

A Nationalism of Substance

THIS year the Philippines celebrates the centennial of the Republic which was inaugurated on 12 June 1898. General Emilio Aguinaldo's proclamation of Philippine independence at the town of Kawit, Cavite followed the outbreak of the Philippine Revolution against more than 300 years of Spanish rule and led to the establishment a year later of the first constitutional republic in Asia.

As we go to press, Filipinos are swept by the centennial fever demonstrated by flag-waving all over the country. The centennial has also been a boon to historical scholarship. One of the centennial programs has been the production of research material on the revolution and the highlighting of the debate over the rivalry for power between Aguinaldo and Andres Bonifacio, the Filipino hero with mass appeal, who sparked the revolution in 1898 but lost the leadership to Aguinaldo.

The Aguinaldo-Bonifacio debate is far from over; new studies have given more nuances and insights to the power struggle that often follows revolution. So, in the spirit of the centennial and in our desire to introduce fresh perspectives into the development of Philippine democracy over the past 100 years, *Public Policy* has decided to dedicate this issue to the theme of the state of Filipino nationalism

a hundred years after Kawit.

In this issue, nationalism is examined from the perspectives of the Left, of the



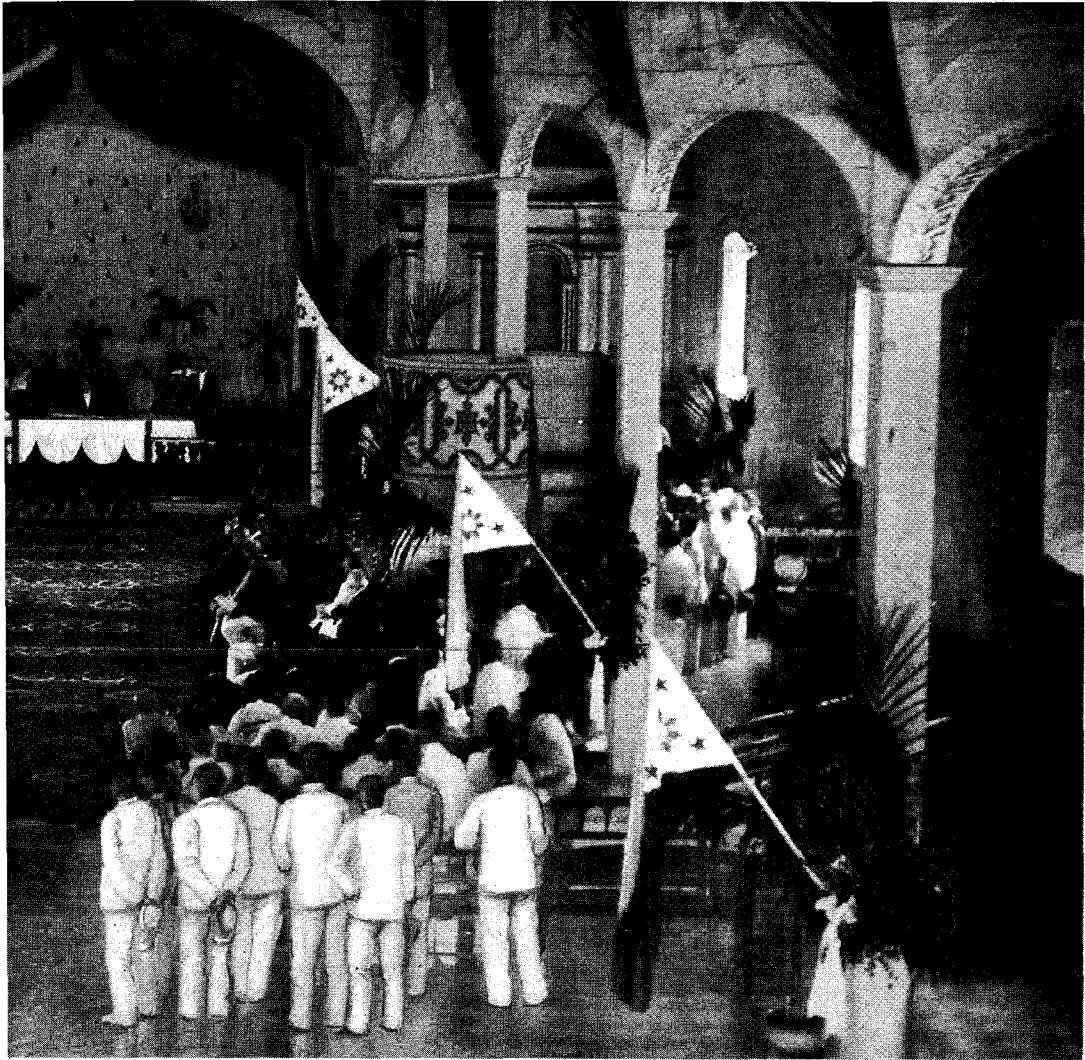
Opening session of the Malolos Congress in Barasoain (Courtesy of D. Thompson Publishing Company.)

Center, and of the separatist tendencies in Mindanao and Sulu. It is also given a regional dimension by situating it within the nationalist movements in Asia.

We are favored to have an essay from Armando Malay Jr, dean of the University of the Philippines Asian Center, who writes about the impact of nationalism on Marxist movements in the Philippines. On the other hand, Satur Ocampo, a

leading figure of the National Democratic Front who is now above ground, argues that despite a century of nationalist struggle for political independence and a self-reliant economy, these goals remain basically unfulfilled — a thesis that is expressed in less dialectical terms by the phrase ‘unfinished revolution’.

Useful for further research is the essay by professor emeritus Jose Abueva,



15 September 1898. (Photo reprinted from *Our Islands and Their People*, Volume II, © 1899 N.

who surveys the body of literature about Filipino nationalism. His essay traces the changing aspects of nationalism in relation to the imperatives of national survival and global interdependence.

Patricio Abinales provides a Mindanao perspective as he writes about the Filipino Muslims and their relationship to the Christian-dominated central government in Manila during the formation of the Philippine State under American colonial rule. His essay, among others, examines the political behavior of the first generation of Muslim leaders who facilitated the integration of southern Mindanao into the colonial political system.

Elmer Ordoñez, now vice-president for academic affairs at the Lyceum of the Philippines, throws illuminating insights on the western-oriented humanities curriculum in the universities and the changes in its orientation through the decades. Noel Teodoro, a historian, examines the writings of leading members of the Filipino and Indonesian elite during the colonial period — Jose Rizal for the Philippines and Raden Ajeng

Kartini of Indonesia. Teodoro writes that both Rizal and Kartini sought the emancipation of indigenous women through education.

The regional perspective comes from the well-known Asian scholar, Wang Gungwu, who examines the tension between ethnicity and nationalism in nation-states that seek to modernize rapidly. He argues, however, that nation-building can be assisted where tensions are resolved by negotiation and consensus.

With these perspectives, it might be possible to consider that the Philippine centennial celebration is of a substance that outlasts the fleeting euphoria of the moment. The fact alone that Philippine democracy has survived a hundred years in a region with a long history of less participatory politics should arouse further interest in the Filipino nationalist movement as it operates within the context of a largely democratic polity.

