

The Philippine View of Indonesian Independence: As Reported in Philippine Newspapers¹

Augusto V. De Viana

Introduction: Visions for National Freedom

Viewing each other as brothers of the same race, Filipinos and Indonesians shared the same aspirations for national liberation and independence. Events in the Philippines such as the Reform Movement in the Philippines of the 1880s, the Philippine Revolution in 1896, and the Filipino-American War were closely watched by its neighbors and helped inspire the formation of independence movements.

One of the Filipino leaders admired by Indonesians was Manuel L. Quezon. In 1916 Quezon rose to prominence with the passage of the Philippine Autonomy Act or Jones Law which had a formal American commitment of the eventual withdrawal of American sovereignty as soon as a stable Philippine government was established. Under the law, an all-Filipino legislature composed of a House of Representatives and a Senate was established. Quezon became President of the Senate and was considered as the foremost Filipino leader of his time. Fiery and dramatic Quezon transformed politics into a spectacle, especially during a dispute over jurisdictional power with the Americans in 1923 when he was reported to have said "I rather have a government run like hell by Filipinos than a government run like heaven by the Americans." During Quezon's time, the Indonesian independence movement was heating up. In the late 1920s Quezon visited Indonesia and among those he met were Indonesian nationalists and intellectuals including Dr. Sutomo, Thamrin, and Dr. Ratulangi (Suradji, 1983: 131-132.)

1 This is a paper delivered during the plenary session of the 22nd conference of the International Association of Historians of Asia (IAHA) in Surakarta (Solo), Indonesia, on July 3, 2012.

Picture 1. Quezon was one of the Filipino leaders admired by Indonesians



Another Filipino leader was Wenceslao Q. Vinzons. In 1934, Vinzons was elected as the youngest member of the Constitutional Convention, which drafted the Constitution of the Philippine Commonwealth and the Philippine Republic. Later, he became governor of his home province of Camarines Norte. An adversary of Quezon, Vinzons dreamed of a united Southeast Asia in 1936. An organization called the Pan-Malayan Union was established at the University of the Philippines. The union was comprised of students from the other Southeast Asian countries and Vinzons served as its adviser. Indonesia was represented by Tengku Usman Hussein, a former Indonesian consul to Singapore who became its Secretary General; the other Indonesian members were Tengku S. Abulbakar, Baron Sudhadfistra, and Tengku S. Djaja as members. Vinzon's dream was to free Southeast Asia from bondage. This dream was voiced out in his prize-winning oration entitled *Malaya Irredenta*. Here, he envisioned the establishment of a Malay nation that could consolidate "a million brown people." This nation is not one state but the entire Southeast Asian region where the people sharing a common racial and cultural heritage, continue to live in peace and freedom devoid of colonial anthem (Suradji, 1983: 136-137).

In 1938, Vinzons was elected governor of Camarines Norte. He did not witness to see the realization of his dream as he was captured and executed by the Japanese during the Second World War. Vinzons became a guerrilla leader during the early part of the war before he was betrayed by his own in-laws, and later, he was executed by the Japanese. Nevertheless, parts of his vision of a pan Malayan union can be seen in the present Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Indonesians also had an influence on the Philippines. The seeds of communism were sowed in the islands by a man named Tan Malaka. Tan Malaka arrived in the Philippines on July 20, 1925 from Hong Kong. Passing himself off as a Filipino musician named Jorge Fuentes, Tan Malaka slipped through Philippine immigration with six Indonesian refugees who had fake papers. In his two years in the Philippines, he met peasant and labor leaders among whom was Crisanto Evangelista who became Chairman of the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas in 1938. Tan Malaka helped pursue plans of the Philippine labor Congress to send delegates to the Trade Conference in Canton, China which was sponsored by the Red International Organization of Labor Unions, a subsidiary of the COMINTERN (Communist International) which was tasked to spread communism worldwide. Tan Malaka also met other Filipino leaders like Quezon, Claro M. Recto who became a senator, Jose Abad Santos who became Chief Justice of the Philippines, Ramon Fernandez, the Mayor of Manila and Apolinario de los Santos, President of the University of the Philippines and his brother, Mariano. Finally Tan Malaka was arrested for illegal entry and deported to Amoy, China (Suradji, 1983).

Regardless of his political ideology, Tan Malaka may be considered as the first Indonesian to make deliberate contacts with the Filipinos although his objectives did not reflect the diplomatic objectives of Indonesia. Before him, Philippine-Indonesian relations began as informal and unplanned interactions between the peoples of the two countries. Though he did not play his maximum role as a communist organizer, he was considered as an ardent nationalist who had incurred the wrath of the alien colonizer of his country. Tan Malaka appeared to have succeeded in his role though it was

Picture 2.

Vinzons envisioned a "Malayan Dawn" in his *Malaya Irredenta*.



not prominently mentioned. By the time he was caught by the Americans and deported, communism was already well rooted in the minds of Filipino labor leaders and that international communism was flexing its newly acquired muscles throughout the Far East (Suradji, 1983: 114). According to Apolinario de los Santos who provided living quarters for Malaka said "Tan Malaka's crime was that of being a patriot - a nationalist of the first order but never a Bolshevik" (Suradji, 1983: 134-135).

During the final month of the Second World War the Indonesians reached a point of no return in their aspiration for independence. Following Japan's decision to surrender, Indonesian patriots declared their nation's independence on August 17, 1945. This declaration was not recognized by the Netherlands which sought to return to its former colony and reclaim it by force.

The return of the Dutch marked the armed struggle for Indonesian independence. In the Philippines meanwhile, preparations were being made for its own independence from the United States. Elections were held on April 23, 1946 and the elected President Manuel Roxas became the Philippines' last Commonwealth President and the first elected president when the Philippine Republic was inaugurated on July 4, 1946. As the Philippines became independent that year, Indonesians sought support and inspiration from the Philippines. The Philippine government did not openly support the independence movement because the Netherlands was an ally of the United States and it did not want to embarrass the American government. However, a *de facto* Indonesian embassy was set up in Manila while the Indonesian war of independence raged.

Many Filipinos sympathized with the Indonesian cause and provided material and moral support. They supplied arms, ammunition and supplies which were smuggled through the country's southern border. Information about this role is sketchy and it needs to be fully researched. Oral accounts by old timers from Cavite and Corregidor also mention that the weapons especially obtained during the Second World War, were brought to the Indonesian freedom fighters. Explosive powder aside from those used in dynamite fishing was obtained from unexploded shells taken from Corregidor and sent to Indonesia. Again this information has become part of local legend and needs to be fully confirmed. According to one account, some of the Filipinos allegedly profited from arms smuggling by getting compensated with goods which were then sold in the Philippines. Again this information needs to be fully verified.

It is also possible that Filipino volunteers also went to Indonesia to fight the Dutch. During a conference commemorating the centenary of the First Asian Republic held in Jakarta in September 1997, the Chairman of the National Centennial Commission, former Vice President Salvador H. Laurel

said in a speech that he volunteered to fight on the side of the Indonesian nationalists against the Dutch. He was prevented however from doing so because of objections from his family.²

Picture 3. Salvador H. Laurel



Note: As a young man Laurel volunteered to fight on the side of Indonesian nationalists during Indonesia's war of independence in 1945-1949.

The Headlines of December 28, 1949

Papers

Philippine newspapers followed up developments concerning Indonesia, culminating with the recognition of that country's independence by the Netherlands on December 27, 1949. The Indonesian event hogged the headlines of Philippine broadsheets such as the *Manila Times* and the *Manila Daily Bulletin*. Local events took a backseat as news of Indonesian independence filled the front pages. The local news at that time included an electoral protest by a member of the Philippine Senate (*Manila Times*, 1949:1).

2 Salvador H. Laurel (1928-2004) served as Chairman of the National Centennial Commission during the commemoration of the centenary of the Philippine Revolution and Philippine Independence (1996 and 1998). In August 1997 he led a delegation which held a conference on the First Asian Republic at the Kartika Chandra Hotel during which he mentioned that he was one of the Filipinos who volunteered to fight on the side of the Indonesian freedom fighters in 1945-1949.

The shelling of a Moro fort in Jolo by naval guns as the Philippine navy, army and constabulary were trying to flush out the group of the bandit leader Hadji Kamlon (*Manila Times*, 1949: 1-2) and a takeover of a town in Mindoro by communist dissidents (*Manila Times*, 1949: 1).

Indonesia then was described as a country of 77 million people and the government that was established was the United States of Indonesia. The December 28 issue of the *Manila Times* shows a map of Indonesia depicting it as a nation of 77 million people living on 743, 885 square miles of land. It showed the islands such as Sumatra, Java, the Moluccas, Celebes and even the western part of New Guinea which was then under dispute with the Netherlands. Between the caption and the map were illustrations of Indonesia's products such as oil, tin, rice, rubber, gold, copra and spices.

On December 28, 1949 issue came out with a very large banner stating "United States of Indonesia Is Born" (*Manila Times*, 1949: 1). The story read:

"Holland's rule over the East Indies ended late yesterday afternoon, Manila time as Queen Juliana, in Amsterdam, signed the final papers, and as on the lawn before the Konigsplein Palace in Batavia, flags changed places and the Netherlands crown's representative motored to the airport to take off for Holland... Today President Soekarno arrives in Jakarta to take up residence in the former palace of the Dutch viceroys."

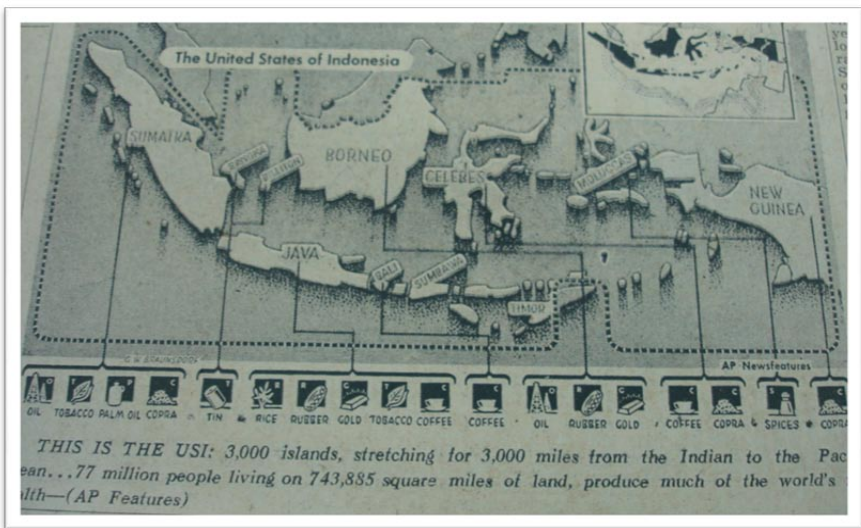
Picture 4. The *Manila Times*, December 28, 1949.



The same paper described the details of the recognition of the country's independence by Queen Juliana in the Netherlands. Headlined "Queen of Netherlands Signs Away Indies Empire, Remains Titular Chief" (*Manila*

Times, 1949: 1) Queen Juliana signed two documents, the first was “the act of sovereignty” and the second, inaugurating the Netherlands-Indonesian Union. The first document created the United States of Indonesia and ended 350 years of Dutch rule in the archipelago. It was a formal act of transfer of sovereignty and recognition to the United States of Indonesia. The second was the creation of the Netherlands-Indonesian Union with the Queen as its titular chief. The union was formed to promote voluntary cooperation between the two countries to promote their common interests. The documents were signed at the Citizen’s hall of the Royal Palace. Witnessing the signing which took place at the Citizen’s Hall of the Royal Palace, there were Prince Bernhard and the entire Dutch Cabinet. The Indonesians were represented by a delegation led by Prime Minister Mohammad Hatta. In the act of transfer, Queen Juliana guaranteed that the “transfer of sovereignty shall have the force of law” and announced that “the Netherlands Union has been effected”.

Picture 5. Indonesia being introduced to Filipino readers on the December 28 issue of the Manila Times.



Prime Minister Hatta accepted the sovereignty on behalf of the republic and agreed on the “effecting of the Netherlands-Indonesian Union”. The Dutch and Indonesian ministers and other Indonesian delegates countersigned the order. After the signing of the pact, the queen spoke briefly to delegations and a handful of officials who attended the ceremony. A few minutes later, the bells of the old palace carillon pealed out the Dutch and Indonesian anthems in greeting the newest country in the world. With a clear and modulated voice, the queen, dressed in a black dress and hat, greeted the birth of the new Indonesian state in a grave speech after she signed the transfer act at 9:20 a.m.

(5:20 p.m., Manila Time). She said, "No longer do we stand partially opposed to one another... This is one of the most deeply moving events of the times, piercing as it were the roots of our existence" (*Manila Times*, 1949).

Meanwhile in New York, Dr. H. Riemens, the acting head of the Dutch delegation to the United Nations handed a letter to the United Nations Secretary General Trygve Lie on December 27, announcing the birth of the United States of Indonesia. He also said that his government is "pledging to take all possible steps to promote the early admission of this newest state as a member of the United Nations organization" (*Manila Times*, 1949). Other countries began recognizing the new nation. In Washington, D.C., officials said that the White House will announce on December 28 its recognition of the United States of the newly-created United States of Indonesia (Washington, December 27). On the same day, the government of Pakistan extended its recognition to the new country and arranged for the exchange of ambassadors. The Pakistani government then sent a message of felicitations to Indonesian President, Soekarno.

Meanwhile in Indonesia, Benjamin Osias of the *Manila Times* reported the independence ceremonies (*Manila Times*, 1949). Osias reported that the signing of the protocol at Koningsplein Palace was signed at 5:34 p.m. (Manila Time). As deputy premier of the USI, Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX signed first the protocol. He was followed by Dr. A.H. J. Lovnik, who signed as the behalf of the Crown of the Netherlands. Lovnik was also the high representative of the Netherlands. The crowd numbering around 20,000 packed about the lawn which was up to that time the residence of the Dutch viceroys listened to the radio broadcast by Queen Juliana from her palace at Amsterdam. There was silence among the crowd as they stood in respectful attention. Then they broke into thunderous cheer as the Dutch tricolor was hauled down and the red and scarlet flag of Indonesia was raised by the troopers of the Indonesian National Army (TNI). The flag ceremony took place against a backdrop of gray cloud and under a slight drizzle ended at 5:54 p.m. (Manila time). Sultan Hamengkubuwono and his retinue bade farewell, accompanied Dr. Lovnik at the airport and with the departure of the Dutch officials. The 350-year old rule of Holland over the East Indies ended and Indonesia assumed full and sovereign authority over the 3,000 islands of the new nation. According to Osias, the ceremonies which accompanied the transfer were deeply impressive and most touching to watch. The mixed feelings were well concealed and the strained solemnity which was the one which prevailed. "There were feelings of triumph and humility, or pride in surrender", Osias observed. "These were merged into a new spirit of mutual need and cooperation between the Dutch and the Indonesians, feelings faintly evident to foreign observers".

Earlier in preparation of the withdrawal of Dutch authority, Dr. Hirschfeld, new Dutch High Commissioner for the Crown, arrived this morning (December 27) by plane to assume his office when President Soekarno arrived from Jogjakarta Wednesday morning. The new High Commissioner for the Crown took up residence at the former British NAAFI store. Soekarno as the new president of USI, will occupy the palace to inaugurate the transition of government functions.

The transfer ceremony took place inside the palace banquet hall. It was in an atmosphere of white Corinthian, with glass chandeliers hanging over a long white conference table, circled by 38 chairs. At the south end, there were two chairs, one for the Sultan deputy premier and the other for Dr. Lovnik. Foreign diplomats and the press rounded out the rest of the table. A life-size portrait of the Queen adorned the west wall and a bust of the Queen at the east wall. The ceremony were attended over 200 representatives of 22 nations, plus press men and photographers witnessing the signing of the protocol and the flag ceremony. At 4:30 p.m. the guests were ushered along streets, cleared by joint Dutch and Indonesian troopers to the palace steps. Security measures were complete with Siliwangi (guerrilla) troopers, bearing machine guns took positions surrounding the palace on all sides. Then the foreign representatives began to arrive. The first delegate to arrive was Pakistan's foreign minister Chaudry Nazir Ahmed Khan. All were seated when the Dutch and Federal officials entered the hall through the south portal, followed by the Indonesian transition cabinet and delegates, who occupied opposite sides of the table.

The Sultan and Lovnik entered together, and took their seats at the head of the table. The Sultan wore a major-general's khaki dress uniform, with white shirt and black tie, without decorations. Dr. Lovnik wore a white dress uniform with one row of ribbons. Their sides took posts behind them. At 4:48 p.m. Lovnik started his speech in a low, soft, but firm voice, and far carrying tone charged with melancholy. He solemnly bid farewell "to this beautiful country, in the full realization that renewal is the law of life, and that the song of labor will resound in the construction of a new free sovereign nation" (*Ibid.*). Pausing to wipe his lips he turned with a fleeting smile to the sultan. He slowed down near the conclusion with best wishes to the new nation in the fulfillment of a prophecy, "in the scroll of the Tjanggal, anent the administration of Java under King Sandjaja in the year 732; that the people without fear, may lay down to sleep in the road; and may that the people rich in good name could enjoy the good, the useful and the agreeable" (*Ibid.*). Again turning to the Sultan, he said, "God bless your country and your people." The sultan, in his fine features set, rose in response. Intense character rose on his youthful face. He was humble in victory as he spoke. Though mentioning the bitter history of the Indonesian struggle, he paid tribute to the Dutch acceptance of "the

new world," stressing thanks to the Netherlands who "with a larger vision were able to understand the soul of Indonesian nationalism."

He cited the following pillars of Indonesian "Pantjasilla" as the political creed of the USI: belief in God, national consciousness, democracy, social justice and humanity. This creed is incorporated in the preamble of the USI basic statute. Both the royal and the presidential decrees were then read in turn, after which the signing of the protocol took place. The banquet hall was then emptied as those who witnessed the ceremonies poured out to the (sic) of 20,000 cheered as Dutch and Indonesian officials emerged together and descended the marble staircase (*Ibid.*). A wild ovation greeted Lovnik and Sultan Hamengkubuwono who came last after a private talk. A detachment of the Dutch navy with a band stood at the west of the palace while a crack "Silliwangi" company with a band stood opposite. Both units came to present arms as the Dutch tricolor waved at the top of the staff.

Then the Netherlands band struck up the Netherlands anthem, as the tricolor fluttered down to rest in the reverent hands of her majesty's seamen. The cheers increased as the white and red flag was hauled up by TNI guerrillas exactly at 5:54 p.m. The Silliwangi troopers wept openly as they hauled on the lines and the crowds outside sang and sobbed the words "Indonesia Raya." The emotion of the Indonesians was reflected among the correspondents who watched, and those who were unable to resist were moistening in the eye. The thought was that the prayers of 70 million people were answered, a new nation was born, and a new spirit of kinship was kindled (with) formerly bitter enemies. "This was truly a Christmas". Osias wrote (*Ibid.*).

Meanwhile on December 27, military authority and responsibility for the maintenance of peace and order in Jakarta and its environs transferred from the Dutch army to the Indonesian army at 10 this morning in a simple ceremony. Base commander Lieut. Col. Taswin, with military governor of Jakarta, Lieut. Col. Daan Jahja, of the TNI (Tentara Nasional Indonesia or Indonesian National Army), entered the Dutch base commander's offices to sign the protocol of transfer. For the Dutch, Col. B.P. de Vries signed the transfer instrument in the presence of the UN commission for Indonesia, and officers of the American and French missions. The transfer included the turnover of Dutch military equipment and installations. Full terms of the protocol have not yet been released. A quaint situation exists as the Dutch and the Indonesian base commands faced each other on Willems Laan. Guard duty is maintained by joint Dutch and TNI soldiers, patrols by mixed forces, while the overall command is in the hands of the TNI "Silliwangi" guerrilla officers (*Ibid*, p. 2).

Sukarno's Triumphant Entry to Jakarta

Osias also reported on the entry of President Sukarno into Jakarta (Benjamin Osias, Jakarta in Frenzy of Joy as Soekarno enters Hall of Dutch Envoys, *Manila Times*, Vol. V, December 29, 1949, P. 1, 4/5). Sukarno had earlier taken the oath of office on December 13, 1949, in Jogjakarta. (Soekarno Takes Presidential Oath, *Manila Times*, December 19, 1949, p.1.) On December 27, he and his party flew to the capital, Jakarta. (In the newspaper it was written as Batavia, the capital's old name). At 12:30 p.m., Sukarno, then 39 years old, arrived at the Koenigsplein Palace which had been the home of Dutch Viceroy at 12:30 p.m., amidst an ovation described as never before seen in this capital. More than half of the population of Jakarta estimated at 1.5 million participated in the event. Sukarno and his party were met at the Kamajoran airport by Sultan Hamengkubuwono, of Jogjakarta, who escorted the President along the streets lined with cheering throngs which often impeded the passage of the presidential car.

The crowds overran the palace fence and flooded the palace grounds, forcing the diplomatic delegates who were awaiting the president to seek refuge in the palace. Sukarno who was dressed in white with the traditional black velvet cap, stood in his red Packard convertible, carrying the plate marked "1 Indonesia 49," white on a red background. The number 1 plate is reserved for the President while 49 referred to the year 1949. Beside Sukarno was Sultan Hamengkubuwono. He appeared pleased at the response of the people and was completely at ease. As he alighted from the car, he was greeted before the palace steps by the Home Minister, Anak Agung. Upon climbing on the carpeted steps leading to the palace, the thousands packed on the lawns, mounted on trees and rooftops, shouted "Merdeka" (freedom). Over 200,000 spectators practically mobbed the President upon his arrival in the palace. It took him several minutes to push through the marble staircase where a red carpet was spread. Foreign observers were deeply impressed as thousands of voices joined in when the band played "Indonesia Raya." The blazing Monday sun of Jakarta proved too much for many, with scores being carried off on stretchers. Four battalions of Siliwangi guerrillas, Soekarno's crack force, were unable to control the crowd. But the masses were stilled when Sukarno raised his hand for silence.

Picture 6.

President Soekarno arriving in Jakarta from Jogjakarta on December 27, 1949.



In his speech, his first address to the nation, Sukarno called for “unity and hard work, to attain the true goals of which independence is the only starting point,” “I am the servant of the people, not their master, he said. The crowd stayed on and cheered every phrase of his speech. “As the constitution demands, I will serve God and the people. Sovereignty for Indonesia is the beginning not the end of our history,” he said. “Peace within” Sukarno described as an added requisite to maintain peace against forces outside the country. Sukarno then said that the next goal for free Indonesians is New Guinea. “We now are peaceful terms with the Dutch and other foreigners. Show hospitality toward them,” Sukarno added. Sukarno and other Indonesian leaders fought a four-year guerrilla war against the Dutch who tried to regain the archipelago after World War II. Finally, Sukarno said that everyone must work, as we never worked before. With solid unity, we must give prosperity to Indonesia and foreigners to restore our economic stability and heal the wound caused by war. God gives us peace” (*Ibid.*).

Picture 7. More photographs from the Manila Times of December 28, 1949



Sukarno's speech echoed the appeal for Dutch-Indonesian cooperation which was voiced in Amsterdam by Queen Juliana when she signed the papers making the United States of Indonesia an independent nation. The U.S.I. remains linked to the Netherlands by recognizing the Dutch Crown as a symbol of Dutch-Indonesian Union, much like the British Commonwealth of Nations. This arrangement was drafted in The Hague Agreement earlier that year.

The first foreign representative to present his credentials to the USI was the Netherlands High Commissioner Dr. Hirschfeld. The preparatory committee for independence announced that the transfer of sovereignty did not mean a complete turnover of the government apparatus. It ordered all present officials under the jurisdiction of the union to continue in office until further orders to "prevent a vacuum." Strict observance of flag rules was also ordered (Batavia, December 28, [1949, Associated Press.]

Events in the Philippines

In the Philippines, meanwhile, the Philippine government formally accorded *de jure* recognition to the Republic of Indonesia, immediately after the close of the inaugural ceremonies in Djakarta. (PI Recognizes Indonesia *De Jure* Recognition Universally Hailed., *Manila Times* 1, pp. 1-2). The grant of recognition was decided by President Elpidio Quirino who was in Baguio City at 9:00 a.m. yesterday (December 27) upon recommendation by the foreign office. The diplomatic note extending recognition to the USI was forthcoming with the dispatch at 3 in the afternoon by the foreign office to the Philippine Consul Vicente Pastrana in Djakarta for transmittal to the Sukarno government.

It was believed that the Philippines is among the first countries, if not the very first country, to extend full diplomatic recognition to the new-born Republic, the sixth Asiatic nation to win its freedom since the turn of the decade. Even before the grant of *de jure* recognition the Philippines gave a *de facto* recognition to Indonesia with the setting up of an unofficial consulate in Manila (*Ibid.*).

Economic and political circles in Manila hailed the extension of full recognition to Indonesia as one of the foreign policy actions of the government meeting with the unanimous approval of the people. Aside from reflecting the general sentiments of the Filipinos, observers said that *de jure* recognition places the Philippines in the best possible light among Asiatic nations and marks the beginning of closer and more intimate relations between this Republic and the USI. The newspaper reported that "a new bond has been established between the two young Republics, observers said, which cannot but work to their mutual benefit. Foremost of such benefits is the enhanced

trade between the two countries, negotiations for which are contemplated for the very near future. Foreign affairs sources indicated that a bilateral trade treaty on the barter basis will be one of the first major deals entered into by the two governments. As the world's greatest producer of oil, rubber and tin, Indonesia is in a position to aid the Philippines its economic rehabilitation. On the other hand, the Philippines may act as middleman between the USI and the United States in the line of textiles, industrial equipment, and medicines which Indonesia sorely needs.

With her almost incalculable wealth of raw materials, Indonesia's potential strength may well prove to be one of Asia's main sources of power in her attempt to maintain a balance between East and West. Simultaneous with the extension of *de jure* recognition, President Quirino and Foreign Undersecretary, Felino Neri led the nation yesterday in hailing the new-born Republic.

In Manila some 200 guests from different diplomatic circles on the morning of December 27, 1949 witnessed the local counterpart of the inaugural ceremonies of the United States of Indonesia at the lawn of the consulate general at 140 Buencamino Street, San Miguel (USI Inaugural is Celebrated Here, *Manila Times*, December 28, 1949, p. 1, 12). In a statement read before the ceremonies by Undersecretary Felino Neri, President Quirino hailed the birth of the "world's youngest democracy," and said that the day marked "not only of a new nation but a new force for world peace, amity, and understanding." In his message at the ceremonies, Minister A.J. D. Steenstra-Toussaint representing the Netherlands hailed the transfer of sovereignty from the Dutch to the Indonesian authorities as in line with the three duties of western colonialism. Consul general Charles Tambu, who was the host of the ceremonies, expressed hope that friendly countries will stand by help his country in its first steps of independent existence, and pledged that the USI will try to be a worthy member in the family of nations. During the program the message of President Quirino was read by y Undersecretary Felino Neri of foreign affairs: (*Ibid.*, p. 12)

"The Philippines joins the other countries of the world in cordially welcoming the Republic of the United States of Indonesia to the community of free and sovereign nations and sincerely wishes the world's youngest democracy success in all its undertakings. My countrymen and I extend our fraternal greetings to the Indonesian people, with whom we have so much in common and rejoice with them over the fulfillment of their aspirations. To us this day marks not only the birth of a new nation but also a new force for world peace, amity and understanding."

For his part Minister A.J.D. Steenstra-Toussaint read the message in behalf of his government. His message echoed the duties of the former colonizers to their former territories. He said (*Ibid.*):

“Since the end of the last war, three duties became clear to western nations: First, transfer of sovereignty two former colonial territories; Second, leaving however the government of those lands in the hands of responsible, constructive elements; Third, leaving an apparatus to direct the economic life of those lands in harmony with the western world.

The Netherlands Government feels that these three conditions, these duties, have been met in Indonesia. The government consists of very able men. While the cultural and religious life of the Indonesians has been untouched an easy approach to the western world is guaranteed. Their wise leaders and clever negotiators have entered into a voluntary agreement with the government of the Netherlands which promises the Indonesians a foothold in the Western world as well as enables the Netherland people to continue their economic activity in Asia, without undue privileges over other foreigners and entirely subordinated to the laws of the sovereign Indonesian people.”

The host, Dr. Charles Tambu then read his message in behalf of Indonesia. He said (*Ibid.*):

“The historic hour has struck. One long chapter in our annals has come to its appointed close, and today we usher in a new era marked by the founding of the United States of Indonesia.

As we tread the high road of our destiny, we dedicate ourselves once again to those ideals which sustained our people in the arduous years now behind us. We face the future with courage, confidence and a sober optimism tempered by an awareness of our manifold shortcomings.

Now, as in the years past, we look to our friends the world over to give us counsel, guidance and help in the great task that lies before us. Your confidence in us and in our cause steeled in our fight for freedom and made possible the birth of this new nation. A continuing duty lies upon you to guide that nation along the thorny path of freedom.

It will be our constant endeavor to acquit ourselves as worthy members of the world order of nations of which we form a part, to contribute our little to freedom for all men, and to live in peace, amity and tolerance with all nations, large and small. “

Picture 8. From the Manila Times, December 28, 1949.



In solidarity with Indonesian independence, they toast to new nation at the Luneta Grandstand, according to President Quirino and Vice President Lopez on Friday. An aerial parade of Philippine Air Force planes will be held during the ceremonies and the Philippine Air Force announced that civilian airplanes will not be allowed to fly over the Luneta during the event.

Work, Work, and Work!

Indonesian Independence day became the contents of the editorial of the *Manila Times*. It drew inspiration from the words of Dr. Soekarno and borrowed his simple but powerful words "Work, Work, and Work! (Editorial, *Manila Times*, December 29, 1949, p. 4.). It wrote:

In his first address to the people of Indonesia as their first President, Dr. Soekarno urged, first hospitality to the Dutch and other foreigners who remain in their midst.

In this the President of the United States of Indonesia reveals his awareness of the need for international cooperation, and the breadth of vision has sustained him through years of revolutionary activity, of enemy occupation, and of the harsh facts of combat.

Soekarno has lived, and was ready to die, for one ideal: freedom of his people.

Now that freedom has been achieved, he shows that he appreciates that it can be only maintained as long as his people hold their place within the framework of a world union of free peoples.

Secondly, President Soekarno urges his people to work. In this, he is singularly in line with a former President of the Philippines in his choice of words.

"Work, work and work!" this is what Soekarno urged on his people.

In the same identical words, President Sergio Osmeña in 1945, urged his newly liberated people.

In Indonesia, as in the Philippines, there is the need for work. And in Indonesia as in the Philippines, it is the duty of the government to create an atmosphere in which the people will be happy to work.

Aftermath

Events following the inauguration of Indonesia as a sovereign nation were characterized by a flurry of diplomatic recognition for the new nation. On December 28, Canada recognized the United States of Indonesia. In Ottawa, Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent sent telegrams on December 27 to the prime ministers of Indonesia and the Netherlands announcing that Canada had recognized the new Indonesian republic. St. Laurent congratulated Prime Minister Mohammed Hatta on the establishment of the republic and said that its formation was a "tribute to your statesmanship and that of your colleagues." (PI Recognizes New Indonesia, *Manila Times*, December 28, 1949, p. 6) He sent Canada's cordial greetings to the people of the new nation.

The Americans were expected to transmit their approval in 24 hours. President Truman then was away from the capital but it was expected to send political support and economic aid to the new nation to help bolster Southeast Asia in its fight against the advance of communism, according to the *Manila Times*. According to the paper the President met with Mr. Merle Cochran the US envoy who was *en route* by air to the Indonesian capital. Cochran was reportedly Truman's choice as the first American Ambassador to Indonesia. In explaining the apparent delay of the Americans, "The government," in reference to the Indonesians, "must comply with certain formalities which the State department left unexplained.

French recognition of the new republic was also expected shortly. "We are pleased to see the emergence of this new state," the spokesman of the French Foreign Ministry said. The influential afternoon newspaper *Le Monde*, which often reflects foreign office opinion, said the newborn republic represented the true "test of American policy in Asia" (*Ibid.*). Aside from the Philippines, another Asian nation was among the first to recognize Indonesia was Pakistan. There was one sore note in the international circles as sources close to the Russian delegation indicated on December 28 that the USSR will block the admission of the USI into the United Nations by vetoing the expected application (Pierre Huss, Soviet Set to Block USI Bid in UN, *Manila Times*, December 29, 1949, p. 1, 12). These sources said the Russian veto will be an act of retaliation against the crushing of communist aspirations by police measures ordered by Indonesian republican leaders. The Soviet delegate Jacob Malik expressed resentment in the Security Council on that issue and accused the United States of masterminding the policies of the newly-created government. It was recalled that two years earlier, the Russian delegation at the UN used every opportunity to exploit the situation in the Dutch East Indies and openly supported communist agitators. In 1948, Dutch forces put an end to the communist-led bands and the Indonesian republican leaders disowned the agents imported from abroad by hanging the native leaders of the subversive organizations. The Russians protested in anger at the UN and denounced the UN Commission for Indonesia as well as the Hague round table. Compared to the Russians, the Netherlands delegate Dr. H. Riemens said on December 28 that his government supports Indonesia's membership in the world body.

Picture 9. Newspaper article showing Soviet opposition to the entry of Indonesia into the United Nations.



Conclusion

For the Filipinos, seeing Indonesia become independent was like seeing themselves. Filipinos themselves as inspiring their neighbors and at the same time they saw what their country could be. There are various parallelisms not only on the day Indonesia formally entered the community of nations but also through that nation's struggle for freedom and independence. Here the Filipinos can see the various paths they may have taken, an armed struggle or a peaceful political negotiation, or both. Indonesians too saw themselves among the Filipinos. Like many Asians, they observed events from the 19th century to the recognition of Philippine sovereignty by the United States. At the same time, both countries entered a neocolonial period with the Philippines entering various agreements with its former colonizer which tied up its prerogatives. The Hague Agreement tried to impose a neocolonial condition by constructing a Netherlands-Indonesian union similar to that of the British Commonwealth of Nations. At the same time, the Netherlands played an old tactic of divide and rule by setting up what appeared to be puppet governments in the various regions of Indonesia in support for itself and denying Indonesia the western part of New Guinea by alleging that the region was not culturally affiliated with the central and western halves of the archipelago. It was an attempt to retain the Netherlands as an Asian power. Like the Philippines Indonesia faced new challenges after independence and most of these involved its former colonizer.

Aside from historical reasons, there is a geographical reason for the Philippine interest in its southern neighbor. This border is just a political one. Since time immemorial peoples crossed the boundaries to live on the other side or earn a living. There is also a cultural and blood affinity. During the Spanish campaign to conquer Southern Mindanao Sultan Kudarat called on his kinsmen in Ternate to help him in fighting the Europeans (Luis C. Dery, *The Kris in Philippine History: A Study of the Impact of the Moro-Anti Colonial Resistance, 1571-1896*, p. 56). On the other hand, when Luzon was under threat from an invasion from China in 1660, Christianized Ternatans known as *Mardikas*, were brought over to Manila as the Spanish garrison in that Indonesian island as well as Zamboanga were abandoned (Esteban de Ocampo, *The Ternateños, Their History, Languages, Customs and Traditions*, pp. 4-7, also: Evangelista Nigoza, *Bahra, The History Legends, Customs and Traditions of Ternate, Cavite*, pp. 2-3). In its fight for independence, Filipinos extended support to the Indonesian cause which included diplomatic support and other forms of support. In his visit to the Philippines, President Sukarno in his address to the Philippine Congress on February 3, 1951 said: (Suradji, pp. 141-142)

"We the people of Indonesia, shall never forget the assistance and sympathy extended to us by the people and government of the Philippines during our dark days of national humiliation and military weakness. You were one of the first to enter into official relations with us. You sent one of your ablest diplomats to the Inter-Asian conference at New Delhi in 1947 to give full weight of personality and worldwide prestige to the cause of Indonesia."

The third reason is that Indonesia upon its independence is a potential regional power. With a population of 77 million people with a wide territory and vast natural resources what it does will certainly affect the region. The Philippines recognized the potential role of Indonesia in the Southeast Asian region and it was in a position to wield its clout in global politics and most of all to vindicate the honor of the Malay people. Speaking before the Indonesian parliament on July 17, 1952, President Quirino said (Suradji, p. 142):

"Indonesia, I am sure, will be a great factor, perhaps, the nerve center, in this movement to revive or vindicate the honor of Southeast Asia. The countries of this region, in a partnership dedicated to the maintenance of peace and justice, the preservation of liberty and the production of the plenty- that is the vision that we have before us."

Picture 10.

Philippine stamp issued in 1951 commemorating the visit of President Soekarno to the Philippines.



The world has its eyes on Indonesia as it became a battleground of ideologies. The Soviets tried to block its membership to the United Nations. It alleged that the United States and the Netherlands had a role in the suppression of communist elements in the archipelago. The United States for its part was anxious to prevent the spread of communism in the islands and would like to have the new Republic of Indonesia as part of its containment policy of communism in Asia. Curiously the newspaper accounts mention that US recognition and the delivery of aid to the new nation were subject to “certain formalities” which were not specified but could be speculated. On its own, it developed its ideology of Pancasila which could be a model also for the Philippines. The nation allied itself not with the West or East but and its stood on its own ideology of neither siding with the two. The Philippines meanwhile watched closely. Many newspaper and radio commentators said that it was a viable ideology and the Philippines can become friends with both the capitalist and socialist countries. Even with the end of the Sukarno period and decades after, Indonesia remained a country which interested Filipinos. The cultural, political, historical and economic factors that link the two nations together remain as strong. It remains a partner, a brother and a friend just like two shirts cut from the same cut from the same cloth. ●

References

Books

- De Ocampo, Esteban, A. 2007. *The Ternateños: Their History, Languages, Customs and Traditions*. Manila: National Historical Institute.
- Dery, Luis, C. 2000. *The Kris in Philippine History: A Study of the Impact of the Moro-Anti Colonial Resistance, 1571-1896*. Manila: De la Salle University Press.
- Nigoza, Evangelino, Emmanuel Franco Calairo, and Neriza M. Villanueva (eds.). *Bahra: Their History, Legends, Customs and Traditions of Ternate, Cavite*.
- Ramos, Severino, Tengku S-Djaaafar and Ismail Ilyas. 1969. *Philippine-Indonesian Relations*. Manila.
- Matias, Apolinar, E. *Indonesia and its Government*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Santo Tomas Graduate School, 1972.
- Suradji, Suradji, D. *Indonesian Philippine Political Relations: An Analysis and Evaluation*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation University of Santo Tomas Graduate School, 1983.

Newspaper Articles

- “Dissidents Capture Mindoro Town”, *Manila Times*, December 28, 1949, p. 1.
- Huss, Pierre, “Soviets Set to Block USI Bid in UN”, *Manila Times*, December

- 29, 1949. p. 1/12.
- "Jakarta Act Signed Under Cloudy Skies", *Manila Times*, December 28, 1949. p. 1/2.
- "Moro Fort Shelled by Land, Naval Guns", *Manila Times*, December 28, 1949, p. 1, 2.
- Osiias, Benjamin, C. "Jakarta in Frenzy of Joy as Soekarno Enters Hall of Dutch Envoys". *Manila Times*, Vol. V, December 29, 1949, p. 1/4/5.
- ". "Netherlands Envoy Leaves Immediately After Flags Change." *Manila Times*, December 28, 1949. p. 1.
- "PI Recognizes Indonesia *De Jure* Recognition Universally Hailed." *Manila Times*. December 28, 1949. p. 1, 2.
- "Soekarno Takes Presidential Oath" *Manila Times*. December 19, 1949. Vol. 5, P. 1.
- "Tan Loses Fight for Seat. *Manila Times*. December 28, 1949, Vol. 5, No. 28.
- "United States of Indonesia is Born", *Manila Times*. December 28, 1949. Vol. V, No. 133, p. 1.
- USI Comes Into Being: PI Among First to Recognize Soekarno. Philippines Accords *De Jure* Recognition, Sends Warm Greetings to New Republic. *Manila Daily Bulletin*. Vol. 140, No. 76. December 28, 1949. pp. 1,15.
- USI Inaugural is Celebrated Here", *Manila Times*. December 28, 1949. p. 1, 12.