

Nineteenth Century  
Conditions and the  
**Revolution**  
in the Province of  
**LAGUNA**

Rhina ALVERO-BONCOCAN

Dwight David DIESTRO

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## FOREWORD

We had always felt the great need to write a history of the province of Laguna during the revolution. As one of the first eight provinces to take part in the revolution of 1896, Laguna's struggle should have been written about by both local and national historians. Other provinces have developed an intensive literature on their role during the revolutionary period. The struggles of Cavite, Bulacan, Batangas, Manila and Pampanga to overthrow the shackles of colonialism have all been extensively documented. This has not been the case for Laguna.

When we heard that the University of the Philippines was offering grants to members of the academe to do research with the Southern Tagalog Studies Program, we immediately took the opportunity to write about Laguna and its part in the revolutionary struggle. Several years have since passed, and during that time, we had grown to appreciate the nobility of the province's history.

We decided early on to produce two complementary but independent essays on the subject. Rhina Alvero-Boncocan would write on the socio-economic background of Laguna. This would provide the backdrop to the revolution in Laguna and explore the trends in the social structure, economic activities and the political fabric that would persist or be disrupted during the revolution. It would also provide the necessary introduction to the revolution by explaining the social, political and economic pressures that pushed the province and the nation as a whole, toward an armed revolt.

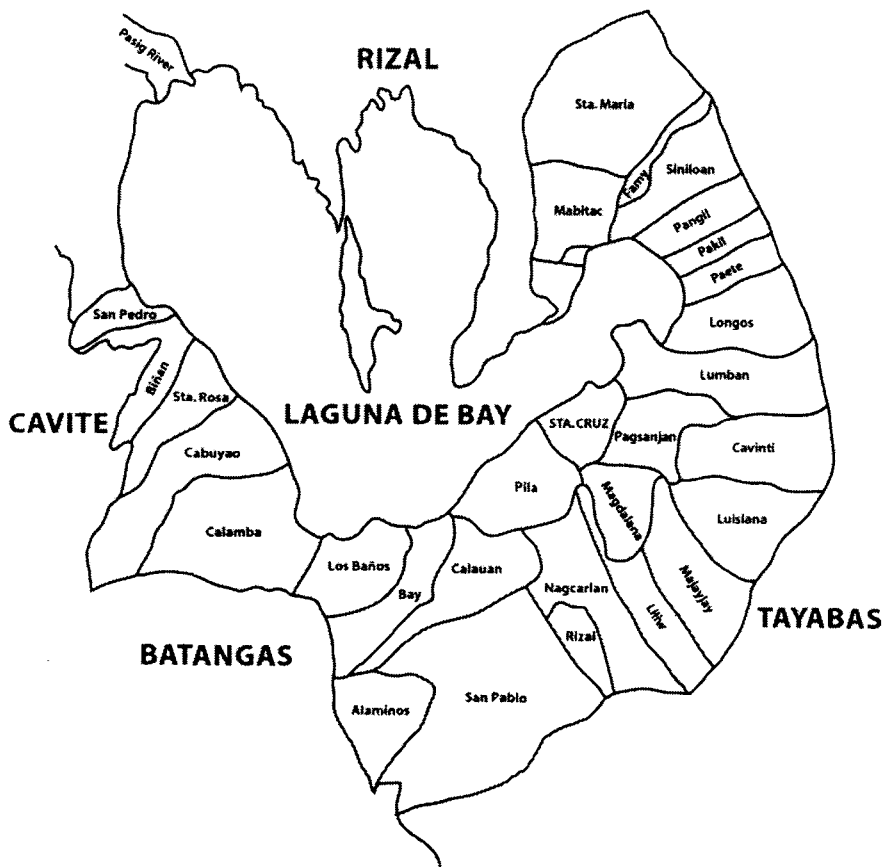
Dwight David Diestro would write on how the revolution developed in the province and the links between the national and the local revolutionary movement, the spread of the movement and the armed engagements between the Spanish forces and later, the Americans with the Filipinos. This would chronicle the struggles of the people of the province, the elite as well as the masses, in attaining the goal of national liberation. So too would it indicate the peculiarities of the revolution as expressed on the local level.

Although we were not able to complete the study in time for the centennial celebrations which would have been symbolically apt, we are nonetheless proud to have gathered materials on Laguna and the revolution. With these, we have produced a manuscript and hopefully, contributed to a greater understanding of our national past.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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# Nineteenth Century Conditions and the Revolution in the Province of Laguna

## The Literature on Laguna

Since the 1960s, a sizeable part of historical literature in the Philippines has been devoted to local histories or the histories of provinces, towns, barrios or regions. Among historians, this zeal in writing local histories derives largely from a belief that Philippine national history is in need of reevaluation since it is based on data and generalizations that are not entirely representative of a varied and vast country.

For the most part, that premise is valid. Most of what is considered national history is limited in scope to the activities and preoccupations of a small historical segment of Philippine society that has lived in the general vicinity of historic Manila. The documents and sources historians have consulted have almost entirely emanated from the center. Much of these materials not only limit the geographic extent of the study, but also focus nearly exclusively on a few social classes that have control over these materials.

The question has been asked: How "national" is national history? The reevaluation of historical generalizations and statements in national history can best be done with a pool of local historical literature.<sup>1</sup> The history of localities provides a counterpoint that can challenge or validate a statement.

There is also a certain preoccupation with enabling the "voiceless" and mostly "invisible" masses to gain a measure of historical "empowerment." Indeed, while historians speak of royal decrees or independence missions or social reform, they have not sufficiently investigated their effects on the majority, and whether the masses initiated their own movements. The mostly unschooled and inarticulate masses have left the contemporary historian very little material with which to chronicle their development. Historians thus