

THE TRUCE OF BIYAKNABATO

Teodoro A. Agoncillo

When, in the early months of 1897, Governor-General Camilo de Polavieja began his offensives against the Filipino revolutionists, he thought that he could cripple the revolutionary movement by short, swift strokes. He was hopeful that in a few months he could bring peace to the strife-torn archipelago and impose anew the powers of the Spanish monarch. But Polavieja underestimated the capacity of the Filipino masses to undergo hardships and privations. They fought with everything they could lay hands on. Polavieja, realizing at last that he could not put down the rebellion, feigned illness and asked his Queen Regent to relieve him of his difficult job. On March 22, General Primo de Rivera, former governor of the Philippines, was appointed to succeed Polavieja.

Primo de Rivera arrived in Manila on April 23. He was optimistic regarding his ability to put down the rebellion, for on his way to Manila he had received cables both from the acting governor and from the authorities in Spain that the revolutionary movement was losing momentum. A first look at the situation, however, convinced Primo de Rivera that all was not well. He tried to woo the Filipinos to his side by adopting the policy of attraction, promising, in substance, that he would pardon all those who, up to May 17, would give themselves up. The revolutionists, however, were wary of Spanish promises; they continued their armed resistance against their sworn enemy. It was then that Primo de Rivera seriously thought of launching a series of military campaigns to humble the Filipinos. He

succeeded in re-capturing Cavite, but Aguinaldo escaped, first, to Batangas, then to Laguna, and finally, to Bulakan. At Biyaknabato, San Miguel de Mayumo, he holed up and harassed the Spanish forces in Central Luzon by means of a hit-and-run tactic. In between engagements, Aguinaldo and his men prepared a constitution, later called the Biyaknabato Constitution.

Owing to the military impasse, Pedro A. Paterno, a Filipino who had studied in Spain, approached Primo de Rivera with the proposition that he wanted to mediate between the two warring sides. He would confer with the revolutionary leaders in order to persuade them to come to terms with the Spanish authorities. The governor accepted Paterno's proposition on condition that he would not compromise the honor of Spain. With this reminder he gave Paterno a pass so the mediator could pass through the Spanish lines.

Paterno reached Biyaknabato on August 9, 1897. He presented himself to Aguinaldo. He pointed out to Aguinaldo that he had the explicit promise of the governor-general that the revolutionists would be pardoned and given a certain sum of money in ex-

change for their surrender. At first Aguinaldo was lukewarm to the proposals; but later on he changed his mind. He demanded, as the price of peace, the expulsion of the religious orders, representation in the Spanish Cortes, freedom, "true justice" for Filipinos and Spaniards. With these proposals, Paterno went to Malakanyang and appraised Primo de Rivera of the rebels' demands. The governor, however, said that he could not promise reforms, nor the expulsion of the religious orders, because he had no authority to do so. Only the Spanish Cortes could grant the reforms demanded, he added. The minimum requirements that Primo de Rivera approved were pardon for all and the security in the departure of the rebel chieftains from the Philippines. As to money, he believed that the Spanish Government in the Philippines could pay as much as ₱1,700,000 to be paid in three installments. With these counter-proposals in his head, Paterno returned to Biyaknabato. Some of the military leaders wanted to continue the struggle against the Spaniards, but Paterno succeeded, through bribery and cajolery, in neutralizing them by winning over to his

BURGLARY

A young couple that had received many valuable wedding presents established their home in a suburb. One morning they received in the mail two tickets for a popular show in the city, with a single line:

"Guess who sent them."

The pair had much amusement in trying to identify the donor, but failed in the effort. They duly attended the theater, and had a delightful time. On their return home late at night, still trying to guess the identity of the unknown host, they found the house stripped of every article of value. And on the bare table in the dining-room was a piece of paper on which was written in the same hand as the enclosure with the tickets:

"Now you know!"

* * *

side the prominent men in the field.

On November 5, Aguinaldo authorized Paterno "to enter into harmonious relations with the Spanish Government, giving him full powers to determine, fix and receive the total sum of the funds or values which the Spanish Government grants us...." Paterno once more returned to Malakanyang and conferred with Primo de Rivera. The obstacles to the conclusion of peace had been hurdled. The resulting Truce of Biyaknabato, in which Aguinaldo was represented by Paterno, had three separate documents.

They were dated November 18, December 14 and December 15, 1897.

The November 18 document provided:

(1) Aguinaldo and his leaders would surrender their arms and submit themselves to the proper authorities;

(2) the surrendered arms shall be delivered to the proper authorities according to a date to be specified and agreed upon by both parties to the truce:

(3) armed parties who did not recognize Aguinaldo's authority may surrender to the Spanish officials; they would

receive the same treatment as those men of Aguinaldo who likewise surrendered to the government;

(4) the governor-general shall provide the surrendered rebels with necessary means of subsistence.

With the signing of this document. Paterno reported to Aguinaldo his success in dealing with the governor-general. Some minor points were threshed out in the next meeting of Paterno and Primo de Rivera. On December 14, the second document of the truce, known as the "Programme," was signed. The "programme" follows:

December 25. — Departure of Aguinaldo and his companions including the Spanish hostages, for Lingayen, and from here to Hongkong. Upon departure, the Spanish Government would hand to Baldomero Aguinaldo a draft in the amount of ₱400,000 payable at Hongkong.

December 27. — Aguinaldo and his men, having left for Hongkong, and having arrived at the latter place, will telegraph Artemio Ricarte "in order that he may carry out the following:"

1. surrender of all arms and ammunitions;

2. the surrender of arms not yet turned in at the departure of Aguinaldo for Hongkong;

3. the freeing of General Tejeiro and another companion who were left at Biyak-nabato as hostages;

4. the cashing of the check in the amount of ₱400,000 given to Aguinaldo upon certification that 225 firearms, 2382 cartridges, and twenty pieces of machinery belonging to the Spanish Government had been turned over to the authorities;

5. payment by the Spanish Government of the sum of ₱200,000 as soon as the Filipinos had turned over 700 arms, and another check for ₱200,000 as soon as the *Te Deum* had been sung and the general amnesty had been proclaimed.

The third document, signed on December 15, dealt with the distribution of the total indemnity of ₱1,700,000, as follows:

1. payment by the Spanish government of the sum of Mexican \$400,000 to the rebels in arms and two checks in the amount of Mexican \$200,000 each "payable on condition of the agreement being fulfilled" by the Filipino rebels;

2. payment by the Spanish Government of the balance to those who suffered the effects of war, the payment to be made in three installments,

the last one to be paid six months after the *Te Deum* had been sung.

In explaining his acceptance of the truce, Aguinaldo, on Christmas Day, said: "I lay down my arms because continuing the war will produce turmoil and evil, in place of happiness. x x x. I lay down my arms in accordance with the patriotic advice of the Ar-

bitrator, the Maguino, Pedro A. Paterno, lover of the well-being of our native land."

On December 27, Aguinaldo, his companions, Pedro A. Paterno, and two Spanish hostages, boarded the steamer *Uranus* for Hongkong. Peace, a temporary peace, had at long last settled on the Philippines.

* * *

"I lost my wife in the sea."

"My poor friend! Was she taken away by a wave?"

"No—by a life guard."

* * *

"How do you control your husband while you are away?"

"I leave the baby with him."