

**Sociability and personal bonds in the Philippines under  
American Colonisation**  
By  
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When Henry Morgenthau arrived in Manila in November 1925, he had with him a letter of introduction from General J.G. Harbord to then Senate President Manuel L. Quezon. General Harbord wanted Morgenthau, President Wilson's former adviser, to meet Quezon not only as a Filipino statesman: «*but as a warm friend of mine for the last twenty years*<sup>1</sup> ». It seems logical that these two characters should meet, not only because they both occupied high positions in politics at the time, but also because they belonged to the same social background. Political and social obligations are inextricably linked. Thus, from time to time, social history, as in this cited case, can shed light on <<sociability>> in the political world; that is, the network of clubs or societies and the relationships and exchanges that someone has with people of the same or similar social background. These bonds help to draw a portrait of a Philippine elite that had as one of its peculiarities the fact that it was composed of both Americans and Filipinos. Through one individual, Manuel L. Quezon, president of the Commonwealth from 1935 until his death in 1944, we will try to understand the peculiarities of Philippine society at the elite level under American rule. This requires an understanding of the network of associations as well as an anthropological survey of the letters of introduction and recommendation widely used by members of the elite. Was it a "classical" colonial society of the kind found in the European colonies in Africa, in which the local elite were influenced by the colonizing power, or was it a mixed society, one that integrated Spanish and indigenous Filipino cultural behavior?

The response requires an examination source; in this case, the archives of President Quezon. For lack of a systematic policy of conservation, the archives cannot be cross-checked against other sources. From the very onset, we must relinquish all hope of finding internal associations or ministerial archives that might clarify certain matters. Presidential documents, satisfactorily classified for the most part, consist of rough, rarely mentioned material, and cover the period from 1912 to 1942. These are essential sources for Philippine colonial history because they modify the perception of American studies based on official American documents<sup>2</sup>. The latter, whether they are administrative or even the personal correspondence of the Governors-General, give the point of

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<sup>1</sup>. Philippine National Library, Rare Book and Manuscript section, Manuel L. Quezon Papers, Letters of introduction, Box (B.). 204.

<sup>2</sup>. Golay (F.H), *Face of empire. United States-Philippines relations, 1848-1946*, Quezon-City-Madison, Ateneo de Manila University Press-Center for Southeast Asian Studies, 1997, 549. At the moment this is considered the landmark study in U.S. – Filipino relations.

view of the colonizer. Quezon's documents represent events as seen by a Filipino. This aspect has also been neglected by Philippine historians<sup>3</sup>.

### *Philippine <<Sociability>>*

In May 1909 Quezon, then a member of the Philippine Assembly, was elected resident commissioner to the United States. He represented his country's interests before the U.S. Congress. After the passage of the <<Jones Law>> in 1916, he became, and remained, senate president from 1916 to November 1935, when he was elected Commonwealth president. This Commonwealth was the last stage of American colonial supervision before the Philippines was granted complete independence in July, 1946. How did this political leader behave in the network of political and social associations he associated with or belonged to?

A multiplicity of clubs and societies proliferated in Manila at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Quezon had some kind of communication with 84 of these<sup>4</sup>. Two-thirds had their headquarters in the Philippines, and were led by American nationals or by Filipinos. The societies headed by Filipinos varied in nature; many of them were close to the political parties like the *Nacionalistas*, many others were only social clubs. The activity of these groups demonstrated the vitality of the young democracy. As in Europe and in the United States, the number of sports clubs increased. The country clubs (such as the Baguio Country Club), except those such as the American Army-Navy Club and the Polo Club, which barred Filipino members, and even some golf clubs (such as the Wack-Wack golf club, founded in response to William Shaw's being ostracized from the Manila Golf Club for being married to a Filipina), where American expatriates mingled with the local elite, spread all over Luzon (the main island of the Philippines). All were characteristic, both in their activities and roster of members, of the bourgeois lifestyle. The Tennis Club (of Manila) or the Olympic Athletic Club « *for the elevation of boxing* » were not aimed at a wider public. The American associations to which Quezon belongs seem to be more connected with the political activities of the commissioner.

#### « Good fellow »

As resident commissioner Quezon clearly did not assign the same importance to all these societies. After he replaced Pablo Ocampo as resident commissioner

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<sup>3</sup>. Regarding the historiography dispute, cf. the controversial book of May (Glenn Anthony), *Inventing a hero. The posthumous re-creation of A. Bonifacio*, Madison, University of Wisconsin, 1996, 200 p. and the reply from Churchill (Benita Reyes) [direction], *Determining the truth. The story of Andres Bonifacio*, Manila, Manila Studies Association, National Commission for Culture and the Arts, Philippine National Historical Society, 1997, 100 p. The defense *pro domo* of Ileta (Reynaldo C.), *Filipinos and their Revolution. Event, Discourse, and historiography*, Quezon City, Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1998, pp. 203-237.

<sup>4</sup>. Clubs, associations, societies, B. 22-28.

in May 1909, he began linking up with American social networks. His approach was pragmatic. When there was no one to make the introductions for him, he introduced himself: such as for the National Democratic Association in October 1915. Shortly afterwards, the association's secretary Lorenzo G. Warfield sent Quezon an application form. By this time, colonial matters had started to concern Quezon and he asked, in passing, about the club's position on Philippine independence. Cautiously, its president answered that: « *The society will not champion any political policy*<sup>5</sup> ». Quezon decided not to become a member. This did not prevent the commissioner from becoming member of the New York Athletic Club or the Riding and Hunt Club of Washington, if only to enhance his social prestige (and because Quezon fancied himself a horseman).

In the letters of recommendation Quezon took with him to Shanghai in November 1915, the American-Chinese Association president spoke of him as a « *good sportsman, good fellow*<sup>6</sup> ». The image of the honest man seemed more important than any actual accomplishments in practicing a sport. To complete the picture, Quezon subscribed to cultural organizations like the National Geographic Society and the American Society of International Law. These contacts were superficial, as the correspondence shows. By contrast, at the beginning of the 1910's, the resident commissioner spared no efforts with regard to cultivating the American Anti-Imperialist League. The image of an ambitious, calculating politician who knew that he has a national future is inconsistent with Quezon's activities in the United States. The relationship that he establishes with Irving Winslow, the secretary of the club is, for example, surprising. On March 23 1911, the latter offered his services in the name of the League, in particular to write speeches and political position papers: « *in a way I suggested*<sup>7</sup> ». Therefore, it seems the League was not, at that time, under Quezon's domination, as F.H. Golay and E. Berkeley Tompkins imply<sup>8</sup>. The resident commissioner accepted all the invitations in different states in the northern United States to speak: « *before clubs and others institutions at my own expense. I believe, he adds, <<it is the very best thing I could do to promote our cause.* » These relations with the League continue until 1913. There is no further documentation until 1935.

In Manila, Quezon did not maintain the same ties with all the associations. In the 1910's, he answered all invitations, either for dinners, or for presiding over small gatherings, favorably. Later he became more selective and narrowed his alternatives to a cultivating a few clubs, of which the most important was the Philippine Columbian Association (P.C.A.). The directory of July 1920 lists exactly 250 members: 188 residents, domiciled in the Philippines and 62 non-residents, American civil servants or academics (17). Quezon was honorary

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<sup>5</sup>. B. 22.

<sup>6</sup>. B. 205.

<sup>7</sup>. Anti-Imperialist League, B. 5

<sup>8</sup>. Golay, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

president in 1914, when he then turned over the presidency to José Abad Santos (a close Quezo confidant and who became Supreme Court Justice Chief at the outbreak of World War II). José Sanvictores, secretary to Quezon, was club secretary. The P.C.A. seemed to function like a social club, open to everyone. Parties were regularly organized, sometimes free for members: « *Smokes and refreshments will be provided in plenty AT THE EXPENSE OF THE CLUB* », says an invitation from July 1920. Sunday was the day for tea dances. The P.C.A. organized competitions with other clubs: primarily sporting competitions with the Rotary Club or the Oriental and the Japan clubs (tennis, baseball, bowling, billiards and volleyball), but also chess tournaments and musical events. The idea was to spend the day at the club with one's family, on the playground or at the clubhouse. The men retiring to the private room, to smoke, talk and listen possibly to the guest speaker. The P.C.A.'s honorary president met other prominent members, such as Jose P. Laurel, M. Burgos, and Manuel Roxas, at least once a month. On November 3 1919, the club received Sergio Osmeña, Speaker of the House and Quezon's rival, as a member. On January 3 1922, Jacob Gould Schurman, former head of the First Philippine Commission in 1899, was received with the respect due to his rank, like every official during their respective stay in Manila. The P.C.A. prepared the luncheon in honour of the new Governors-General with attention to detail. Francis Burton Harrison, while holding that position, was a regular visitor to the club and even accepted an honorary presidency alongside his friend. The members were called together for "*the regular monthly affairs*" in accordance with an order of business that resembled that of a masonic lodge<sup>9</sup>. Although we are unable to go into more detail, we can assume that the P.C.A.'s principal function was to be a setting for political meetings. In addition, as Mr. Quezon was very active in the club, it could not have been just a place for conviviality. The club's members were very loyal to Quezon, composed as they were, of Filipinos educated in the United States (hence the name of the club), and often belonging to a younger generation that gravitated to Quezon. On 15 January 1935, a song was composed for him<sup>10</sup>. But the leader of the Philippines was not spared criticism. In an anonymous speech, the author, after the customary compliments, pointed out that the country was not ready for independence. The government had no plan for economic life: « *Mr. President, the people are still waiting for it (...). Our "Bahala na" will not place our commonwealth on a stable basis nor save our industry, our economic structure from collapse*<sup>11</sup> ». Following the P.C.A. example, the Senate President made a tremendous effort in the association field until the mid 1920's. After that, he accepted some honorary presidencies, such as that of the Philippine Anti-Leprosy Association,

<sup>9</sup>. For example, the order of business in December 1922: « 1- reading of the minutes of the last regular meeting 2 - report of the officers and committees 3 - unfinished business 4 - new business 5 - election and installation of the new officers 6 - adjournment ».

<sup>10</sup> . « *Manuel Quezon (M.Q.), M.Q. /Chief Tagolo, Hablado or/ M.Q., M.Q./ De los politicos campeor/ M.Q., M.Q./The Philippino defenso/ M.Q., M.Q./Chief Columbian garador.* »

<sup>11</sup>. Box 22. The "Bahala na" is a very philippine concept. It means « with god's grace » and « come what may ». Foreigners, even today, are taken aback by the Filipino propensity to live in a continuing present.

without actively participating. But he nonetheless kept a vigilant watch over these associations and, from time to time, he provided them with funds when he deemed it necessary. On January 19 1927, for example, Sali Pampaga wrote to the Senate President in the name of the Young Generation non-Christian Society. For lack of money, some students from Mindanao could not pursue their studies. On February first, Mr. Quezon replied that he would try to release funds for the students.

### A pragmatic Freemason

Freemasonry played an important role in these sociabilities. Meeting places *par excellence*, the lodges gave Quezon, as a public personality, the opportunity to talk informally about current topics and cultivate the enhancement of his career.

On August 17 1918, Charles S. Lobinger, a member of the Philippine Supreme Council gave the Senate President a report on Freemasonry in Asia. According to the author, there were 1,600 Scottish rite freemasons in Asia of which between 1,200 and 1,400 were in the Philippines<sup>12</sup>. The names that can be found suggest that masonic membership did not differ significantly from the enlightened bourgeoisie: academics, lawyers and rich merchants from the Philippines mixed with those of American dignitaries. F. B. Harrison and his successor Leonard Wood, Governors-General from 1913 to 1926, both freemasons, frequently visited the lodges of the capital. The cosmopolitan character of the Manila lodges did not, however, help them avoid conflicts altogether, something that has escaped the attention of most people. In the summer of 1915, a dispute arose between two principal obediences. One belonged to the Spanish Grand Orient (lay, anticlerical), the other to American freemasonry, to be precise, the Great Lodge of California (deist, close to the Protestants). The G.O. objected to the G.L.C's settlement in the Philippines without its permission. The American obedience reasoned that the Philippines was free, from a Masonic point of view, implicitly referring to a dispute that troubled the French and English obediences at the end of the XVIIIth century<sup>13</sup>. In perfectly bad faith, the Californian masons casually dismissed the Great Orient arguments. In a personal letter to Quezon, Austin Craig (noted pioneering colonial anthropologist), the most well known Freemason in the Philippines explained what was really at stake. Our work, he affirmed, consisted in: « *getting rid by absorption of the Spanish and Portuguese invaders*<sup>14</sup>. » To eliminate all European influence, especially the Spanish one, which had been accomplished by 1918, was only a beginning because Charles S. Lobinger believed, in view of the progress that American masonry had already

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<sup>12</sup>. Free Masonry, B. 137-139.

<sup>13</sup>. French Freemasonry does not recognize the existence of god. It provoked a schism in 1773 which gave birth to the Grand Orient. Today the British obedience considers the French obedience as irregular.

<sup>14</sup>. Free masonry, B.135.

made, that this expansion had just started. The large number of Philippine freemasons would help to make Manila the "*Masonic center of the Far East*". Mr. Quezon was aware of the stakes and did not hesitate to play the American card to his advantage.

The archives are silent on the resident commissioners' initiation. In December 1916, Dr. Austin Craig informed Quezon of his acceptance into the high grades, hinting that he had sufficient seniority in rank (probably two years), putting his entry into masonry at 1914 at the latest. Quezon pragmatically used his Masonic network to strengthen his position as a political leader and, when needed, to make use of the connections being a Mason afforded. The Senate President was very much in demand as a speaker at the lodges, in the Philippines as well as in the United States. Between 1918 and 1921, at the height of his masonic activities, Quezon visited a lodge at least once every two weeks. The network worked well, especially in America<sup>15</sup> where Quezon, in one of his most relished roles as propagandist for Philippine independence, traveled, sometimes in Harrison's company. He also found the Masonic network helpful in his dealings with the Insular Affairs Bureau in Washington. Perhaps Freemasonry was a victim of its own success. "*We need a lodge of perfection in Northern Luzon, a thousand members of good standing*", wrote Austin Craig on May 15 1921, to extend the influence of the obedience in Japan, China and Siam, which could be the Philippine "*contribution toward peace in the Far East*" and would preserve the elitist characteristic of Masonry. Quezon did not hesitate to ask his brothers in the Craft for introductions when he traveled overseas. In November 1918, when he planned go on a tour of Europe, Mr. Lévy introduced him to Henri Tureau, editor-in-chief of *La Petite République*<sup>16</sup>. Quezon's use of the network offended some brothers. « *I think, affirmed Mr. Quezon, <<my conduct in the past justifies me in saying that my brethren will never find occasion to say with reason that I have done anything in masonry for my private purposes or those of my friends*<sup>17</sup> ». The author said this in good faith, but this is just part of the story. For some time, Quezon did make use of the Masonic network. However he became less interested at the start of the 1920's, when he wrote a letter of retraction to his fellow passenger at sea, Manila Archbishop O' Dougherty on August 18, 1930, informing him that he had renounced free masonry because in any case he no longer frequented the lodges<sup>18</sup>.

### An osmosis

The utility of these networks remains the point at issue. Quezon undeniably used them to advance his own career, and his position as foremost powerbroker

<sup>15</sup>. Free masonry, B. 138 and A. Craig's introduction letters B 205.

<sup>16</sup>. The author specifies that M. Quezon would like to meet "the boss" A. Millerand (speaker of the House), whom he admires, which indeed is false! B. 205.

<sup>17</sup>. Free masonry, B. 138.

<sup>18</sup>. Family correspondence, B. 24.

and self-appointed spokesman on Philippine independence. In the meantime, this man of influence is himself influenced by his contemporaries -his American friends in particular, even if it is difficult to evaluate the extent of their influence. It is during his senate presidency that he is most influenced by Western principles. In January 1917, he recommended Mrs. A. W. Smith to the American military authorities. He asked that she, and her two children, be allowed to travel to San Francisco on official transport. General H. Liggett refused, explaining that this kind of service was an official privilege: « *This is a requirement of law and regulation and no discretion in the matter is allowed the military authorities request*<sup>19</sup>. » The strictness of the American administration, essential to the functioning of a state of rights, contrasts with the Philippine custom of cronyism. Quezon had been told this once, for the last time. We never find such an initiative in his later mail. Many years later, the Senate President is apparently transformed into a paragon of virtue. On August 26, 1926, James A. Wood, a patrolman, wrote up a report on an incident involving the senate president's chauffeur. The latter blocked traffic, insulted and eventually threatened the policeman. Tomas Earnshaw, who was resident commissioner with Quezon, was, by that time, mayor of Manila. He wrote, amiably (he was, after all, godfather to Quezon's son), to his former counterpart, saying that the charges against the chauffeur would be dropped and requested that the episode not be repeated. Quezon replied that he did not want the legal process to be stopped, and required the police to go on with their work. « *I am not protecting anybody who violates the law (...). What would embarrass me is to let people free and unmolested even though they have been disregarding the law simply because they are my friends, my relatives or employees*<sup>20</sup>. » This is a far cry from the usual accounts of the fiery resident commissioner and, ironically, the combative senate president waging a political war of attrition against the <<khaki cabinet>> of his nemesis, Leonard Wood. His continuing relationship with the American authorities; and advice from his friends Harrison, McIntyre and Harbord have transformed his conduct, at least as reflected in his correspondence. He is now, when it comes to his mail, a statesman. Governor-General Harrison and McIntyre, head of the Insular Affairs Bureau in Washington, have always been kindly disposed to him, even beyond their Masonic fellowship. The friendship between these men is indisputable. It also signifies a continuing sense of state, and of common interests, and it appears in their dealings. Finally, the influence works two ways.

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<sup>19</sup>. Americans in the Philippines, B. 4.

<sup>20</sup>. Complaints and protests, B. 33. We must point out that this happens one year later, after the Conley affair. The employee in question was protected by Governor-General Wood, instead of punished. On this pretext Quezon attempted to discredit Wood, and to appear as the future head of state, ahead of Osmena, his rival. Aware of his future functions, he cannot afford to give such political "affairs" to his adversaries.

« *Any courtesy you may extend...* »

The letters of introduction and recommendation help us to appreciate the ties that linked a political leader to his contemporaries. The letters of recommendation serve a specific purpose: to help one obtain a position. The letters of introduction were put to use in a wider range of situations, from simple civility to political intervention<sup>21</sup>. The last will draw our attention as they shed some light on the role of the individual known in the Philippines as the "go-between". There are 382 individual letters or files letters (55). The matter in hand is a simple missive, often typed, and its length varies from between two sentences to two pages. The average is about half a page. 131 were received, 178 sent by Mr. Quezon or his secretaries (62). In the files are usually requests and one or several answers. 18 items seem to be there by accident or perhaps belonged to files that are now incomplete. These items certainly do not represent the totality of Quezon's correspondence, because some missives could have been classified under other themes, or been lost or stolen. Moreover, an interlocutor could have kept his letters after the exchange. Some letters may not have found an addressee (letters not sent, not given to the recipient, etc.). Although these letters are spread out over a 30-year period (with more than half from the 1920's), they nonetheless constitute an excellent series, as social habits changed little in the time.

This social custom still exists in the Philippines today, and is a shock to "continental" Europeans who are not in the habit of such use. In the Philippines under American colonization, the meaning was different. Actors exchange services against gratitude in accordance with social conventions. The result is complex.

### The process

Manuel L. Quezon is the center of gravity in these social exchanges: either one wants to meet him or expects him to be an influential mediator. Those who wish to meet the political figure usually have a letter of introduction to assert their rights. The applicant may write another letter, as did Mary du Hamel Clagett, on December 11 1916. She asked to meet, and the resident commissioner gave her an appointment two days later<sup>22</sup>. But the process cannot be shortened "*After two months of trying to see you in vain*>>, wrote T.V. Baglawis in December 1919, << *I have decided to write*". People preferred to phone the secretary as the use of the telephone increased. On February 9, 1921, a letter introduced J.O. David, Collector of Customs in San Francisco. In March, Primitivo San Augustin, private secretary to the president, mentioned: "*this came by mail but Mr. David has not called yet*". Finally there are few

<sup>21</sup>. That distinction corresponds to the classification. Letters of introduction B. 203-205; letters of recommendation B 206-230.

<sup>22</sup>. For the following examples, we must refer to the classification: B. 203 letters A to G ; B 206, H to P ; B 207 for the letters Q to Z.



solicitations for interviews because the secretaries solved most of these matters by mail. Thus, one could ask the president for a letter of introduction as long as he was close to him. The letter was then sent to the future "bearer" or directly to the person that he wanted to meet. In July 1919, a former senator took a trip to the United States to meet with Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War, and Joseph P. Tumulty, secretary to the President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson. At the bottom of the envelope, we find the words, « *Introducing Hon. H. Gonzales* ». The practice had become institutionalized. In addition, there is sometimes another motive present. On April 23, 1929, F. McIntyre wrote a personal letter to his Philippine friend despite the fact that he has already written a letter of introduction for Colonel Rigby. The Chief of Insular Affairs warned that the latter: "*has for several years been in charge of the Philippine government legal business here [Washington]. (...) In addition to all of this, this is a good friend of mine*". This was a means to reinforce an existing practice, without which it might have seemed too conventional. On June 25, 1929, it was Mr. Quezon's turn to make use of that possibility. He wrote to the new Governor-General, Dwight F. Davis (founder of the Davis Cup and former secretary of war under Coolidge). The senate president had already given a letter of introduction to Mr. Torressis, an influential pressman with radical ideas, and a vigorous opponent of the previous Governor-General, Henry Stimson. « *Mr. Torresis was under the impression that governor Stimson's policies meant the exploitation of the Philippines by the American capital*, wrote Quezon (...). <<*I feel that if he knows you and learns of your ideas, he would support your administration* ».

### Between clientelism and social obligation

The use of written communication is the main hurdle to gaining presidential favors, and English is preferred over Tagalog, which is rare (9 letters), or Spanish (101 letters). The great *Mestizo* families are accustomed to communicating in Spanish. The president and his secretaries invariably reply in English.

Different types of people associate with Quezon, and the interaction between them changes constantly. The standard openings of the letters give little information on the nature of the relationship. A lector is called by his title: "Dear President" or "My Dear President". "Dear Manuel" is reserved for the American "brothers" who do not have any professional relations with the interlocutor. Mr. Quezon proceeds in the same way, employing the standard openings. Those like "My Dear Patrick" or "My Dear Jim"<sup>23</sup> are rarely used. By the tenor of the letter it is possible to establish three circles around the president. The first includes family and close personal friends, the second, wider one, personal and professional acquaintances, and the third, strangers.

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<sup>23</sup>. Patrick Gallagher, 9 XI 1917 and James Ross, 19 III 1925, Letters of introduction B. 205.

In the first circle, the family is remarkably quiet<sup>24</sup>. A certain Pepe, Quezon's nephew from Baguio is the only exception. He writes his uncle to implore that his ostracism be ended. He asks for a letter of introduction, in vain. Aurora, Quezon's wife, rarely asks her husband's secretaries for favours. When she does, the secretaries feel compelled to specify the origin of the request<sup>25</sup>. The secretaries themselves do not hesitate to take advantage of their position and sign: "*secretary to the president*" even in personal matters. From this correspondence, it seems that Quezon's closer friends were American. F. B. Harrison, F. McIntyre and General Harbord are never dismissed. Warm letters, like the one addressed to Victor Buencamino, his former adviser on January 9 1931 or Sotero Baluyot, governor of Pampanga and the official candidate of their party on April of the same year, are exceptional<sup>26</sup>. Quezon's daily contact with the political staff when he is in Manila perhaps explains this. The second circle, consisting of Quezon's acquaintances, is as wide as it is heterogeneous. American administration officials, principally the chiefs of the services, mix with the great Filipino families (Laurel, Zobel, etc.) heads of industry, academics (presidents and professor of U.P. or of the National University), and prominent politicians, in sum, the élite. The last circle includes those individuals that can loosely be referred to as middle class, who remain anonymous in the correspondence. There are teachers and clerks who demand presidential favors, for themselves or for others, who cannot write. The teacher of Tamparan-Lanao, for example, introduces two *datus* (Filipino tribal chiefs) who: "*are strong leaders to help you for the Philippines Independence and can strongly convince the people of Rumayas*"<sup>27</sup>. Diversity, therefore with regards to the actors as well as motives, is evident.

A letter of introduction signifies that the author rests his reputation on the character of the "bearer" *a fortiori* when a statesman is involved. The letters endings can be conventional: "*Any courtesy you may extend will be appreciated*" or more direct: "*Any courtesy you may extend to Mr. or Mrs. ... will be highly appreciated by me*". The purposes can be classified into three types: First: "good manners" between honest members of the bourgeoisie. Second, those with a practical purpose: to seek a service, for instance. Third, the applications for a position, in particular, the requests from students and journalists.

Politeness is among the most important of the bourgeois values. In May 1913 a translator asked Quezon for a letter because he would like to pay his respects to Morgan Shuster (member of the Philippine Commission during the Taft era), before leaving the Philippines. Twenty years later, the governor G. Borrero was

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<sup>24</sup>. This could be because of the secretaries' classifications. The "family correspondence" is not classified on the same references.

<sup>25</sup>. For instance on August 6 1926, Guillermo Cabrera writes to Manila college San Juan's rector. Letters of introduction B. 206.

<sup>26</sup>. Respectively B. 208 and B. 207.

<sup>27</sup>. Letters of introduction B. 204.

introduced to the Governor-General for the same reasons. An American senator, worried about his son's upbringing, would like to know if the latter has paid his respects to his counterpart (Quezon) in the Philippines. Beyond civilities, we can recommend a "friend" even if the word acquires a particular meaning in politics. On September 26 1921 Quezon wrote to his friend (sic) Sun Yat Sen, to introduce G. G. Moore. He was careful to employ the appropriate vocabulary with the Chinese: « *It would afford me genuine pleasure if you could give him a few minutes of your valuable time* ». Barbara Harrison knew how to arouse the senate president's interest. She explained that one of her friends, a Mexican artist, had just arrived in September 1933 in the company of « *his very beautiful wife* » and would Quezon take care of them? The bourgeoisie cultivates the art of traveling. One does not hesitate to call on contacts that one can depend on. The President nearly always answered favorably to American acquaintances whose friends visited the archipelago. It was understood that if the need arose, he would put his house at their disposal. When the president planned to travel in Europe in the autumn of 1918, he asked for letters of introduction in France and in Italy. It was not only to get contacts but also to be invited and thereby be able to travel less expensively. Material issues are important considerations as well. All things considered, material issues are often the least important considerations in the social convention. "*You know Mr. Antonio Melian*>>, wrote Mr. Quezon to F. McIntyre, <<*who is taking a trip to the United States, and he therefore needs no introduction, but I am writing this letter to express the hope that should Mr. Melian need your help in any way you will do for him whatever you can.*" The visit was a " must ". "*Why go to Athens without doing the Parthenon*>>, candidly explained F. Thompson on November 24, 1919, <<*to Rome without visiting the Coliseum, in the Philippines [without visiting] Quezon, I asked the bearer my good friend Chester A. Doyle?*" Why not indeed? One of the peculiarities of the trip to the Philippines was the length of the voyage, two to three weeks by ship to cross the Pacific, depending on the itinerary. Hence, meetings between passengers were prearranged, such as that putting Quezon into contact with C. Carkhuff, secretary of rubber magnate Harvey Firestone, who "*should influence the transfer*" of investments into the archipelago.

A letter of introduction saved the bearer trouble. M. Quezon asked his bankers for several before traveling abroad, even to the United States. The bearer was laconically introduced as a client of the bank and president of the Philippine senate, therefore solvent. Pieces of news spread about "good" doctors. In January 1922, the president sent a close friend of his to the cardiologist Antonio Sison. On November 21, it was the manager of the Manila Railway Company, Ernest de Westerhouse's turn, to advise a doctor to do "*anything he can*" for the political leader who had serious health problems. In the public field, the letter of introduction has a consistent character and function. New resident commissioners are treated with consideration, for example. On August 23 1920, Quezon urged the American senator G. Fairchild to send letters of introduction to his colleague Isauro Gabaldon. The new commissioner needed

contacts in Washington and in New York. Five letters arrived the following week. Camilio Osias was credited with receiving 29, but these were mostly form letters. Only 12 were addressed to the recipient by name. The author only added a personal word to General Harbord. One wonders about the usefulness of these letters, which begin with "*To whom it may concern*". They assure the recipient of the bearer's qualities, the respectability of his family. Used within the administration, these letters may indicate that the case has been redirected to a more appropriate department or to more competent persons. The senatorial office operated like a filter. It was understood that the postulant's case deserves attention. In these cases, Mr. Quezon acted as an intercessor, as a "go between". Thus, 31 files were reoriented with notations such as: "*very important matter to take up with you*" or "*about matter related to your division*". The purpose was rarely specified, and from time to time only a vague reference was made to it. Thus, Mr. Quezon introduced the "*late relative Soriano*<sup>28</sup>" to judge Hidalgo in connection with a matter left by his brother to his bureau. There is a standard procedure known to the secretaries. In an undated manuscript, for example, we learn that A. Cadix, an elementary school teacher from Lucena, capital of Quezon's home province, wanted to be transferred to Manila for (good) personal reasons. On June 19, 1925, the office of the senate president forwarded the request to Luther B. Bewley, Director of Education, with a letter which ended with: "*I strongly recommend a favorable action on this request for the transfer.*" The answer comes back on July 9: "*I shall state>>, wrote L. B. Bewley, <<that I have taken this matter up and Mr. Cadiz has submitted his application and he will be given an appointment in the city schools*<sup>29</sup>". In the given example, the matter is hinted at because it is linked to a position.

A politician's power can be measured by his ability to give jobs, or, failing that, money. A letter initialed by Quezon is an asset in obtaining a position. Hence, it is no surprise that "letters of recommendation" are a significant subject file in the presidential archives, second in volume, after "elections"<sup>30</sup>. These letters written for individuals seeking a position are classified as "letters of recommendation" but it happens that they are compiled as "letters of introduction". Nevertheless, in 52 cases, it is clear that the letter is written for an individual seeking a position, that is to say one in six. The preamble can be simple and straightforward: a former presidential driver claims a work certificate, for example. But several persons can also intervene in the process of designation, *a fortiori* for sensitive political positions.

The actors in this sphere move with caution with care and increase their correspondence. And Mr. Quezon works to position his own people. More than in any other field, it is in this area that we see how a political figure uses his

<sup>28</sup>. One of the wealthiest families in the Philippines, used to own San Miguel Brewery.

<sup>29</sup>. Letters of recommendation B. 209.

<sup>30</sup>. 53 boxes for "election", 26 for "Letters of recommendation" 8 for "Applications for a position". This theme should be studied in a different survey that cannot be done presently.

power if not on a daily, then at least on a weekly basis. The president's attitude oscillates between two extremes. He recommended the son in law of an old friend to the customs authorities: "*He has good records of the Provincial Fiscal*>>, affirmed the president. <<*Personally, he is a good friend of mine.*" That is to say that if the collector of customs did not comply with the request, he would have personally offended the author of the letter. Conversely, the applicant can be dismissed. "*With regard to your letter*", wrote Jose Gil, secretary to the president: "*We regret to have to advise you that as a matter of policy, His Excellency does not issue any recommendation to jobless persons, either in public or private office*<sup>31</sup>." In both cases, the political leader lied. He was no more the friend of the first than he was of the one to whom he refused to issue recommendations. It all depends in fact on the person and the issue at hand. The president is benevolent with his social inferiors. Some of them find themselves in dire straits, often for familial reasons. Moreover, his prestige is at stake. Even if the applicant does not find employment, the intermediary can always say that he did his best. In this manner, the heads of official departments, or the administrators of the Philippine National Bank and the Manila Railway Company become partners in the process. In general they reply when they are not able to comply with the request. The approach seems efficient. A teacher who claims to be in a difficult situation is a case in point. On November 6 1923, C. Osias solicited, with Quezon's support, the President of the National University, in vain. One later learns, in a letter dated 14 May 1925, that the postulant, Mariano Acevilla, had found a position in a provincial high school. He desired a letter of recommendation to work in one of the Chinese schools in the city. "*Please, help me, I am so far from home*", he lamented. The following year, Acevilla again took the necessary steps to find a new job: "*With my present position as teacher in one of the Chinese schools of the city, he explained, I feel I am not rendering service to my people*<sup>32</sup>". Now he wanted another letter - to the head of the Railway company! The previous interventions succeeded, therefore. But there is a limit. In the same manner, the president is circumspect in intervening for a colleague in the legislature. G.S. Abaya, a deputy from Batangas, for example, wrote in a discourteous manner to Quezon in connection with three of his clients. No reply is included in the file.

The cases of students and journalists deserve special attention. The former are never refused when they ask for help. Even when Mr. Quezon considers the recommendations from professors "*more than sufficient*" to get a position, he "*take[s] pleasure in enclosing herewith the letter of recommendation you desire from me*<sup>33</sup>". For students from comfortable social backgrounds, en route to the United States, he gives, at least, a letter: "*To whom it may concern*" asserting that the bearer: "*comes from good family*" and that "*he is himself of*

<sup>31</sup>. File Abad, August 7 1931 and file Abarca, September 9 1936, Letters of recommendation B. 206.

<sup>32</sup>. Letters of recommendation, B. 207.

<sup>33</sup>. November 15 1915, Ledesma Jalandoni, Letters of introduction B. 204.

*good moral character*". But Mr. Quezon does not dare to get involved in two cases. On the one hand, he favors the brightest students, like doctors who wish to complete their training in the United States or young men applying to the great American universities. The son of one of his Tayabas friends wanted to go to Georgetown. "*He has a letter from the Rector of Ateneo de Manila [the most prestigious Catholic University in the Philippines], explained the author to F. McIntyre. But I request you to say a good word for him to the authorities of the University*<sup>34</sup>." Mr. Quezon supported the daring student, even if he does not come from a privileged background. On June 23, 1925, Arsenio Arellanos received a form letter of introduction, which might help him in his American studies. Two other missives are enclosed, one to Vicente G. Bunuan, Director of the Philippines Press Bureau who must do his best to give the bearer a position: "*even as a messenger*"; the other is meant for F. McIntyre. A. Arellanos: "*... is a poor boy, he would like to find some means to earn his livelihood while there [Washington]. If you could help him in any way, I shall immensely appreciate it*<sup>35</sup>." Journalists are treated with the same interest. Never is a request for an interview refused. Reporters are usually introduced by their editor, who invariably points out that his newspaper has a considerable influence on public opinion, particularly on the issue of Philippine independence, among American professionals. Burton Holmes, who wrote an important piece on the country, is credited with 28 letters of introduction, most of them addressed to provincial governors. One week later, the resident commissioner wrote to Sergio Osmeña to warn him that B. Holmes must be well treated to transmit a favourable impression to the American public ("*los publicos de America*<sup>36</sup>") and suggested that S. Osmeña get in touch with the governors by telegram.

### **A Limited power?**

*« I appreciate and thank you sincerely for the favor you have accorded me; and trust that I may someday have the pleasure of serving you »* wrote a grateful A.C. Gonzales. A favour naturally obliges its recipient, but in politics, one easily forgets. Although impossible to quantify, it can be said that presidential favours were, all things considered, perceived as "normal". It was therefore important to strike a balance between the refusals to intervene, which would displease, and the heavy interventions that might not succeed. That *savoir-faire* distinguishes politicians from statesmen. Many letters are models of ability and cleverness. Thus, an insistent applicant receives a letter of introduction containing one sentence only: "*This is to certify that the bearer Mr. D. McDevitt has arrived in the Philippines*"! Distant and without warmth is the letter attributed to E. Paguio for Jose P. Laurel: "*which I am giving without wishing in the least to influence you in one way or another.*" A statesman makes use of his influence to give favors, if he wishes. It is through

<sup>34</sup>. December 7 1929, Letters of introduction, B. 203.

<sup>35</sup>. Letters of recommendation, B. 207.

<sup>36</sup>. April 3 1913, Letters of introduction B. 204.

the dialectic of power and will that we must approach the use of letters of introduction in the public domain. These letters also served a wider social function, as we have seen. They strengthened the social ties within the bourgeoisie, constructing a kind of clientele around someone who holds power. Beyond these social considerations, the letter of introduction is also a tool of public administration. These letters also permit a better grasp of Mr. Quezon's psychology, on three points. First, throughout the period, Quezon behaves like a head of state. Beyond the political contingencies - which it would be vain to deny - he supports those persons that can aid, in one way or another, the future Philippine State. From the teacher who would like to start a school a deprived province to the civil servant or doctor who wishes to pursue further studies, the president gives his complete support, knowing that the success or failure of independence is directly linked to this elite. This is perhaps also the reason for his wish to sustain relations with the United States. The Philippine elite was fragile and sensitive to the centuries-old tendency of corruption and prevarication. Secondly, the letters also show that Mr. Quezon knew how to listen to his social inferiors, even when there is nothing to be gained from a political point of view. His haunts, his clubs, his choice of social networks indicate a real humanist dimension. The last point poses a problem. Judging from the correspondence, it seems that M. Quezon's closest friends are... American. This is may be because of the physical proximity of his countrymen or the certitude that the Americans will not jockey for position: the debate is open.

The highly individual origin of the sources shapes the representations that we can have of Philippine social conventions under American colonization. Knowing this, and the fact that Mr. Quezon was not a typical Filipino, and therefore that his relationships cannot serve as a paradigm, we can nonetheless constitute an "atmosphere" of Philippine society.

On one hand, social code of the Manila elite seems to follow the American model. The speed of its Americanization is amazing, as if Spanish colonization was only an interlude. Instances of syncretism in the letters of introduction or recommendation are rare. This occidental habit has immediate success because it coincides with the social custom of a "go between" that existed before 1898. Therefore, the society in which he is going to live does not surprise a presidential guest who arrives in Manila at the beginning of the century. We can imagine that he finds the Philippines "ahead" of the other Asian countries. This submission to the American model has some advantages for the new state: the future social and political framework is already in place; the political staff has been trained by the rigor of the American administration, the economic decision-makers are influenced by the new continent theories. Was this heritage of the American colonial period misappropriated in the fifties or was this "Americanized" culture merely a veneer that cracked under Japanese occupation? Perhaps both.

With regard to Manuel L. Quezon, the letters permit us to define a chronology of his social relations. The resident commissioner is obviously ambitious. He is aware that he has a national destiny but he knows how to listen and learn. His American friends polish a character that gains humanity expressed in the nickname they gave him, "Casey". The turning point for Quezon comes in the middle of the twenties, after he returns to the archipelago. Nothing is neglected in the political race, principally with his rival and friend Sergio Osmeña. Finally, by reason of his experience and his contacts, Mr. Quezon appears, after the Conley affair in 1925, to be the only possible Filipino head of state, not only for Filipinos, but also in the eyes of the Americans. Having acquired this stature, Mr. Quezon can afford to scorn his network of associations and become reluctant to write letter of recommendation unless they were of obvious political and social strategic value.