

The Economics of Violence: An Instance in Philippines History

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This topic of the “Economics of Violence” appears to be non-existent. In fact, it is seldom treated in modern handbooks on morality. But in truth, although the oppressive *institution* of slavery has at last been virtually abolished from the world, it is obvious that it has managed to take new and subtler forms.

Slavery is a most despicable form of violence inflicted on innocent people who are not in a position to defend themselves. It is a violent act and practice which have a marked economic dimension because slaves are seen as commodities to be sold or bought, just like any other object in the market, fit to be used at the owners whim and caprice. The worst aspect about slavery is, sooner or later, it instills in the minds of the victims a feeling of worthlessness, a loss of a sense of dignity. Eventually, slaves begin to lose their desire for freedom, and start to love the chains that bind them.

Today, even here in the Philippines we see forms of servitude, especially in the case of undocumented cases of abused maids and man-servants, child laborers, and OFW's forced to work in miserable living conditions and even reduced to mere sex slaves by their cruel employers. We have also witnessed refusals to pay just social security for domestic employees and keep poor people in bondage through promises of a better future that remain unfulfilled. In most of these cases of modern-day slavery, the hapless victims are minors and women.

Allow me, as a laywoman, to begin by asking a question: *“Historically, has the Catholic Church made an explicit condemnation of slavery?”*

THE CHURCH AND SLAVERY

According to some historians, it was not until 1890 that the Catholic Church finally condemned slavery. It was also argued by many moralists that the Church's stand on slavery is one instance where the Church has changed its moral teaching to suit the times. In fact, one theologian by the name of Laennec Hürbon declared that "no Pope before 1890 condemned slavery." John F. Maxwell wrote in his 1975 work on slavery that the Church did not correct its teachings on the moral legitimacy of slavery until 1965,¹ with the publication of the Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* by Vatican II.

Contrary to the opinion of the above-cited authorities, however, there is a not-so large body of scholarship that proves through proper documentation and research, that from the 15th century onwards, the Papal Magisterium has continually issued explicit condemnation against slavery.

Slavery before the 15th century

We have to understand that forms of slavery were varied, complex, and very often of a different sociological category than those which were prevalent after the 15th century. While all forms of servitude are certainly unacceptable, to most people today, this has not always been the case. Prior to the Age of Discovery, slavery was justified as a consequence of the "just war" theory. Servitude was often imposed as a penalty on prisoners-of-war and was even freely chosen by many prisoners or captives for economic and survival reasons. Children born of those held in servitude were also at times considered to be in the same state as that of their parents. These types of servitude were the most common among those generally considered to establish the so-called "just titles" of slavery. But even in these instances where slavery was allowed under the pretext of "just titles," the Church always insisted on the obligations of masters to give fair and humane treatment to their slaves, even encouraging the possibility of their liberation.

¹ John F. Maxwell, *Slavery and the Catholic Church* Chichester, Ross, 1975.

Slavery during and after the Age of Discovery

The kind of slavery against which the Catholic Church, through various Popes, issued explicit condemnation, is consequent to the Age of Discovery. In 1537, Pope Paul III described this kind of slavery as “unheard of before now.” Starting in the first half of the 15th century, Spain and Portugal initiated the so-called Age of Discovery, although it is well to remember – as Francisco de Victoria noted – “*the natives did not need to be discovered because they knew where they were.*” To the natives who were discovered by the Spanish and Portuguese missionaries and *conquistadores*, came not only the good news of Christ’s gospel, but also the evil of slavery. Indeed, it was a common practice to force the natives to slavery as the argument was often made that the only way to bring the Christian faith to them was by brute force and human subjection. Clearly, slavery of this form differed not only in degree or cruelty, but also in nature from the “just titles-slavery” described above, since the justifying motive for this type of servitude was either non-existent or purely economic and ideological. This slavery came about not because those so treated were prisoners of war or criminals or servants or born into servitude, but rather was enforced on people *out of an immoral desire for cheap human labor*. Furthermore, there is a distinctive *racial element* in this kind of slavery which is most noticeable after the European discoveries in Africa, Asia, and America.

Church’s condemnation of Slavery (Some representative documents)

The following are some representative documents:

1. ***Eugene IV (1431-1447)***. Perhaps the very first explicit Papal pronouncement against the slavery perpetrated by conquerors of newly discovered lands was the one issued by Eugene IV entitled *Sicut Dudum* issued on January 13, 1435. This document condemned the enslavement of the natives of the newly colonized Canary Islands. The date of the document is very significant because it shows that nearly 60 years before the conquest of America (and 86 years before the discovery of the Philippines by Magellan), the Pope had already condemned slavery. He even demanded the correction of the injustice within 15 days. Those who do not restore the

enslaved people to their liberty within the period incurred the sentence of excommunication *ipso facto*. The relevant part of the Papal decree goes:

They have deprived the natives of their property or turned it to their own use, and have subjected some of the inhabitants of said islands to perpetual slavery, sold them to other persons and committed other illicit and evil deeds against them. Therefore We exhort, through the sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ shed for their sins, one and all, temporal princes, lords, captains, armed men, barons, soldiers, nobles, communities, and all others of every kind among the Christian faithful of whatever state, grade or condition, that they themselves desist from the aforementioned deeds, cause those subject to them to desist from them, and restrain them rigorously. And no less do We order and command all and each of the faithful of each sex that, within the space of fifteen days of the publications of this document in the place where they live, that they restore to their earlier liberty all and each person of either sex who were once residents of said Canary Islands and who have been made subject to slavery. These people are to be totally and perpetually set free and are to be let go without the exaction or reception of money."²

Eugene IV's efforts on behalf of the peoples of Canary Islands were merely the first in a long struggle to direct the world away from the sinful greed that was at the heart of slavery, a greed that is motivated primarily by economic gain and racial superiority.

2. ***Paul III (1534-1549)***. This Pope initiated the Council of Trent in 1545. Previous to the issuance of his declaration against slavery of the native indios in Spanish colonies, the Catholic Kings: Ferdinand and Isabela had been attempting to convert and exercise dominion over their conquered territories by peaceful means. These attempts quickly gave way to the use of force, however. Frustrated that the Spanish and Portuguese had resorted so soon to violence,

² Eugene IV, *Sicut Dudum*, January 13, 1435, in *Annales Ecclesiastici*, (ed.) O. Raynaldum (Luca, 1753), Vol. 28, pp. 126-227, (trans.) Joel S. Panzer, *The Popes and Slavery*, New York, 1996, pp. 75-78.

the Dominican missionaries, especially Bartolomé de las Casas, implored the assistance of Pope Paul III.

On June 2, 1537, Paul III issued a bull, entitled *Sublimis Deus*, regarded by many authors, including Gustavo Gutierrez, as "the most important papal pronouncement on the human condition of the indios." It is addressed to *all* Christians all over the world, thereby giving the decree universal significance and application. After re-affirming the doctrine of the universality of salvation, the papal decree deplored the evil of slavery thus:

Seeing this and envying it, Satan, the enemy of the human race, who always opposes all good men so that the race may perish, has thought up a way, unheard of before now, by which he might impede the saving word of God from being preached to the nations. He has stirred up some of his allies who, desiring to satisfy their own avarice, are presuming to assert far and wide that the Indians of the West and the South who have come to our notice in these times be reduced to our service like brute animals, under the pretext that they are lacking the Catholic faith. And they reduce them to slavery, treating them with such cruelty which they would scarcely use with brute animals...

Therefore, We, noting that the Indians themselves indeed are true men and are not only capable of the Christian faith, but, as has been made known to us, promptly hasten to the faith, and wishing to provide suitable remedies for them, by our Apostolic Authority decree and declare by these present document that the same Indians and all other peoples – even though they are outside the faith – who shall hereafter come to the knowledge of the Christian faith, shall not be deprived of their liberty or of their possessions. Rather, they are to be able to use and enjoy this liberty and this ownership of property freely and licitly, and are not to be reduced to slavery, and that whatever happens to the contrary is to be considered null and void.³

3. *Gregory XIV (1590-1591)*. Despite his short pontificate, Gregory XIV had one lasting contribution to the fight against

³ Paul III, *Sublimis Deus*, June 2, 1537, in Helen-Ran Parish and Harold E. Weidman, *Las Casas en Mexico: Historia y obras desconocidas*. Mexico City, 1992, pp. 310-311, (trans.) Joel S. Panzer, *op. cit.* pp. 79-81.

slavery. The decree which he authored was the more significant for us, Filipinos, because it was addressed to the Bishop of Manila. Issued on April 18, 1591, the bull *Cum Sicuti* strongly lends support to the anti-slavery decrees of King Philip II:

Furthermore, since, as we have learned, Philip the Catholic King of Spain, our beloved son in Christ, has forbidden that any Spaniard in those Philippine Islands dare to make, have or retain slaves, whether by just or unjust war, or through sale or any other title or pretext among the many frauds accustomed to be committed here, and that some do in fact still detain slaves against the edict and mandate of King Philip, We, in order that the Indios may come to or return to Christian doctrine and their own homes and possessions freely and securely and without any fear of servitude, as befits what is in harmony with reason and justice, decree in virtue of holy obedience and under penalty of excommunication that if, at the publication of this decree, anyone have or detain such Indio slaves they must give up all craft and deceit, set the slaves completely free, and in the future neither make nor retain slaves in any way.⁴

Over the course of the next three centuries, several other Popes issued their own proclamation against the evils of slavery, especially the kind practiced in the newly discovered colonies like the Philippines. It was Pope Leo XIII who added an extra dimension to the series of Papal exhortations against slavery. To the previous teaching on the redemption of all people and the universal call to the faith and eternal salvation, Leo XIII added the reason of the unity of human origins. We are all equally children of God, regardless of race, color, or creed. therefore, no one has the right to trample upon the freedom and other rights of other people whether for religious, racial, or economic reasons.

The previous Church documents against slavery were addressed to Christians. Many historians and moralists agree that even if there was such a consistent series of Church declarations and decrees against slavery, the practice is quite different. In many colonized territories, such as Brazil (as portrayed in the movie *The*

⁴ Pope Gregory XIV, *Cum Sicuti*, in *Colección de Bulas*, p. 108, (trans.), Joel S. Panzer, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-88.

Mission), Africa and Asia, slavery was rampant. Christians committed such acts of violence against non-Christians.

I would like to present here a historical instance which shows the opposite. It is about the raids conducted by non-Christians, specifically Muslims, against Christians. Such raids were for the particular purpose of taking Christians as hostage, and then selling them as slaves. It was a violent act, with an obviously economic motive. I am sure the Qur'an has something to say against slavery and slave-raiding, but like Christians who can cite endless passages from the Bible and from the Papal Magisterium on the evils of slavery, Muslims too suffer from a common malady afflicting all human beings: the separation between theory and practice, doctrine and life.

PIRACY AND SLAVE RAIDING IN ASIA: A BRIEF HISTORY

Many factors motivated the earliest European expansion into Asia. One was the search for spices for the European market. The second was the desire to participate in the trade of luxury goods with China and bring them to the West.⁵

When the first Europeans arrived in Southeast Asia in the 16th century they concentrated their attention on the maritime region, with its cluster of Islamic sultanates and other small kingdoms, most important of which was the Sultanate of Malacca. After the fall of Malacca in 1511 to the Portuguese, other states such as Aceh in Sumatra and Johore on the Malayan Peninsula competed with Malacca for regional power. In westernmost Java, the Sultanate of Banten in Indonesia became a major port in the 16th century.

Before the coming of the Europeans, piracy already existed in the Malayan Peninsula. Muslim traders in the area between the Strait of Malacca and the Strait of Berhata were vulnerable to attacks from the *Orang Selat*, the inhabitants of the strait of Singapore.⁶

⁵ Eric S. Casañó, *Mindanao Statecraft and Ecology: Moros, Lumads and Settlers Across the Lowland-Highland Continuum*. Notre Dame University, Cotabato City (2000), p. 46.

⁶ Cesar A. Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines* (Asian Center, U.P. Press, Q.C., 1973), p. 10.

The coming of the European caused economic activity and made piracy in the high seas a profitable activity. Because of its strategic geography, the Sultanate of Sulu inevitably became an "entrepot for European as well as Asian commerce in the China trade from the late 18th to the end of the 19th century."⁷ Its geographical importance may be attributed to the emergence of Jolo – the capital of the Sulu Sultanate – as a center for the trade and marketing of slaves. To the north lay China, to the southeast Celebes and the Moluccas, and to the southwest Borneo, forming a triangular trade route in which Sulu played a key role.⁸

The China trade boosted the economic and commercial potentials of the Sulu Sultanate. Such commercial development and economic prosperity led to the emergence of the Taosug as a dominant ethnic group superior to the Samals, the Iranun, and other indigenous tribes in the area.⁹

Three conditions appear to govern the incidence of piracy: first, the existence of productive but defenseless coast communities or the existence of regular sea trade along regular routes; second, a fluid, if not quite nomadic, way of life, in which tribal warfare, feuds and raiding are accepted institutions; third, superior striking power and speed on the part of the piratical force together with a degree of invulnerability and immunity in its own home.

The motivation of such piracy this writer believes although some may consider it as an extension of Moro-Spanish wars of the West,¹⁰ might be twofold: One motive was economic: the enjoyment of the goods acquired, or of the profits from their sale through extra-legal trade channels. Often of equal importance was the existence of certain social political advantages that made successful participation in formal conflict highly desirable.

⁷ Najeeb M. Saleeby, *History of Sulu* (Filipiniana Book Build, Inc., Manila, (1963) p. 20.

⁸ Eric S. Casiño, *Mindanao Statecraft*..., p. 50.

⁹ James Francis Warren, *The Sulu Zone*..., p. 209.

¹⁰ A contrary opinion is offered by Najeeb M. Saleeby. While admitting that Mindanao Muslims were "piratical," is convinced that the motive of the Spaniards was to suppress Islam and not to crush piracy. [*History of Sulu*, (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1908), p. 168-169].

The demands of the China trade for the local marine and jungle products created an urgent need for large scale recruitment of labor and manpower in Sulu's economy. But where was labor to be had? In those days, one did not have to pay for labor. One "gathered" it through slave raiding.¹¹ The relationship between trade and slavery was reciprocal. Power depended on control of persons such as slaves and retainers, which in turn depended on disposable wealth to maintain and attract them. Escalating competition for wealth further fueled the demand for manpower, more slaves and retainers. Here is where the Samal Balangingi enters.

THE SAMAL BALANGINGI AND THEIR SLAVE RAIDING ACTIVITIES

With their slave raiding and trading, the Samal Balangingi perfectly complemented an economic need.

The Samal Balangingi people were the natives of Balangingi Island, scarcely six square miles in area, surrounded by corals and covered to a great extent by mangrove and little dry land. It measures 3+ miles from northeast to southeast.¹² Its width is a mile long. It belongs to the biggest cluster of 27 islets dividing two mighty seas – the Celebes Sea and the Sulu Sea. The Balangingi homes extended outward into the sea, surrounded by shallow canals. Only a canoe or a vinta could navigate its water. The Spanish galleys and caracaos could not weigh anchor in the waters of Balangingi due to the sudden drop of the sea bottom. All these provided the adequate protection for the Samal tribe.¹³

The Samal Balangingi were a seafaring people and boat specialists whose craftsmanship dated back to thousand years

¹¹ James Francis Warren, *Slavery and the Impact of External Trade: The Sulu Sultanate in the 19th Century*, Paper used in Ateneo de Manila University by the author, n.d., p. 417.

¹² Cartas: 1847-1848 (RMAO); see also Margarita de los Reyes Cojuangco's *Kris of Valor*, Manisan, 1991.

¹³ Marcelino Orca, *Description of Balangingi Island (1842)*, *Mindanao y Sulu - 1838-1885*, MSS/Carpeta 4a No. 9, #32, 1842, Zamboanga, RMAO Manila.

earlier.¹⁴ Their geographical location, however, virtually offered them no source of sustenance and consequently, they bound themselves to the Sulu Sultanate.¹⁵ The Samal Balangingi people turned to Jolo and Basilan for their rice, fruits, vegetables and other trade goods. Their other source of livelihood was the slave raiding expeditions along the Philippines coasts as well as those of Borneo, Celebes, Moluccas and other islands in the Southeast.¹⁶

Their slave raiding missions formed an integral part of the flourishing slave trade in the region, and were closely regulated by their Taosug patrons from the years 1800 to 1848 who equipped the former with vessels and provided them with credits for their powder, cannons, rice, opium and crewmen. All of these had to be repaid in captured slaves. In this set-up, slaves were not only chattels but also hard currency.¹⁷

Slavery as an institution was nowhere more important economically then in the Sulu Archipelago in the late 18th and early 19th century. James Warren (1975:410-411) had shown that as Sulu's involvement in the British and Spanish trade with China increased in that period, so did the demand for manpower to procure the sea and jungle products (e.g., sea cucumbers and birds' nests) required in that trade. Ilanun and Samal Balangingi raiders in the service of Tausog overlords ranged far and wide in the Philippines, Borneo and elsewhere in Southeast Asia and provided literally tens of thousands of captives – the descendants of whom, in the course of time, blended into Sulu society. The reputation of the Moros for ferocious piracy, raiding, and slaving was greatly enhanced in this period, reinforcing the negative "Moro image" in the Visayas and Luzon.¹⁸

¹⁴ Muhammad Kurais II, *Boatbuilding of the Sama*, Mindanao Journal, University Research Center, Mindanao State University, Vol. I, No. 4, [April-June 1975], pp. 67-125.

¹⁵ Cartas: 1847-1848 (RMAO); see also James Warren's *Sulu Zone, 1768-1898*, Kurt Ridge, Singapore: Singapore University Press.

¹⁶ Eric S. Casiño, *Mindanao Statecraft and Ecology...*, p. 27.

¹⁷ James Francis Warren, *The Sulu Zone...*, p. 186. See also Margarita de los Reyes Cojuangco, *The Samal Balangingis: An Experiment in Colonial Diaspora*, M.A. Thesis, November 3, 1986, UST Graduate School, p. 43.

¹⁸ Cesar A. Majul, *The Muslims in the Philippines: An Historical Perspective*. Published in the *Muslim Filipinos: Their History, Society and Contemporary Problems*. Edited by Peter G. Gowing & Robert D. McAmis (1974), p. 11.

These pirates are supposed to possess in the whole about 200 prahus, which usually are manned with from 40 to 50 pirates, the number therefore engaged in this business at 10,000. They are armed with muskets, blunderbusses, krisses, hatchets and spears, and at times the vessels have one or few large guns mounted. They infest the Straits of Macassar, the Sea of Celebes and the Solo Sea. Soung (Sulu) is the only place where they can dispose of their plunder to advantage, and obtain the necessary outfits. It may be called the principal resort of these pirates, where well-directed measures would result in effectually suppressing the crime.¹⁹

By the middle of the 1800's, a slave as an article of barter was equivalent to 200-300 gantas of rice; six to eight slaves could be worth a *prahu*; a portable cannon would be loaned for one slave, and a boat for two to three slaves.²⁰

As mentioned earlier, for the Sulu Sultanate, slaves meant wealth (given in repayment for commissions to raid, for assistance to raiding parties, and for harbor fees) and, in turn, power. For the Samal Balangingi, they meant food, clothes, additional workmen and other basic commodities.²¹

The Samal Balangingi were among the main suppliers of human cargo for the Sultanate of Sulu. They became known as the scourge of the high seas. Their piratical activities earned for them a notoriety that from 1830, the term "Samal Balangingi" became synonymous with "pirate", in European literature.²²

PROFILE OF A SLAVE RAIDING EXPEDITION

How did the Samal Balangingi plan and carry out a slave raid? A slave raiding expedition was under the command of *panglima* or *orang kaya*, duly authorized by the Sultan and *datus* who provided

¹⁹ Horacio de la Costa: *Readings in the Philippine History*, Bookmark, pp. 204-206.

²⁰ Cartas, 1849: RMAO; see also Warren's *Sulu Zone*, p. 186; see also *Piratas*, Part I, RMAO, Manila.

²¹ Eric S. Casiño, *Mindanao Statecraft and Ecology...*, p. 53.

²² James Francis Warren, *The Sulu Zone...*, p. 209.

the necessary supplies for the voyage. In turn, the *panglima* appointed a *nakodah* (vessel commander) who was responsible for recruiting his own crew, usually taken from his own village or family clan. On board were experienced crewmen: the *juru mudi* who served as steersman and supervised the *sakay* (crew), the *juru batu* (pilot) who tended the anchor and watched out for reefs, shoals or enemy vessels. Likewise on board was an *imam* (religious leader) who led the prayers and acted as the *hakim* (judge) over disputes. With each vessel were a number of able-bodied young boys (12-15 years) who would provide assistance at the oars and apprenticed as seamen. Women rarely joined an expedition except as a consort of the commander.²³

An expedition normally was made up of not less than ten *prahus*. At the height of slave raiding, some expeditions under the alliance network of powerful *datu*s were made up of 30 to 40 or even 50 *prahus*. These voyages were set according to monstrous and once they sailed, the *panglima* and *nakodah* rarely left their *prahus* during the voyage.²⁴

It was with clockwork regularity that these marauders conducted their raiding missions. Timed according to the prevailing monsoons, the Samal Balangingi roamed the Philippine waters twice annually: in March and October.²⁵ The southwest monsoon may occasionally appear as early as April over the Philippines and persist up to November or December. These buccaneers then scoured the Visayan and Luzon seas, attacked the coastal villages, plundering, killing and carting off human captives. By the time the northwest monsoon prevailed – during the months of December and January – they were off to the Celebes, Moluccas, Java, Bali, Timor, Borneo and Sumatra. The Samal Balangingi were of the conviction that “it is difficult to catch fish but easy to catch Borneans.” The regularity of these raids were as predictable as the winds that

²³ Margarita de los Reyes Cojuangco, *The Samal Balangingis: An Experiment in Colonial Diaspora*, Masteral Thesis (History, UST Graduate School, November 3, 1986), p. 44.

²⁴ David E. Sopher, *Sea Nomads* (Singapore: Historical Museum, 1977), p. 151.

²⁵ Margarita de los Reyes Cojuangco, *Handful of Pearls*, Unpublished manuscript, n.d.

brought them to the Straits of Malacca that they were known as the "pirate wind."²⁶

The pirates' mode of raiding never deviated from plunder, killing, and making slaves of captives. For comparative purposes, it would be interesting to hear firsthand accounts of the agonizing ordeals of the captives and slaves of the Samal Balangingi, and likewise, to know what goes on in the minds of the people belonging to this dreaded tribe. This is to help us realize that moral judgments can never be done in the abstract. We always have to consider the actual circumstances of the people involved.

THE VICTIMS' PLIGHT

A report of 1620 describes one typical attack on the coastal town of Capul, Samar:

The pirates gave us a surprise attack. Immediately upon arriving on the Island of Capul, they captured and killed thirteen Capuleños. All the houses were robbed of their valuables, the Church was stripped of its sacred vessels and vestments; not stopping there, the sacred images were profaned, the crucifix was buried and the image of Our Lady was trampled in the mud. Upon satisfying their greed and vengeance, they returned to their ship leaving behind two or three of their dead.²⁷

Another letter of 1631 states:

The pirates from Mindanao...again pillaged Capul and left great damages in Carigara, Bohol and other parts. They viciously robbed the towns, burning churches, destroying sacred images with their daggers and profaning the sacred shrines. The they circled the islet, captured 40 persons. The reason the enemy was able to penetrate into the town was that they feigned to request a priest to come and perform the celebrations in their town.²⁸

²⁶ James Francis Warren, *The Sulu Zone...*, p. 190. See also Margarita de los Reyes Cojuangco, *Kris of Valor*, Manisan Publication (1991).

²⁷ *Cartas Edificantes*: Annual Letter of 1620. Historical Archives, ARSI (Archivum Romanum Societas Jesu).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, [Arsi, Phil. 7 (1) 265 v. 1631].

A detailed description of slave raiding as witnessed and recorded by Luis Ibañez y Garcia in his diary and who himself was held captive by a notorious Samal Balangingi chief, the feared *Panglima Taupan*, may best describe such nightmarish events. He writes:

Suddenly it happened. As if from nowhere two boats appeared, approaching fast. "Fishermen to hawk their catch," so they thought. But such complacency was shattered. In lightning fashion, two big wooden planks went over their boat's parapets as nimble, kris and knife-brandishing dark-skinned men climbed over. Ibañez and his companions were held at bay. At the same time some set fire to the boat's hull.

Like vultures, the Moros pounced upon everything they could lay their hands on. They broke everything in a mad frenzy, looting all they could grab. Tumugsuc ordered Ibañez and his companions bound and their luggages transferred to his *banca*. Dazed, Ibañez watched Tumugsuc brazenly hide the Spaniard's money, jewelry and powdered gold. "I will kill you if you reveal this to my headchief." He was referring to the notorious *Panglima Taupan*.²⁹

With Ibañez and his companions as captives, the pirates proceeded to the small island of Timobo, a hideout and resting place. Days passed and because Ibañez health was deteriorating, he was allowed to go to ashore. He wrote:

It would have been better had I not stepped on land. For there I saw four skeletons, human bodies unburied, the flesh devoured by birds of prey. From the clothes they wore, they were Christians.³⁰

Days turned into weeks. The pirates then set sail for Panaoan and Leyte and landed on the island of Colongan. Along this coast they seized a boat and its passenger, his wife, his 12-year old

²⁹ Luis Ibañez y Garcia: *Mi Cautiverio Carta que con motivo del que Sufrio Entre 105 MDRDS Piratas Joloanos y Samales en 1857*. (Madrid Imprenta de Gabriel Alhomer), pp. 268-270 in Margarita de los Reyes Cojuangco's M.A. Thesis of 1986, published in 1991 as *Kris of Valor*.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

daughter and the crew of six plus some 10 earthen jars of salted fish and other merchandise.³¹

During their days of rest, the pirates would entertain themselves by having Ibañez stand half-naked and rush upon him with drawn kris and hit him with their shields made of tough carabao hide. Ibañez was finally ransomed for 500 *duros*. And he learned later that the Sultan had given strict orders not to harm any Spaniard captured in the Visayan territory.³²

No captive escaped the cruelty of the pirates. During the attack, they were forced to serve as human barricade on the bow of the *prahu*. Otherwise, the captives were tied with rattan halters from their back to their benches, their hands and feet tied with ropes. To make up for lack of food in the open sea, the sturdy Sama would bring sorghum grains. Since the sorghum was difficult to digest, they were expelled in the stools undigested. And stories have it that these were gathered and reboiled and eaten again.³³

THE SAMAL BALANGINGI VIEWPOINT

In fairness to the Samal Balangingi, let us also hear their side of this sordid story of slave raiding.

My masteral thesis in History, which I defended on November 3, 1986, dealt with the Samal Balangingi tribe, or at least, what was left of them after their destruction by the Spaniards. It took me seven hours by boat from Zamboanga to Balangingi Island. I realized later that, to get there, we had to traverse an extremely perilous expanse of water whose depths would fall from a shallow 15 fathoms to an ominously deep 265 fathoms. We were at the juncture of the Pacific and China Seas.

I learned that in on February 19, 1848, described by one chronicler as "a lovely and tranquil day,"³⁴ the Samal Balangingi tribe

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 271-272.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 276.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

³⁴ Letter of Governor General Narcisco Claveria to the Royal Audencia and Auditor of War found in *Cartas*, 1848. RMAO.

were conquered by the Spaniards in an expedition headed by Governor General Narciso Claveria. Earlier, on April 12, 1845, after considering the ill effects of Samal piracy on Spanish territories, Claveria concluded it was worthless to listen to their promises of reform and to hope that they would renounce such an infamous trade; the trade they exited on. He cried out: "*They are like animals. The only means of eliminating them is to exterminate them.*"³⁵

How did the conquest of the Samal Balangingi happen? In the Balangingi Island was erected four strong forts built by the Samals at points difficult to access. The walls of these forts were 20 feet high and could not be scaled without ladders. The Spanish troops consisted of three regular companies of infantry, two of volunteers, and detachments of artillery, pikemen, engineers, and laborers. The fighting was heroic and desperate on both sides. The Samals, it is said, fought valiantly but they were overpowered in the end. When the walls were entered, some of the defenders in their desperation thrust their kris and spears into their wives and children, killed them first, and then dashed themselves against sure death at the point of the Spanish bayonets. The Samals, being Muslims, considered such action most valorous and honorable and do it in order not to allow their wives and children to fall into slavery or be killed by the hand of the enemy.³⁶

The surviving 350 Samal Balangingis together with *Nuyla*, the pregnant wife of the *Panglima Taupan* (who died a prisoner in Cavite, of cholera, in 1861)³⁷ were forcibly transported and transplanted to Northern Luzon. I discovered that they were in Cagayan Valley when the late Fr. Hilario Lim showed me a letter from Fr. Ambrosio Manaligod, SVD, who was then working in Isabela. Fr. Manaligod wrote that he encountered a strange-speaking people who claim to be Samals from Balangingi, and who professed to be Muslim. There were around 150 of them living in Barangay Pilitan, Tumauni, Isabela and 10 in East Dammang, Echague, Isabela.

³⁵ *Cartas*: 1848-1849. MSS, RMAO.

³⁶ Francisco Gainza, *Memoria y antecedentes sobre las Expediciones de Balangingi y Jolo* (Manila: Establecimiento y topógrafo de Colegio de Santo Tomas (1851), p. 69.

³⁷ *Mindanao y Sulo*, 1838-1878: RMAO.

At present, the progeny of their tribe can be found in the remote towns of Tumauni and Echague, in Isabela. From a race of might warriors and slave raiders, they are now docile, peace-loving families of farmers and fishermen. The exploits and bravery of their forebears are the main subjects of their history and legends. As of 2001, 50 descendants live in Pilitan, Tumauni. The oldest Samals alive are aged 83 and 89.

How did the pirates and slave raiders feel and think? From archival sources, there is information which I re-wrote in the form of two intimate letters from Nuyla, the wife of greatest Sama slave raider Panglima Taupan. The first is a letter to her husband; the second to us: modern Christians.

My dearest,

How I wish I could comb even nineteen islets of our Samalese islands with you. Ymbra, Sabi, Bail and I have been fishing. Hopping from shore to shore going from north to northeast. We bartered the fish with coal for firewood and cut long poles to build for houses especially for the old Babu Beng. We picked honey and cacao and bird's nest.³⁸

One day you promise you will teach your son to navigate his own sailspan. But first he must sail bravely with a dug out canoe to the rock where you pray everyday so he can praise Allah.³⁹

You once said to me it is difficult to catch fish but easier to catch Borneans.⁴⁰ Do you remember we waited for three months for your son Dungan to return from the Moluccas with captives and money?⁴¹ It was a profitable trip. I remember you reprimanded him because he had fallen in love with a Brunei native whom he had brought to Jolo to trade for three hundred gantas of rice.⁴²

³⁸ Margarita de los Reyes Cojuangco, *A Handful of Pearls*, unpublished

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Piratas* (RMAO); See also *Kris of Valor*.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

Do not fall in love with anyone! It is not fair to me who loves you and longs for you. Anyway I am a Muslim. Those women out there are Christians.

*Your wife,
Nuyla*

The second letter goes:

To the Christians,

My husband, father of mariners, was not a notorious pirate as he was called by Governor General Narciso Claveria. He was a trader and a leader. The Spanish authorities were irritated because they felt helpless in protecting their Christian subjects from slave raids.⁴³ Why should they be angry with my husband? Why blame my husband for their incompetence? Peñaranda or garays went there to watch barricades. They say my husband and his fellow slave raiders used to pose as fishermen on the seashores of Luzon and Visayas.⁴⁴ If they already had this information, why did they not provide such shores with enough protection? If my husband was successful, it was not because he was bad, but because he was daring. They also say my husband is merciless and cruel.⁴⁵ Are the Spaniards less cruel because they do their slave raiding on land? Are not their subjects slaves as well? My husband engages in slave raiding so we may rise up from poverty. What about the Spaniards? Surely, it is not poverty or necessity that impelled them to make slaves of other people. It is their greed for power. They might not sell these slaves to others, but until these slaves die, they will be servants, lowly indios despised and kept in bondage by the Spaniards, deprived of their own freedom.⁴⁶ Is that not a worse fate than being raided and sold by my husband, Taupan?⁴⁷

Nuyla

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Luis Ibañez y Garcia, *Mi Cautiverio Corta Que con motivo del Que Sufrio Entre Los Moros Piratas Joloanos y Samales en 1857*. Madrid: Imprenta de Gabriel Alhombra, 1859.

⁴⁶ Cartas: 1848-1849, MSS/Corpeta No. 2, Legajo No. 4, RMAO.

⁴⁷ Slaves could be bought and sold at will or exchanged for debts or given as part of a bride-gift. Authorities agreed that in general the lot of the slaves in Moro society was not unduly harsh. More often than not they were accepted as integral member of the datu's household.

CONCLUSION

This phenomenon of Moro slave-raiding is not exclusive to the Samal Balangingi. Men became pirates for a variety of legal, economic and personal reasons even for revenge. Piracy and buccaneering were businesses that profited not only seafarers, but many private business interests and the exchequers of some governments.⁴⁸

England, France and the Netherlands made use of adventurers called buccaneers, who raided the Spanish Main or Caribbean area. Buccaneering ranged through various shades of legality from legitimate privateering to pure piracy.⁴⁹

Nevertheless all that piracy reminds me of the Abu Sayyaf meaning "*Father of the Sword*" who continue to grab the limelight because of their terroristic activities. Although the term "slave-raiding" is no longer used, the activities of the Abu Sayyaf that of kidnapping, hostaging, haggling for ransom, are quite similar in nature to the slave-raiding and trading activities of the Samal Balangingi. Both then had a marked economic dimension.

Although historians say that the slave-raiding activities of our Muslim brothers were destructive, I can say that there are several significant benefits derived from these. One is that the raids led to intermarriages between Moro captors and Christian or foreign captives with no prejudice attached. In fact, "Because of the relation between slave and masters the Moros became a mixed race." (Ileto 1971:36) These intermarriages consequently caused the population to rise alarmingly in Jolo. Sulu now began to emerge as the unchallenged center of the triangular commerce among European, Chinese, and Southeast Asian trading partners. European traders came to sell Indian textiles, opium, and war supplies in exchange for tons of mother-of-pearls and tortoise shells and

In accord with Islamic law, it was possible for slaves to earn their freedom by arrangement with their masters: Also, there are cases on records where former slaves, by virtue of remarkable ability, or the patronage of kindly masters, acquired influential positions in the entourage of datus or sultan. (ct. Ileto, 1971:37) (Also put population bloated intermarriages of Warren).

⁴⁸ Serafin D. Quaison, *English "Country Trade" with the Philippines, 1644-1765*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines (1966); p. 121.

⁴⁹ Encyclopedia Americana: Vol. 22, pp. 133-134.

tripang, which Taosug slaves and laborers collected from the shallow seas surrounding the Sulu archipelago. Hundreds of slaves and subject tribal peoples also collected forest products from the hinterlands of Borneo and Mindanao. In this triangular trade, slaves became the most critical resource as attested to by the growth of Sulu's population, from about 40,000 people in 1770 to about 200,000 in 1814.⁵⁰

Attacks and counterattacks led to the consolidation of the population in the hinterland. Many coastal inhabitants all throughout the Philippine Archipelago relocated their houses deep into the interior. Although some of these inhabitants returned to their coastal homes later, some remained to become the core of the population that inhabited the interiors led to the establishment of secured new "pueblo."⁵¹

Slave-raidings also enabled the Spanish colonial government to undertake various infrastructure projects such as roads and bridges, as part of its defensive measures to facilitate communication between town in jointly combating the Moros. These projects served as conduits among the inhabitants of the various towns thereby facilitating trade and travel among them.⁵²

For the Christianized coastal towns, the Moro slave raidings forced the Spaniards to formulate defensive moves to counter the Moros by constructing watchtowers (today historical markers) reminding us of the fire and fury of the human dramas that raged around these fortified structures.⁵³

It is difficult to pass judgments on the morality or immorality of the slave-raiding activities. The leading actors in those centuries of Spanish-Muslim conflicts had their respective motives.

⁵⁰ Eric S. Casiño, *Mindanao Statecraft and Ecology...*, p. 50.

⁵¹ *Ereccion de Pueblos*, Tayabas, Año 1755-1856, RMAO.

⁵² *Cedulario*, 1757. Two years of personal services for the town of Balayon, Batangas for the construction of the walls and bulwarks for defense, Manila, 5th of September, 1757.

⁵³ Ildfonso de Aragon y Abollado, *Plan General de defensa de las Islas Filipinas con su plano hidrográfico*, Año de 1829 (MSS), Folio 177-178.

By presenting this phenomenon of slave raiding conducted by Muslims against Christians, it may not be difficult to understand the sentiments that gripped the Muslim inhabitants of Mindanao in their response to the “problematic new order” created by European expansionism and mercantilism. The violence they inflicted through their slave raids was also the result of the violence created by the Spanish incursion in their homeland, the consequence of which were attacks highlighted by the fundamental Islamic belief that Allah was the guiding hand in every individual or group response regardless of the outcome of the attack.

Despite all measures adopted by the Spanish colonial government, their use and exploitation of native manpower and resources, the Muslim threat has not been eliminated up to the present. The recurrence of Muslim independence movements has highlighted their consistent adherence to the ancient and universal ideals of liberty, freedom and self-rule.

Today slavery exists because of the presence of huge economic gaps between the developed countries and the poor countries. The employed Pinoy in the U.S. can come for a visit, as a *balikbayan* he brings US dollars, one US dollar is presently P51. For five dollars he can be master of several of his own siblings in the VIP rooms of Calle Dapitan.⁵⁴

The “slaves” are still around. Even in the old days, a slave never came to its owner for free. Slaves were expensive. But today the American slave owner buys him as a farm equipment for roughly the same value as his descendant would now pay for a Caterpillar tractor or a harvesting combine. The slave-owners descendants in California probably live an easier life because of the services of Filipino “illegals” in that place. These slaves work for a pittance and are, in fact, prisoners also in the textile and mass tailoring factories of California. The entire phenomenon of slavery has always been economics.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Dr. Teodoro de los Reyes Abbas, Chair & Professor, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, St. Luke College of Medicine (William Quasha Memorial), Co-Chairman of Institute of Neuro-Sciences, St. Luke Medical Center; President and C.E.O., Drug Abuse Research Foundation (DARE).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

Christianity and Islam have many roots in common. But Islam is a little more warlike. They both have one main prophet. Jesus of Nazareth was a humble carpenter and walking guru. There was only one incident when he got angry and became physically violent. It had to do with the money changers in the Temple.

Mohammed was an established leader who preached his beliefs as basis for a religion that includes nation building in the tenets of Islam. Mohammed led and commanded armies. Jesus ascended into heaven unmounted, Mohammed ascended into heaven astride his favorite war horse.

Christians used religious fervor to raise the army for the first Crusade to massacre non-Christians in the Holy Land. The holy war of Islam is between Muslims and non-Muslim. The *Jihad* is a rightful war in the same way that St. Thomas Aquinas wrote about "justified wars." But the Christians drew first blood with the Crusades.⁵⁶

It may be true that all wars have economic gain as their basis. But for propaganda purposes or motivation for the soldiers, it has always been good to claim that "God is on our side." The Muslims make war in the name of Allah.

The so called "terrorist" is nothing more but the soldier of an impoverished nation or group. He has noble ancestors, the "divine wind" pilots of Japan, the "amok" of Southeast Asia, yes, the "jura-mentados" of our own south. The B-29 and B-52 pilots of the U.S. were never referred to as terrorists. Although they were flying the most terrifying vehicles of war.

In war as in peace, it is good to be rich.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

APPENDIX

SLAVE-RAIDING ROUTE

There are three different routes that the pirates have been following since time immemorial used and they are the following:

1) The coast on the Northeastern and Northern part of the Island of Borneo, then to the Southeastern and Eastern part of Paragua, Palawan and south of Calamianes. Along this course they ravage the towns and capture slaves. They penetrate the group of the Visayas islands, gather captives, then return to the point of their departure through the same route that they made (vice-versa) or proceed to the Southern part of Negros and then to Cagayancillo, then to Paragua (old name of Palawan), and then return to their point of departure and lastly to their center base in Tawy-Tawy.

2) From this point, they navigate the Southern part of Jolo and Basilan, then to Mindanao and through its Southeastern and Eastern parts then proceed to Visayas islands and from there, back to the same route.

3) The last route originates from Tawi-Tawi, onwed to Mindanao, then to the island of Sanguir in Moluccas and from there they seize slaves and whatever they may could loot from the raids and then return via the same route.

It would be easy to put up blockades along these routes to stop piratical invasions. Sub-divisions of gun-boats and schooners could be stationed conveniently and piracy will be stopped. The best places will be in Cuyo or in Calamianes which will in fact reinforce those in Balabac. The other will be in Tawy-Tawy to reinforce the blockade in Sarangani Island formerly a part of Davao. Once, the division for blockade is established in Tawy-Tawy, the big ship will be stationed in Jolo in order to check other movements of the pirates.*

* [Report of Guillermo Casanova to the Governor-General of Zamboanga, November 9, 1868. Mindanao y Sulu, Unclassified. MSA/Alcaldia Mayor de Zamboanga. PMAO, Manila.]

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