http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/unofficial/students/fjzwick/vof/er011510.html>. In Jim Zwick, ed., *Anti-Imperialism in the United States, 1898-1935*. <http://web.syr.edu/~fjzwick/ail98-35.html> (January 1996).

## Conclusion

This article has illustrated through examples how important the press was in the Philippines between the Spanish and U.S. empires. The U.S. Administration complained that the newspapers in the Philippines were mainly political. This was a Spanish legacy in the archipelago — as has been explained, many newspapers were founded in the Philippines in the 1890s, after the press law was passed in 1883. In addition, this article has emphasized, through a historical analysis of the newspaper *El Resumen*, how Spanish censorship was avoided (in spite of the fact that the publication was an organ of La Liga Filipina); *El Resumen* dared say what other newspapers did not. In fact, *El Resumen* was Rizal's voice, and what the newspaper published in "Our Wishes" was, finally, Rizal's wishes for his *patria* (homeland). Therefore, this article wants to open a new line of research: It is necessary for scholars to start consulting papers, aside from *La Solidaridad*, that played an important role in the Spanish colonial era. The rich variety of publications can help us understand the complex power politics and the lesser-known aspects of Filipino history during Spanish and U.S. colonial rule. If anything, this article has made clear that the alleged Spanish censorship was not as strict as has been discursively argued by American and Filipino scholars. However, we cannot categorically state that U.S. rule was enlightened, except for the period 1914–20, when Governor-General Francis Burton Harrison implemented the policy of Filipinization in the archipelago. This policy allowed Filipinos to express themselves freely. However, from the very outset there had been a persistent attempt to conceal the facts, and thus to muzzle public sentiment. Censorship and strict suppression of facts occurred as soon as the "Criminal Libel" and "Sedition" acts were passed in 1901. These two acts were passed with the object of repressing public criticism. It is clear that *El Renacimiento* suffered the consequences of real censorship. The Americans came to the islands promising to safeguard freedom of speech and freedom of the press, but, as argued in this article, they quickly broke their promises. Soon *El Renacimiento* realized and denounced the arbitrariness of officials and government and advocated the continuity of Spanish as the official language. This campaign was effective, as in 1920 Spanish was still the language of the courts, politics, administration and press. *El Renacimiento* was able to demand immediate independence. All these issues, which provoked the U.S. Administration into applying pressure on the publication, forced the paper to relinquish the task it had undertaken for eight years, thus bringing to a close a chapter in Filipino history at the turn of the twentieth century. How we read this chapter will influence future archival research on the complexities that existed in the transition from the Spanish to the U.S. colonial periods in the Philippines.

### Acknowledgements

This work is part of a collective research project titled “Transiciones Imperiales, cambio institucional y divergencia. Un análisis comparado de la trayectoria colonial y postcolonial de las posesiones españolas América, Asia y África (1500–1900),” funded by the Ministry of Education and Science Program I + D + I HAR2009–14099–C02–01.

I wish to dedicate this article to Professor Josep M. Delgado, because when I suggested acquiring the publication *El Renacimiento*, he did not express any doubts about doing so. In addition, I want to thank Caroline Hau for her helpful comments on earlier versions of this article and Mario López for his editing. They are not in any way responsible for the opinions presented in the article.

### References

- Artigas, Manuel. 1909. *Los Periódicos Filipinos: La Más Completa Bibliografía Publicada hasta la Fecha Acerca de los Papeles Públicos Filipinos*. Manila: Biblioteca Nacional Filipina.
- Bahamonde, Ángel; and Martínez, Jesús A. 2001. *Historia de España Siglo XIX*. Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra.
- Blair, Emma H.; and Robertson, James A., eds. 1903–09. *The Philippine Islands 1493–1898*. 55 vols. Ohio, Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company.
- Cal, Rosa. 1998. Propaganda Revolucionaria en Filipinas: El Resumen y la Liga Filipinas. *Historia y Comunicación Social* 3: 27–39.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1999. Filipinas 1898: El Control de la Prensa. *Investigaciones Históricas: Época Moderna y Contemporánea* 19: 159–168.
- Calderon, Felipe G. 1907. *Mis Memorias sobre la Revolución Filipina*. Segunda Etapa (1898 a 1901.) Manila: El Renacimiento.
- Cano, Glòria. 2008. Wenceslao Retana Revisited: A New Historical Assessment. In *More Hispanic than We Admit: Insights into Philippine Cultural History*, edited by Isaac Donoso, pp. 263–301. Quezon City: Vibal Foundation.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “La Solidaridad” y el Periodismo en Filipinas en Tiempos de Rizal. In *Entre España y Filipinas: José Rizal, Escritor. Catálogo: Estudios Críticos*, edited by Elizalde María Dolores. Madrid: AECID-Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación, forthcoming.
- “Farewell *El Renacimiento*.” 1996. *The Public* 13 (25 March 1910). Accessed November 11, 2011. <http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/unofficial/students/fjzwick/vof/er011510.html>. In *Anti-Imperialism in the United States, 1898–1935*, edited by Jim Zwick. <http://web.syr.edu/~fjzwick/ail98-35.html> (January).
- Forbes, W. Cameron. 1928. *The Philippine Islands*. Vol. II. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Ford, Henry J. 1916. *Woodrow Wilson: The Man and His Work*. New York: D. Appleton and Company.
- “Ford sobre la Situación Filipina.” 1917. *The Philippine Review* 2 (May): 43.
- Foreman, John. 1899. *The Philippine Islands: A Political, Geographical, Ethnographical, Social and Commercial History of the Philippine Archipelago and Its Political Dependencies, Embracing the Whole Period of Spanish Rule*. New York: C. Scribner’s Sons.
- Gies, David T., ed. 1999. *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Spanish Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hayden, Joseph Ralston. 1942. *The Philippines: A Study in National Development*. New York: Macmillan.
- Ileto, Reynaldo C. 1998. *Filipinos and Their Revolution: Event, Discourse and Historiography*. Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press.
- Jenkins, J.C. 1910. *Decision of Judge J.C. Jenkins of the Court of First Instance for the Judicial District of Manila, Part IV, in the Action for Damages Brought by Dean C. Worcester Against the Owners, Directors, Writers, Editors and Administrators of the Newspaper Known as El Renacimiento y Muling Pagsilang*. Charleston: Nabu Press.

- Kalaw, Teodoro M. 1950. *"El Renacimiento" Libel Suit*. Manila: n.p.
- LeRoy, James A. 1914. *The Americans in the Philippines*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co.
- May, Glenn. 1997. *Inventing a Hero: The Posthumous Re-creation of Andres Bonifacio*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers.
- Owen, Norman G. 2005. *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia: A New History*. Singapore: Singapore University Press.
- Retana, Wenceslao E. 1890. *Reformas y Otros Excesos*. Folletos Filipinos IV. Madrid: Librería de Fernando Fé.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1891. *Frtailes y Clérigos*. Madrid: Librería de Fernando Fé.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1895. *El Periodismo Filipino. Noticias para su Historia (1811-1894). Apuntes Bibliográficos, Indicaciones Biográficas, Notas Críticas, Semblanzas, Anécdotas*. Madrid: Imp. de la Viuda de M. de Minuesa de los Ríos.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1906. *Aparato Bibliográfico de la Historia General de Filipinas*. Madrid: Imprenta de la Sucesora de M. Minuesa de los Ríos.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1907. *Vida y Escritos del Dr. José Rizal*. Madrid: Librería General de V. Suárez.
- Robertson, James Alexander. 1904-08. Papers. Box 5, Special Correspondence. Washington, D. C.: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1906. Annapolis, Md. Manuscripts, Box 2, Folder Letters 1902-06. Durham, N. C.: Special Collections Library, Duke University.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1907-39. Manuscripts. Letters, Box 3, James A. LeRoy to *El Renacimiento*, Durango, México, 1 November 1906. Published in supplements of *El Renacimiento* 17, 19, 22 and 24 January 1907. Durham, N. C.: Special Collections Library, Duke University.
- Salamanca, Bonifacio S. 1984. *The Filipino Reaction to American Rule, 1901-1913*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers.
- Sánchez Fuertes, Cayetano. 1989. La Prensa Española y Filipinas, 1868-1872. In *Extremo Oriente Ibérico. Investigaciones Históricas: Metodología y Estado de la Cuestión*, edited by Francisco Solano, Florentino Rodao, and Luís Togores. Madrid: Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional, Departamento de Estudios Históricos, CSIC.
- Schurman, Jacob G. 1900. *Report of the Philippine Commission to the President*, Vol. II. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office.
- Taft, William H. 1902. Political Parties in the Philippines. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 20 (2): 307-312.
- Villanueva Kalaw, Pura. 1950. Foreword. In *"El Renacimiento" Libel Suit*, author by Teodoro M. Kalaw. Manila: n. p.
- Willis, H. Parker. 1905. *Our Philippine Problem: A Study of American Colonial Policy*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1907. The Philippines and the Filipinos: A Reply. *Political Science Quarterly* 22 (1): 105-128.
- Worcester, Dean C. 1898. *The Philippine Islands and Their People: A Record of Personal Observation and Experience, with a Short Summary of the More Important Facts in the History of the Archipelago*. New York: Macmillan.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1900. "Some Aspects of the Philippine Question," address delivered under the auspices of the Club at Central Music Hall, Chicago, 15 November 1899. Washington, D. C.: Library and Publication Committee.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1930. *The Philippines Past and Present*. New ed. New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Newspapers
- El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino*, 1901-05.
- El Renacimiento: Diario Filipino Independiente*, 1905-08.
- La Solidaridad*, Barcelona 1889, Madrid 1890-95.