

Notes on Tan Malaka's Pan-Malayan Views in his Letter to Manuel Quezon

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Abstract

Noted biographers of the Indonesian nationalist Tan Malaka (1897-1949) such as Helen Jarvis and Harry Poeze have described his sojourn in China from 1928 to 1932 as a lacuna since there is a dearth of direct information about his political activity. The gap is evident in his autobiography *Dari Penjara ke Penjara*, which Poeze claims is a deliberate attempt to cover his reconciliation with the Comintern. Three pieces of correspondence from the Philippine President Manuel L. Quezon Papers located at the National Library of the Philippines helps to shed some light about Tan Malaka's activity. The letters reveal that at least around April and May 1928, Tan Malaka made attempts through his Filipino contacts to re-establish direct correspondence with Quezon, who sympathized with him during the deportation proceedings. In his main letter, Malaka offers his support for Quezon's leadership in the aftermath of the latter's opposition against the recently-deceased American Governor-General Leonard Wood. He then presents an analysis and vision for a pan-Malayan union and explains how this can fit in with the nationalist sentiments of the colonized peoples. However, it is also notable that the ideas expressed in this communication appear to have been motivated and overshadowed by a desire to enlist Quezon's support for his re-entry to the Philippines.

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Keywords: *Tan Malaka, Manuel Quezon, Pan-Malayanism, Indonesia, Philippines*

Abstrak

Sejarawan-sejarawan ternama yang menulis mengenai tokoh kemerdekaan Indonesia, Tan Malaka (1897-1949), seperti Helen Jarvis dan Harry Poeze mengutarakan bahwa keberadaan Tan Malaka di Cina pada tahun 1928-1932 masih menimbulkan banyak pertanyaan karena minimnya informasi mengenai kegiatan politiknya di sana. Dalam otobiografinya, *Dari Penjara ke Penjara*, Tan Malaka tidak banyak menuliskan kegiatan politiknya di Cina pada periode waktu 1928-1932. Menurut Poeze, hal ini merupakan upaya Tan Malaka untuk menyelubungkan rekonsiliasinya dengan Comintern. Tiga dokumen dari arsip Presiden Filipina Manuel L. Quezon yang dapat ditemukan di Perpustakaan Nasional Filipina dapat mengungkapkan lebih lanjut mengenai kegiatan politik Tan Malaka pada tahun 1928-1932. Dokumen-dokumen tersebut mengungkapkan bahwa pada kisaran bulan April dan Mei 1928, Tan Malaka berupaya untuk menjalin kembali hubungan dengan Quezon, seorang simpatisan selama proses deportasinya. Dalam suratnya pada Quezon, Malaka menawarkan dukungannya terhadap kepemimpinan Quezon dalam menentang Gubernur Jenderal Amerika untuk Filipina Leonard Wood. Selain itu, Tan Malaka juga memaparkan analisis dan visinya mengenai perserikatan Pan-Malaya serta korelasinya dengan semangat nasionalisme para penduduk koloni. Meskipun begitu, perlu diingat bahwa ide-ide yang diutarakan Tan Malaka dalam surat ini juga didorong oleh keinginannya untuk memperoleh dukungan Quezon terhadap kedatangannya ke Filipina.

Kata kunci: *Tan Malaka, Manuel Quezon, Pan-Malayanism, Indonesia, Philippines*

Introduction

Noted biographers of the Indonesian nationalist Tan Malaka (1897-1949) such as Helen Jarvis and Harry Poeze have described his sojourn in China from 1928 to 1932 as a lacuna since there is a dearth of direct information about his political activity. The gap is evident in his autobiography *Dari Penjara ke Penjara*, which Poeze claims was a deliberate attempt to cover his reconciliation with the Comintern (Jarvis, 1987: 49-50; Poeze, 1976: 415-417).

Three pieces of correspondence from the Philippine President Manuel L. Quezon Papers located at the National Library of the Philippines helps to shed some light about Tan Malaka's activity. The letters reveal that at least around April and May 1928, Tan Malaka made attempts through his Filipino contacts to re-establish direct correspondence with then Senate President Quezon, who appeared to sympathize with him during the deportation proceedings in August 1927.

Malaka's correspondence reveals insights into the continuing evolution of his Pan-Malayan views which found its early expression in 1925. His vision of a Pan-Malayan union was a counter-hegemonic response to Western colonialism to be achieved in stages. First, by raising awareness of a common heritage, not only would it break the wall of separation built by the colonial powers, it would also present nationalists with a common front in the fight for independence within the Southeast Asian region. Once achieved, a form of political union is necessary in order to preserve its identity as a single political and economic bloc that would bring forth prosperity to its inhabitants through a sharing of natural and political resources. A confederation of states with federal-level institutions would be an appropriate solution. As a supranational entity, Malaka believed that the Indonesian Federated States (IFS) would be treated as a political equal in the world stage. Since the

Philippines was at the forefront of this struggle and Quezon being the acknowledged leader of the nationalist movement, Malaka believed that Quezon's leadership would inspire like-minded individuals in the region to do the same. Malaka was encouraging Quezon to rekindle his revolutionary spirit and show the way.

However, it is also notable that the ideas expressed in the correspondence appear to have been motivated by a desire to enlist Quezon's support for his re-entry to the Philippines. Apart from the personal and financial hardships he was experiencing in China, he remained in contact with his Filipino allies, who promised to work for his return. Despite Quezon's eventual rejection, Malaka- if he ever got the reply- did not seem to express any negative feelings about the former as he portrayed him in his autobiography years later.

The discussion will first tackle various assessments situating Tan Malaka's views in relation to the existing Pan-Malayan discourses. The next section will then focus on Malaka's Philippine experience from 1925 until 1927, the development of his Pan-Malayan views during this period and how the controversy surrounding his arrest and deportation to China led several of his Filipino allies to utilize Pan-Malayan polemics to defend Malaka before the public, which serves as the context to the correspondence with Quezon. Finally, the contents of the correspondence will be examined to determine the extent by which Malaka's Pan-Malayan views have changed by 1928 and beyond.

Tan Malaka and Pan-Malayanism

As articulated by the Malaysian scholar Ahmat Adam, Pan-Malayanism or Pan-Indonesianism (depending on which national lens one is viewing it from) as a political project broadly construed, refers to the vision to create a unified and independent nation under the leadership of inhabitants of Malay-descent residing within the geographic zone of the Malay-Indonesian archipelago to the Philippines (Adam, 2013: 69).

Pan-Malayan thinking existed in various versions. The Filipino nationalist Jose Rizal founded in 1889 the *Los Indios Bravos* (The Brave Natives), a secret organization that advocated the "Redemption of the Malays" towards the "liberation of the Malay peoples from colonial rule" starting from the Philippines and later to Borneo, Indonesia and Malaya (Salazar, 1998: 120; Curaming, 2011: 249). Rizal and his compatriots began to develop studies that in effect "appropriated what was then a fairly common claim of Malayan ancestry for what amounted to as politico-scholarly project of counter-hegemonic identity-formation" (Curaming, 2011: 246). The Filipino revolutionary Apolinario Mabini likewise claimed that the readiness of the 'Malay peoples' to form a confederation of Asian states would serve as a future bulwark against colonialism, either through cooperation or union. The early years of American colonization saw the popularization of the idea that Filipinos were descended from Malays starting from David Barrows' 1905 Philippine history textbook (Curaming, 2011: 249).

In October 1925, Indonesian and Malay students from the *Djama'ah al-Chairiah al-Talabijja al-Azhariah al-Jawiah* (Welfare Association of Java) of the Al-Azhar University in Cairo published the first issue of *Seruan Azhar*, a magazine that highlighted the unity of the inhabitants from the two territories due to their common language and heritage with an aspiration towards the establishment of a single state (McIntyre, 1973: 76). Beyond exhortations, no specific program of action was made to realize this project (Kheng, 1979: 85). This idea of 'Pan-Malaysian' co-equality would be eclipsed by the *Indonesia Raya* (Greater Indonesia) concept that advanced the idea that the Malays of Malaya were an ethnic component of the Indonesian people or race and not just faith-based. Ironically, this idea came in the late 1920's from members of the Malaya-based Sultan Idris Training School (SITC), a Malay-language teacher-training institution. Its prominent individuals such as Ibrahim Yaacob, Hassan Manan Karim Rashid would later join Sukarno's Indonesian National Party (PNI). Yaacob founded the

Kesatuan Melayu Muda (KMM) in 1938 and was present to include Malayan territory during the Indonesian independence deliberations in July 1945 (McIntyre, 1973: 76-79).¹ However, McIntyre's view that this implied a diminution of the Malays' status was disputed as the KMM may have assumed that the future state was to be organized along federal, not unitary, lines (Kheng, 1979: 86-87).

Another related development was the promotion of the idea of *Nusantara/Alam Melayu* unity interpreted as encompassing the Malay World (i.e., Malay-Indonesian archipelago).² This also emerged from the SITC through the series of books entitled *Sejarah Alam Melayu* first published in June 1925 that included works from Indonesia. Kheng claims that this move and Sukarno's influence helped direct the movement towards a more secular direction (1979: 88).

Scholars of Tan Malaka have not paid as much attention to an examination of his Pan-Malayan or internationalist views. There may be several reasons for this. First was perhaps the tendency to focus on connections where his revolutionary thinking was actualized during the Indonesian struggle for independence. Poeze's (1976, 1988, 1999) definitive biography of Malaka's pre-1945 career is a case in point. While interspersed within his work were multiple references to Malaka's Pan-Malayan/Pan-Indonesian views, no analysis of these ideas were undertaken in relation to the development of Malaka's thinking. This shortcoming of Poeze's work as being more of a compendium of facts rather than an "analytic biography" was, in fact, also pointed out by fellow biographer Helen Jarvis (1991: lxxxii). Secondly, the fluid and contingent nature of Malaka's vision may have presented difficulties in interpretation for scholars. This may have been the case for Jarvis, as her English-language annotated translation of Malaka's autobiography demonstrated. In her discussion on Tan Malaka's ideas, she devoted a few pages on *Aslia*, the envisaged federation of countries stretching from Southern Asia to Australia, but did not explain why he was engaged in internationalist thinking (Jarvis, 1991: 96-99).

On the other hand, there were two notable attempts at interpreting Malaka's Pan-Malayan thinking. Rudolf Mrazek attempted to frame *Aslia* as the end-product of a "Free and Socialist Indonesia" rooted in the concept of *rantau*, or quest towards self-realization, that Mrazek claimed to have guided Malaka's "belief in a Minangkabau cultural mission in Indonesian and Southeast Asian history" (1972:35). Thus, extrapolating from Mrazek's argument, Malaka's thinking could be interpreted as a way-station on the road to *Aslia*. More recently, the Malaysian scholar Ahmat Adam explained that Malaka's Pan-Malayanism/Pan-Indonesianism was framed in racial, rather than territorial, terms to emphasize the socio-economic inequality being perpetuated on the native population as a consequence of colonialism (2013: 59-75).

Tan Malaka's Philippine Experience and the Development of his Pan-Malayan Views

Mrazek attributes a number of sources for Malaka's Pan-Malayan views. Malaka traveled far and wide. From his Sumatran homeland, he pursued further studies and later went into exile in the Netherlands, making his way to the Soviet Union and then China where he came into contact with various personalities and ideas- further enriching his *rantau*, and "structure of experience" (Mrazek, 1972: 2). Malaka's appointment as the Comintern agent for Southeast Asia in 1923 giving him

¹ In May 1945, Muhammad Yamin, proposed that *Indonesia Raya* should include the territories derived from the Majapahit state such as Sumatra, Java, Madura, the Lesser Sundas, Borneo, Celebes, the Moluccas, Peninsular Malaya, Timor and Papua (McIntyre, 1973: 81).

² However, this was not to be confused with the narrower concept of *Nusantara-as-Insulinde* which were alternate names applicable only to Netherlands East Indies and championed by Ernest Douwes Dekker in the 1920's (Vlekke, 1961: 400; Evers, 2016: 5-6)

jurisdiction over “all the Southern lands and Australia” may have developed his awareness of the existence of a regional unity based on geography, climate, race, economy and psychology and experience under imperial rule. It was this juncture that he may have been exposed to Pan-Malayan discourses and came into contact with Filipino nationalist leaders who sympathized with his cause. As he claimed in his 1946 work *Thesis*, this exposure gave him “the suggestion, the idea, that all these countries should be federated as one” (Quoted in Mrazek, 1972: 33).

Malaka was no stranger to internationalist ideas. As one of the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (PKI) leaders, he participated in the Fourth Comintern Congress of November 1922. In a speech he delivered, Malaka emphasized that supporting Pan-Islamism was compatible with communism’s anti-imperialist struggle. For him, Pan-Islamism should go beyond a simple unification of Muslim interests but also participation in the struggle against imperialism and capitalism in the world. (Poeze, 1988: 316; Jarvis, 1987: 44). As we can see below, Malaka used the same arguments in justifying the need for Pan-Malayan solidarity, suggesting a certain level of continuity in his thinking.

Tan Malaka’s first contact with the Filipino labor groups appears to have occurred in Canton (Guangzhou), where he had been based from December 1923 after his departure from the Soviet Union (Jarvis, 1987: 45). He was tasked to participate in the Pan-Pacific Conference of Transport Workers convened by the Red International of Trade Unions (Profintern) in June 1924, run its Bureau of Transport Workers of the Pacific and edit its English-language periodical *The Dawn* (Malaka, 1991: 103-109). Both Malaka and Domingo Ponce, the head of the Filipino trade union *Legionarios del Trabajo* (Workers’ Legion) delivered the reports of their respective delegations (“Tan Malacca”, 1927: 2,4). The five-person Filipino delegation was invited by the American communist William Janequette (a.k.a. Harrison George) in May 1924. Aside from Ponce, another delegate of note was the then labor leader Francisco Varona of the International Marine and Labor Union (see fig. 1) (Guevarra, 1995: 45; McLane, 1966: 114-116). Ponce’s group then urged Malaka to come to Manila (Richardson, 2011: 91).



Figure 1. Francisco Varona. Editor of *El Debate*, Philippine Labor Congress president and Tan Malaka supporter. (Retrato, 2008).

This newly-found connection, along with Malaka's deteriorating health probably due to tuberculosis, prompted him to relinquish his responsibilities in Canton and make his way to Hong Kong where he befriended several Filipinos whose assistance enabled his entry to the Philippines under the assumed name Elias Fuentes in July 1925 (Nery, 2011: 134; Malaka, 1991: 114-115; "Board Decides", 1927: 4). Malaka's contact with Ponce and Varona apparently paid off as the latter, who was also the publisher of *El Debate* and in 1927, the president of the *Congreso Obrero de Filipinas* (Philippine Workers' Congress), became one of his strongest supporters (Guevarra, 1995: 46; Richardson, 1991: 284, 290). One of Ponce's colleagues, lawyer Antonio Paguia, recalled that he helped Malaka and "five or six" Indonesian revolutionaries who came with him secure residence certificates by assuming the identities of deceased Filipino laborers. Varona then met with Manuel Quezon to allow the Indonesians to meet in the Philippines "but Quezon would not agree as he said the Philippines and the United States were enjoying friendly relations with the Dutch government in Indonesia" (Quoted in Poeze, 1999: 36; see also Richardson, 1984: 123). Malaka earned his keep as a correspondent for *El Debate* and most likely it was Varona who assisted in the publication of two of Malaka's writings (Jarvis, 1987: 46). Varona and several allies either financed or provided shelter to Malaka during his stay in the Philippines (Richardson, 1984: 123; Poeze, 1999: 37). It is at this juncture where his Pan-Malayan views seem to have taken off.

It is not entirely clear where specifically Malaka drew inspiration for his Pan-Malayan ideas. There is no current evidence that suggests he had contacts with the Cairo or the SITC group on or before 1925. Nor is there evidence that he began expressing such ideas prior to his arrival in the Philippines. His work *Naar de Republiek Indonesia* first published in Canton in April 1925 refers to Indonesia in narrow terms, that is, as the successor-state to the Netherlands Indies distinct from the other colonies such as the Philippines (Malaka, 1962: 12). It was likely that his ideas were formed in the Philippines as history textbooks promoting the idea of Filipino affinity with the Malays were in circulation.

References to Malaka's awareness of the need for regional unity appeared around the latter half of 1925 when an article dated 25 September in *Njala*, a PKI newspaper. Entitled "*Djalan yang haroes kita laloei: Menoentoet persatoean dari ra'jat diseloeroeh Timoer, teroetama diseloeroeh Indonesia*", the article described 'Indonesia' he was referring to as encompassing Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines. Two more articles followed. The third article's title, "*Indonesia (Malaysia) dipetjah-petjah. Dengan begitoe dijatohlah ditangan orang lain*" now made it absolutely clear that Malaka's Pan-Malayanism and Pan-Indonesianism were interchangeable.³ In these articles, Malaka painted a picture of the project's objective. Prior to the coming of the West, there was a sense of unity of culture, history, justice and government. This unity was broken up but not completely destroyed. Despite the divisions imposed by the colonial powers, the links of 'Indonesia's' (in the broad sense) culture and language were never completely severed. In order to fight imperialism, a common consciousness must first arise to encourage collaboration within the region with the goal of creating a united front (Poeze, 1999: 21-23).⁴ Likewise, in a September 1925 letter written from Chiang Mai, Siam, Malaka noted that colonialism undermined the 'Malay race' by denying its unity of heritage. Malaka then introduces the terms North Indonesia to refer to the Philippines and South Indonesia to the Netherlands Indies. Now that he realized the similarities of the two colonies' political and economic conditions, "there exists good enough ground for unity, because separation implies a menace to independence in every case." (Quoted in Poeze, 1976: 302).

³ In this context, Malays commonly used *Melayu Raya* just as Indonesians used *Indonesia Raya* in the broad sense. Yaacob also articulated this meaning as well (Kheng, 1979: 84; Adam, 2013: 69)

⁴ Volume 2 of the Indonesian translation of Poeze's work (1999) adds information not found in the 1976 edition, particularly this section.

The 10 September 1927 issue of the *Philippines Free Press* also referenced a 1925 article written by Malaka in one of the “local dailies”. It was most likely that Malaka wrote this in Varona’s *El Debate*. The article mentioned his vision of a Pan-Malayan confederation with Davao in Mindanao as the capital, although it was uncertain whether this was included in his 1925 writing.⁵ The extant quotation suggests that Malaka referred to Indonesia and Malaysia as people from the “South,” stressing the cultural bonds that linked the three Malayan peoples.

We from the South believe that now or tomorrow the Filipinos should adopt a more ample nationalistic policy. For the reason that they will have either to fight alone or in cooperation with others of the same ideals and interests in order to seize, not to receive, their independence...[In the] case of an independent Philippines, taking into consideration the strategic situation of the islands, the country will have to seek an alliance to preserve its national integrity. And we from the South believe that for the attainment of this independence, Southern Malaysia [i.e., Indonesia proper] is the most direct and logical ally of the Philippines...It is for our freedom and for that of all the subjugated Malayan people, that we sincerely wish the establishment of more intimate cooperation with the Filipino people. (“Tan Malaka’s Two Faced Views”, 1927: 58)

Malaka further developed his views in Chapter II of his 1926 work *Massa Actie* (Mass Action). Firstly, he was more precise in his terminology. He used the terms *Persatuan Indonesia Raya/ Bangsa Indonesia* for the envisioned Greater Indonesian cultural zone and *Federasi Repuhlik Indonesia* (FRI) as the political entity that, aside from the *Indonesia Raya* core, also included Oceania and Madagascar. Aside from affirming that the Philippines was *Indonesia Utara* (North Indonesia) and the Netherlands Indies as *Indonesia Selatan* (South Indonesia) or ‘*Indonesia kita*’, he explicitly used the terms *Semenanjung*, *Semenanjung Malaka* or *Semenanjung Tanah Melayu* (Malayan Peninsula) to refer to Malaya.

Secondly, the union was to privilege people of Malay/Indonesian descent. One of the consequences of imperialism was that it economically disadvantaged the *bumiputra* of Malaya. Industry and commerce were in the hands of foreigners and increasing competition from Chinese and Indian immigrants had reached the point that the *bumiputra* were being pushed out of the cities and into the mountains. A unified region would bring about opportunities for shared prosperity as the former colonies would no longer have to compete with each other in selling similar products on the world market. Moreover, the union would encourage free movement across borders and fill in the needs of the workforce and redistribute the population. Certainly the Philippines will not view this as an occupation but rather a reaffirmation of its racial ties with the Malay World as it too, descended from South Indonesians.

Finally, nationalist forces from the three territories should look beyond their respective colonial borders and endeavor to work in solidarity towards the creation of the FRI. A single bloc will lead towards a concentration of resources, a unified economic policy, a higher level of cultural development, and its recognition as a major power in Asia and a source of inspiration for oppressed peoples elsewhere. (Jarvis, 1991: xcvi-xcvii; Malaka, 2017: 117-121).⁶

⁵ In *Madilog*, Malaka identified the future center or axis of *Aslia* to be located “near the equator, roughly demarcated by a line drawn from Bondjol to Malaka.” (Quoted in Mrazek, 1972: 34). Bondjol is a town located north of Bukittinggi in West Sumatra and close to Malaka’s birthplace. The article’s commentary on Philippine aspirations towards independence may be a reference to the Fairfield Bill that guaranteed Philippine independence after 20 years (Richardson, 1984: 115).

⁶ In his magnum opus *Madilog*, Malaka reformulated the confederation’s scope into its final form: the *Federasi Aslia* (Aslia Federation). A portmanteau of Asia and Australia, it included the latter, Annam, Siam, Burma,

By mid-1926, Malaka had built up a network of Filipino contacts and was able to seamlessly blend in Philippine society that he was able to go to Singapore and meet with members of the PKI to register his objection to the planned rebellion later that year (Jarvis, 1987: 46-47). He was able to travel using another alias, Hasan Gozali, with a passport that he managed to obtain “after a high-ranking Filipino official” provided an endorsement. While Malaka did not name or did not know the official, acting US Governor General Eugene Gilmore met with Malaka’s defense lawyer Jose Abad Santos and used the passport fraud issue as leverage to successfully force Malaka’s deportation in late August 1927 (Malaka, 1991: 137, 150).

Malaka was amazed at the media attention and the expressions of sympathy upon his arrest on 13 August 1927, having recently reentered the Philippines from Siam. A media war of sorts erupted. Varona’s *El Debate* and like-minded newspapers mustered public support through their editorial cartoons and editorials. *The Tribune* editorial wrote, for example:

He is Malay and we are Malays, and this racial kinship stirs in us the deepest sympathy for him...Tan Malaka might be a Filipino patriot, of the generation of Jose Rizal, come to life...We thus understand him, the processes of his thoughts, and the ideals that give him the strength through all his misadventures. (“Editorials,” 1927: 4)

Varona likewise vouched for Malaka’s motives: “This man is a worker in behalf of his country’s destiny and that of his race, in the same manner that his Malayan kins [sic] and ancestors- Rizal, [Marcelo] Del Pilar, [Mariano] Ponce, [Antonio] Regidor and others labored (“Alleged Agent,” 1927: 1). Elsewhere, he built on the Rizal analogy. “I am convinced that the most ingenuous form of discrediting any aspiration of the masses, however harmless it may be, is to point to such aspiration as a Bolshevik movement. Bolshevism is becoming like the bogey of ‘*filibustero*’ [rebel] as Rizal has said in the past” (“Bolshevik,” 1927:23). Varona also turned to the nationalist Andres Bonifacio in Malaka’s defense. Had the Soviet Union existed in 1896 Bonifacio, he argued, would have turned to Moscow for support as well (Richardson, 2011: 290).

Among other cartoons that portrayed similar Filipino sympathies toward Malaka (Poeze, 1976: 366, 375), one cartoon stood out. In the *El Debate* cartoon of 18 August, Malaka was shown as being shielded by both Rizal and Del Pilar (Plaridel) before the oppressive colonial state represented by the Spanish-era police- the *Guardia Civil* (Civil Guards). Juan dela Cruz, the personification of the Philippines, is seen blocking the advance by putting up his hand and saying “Do not touch him!” The caption read, “Juan does not forget”, a reminder to the Filipino public that Malaka’s struggle was nationalist, not communist (see fig.2) (Poeze, 1976: 373).



Figure 2. Cartoon from the 18 August 1927 issue of *El Debate*. Malaka (second from right) is flanked and protected by the Filipino nationalist heroes Jose Rizal and Marcelo Del Pilar (Plaridel). “Juan De La Cruz”, a personification of the Filipino people, is trying to prevent colonial authorities (represented by the Spanish-era *Guardia Civil*) from arresting Malaka by yelling “Do not touch him!” Malaka’s supporters depicted him as a nationalist and therefore reminded the Filipino public about Rizal and Plaridel’s nationalist struggle against Spanish oppression. (Photo from Poeze, 1976: 373)

On the other hand, critics such as the *Philippine Free Press* and its allies called Malaka an “Agent of Bolsheviks”, “Javanese Red”, and “Two-Faced” in their efforts to paint him as a dangerous Bolshevik who was a threat to the colony’s security (“Tan Malacca, Communist,” 1927: 2; “Tan Malacca’s Two-Faced Views,” 1927: 12). Apparently as a response to Varona and *The Tribune*’s analogy, to liken Malaka to Jose Rizal, the *Free Press* charged, would be an insult to the Filipino hero as the latter never used aliases and fought in the open (“Tan Malacca, Alias Hassan,” 1927: 35; “Scott Nearing,” 1927: 41).

There were also various attempts initiated by Malaka’s Filipino supporters for him to stay. Former President Emilio Aguinaldo believed that Malaka was patriot and as a revolutionary leader, ought to be granted asylum (Poeze, 1999: 124). One supporter broached the possibility of his return if he was hired as an Asian language professor by a Filipino university (“Malacca’s Legal Return,” 1927: 1). Legislators also weighed in their support. Representative Ramon Torres filed a bill to exempt Malays to enter the Philippines without being subjected to passport and immigration controls while Representative Gregorio Perfecto filed a bill specifically allowing Malaka to stay. Other lawmakers expressed the view that informal movement of Malays in and out of Mindanao

without passports happened anyway. House Speaker Manuel Roxas argued that as a political refugee, Malaka ought to be allowed to stay (Malaka, 1991: 276).

The highest level of Filipino official support, however, came from two individuals, namely the lawyer and future Philippine Chief Justice Jose Abad Santos and then Senate President Manuel Quezon. The Malaka Affair occurred at a time when Filipino nationalistic sentiments ran high due to the controversy between Quezon and US Governor General Leonard Wood that ruptured into the Cabinet Crisis of 1923. At the time of the Crisis, Quezon was Senate President while Abad Santos was the Secretary of Justice in the Wood Cabinet who later resigned (Gripaldo, 1994: 13). Abad Santos was later sent by Quezon to the United States as a special adviser to a Filipino committee tasked to promote the cause of Philippine independence (Churchill, 1981: 302-304). The Crisis created a split between the American and Filipino leaders in the colony, with Quezon becoming the spokesman for the Filipino political leadership. Governor Wood, however, passed away at the United States on 7 August during a brain operation. The resolution of the Malaka Affair, therefore, fell into the hands of Governor General Gilmore who had been in charge since May. To ensure that the Filipino leaders' voices were heard in the search of a new governor-general and repair relations in the post-Wood period, Quezon left for the United States on 1 October 1927 and returned to the Philippines in August 1928 (Churchill, 1981: 256, 373, 390-412).

It is within this historical context that we should view the importance of Quezon's support for Tan Malaka. The political tug-of-war between Quezon's group and Wood's meant that the former had to seek a broad range of political support, which included adopting stances that were in opposition to Wood or weighing in his support for persons like Malaka to gain favor with labor and leaders of the progressive sector. Quezon did not believe that Malaka was a Bolshevik "but only a Nationalist leader", at least in the open ("Prominent Persons," 1927: 1). Malaka was a "highly educated man," did not intend to cause trouble in the Philippines and was eligible for political asylum just as was the case of Sun Yat Sen. Deporting Malaka, Quezon argued, would make the Philippines look "less liberal" than the British ("Government," 1927: 4). Malaka later recalled that Quezon asked him to present before a group of individuals on the Indonesian independence movement and assured him of support (Malaka, 1991: 148, 273). However, Quezon's support was not enough in preventing Malaka's deportation and exile to Amoy in mainland China on 23 August 1927 (**see fig.3**). Nonetheless, Quezon's expression of support, whether direct or indirect (as in having Abad Santos become the defense counsel), created a very notable impression on Malaka. In an article written sometime after his deportation, he felt that strong solidarity as a fellow Malay with expressions of Filipino sympathy for him. Despite four hundred years of colonial rule, he realized that the common cultural bond among the Malays had not been severed (Poeze, 1976: 387). It is against this backdrop that the letters are to be read.

TAN MALACCA TENDERED FAREWELL SUPPER



Tan Malacca, Javanese refugee who will leave Manila today for illegal entry into the Islands, was tendered a supper last night at the Panciteria Nueva by his Filipino sympathizers. Front row, left to right: President Apolinario de los Santos, Tan Malacca and Judge Jose Abad Santos. Back row: Francisco Varona and Mariano Nable.

Figure 3. Photo from the 23 August 1927 issue of *The Tribune*

The Tan Malaka-Quezon Correspondence

We now turn to the content of the correspondence found in the Manuel L. Quezon Papers at the Philippine National Library. There are three letters in total- two from Malaka to Quezon and two unsigned copies of Quezon's reply to Malaka, the other in Philippine Senate stationery. There is reason to believe that the two letters written from China eventually reached Quezon as the third letter was a response to both. Police who later investigated Malaka's effects noted that he still maintained communication with the Philippines. An article, this time with his name on it, appeared in another periodical *La Opinion* in October 1927. It reiterated the theme of a unified, glorious past where there was peace and prosperity but called the combined region as Malaysia (Poeze, 1999:

140). Varona was still in contact with him, as the letter below reveals. Another source was most likely via the captain of the Manila to Amoy ship *Susana* who helped Malaka evade the arresting authorities after his deportation (Poeze, 1976: 400; Malaka, 1991: 153-157).

Another crucial contact in Amoy was Francisco Tan Quan or Tan Chuan, who provided needed help in Malaka's second sojourn in China. Tan Quan sought out Malaka in Amoy, having arrived shortly after Malaka's deportation. Malaka called him by Ki-Koq which was not a Chinese nickname but rather a shortened name for Francisco (Kiko). Kiko was also called in Hokkien as *Kuya* (an honorific for elder brother that has come to mean the same in Filipino) or in his village as Tan Bian Ku, and hailed from Vigan, Ilocos Sur. Another rendering of his name was Francisco Tan Chuan Juan Lima but this is incorrect (Poeze, 1976: 436). Quan was sent by his adoptive father to run their Manila-based lumber company, which indicated an address: 650 Juan Luna Street. Malaka described him as a "*keturunan Filipina tulen*" (natural-born Filipino) and a nephew of labor leader Isabelo de los Reyes. During the Philippine Revolution, Kiko's family went to Manila but he got lost, was found by a Chinese merchant who eventually adopted him. Kiko presumably acquired a Chinese name as well. Malaka recalled staying in his village for some time (Malaka, 1928b: 1; Malaka, 2014: 222).

The first letter to Quezon was the longest and most substantial at four pages long. It was written on 25 April 1928 in the vicinity of Shanghai. This letter outlined Malaka's views in relation to Quezon's ongoing Philippine independence campaign and his ongoing quest to promote Pan-Malayan unity (see attachment 1).

Before discussing the contents of the letter (1928a), it is worth noting Malaka's usage of terminologies as they related to his Pan-Malayan thinking. First, Malaka again employed the term 'Indonesia' in its broadest sense as articulated in *Massa Actie* and used it interchangeably with the term 'Malaysia' (1,3). He made references to its location between Asia and Australia and strategic control over the Malacca Strait, thus making clear that he thought of the region in holistic terms (1-2). The envisioned Federal Republic of Indonesia (FRI) was now called "Indonesian Federated States" (IFS) in the letter (2).

The constituent parts of Indonesia/Malaysia as Malaka defined them were also variably differentiated such as "British Malaya and Sumatra" (1), "Indonesia proper, including British Malaya and the Philippines", "the South" as a reference to Indonesia proper (2,4), "North and South Indonesia" as Philippines and Indonesia proper (2), and "our Northern cousins" and "Northern Malaysia" as the Philippines (3).

Malaka opened the letter with the news relayed by Varona regarding Quezon's absence from the Philippines. He understood that Quezon would not return until May or June 1928 (Malaka, 1928a: 1). Malaka must have known that Quezon was recovering from a collapse he suffered during the independence campaign in December 1927 and was eventually diagnosed with tuberculosis. In fact, Quezon would only return to the Philippines in August 1928 (Onorato, 1989: 228, Churchill, 1981: 404). Malaka also apologized for the lost opportunity to present before an audience of around twenty Filipino leaders on the state of Indonesia's independence that Quezon previously asked him to prepare just before his abrupt deportation on 23 August 1927. This was because a few days prior, Customs chief Vicente Aldanese granted a two-week extension of Malaka's stay to allow his allies to raise funds on his behalf. However, on 22 August, Gilmore met with Abad Santos and overruled Aldanese's decision by enforcing the deportation the following day. This meant that the scheduled lecture had to be cancelled (Poeze, 1999: 126-130; Malaka, 1991: 273). He then proceeded to explain his views.

Within the regional setting, Malaka was optimistic that whatever the future held, an "awakened and watchful Indonesia will geographically, economically and therefore politically [will] not be in the worst position." The IFS' strategic location between Asia and Australia, its sheer size, large amounts of natural resources and vast agricultural potential that can sustain 300 to 400 million people made

the IFS a potential power broker. It can “decide the problem of war and peace” as well as “pacify and harmonize.” A united IFS also signified a return to its precolonial glory when it once exercised significant influence in Asia (1-2), a reference to the Majapahit empire’s sphere of influence that was thought to have reached the Philippines (Malaka 1991: 117).⁷

A political union was now possible as barriers towards a common understanding were slowly being removed. One factor that may encourage the “rapid process of unification” in Indonesia proper was the adoption of the “Malay language” as the lingua franca of the intellectuals, his people and of the region, perhaps surpassing Mandarin and Urdu in terms of geographic scope. With a single language, ideas that promoted economic, political, social and cultural unity may now be put into practice (2).

Colonialism, Malaka notes, may have left “my own people in the South” in a state of disintegration and stupidity” for a long time. However, the nationalist awakening had begun to do away with the petty differences the Dutch encouraged as part of their divide-and-rule strategy. Moreover, the emergence of political parties and the blood shed out of the failed PKI revolt only showed this growing consciousness that Dutch imperialism will try to undermine as the struggle continued. The “preachers of Pan-Malayanism,” he wrote, “are not marching to the land of Utopia” (2). However, he does not see any “important antagonism” between the Philippines and Java that would prevent a union between “North and South Indonesia” where the “fittest Indonesian can climb to the highest position in the country” as the “highest form of unity.”

The assumption of incompetent politicians must be avoided. However, if the native political elites still do not have the adequate preparation nor the intellectual maturity that enables them to grasp the idea of federalism beyond their respective domestic concerns, then perhaps a confederation arrangement might work. This union could confer a lot of political and strategic benefits as countries can avoid competing against each other, present a united front against foreign aggression. It may take time for the political leaders to work out the details but the sooner that everyone realizes that “the cause of Filipinos is our very own and vice versa...the better it is for Malaysia [IFS] as one body.” He explains his vision thus:

While for instance granting each other political sovereignty and independence within its own sphere, we can progressively proceed on the creation of a Common Army and Naval Department, further a Common Department for Commerce and Communication, Financial Department for Carrying the Federal Business and the creation of a Department or Organization for the promotion of a Common Culture along evolutionary lines, etc. etc. (Malaka, 1928a: 2)

At this point, the letter diverges to critique the current strategy being utilized by the Philippines’ independence campaign which Quezon was leading. With the recent appointment of the new Governor General Henry Stimson whom Quezon supported, the latter did not publicly raise the issue of Philippine independence issue. This raised suspicions that Quezon had reversed his stand on independence (Churchill, 1981: 420).

While Malaka finds common cause in the struggle for independence, he advises Quezon that even diplomacy has its limits as the United States would want to keep the Philippines as her colony for economic reasons. The Filipino people will have to win their independence “by [their] own force.” Will Quezon support and lead “revolutionary action” should the Filipino people decide to resort to violence as the ““next” available weapon” and rekindle his old Philippine Revolutionary days?

⁷ As late as 1948, Malaka still referred to the wholeness of Indonesia by referring to Indonesia proper as *Indonesia Selatan* (Malaka, 2014: 161)

For Malaka, Quezon is at a crossroads at this point of his political career. He has to continue to pursue the struggle for Philippine independence at all costs. This is because Malaka sees in Quezon as one who understands the Filipinos' weakness and the strength of American imperialism best. It might be as difficult as going up a mountain, but "victory, prosperity and glory to the Malayan peoples" are waiting for him at the top (3). Quezon and the Filipino people can count on the sincere support of his fellowmen of Indonesia proper in the struggle for complete independence through 'concrete action.' This will finally end Western domination over the Malayan people. He encourages Quezon "for the sake of us all" to employ all means at his disposal to achieve Philippine independence- including revolution (3-4).

The second letter was both a letter of introduction and Malaka's appeal for support written from the "Chinese Interior" on 1 May, or just a week after he wrote the first letter (see attachment 2). Malaka had requested Kiko Tan Quan to deliver the letter in person to inform Quezon about his desperate situation. He had been encouraged by Tan Quan to lodge an appeal for support as a way of doing his "outmost to lessen the hardship of my struggling brothers from Java." It appears that after he had written the first one, plague broke out in the residence he was living in and everyone left for their relatives in the other villages, forcing Malaka to also leave the area and fend for himself. He concludes the letter with the following reason:

I had requested Mr. Francisco Tan Quan to inform you about the particularities of my present condition and to get your full support for a campaign for my return to the Phil. Islands.

Hoping for a better time, I am, Dear Sir, yours faithfully,

Tan Malacca. (Malaka, 1928b: 1)

Quezon was unable to respond to Tan Malaka's letters until eight months after the second letter. Quezon's reply is a short one-page letter dated 1 April 1929 consisting of two copies with the other typed onto his Senate President stationery (see attachment 3). Although both copies were unsigned, it was possible that a signed copy was sent to Malaka to Shanghai through Representative Varona's office. Quezon was straightforward and cordial with his answer:

I sympathize cordially with your national aspirations, since your cause and mine are the same, with the very great difference that your people are very much worse off than mine. I am sorry to say, however, that I can do absolutely nothing for you as much as I would like to, and God knows I meant what I said. I hope I may find some way to be of service for you in the future. (Quezon, 1929: 1)

CONCLUSION

There is no current evidence indicating that Malaka made another attempt to relocate to the Philippines after Quezon became the President of the Philippine Commonwealth in 1935. However, it was now no longer possible given the political climate of the 1930's with the wave of peasant uprisings such as the Sakdal revolt and the eventual outlawing of the Philippine Communist Party (PKP) from 1933 onwards (Richardson, 2011: 242-257). Although at this point Malaka no longer claimed to be affiliated with the PKI, his past association would not have placed him in a better position.

Malaka continued to send news articles and messages to Manila after August 1927 and had Chinese contacts with Manila connections. However, after his arrest and deportation from Hong Kong in 1932, his health completely collapsed and spent the next three years recovering in a village in South China. As a consequence of his illness, he not only lost contact with Indonesia, but by 1936 he admitted that his connection with the Manila press as correspondent and news writer also ended. It was his main source of income (Malaka, 2014: 363). His prolonged absence also led to rumors of his death in Manila in November 1935 (Poeze, 1999: 251). The loss of his Manila job and the Japanese invasion of South China would again force him to move until he reached Singapore in 1937 and clandestinely returning to Indonesia in 1942 (Jarvis, 1987: 32).

Malaka's experience in the Philippines enabled him to develop his Pan-Malayan views that would develop into the bigger but rather unwieldy concept called *Aslia*. While he was not the first nor the last one to articulate a Pan-Malayan or Pan-Indonesian vision, Malaka saw it as a means to an end. Malaka was no stranger to big-picture ideas since he was trained in Marxist thinking. Just as Pan-Islamism meant more than just a simple show of solidarity for him, Pan-Malayanism/Pan-Indonesianism was supposed to be a vehicle for joint political action in the anti-colonial struggle. As outlined in his 1926 *Massa Actie*, the natives of the core region (North Indonesia, South Indonesia, Peninsular Indonesia) must first become aware of a common identity (Malay/Indonesian) and shared interests. Collaboration amongst nationalist forces may then be necessary to achieve independence in the core regions. In the post-independence phase, the formation of the FRI would be very important since a supranational state of 100 million people will be able to leverage its strategic advantage in the world stage, establish a counter-hegemonic presence against the capitalist powers, effectively marshal and manage the bloc's economic resources and promote prosperity of its population through redistribution of wealth. In his 1928 letter, the central ideas remained the same although he did introduce one important element: the creation of a federal structure that would be given responsibilities in the areas of defense, trade, finance and promotion of culture. This structure could, in theory, be managed co-equally by its members if the respective nations' leadership did not yet have the necessary skills in leading the federation. For this political and cultural project to succeed, only the 'fittest Indonesian' must lead it.

For Malaka, the bedrock of Pan-Malayanism/Pan-Indonesianism was the awareness of a common heritage and a common enemy. As identified in *Massa Actie*, the union's purpose was to empower and bring prosperity to the dominant inhabitants of the core region, namely those of Malay/Indonesian ethnicity or descent. The colonial economy was controlled by foreign capitalists and one consequence was the influx of immigrants that further marginalized the native workers. The union sought to benefit everyone in the core by promoting freedom of movement. However, Malaka was also aware that there was more to it than mere skin color. In order to actualize this unity, the Malay *lingua franca* must be adopted and in his 1928 letter hoped that the intellectuals of *Indonesia Selatan* "dispose of their own dialects in their writings and speeches" if the process of unification were to be accelerated (1928a: 2). However, one wonders whether his time in the Philippines forced a reconsideration of these assumptions.

The expressions of support he also obtained from a broad range of Filipino intellectual, political and economic elites such as Varona or the ship owner Vicente Madrigal created a very lasting impression on him, especially during the deportation proceedings. Although he was critical of social inequalities in Philippine society, Malaka did not seem to harbor any negative feelings towards the persons who supported him during his stay in the Philippines nor during the deportation trial (1991: 117-151).

Malaka also observed that while the conflict between the *buruh Indonesia* (that is, the *Filipina asli* workers) and their mestizo superiors were brought about by economic and social conflict, it "did not give rise to an anti-mestizo feeling since other mestizos were not exempt from the process of

proletarianization.” Mestizos and Indonesians (Filipinos) shared a common culture and joined the Philippine Revolution (Malaka, 1991: 120). And his dealings with the mestizo Quezon was a case in point. The April 1928 letter advised Quezon to pursue the struggle for Philippine independence at all costs “for the sake of us all” and take the high road for the “glory of the Malayan peoples” (3). The implication of Malaka’s appeal is clear: Filipino mestizos like Quezon (and Jose Rizal) also do belong to the Pan-Malayan/Pan-Indonesian project.

It appeared that Malaka’s perception of Quezon remained positive years later in his memoirs despite the unsuccessful attempt to vouch for his re-entry into the Philippines. “We are ready to give our support,” that was what Malaka remembered of Quezon’s commitment to him because the latter thought that a political refugee deserved asylum as “this was included among the principles of democracy and humanitarianism practiced for centuries by civilized nations” (Malaka, 1991: 147) This was a remarkable recollection considering that Malaka was writing about the event two decades past while in detention.

Malaka would go on expanding the FRI/IFS concept and by the time his memoirs were published, it would assume its final form of *Aslia*. Unfortunately, the work *Gabungan Aslia* has been lost and what we have are short descriptions of it. The Federation was now envisioned to encompass areas beyond the Malay core region but was essentially a reiteration of the FRI/IFS concept: a supranational state with the goal of promoting the overall welfare and security of the region. Before we jump to the conclusion that Malaka was already anticipating an ASEAN-type or an EU-type model, he clarifies in his memoirs that the federation is a socialist state in character, which is not surprising given his political orientation. These gigantic blocs of socially federated regions, once assembled will become the basis of a world government (Jarvis, 1991: xcvi-xcvii). As a result of this expanded model, Malaka effectively jettisoned the cultural foundation of the confederation in favor of geopolitical considerations.

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Attachment I. Malaka's first letter to Quezon, 25 April 1928 (Manuel L. Quezon Papers, National Library of the Philippines)

-1-

Shanghai-Vicinity 25-4-28.

To

Mr Manuel Quezon, President
of the Philippine Senate.

My dear Mr Quezon,

From Mr Francisco Varona, I heard last year, that you went to the U.S. and would not return to the Philippine Islands before May or June in this year. In the hope that you are already back again, I take the opportunity to write you this letter.

First of all I wish to express that I am still blaming my own misfortune to lose the time granted by you, in which I should have the honour to explain before some responsible Filipino leaders, the meaning of the present independence movement in my own country, as you had framed it, just a day, before my forced departure from Manila. I doubt, whether I will ever be in the position to materialize it in the future. Therefore I have to resort to this letter. Indeed a poor remedy for an oral communication, as there are many things, which can not be explained or created through it. Nevertheless, I have to do it, hoping for a better time!

If I have to explain the full meaning of the Indonesian Movement, as my own Party and I myself conceive it, I will need too much space, as I have to include, though partly, the Asiatic Movement, of which we consider our Movement inseparable part. But perhaps I will be able to give an adequate impression, if I take a refuge to an analogy, taking however into consideration the fact, that analogy can not always lead us to a correct conclusion. Thereby I expressly omit to discuss the inter-relation of all Asiatic Countries in their common-effort for many common-causes, in their common effort first of all to free themselves from the Western domination. If the history will repeat itself again then, or more concretely, if the Asiatic history will in the principal lines ~~will~~ take a similar course as the European in the past, Indonesian part in Asia will not be an unimportant one. Analyzing the mineral resources of the Orient, taking coal, iron and oil as the continued basis of the material-civilization, taking the geographic position of Indonesia, especially British Malaya and Sumatra into consideration, this part of Asia seems to be by nature designed to play more or less the same role as Great Britain had played and plays in Western countries. But in extent and quantity it seems to be bound to surpass the European records, as we will have to do with the far more greatest part of the globe and no less than 1000 000 000 human souls.

Whatever course Asia will take, either quarreling and warring with each other alike the Europeans, or cooperating with each other, Indonesia, at least an awakened and watchful Indonesia will geographically, economically and therefore politically not be in the worst position. It can give a decisive weight in the balance between the potentially and materially antagonistic Central and Far-East (minerals!) and so decide the problem of war and peace. It can pacify and harmonize, as it can more or less depend upon its national resources, and because of its central position in Asia and between Asia and Australia and above all the control of the Straits (Malacca

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...can in military affairs exercise an influence of an highly character.
 ...Indonesia proper, including British Malaya and the Philippine Island ... the fullest development perhaps easily feed 300 a 400 000 000 of

But Indonesia will in my opinion be in a less advantageous position, as long as it is divided in many fragments, as it is now the case. There was a time, when it was united and therefore in Asiatic policy very influential. But even only among my own people in the South there had been for quite a long duration disintegration and stupidity. One part of the population, because minor differences, lent itself to be played out by the Dutch against its own brothers. But fortunately all of these petit-differences are disappearing now. Already 6 years ago I hardly noticed the differences, which had been for three centuries the keystone of the Dutch domination. A sure and rapid process of unification can be hoped in the future, as all the intellectuals from all Islands and tribes in my country dispose of their own local dialects in their writings and speeches and adopted the "Malay language", which is used as lingua franca in Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes, New-Guinea, British-Malaya, still in a considerable part in the Moro-countries and among the population in Siam, and which probably has extensiveness than the Mandarin in China, or Urdu in British-India. With one language, the ideas of economic, political, social and cultural unity can be carried out intensiver and extensiver than ever before.

Nowhere else was the possibility for a union clearer demonstrated than by the happenings in the last two decades. Not only had been several parties, based upon nationalism, religion and politico-economy, successful in wide national sense of the words, but the blood shed by the Indonesians from Java at the end of 1926, was spontaneously replied by the Indonesians from Sumatra. Common blood, shed for the common-cause of all Indonesians, had had deeply impressed, even those tribes in the South, who had been for long time lending themselves to a military tool of the Dutch, as the Christian Indonesians, the Menadonese and the Amboinese. The recent persecution of many Menadonese soldiers, because their sympathy, even solidarity with their Mohammedan brethren, that the preachers of Pan-Malayanism are ~~not~~ not marching to the land of Utopia, proves

As there is not any important antagonism between people and country of that of the Philippines and Java for instance, racially nor materially, economically nor mentally or psychologically, I see not any fundamental reason, why I should believe one, who is going to tell me, that an union between North and South Indonesia is an impossibility. There is not any principal objection to a political course in the direction of an "Indonesian Federated States", in which, the fittest Indonesian can climb to the highest position in the country. We want however from the beginning, avoid a company with dreamers and cabin-politicians. We will gladly take history and tradition, which had been developing divergently in the last 4 centuries into account. If the highest form of Unity, can not yet be materialized, there are several nuances of federalistic ideas, which can be put into practise. While for instance granting each other political sovereignty and independence, within its own sphere, we can progressively proceed on the creation of a Common Army and Naval Department, further a Common Department for Commerce and Communication, Financial Department ~~xx~~ for Carrying the Federal Business and the creation of a Department or Organization for the promotion of a Common Culture along evolutionary lines, etc. etc. The enormous material, political and strategical advantages, even of the most loose form of cooperation must be visible, even to the poorest local Malayan patriot. Indonesian industry, agriculture and trade, which are all of the same character can be concentrated, deadly competition among two Malayan countries on the world marked avoided and a united-front can be taken towards foreign aggression..

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...I confess, that among my own people too, those, who's political horizon is beyond the Sulu Sea, can be counted. Separatistic Dutch educational system for a considerable part the cause of this ignorance. But if I am not mistaken, the natural course of the political movement in my own country will sooner or later coincide with my personal opinion; the cause of Filipinos is our very own and vice versa. The sooner we are realizing this the better it is for Malaysia as one body.

I don't want to discuss here the ridiculous problem, whether our Northern cousins will be capable to maintain their independence or not. Such a question, however interesting it might be for schoolboys' debating club is not worthy to be brought forward as an argument against the natural-right of every nation to be complete master in its own house and to set up a Government according to its own psychology and characteristics. The old Laws however, as unchangeable, as those of the Medes and Persians, the Laws which govern the relation between oppressors and the suppressed, will make for Filipinos no exception. Our Northern cousins have to conquer their independence, or else... to remain forever under American domination.

I am not blind for a danger of military or economic aggression (penetration pacifici) from the part of a wellknown equally imperialistic as hypocritical "parvenu" in Asia. But once the Filipinos become free "by its own force" they will be mastered by a new spirit, and an entirely new spirit, of self-confidence and attachment to the soil and people of the Northern Malaysia and finally to the soil and people of all Malayan countries, that at this stage of mental and psychological development, even the most brutal aggressor will consider twice, ere they will put an aggressor's feet on the Philippine Islands.

The fact, that you have been following peaceful actions, Mr. Quezon, is by no means contrary to the conclusion, which can be drawn from my opinion, mentioned above. The question is only, where is the line between a peaceful and a revolutionary action. Will Mr. Quezon for instance be responsible, if after the employment of all peaceful means - i.e. pure diplomatic means - the people is forced to the "next" available weapon? Or must the Philippine People drop forever their head, because America wants to keep the Philippine Islands for the sole benefit of her trade and trade-expansion?

As for me, Mr. Quezon is not yet out of employment. It is my sincerest opinion, that he has a better position than ever before. Considering, earlier during the Philippine Revolution and his place among the masses - please excuse me for using this word! - in connection with the continuance of diplomatic negotiations, it often seemed to me, that, have an unconquerable spirit of patience. One more reason and one more guarantee for success in the use of a method, no more risky, than you have followed until now, and of which you are surely aware of! Here I wish to express, that you are reaching now a cross-road Mr. Quezon: on the right hand a peaceful and level way, with a colourless end however and on the left hand a mountain upward, which lead to victory, prosperity and glory of the Malayan peoples.

If Mr. Quezon considers his career now as ended, I am among my many friends in the South ~~will be~~ the first to congratulate him for all his achievements. But if he wants to go the upwardgoing road, we will follow him with all of our attention, sympathy and hope. If he is among the suppressed Malayan peoples, the first, who reaches the top, we will be as satisfied and proud, as we ourselves had done it. We will find in it a living force and inspiration in our difficult struggle. When the Philippine people further want to do more for entire Malaysia, I am of the opinion, that my country will be too willing to accept its material, political or moral aid, without any "suspicion". But only the objective effect of a lawful but "concrete" action, not to speak of a complete independence of Northern Malaysia, will, I think, means the end of the domination of the Western powers over the Malayan race.

...my personal
-4-

Therefore solely for what I mean the interest of 80 millions
of the South, that I venture to touch the Philippine problem, not wi-
th the purpose of criticizing you or your party in any way, Mr President.
Indeed we have no right to do it at all! Call it egoism--but it is than a
rational and organized egoism--that many of my friends in the South and
I myself appeal to you, because we are of the opinion, that no other leader
at present in the Philippines understand better, the "weakness" of the Fi-
lipinos, the "strength" of the American imperialism and finally the even-
tual materialization of p e a c e f u l b u t a c t i v e m e a n s.
In conclusion I wish to state that you have still a big chance and we
hope for the sake of us all, that you soon will make use of that "chance"
and of all the "potentialities" at your disposal.

Wishing ^{you} and your people a speedy and
complete success, I am dear Sir,
yours faithfully,

T. Melana
T. Melana ?

Attachment 2. Malaka's second letter to Quezon, 1 May 1928 (Manuel L. Quezon Papers, National Library of the Philippines)

-1-

Chinese Interior May 1, 1928

To
Honourable Manuel Quezon
President of the Philippine Senate.

Dear Sir,

When about 7 months ago, the crisis of my material life was at the top, I met Mr Francisco Tan Guan, whom I requested to bring you personally this letter. When financial and numerous other difficulties submitted me to the position of irresolution, Mr Francisco appeared suddenly and offered me the very material things I needed to meet the requirements of the coldest season in China.

Mr Tan Guan has a very adventurous and interesting history and suits very well to that of my own. He is a natural born Filipino and belongs to a well-to-do family in the Philippine Islands. He was born in Bigan, Iloco Sur, and is a nephew of the well-known Ex-Senator Isabello de los Reyes and a brother in law of a well-known physician Dr Jose Acosta in Bigan. He was however lost in Manila in the days during the Philippine Revolution. Hungry and weary at the point of starvation a Chinese merchant took him up, adopted him as his own son and gave him Chinese education in China, so that Mr Tan Guan is now acquainted with Chinese language, costume and history. After returning to the Philippine Islands, his adopted father transferred to him his present Lumber Company, Juan Luna 550, Manila.

It is from this Malay and Chinese Citizen I often heard: why should I not do my utmost to lessen the hardship of my struggling brothers from Java. And it is because my confidence in him and his full knowledge about my life in China, since the time I left the Philippine Islands, that I take the opportunity of requesting him to hand you this letter.

Just a week ago, before his departure to the Philippine Islands, plague broke out in the very house I was living, so that the whole of the family left that house to go to their relatives in other villages. I, of course was forced to go, with lesser means for existence and certainty for life than ever before.

I had requested Mr Francisco Tan Guan to inform you about the particularities of my present condition and to get your full support for a campaign for my return to the Phil. Islands.

Hoping for a better time,
I am, Dear Sir, yours faithfully,

Malaca

Attachment 3. Quezon's letter to Malaca, 1 April 1929 (Manuel L. Quezon Papers, National Library of the Philippines)

