

# Storming the Citadel: the Katipunan's military plans prior to August 1896

## Unang Quidlat, Letter to “*kanilang minamahal*,” c. May 1896

Source: Archivo General Militar de Madrid, Caja 5677, leg. 1.88 and Caja 5393, leg. 4.26

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The Katipunan's rapid growth in early 1896 made its discovery ever more inevitable and imminent. It would have to launch the revolution, Andres Bonifacio warned in May, before it was ready, like a pregnant woman who had to deliver before she was due.<sup>1</sup> Determining the strategy and tactics for the final battle (“*huling pakikilaban*”) became a pressing priority, a race against time. But in August the society was betrayed, and the race was lost. The Katipunan's top leaders quickly left Manila and headed about five kilometers north to Caloocan, where they organized the ill-fated offensive that was mounted on August 29-30, 1896.<sup>2</sup>

Supposing, though, the Katipunan had been able to take the offensive in a manner and at a time of its own choosing, before the Spaniards pre-empted its original plans. Then the uprising would have begun not around the periphery of Manila, but with a surprise attack at its center, at the very heart of colonial power. What the Katipuneros plotted in the weeks prior to August 1896 was the capture of Fort Santiago and other strongholds in Intramuros, the seizure of the enemy's weapons from its arsenals, and the speedy expansion of the insurrection outwards from the city to the suburbs and countryside.

## Unang Quidlat's letter

The letter transcribed and translated below is the only document yet found that discusses the Katipunan's military plans. Given the need for total secrecy, it would obviously have been safer to exchange ideas verbally rather than commit them to paper. Other documents refer to the ongoing debate, but give no details.<sup>3</sup> Confidentiality also demanded that the discussion at a strategic level was confined more or less to the Katipunan's leadership, and mainly to the society's top decision-making body, the Supreme Assembly (Kataastaasang Kapisanan). In theory, this body comprised the members of the Supreme Council (Kataastaasang Sangunian), the presidents of the popular councils (Sangunian Bayan) and the presidents of branches (Balangay) not affiliated to popular councils, but in practice the presidents were often accompanied by one or two other leading activists from their sections.

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<sup>1</sup> Santiago V. Alvarez, *The Katipunan and the Revolution: The Memoirs of a General*, translated by Paula Carolina S. Malay (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1992), 11.

<sup>2</sup> Zeus A. Salazar, *Agosto 29-20, 1896: Ang pagsalakay ni Bonifacio sa Maynila*, Salin ni Monico M. Atienza (Quezon City: Miranda Bookstore, 1995); and idem, *Ang 'real' ni Bonifacio bilang taktikang militar sa kasaysayan ng Pilipinas* (Maynila: BAKAS, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Supreme Council, Notice to members of the Supreme Assembly,” May 27, 1896 (Archivo General Militar de Madrid [hereafter AGMM]: Caja 5677, leg. 1.27), in Jim Richardson, *The Light of Liberty: Documents and studies on the Katipunan, 1892-1897* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2013), 248-9; and Sb. Mahiganti, Record of meeting held on May 30, 1896 (AGMM: Caja 5677, leg.1.58), in *ibid*, 250-2.

This letter, signed with the alias “Unang Quidlat,” was presumably penned by one of these activists, someone who evidently knew about the plans for the offensive but was not himself a member of the Katipunan’s Supreme Council. It is probably the members of the Supreme Council to whom he writes, addressing them as “their excellencies” (“*kanilang minamahal*”) and offering them his thoughts.

To make a more specific guess, it is likely “Unang Quidlat” was Hermogenes Plata, a first cousin of Gregoria de Jesus and the younger brother of Teodoro Plata, one of the Katipunan’s co-founders. Hermogenes Plata had been one of the society’s first recruits, in September 1892, and had taken “Kidlat” (Lightning) as his alias.<sup>4</sup> The writer of the letter remarks that many other Katipuneros had subsequently adopted the same alias, and to avoid confusion he would henceforth call himself “Unang Quidlat” (“First Lightning”).

There are two slight doubts in identifying Plata as the writer. First, he was expelled from the Katipunan as a “traitor” (“*taksil*”) at the beginning of 1896 after getting into some dispute with the Supreme Council about the affairs of the branch, Katotohanan in Tondo, of which he was a leading member.<sup>5</sup> It seems, however, that he was soon readmitted, and in August he was among the revolutionists who gathered in Balintawak.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, one would expect Plata, as a long-standing, Manila-based member of the Katipunan, to use the “k” in his orthography rather than the “c” and “qu” found in this letter – to sign his alias as Kidlat, for example. This may well indicate that the letter is a copy and that the orthography has been changed, perhaps by an intelligence agent tasked with deciphering a scrawled original and/or making a Spanish translation.<sup>7</sup> But there is nothing in the letter to suggest it is a fabrication; on the contrary, the inside knowledge of the Katipunan it reveals, coupled with its quirky individuality, attest strongly to its authenticity.

## Pio Valenzuela

The plans for the offensive, the letter reveals, were drafted initially by the KKK’s supreme fiscal and physician, Pio Valenzuela (alias “Dimas Ayanan”), possibly on his own initiative but more probably at the request of Bonifacio and other Supreme Council members. So far as is known, Valenzuela did not have any training or expertise in military matters, but nor did any other high-ranking Katipunan leader, or at least nothing more than the basic training Francisco Carreon would have received when he had been a *carabinero*. It may be that Valenzuela was felt to be best qualified for the task simply because he was the only Supreme Council member at this time who was a university graduate.

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<sup>4</sup> Manuel Artigas y Cuerva, *Andres Bonifacio y El ‘Katipunan’* (Manila: Imp. De ‘La Vanguardia’, 1911), 24; also “Relación de todos los individuos que figuran en el legajo de documentos del Katipunan, perteneciente a Andrés Bonifacio con los nombres propios, simbólicos y en clave” (AGMM: Caja 5393, leg.9.10). Hermogenes Plata worked as a clerk in the Aduana.

<sup>5</sup> Supreme Council, Notice to all members, January 25, 1896 (AGMM: Caja 5677, leg. 1.42), in Richardson, *Light of Liberty*, 158.

<sup>6</sup> “Unang Sigaw, Unang Labanan sa Paglaya,” *Bagong Buhay*, August 25, 1952, in Richardson, *Light of Liberty*, 261.

<sup>7</sup> Unang Quidlat’s description of the Katipunan’s planned attack on Fort Santiago was relayed by the *secretas* to higher authority, and was summarized by a senior colonial official, Manuel Sastrón, in one of the first books on the revolution, *La insurrección en Filipinas*, Tomo 1, (Madrid: Imprenta de la viuda de M. Minuesa de los Rios, 1897), 621-5.

Intramuros could be taken, Valenzuela reckoned, by an assault force of 600 troops. Half would enter the walled city surreptitiously in advance, where some would lie low inside rented houses, some would disperse in the streets, and some would mingle with the worshippers at the Cathedral. The other 300 would be under cover in *cascos* (cargo barges) moored in the Pasig River between the Puerta Almacenes and the Puerta de Aduana. At the appointed hour, 150 of the troops already inside the walls would enter the Maestranza (the Spanish arsenal); 40 would be deployed to capture the cannons on the Baluarte Plano de Santa Isabel, facing Manila Bay; and the remaining 110, it seems, would be assigned to the fight for Fort Santiago, in which they would be instantly joined by the 300 who had been hiding in the *cascos*.

Aside from these sketchy details about the first cry of battle in Intramuros, Unang Quidlat's letter unfortunately says nothing directly about Valenzuela's strategy. He takes the strategy as his starting point – he says it is all he knows of what is being planned – but his purpose in writing, of course, is to make his own comments and suggestions, not to summarize a strategy which, he notes, the Katipunan's leadership has already approved. We can perhaps get a general impression, or glimpses, of how the leadership intended the insurrection should develop and spread, but it is difficult to discern which proposals had been embodied in Valenzuela's master plan and which were Unang Quidlat's own.

### **Cannons, rifles and Rizal**

One suggestion that appears to be Unang Quidlat's own is that eight KKK members should be sent to Japan for a month or so for artillery training before the revolution was launched, and if possible bring a number of small cannons back with them when they returned. Another idea in his letter is that the Katipunan should charter a boat to pick up José Rizal in Dapitan and transport him safely to Japan, where he could act as “our representative”. In that capacity, ideally, Rizal would be able to arrange a shipment of arms and ammunition to the Philippines. But in the meantime, as the Katipunan's leaders would be fully aware, rifles, revolvers and other weaponry had to be obtained within the country.

### **Brigandage**

Unang Quidlat states another obvious fact the Katipunan's leaders did not need to be told. The preparations for revolution needed money, and as soon as possible.

The KKK's only “legitimate” sources of income were members' dues and donations, and in mid-1896 the society had nothing like sufficient funds to buy large quantities of weapons, or to send eight people to Japan for artillery training. Sending a delegation of some kind to Japan was discussed internally in late May, but was not pursued due to a lack of cash. The maximum that could be raised at short notice, it was estimated, was 1,390 pesos, and the priority, it was agreed, should be to send Pio Valenzuela and an aide to Dapitan to inform Rizal that “all of us are ready at all times” and to seek his views on how best to proceed.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Sb. Mahiganti, Record of meeting held on May 30, 1896, as cited.

The only quick way to get more money was to resort to crime. Unang Quidlat suggests that the Katipunan should recruit about 100 bandits and other “people of courage” (“*taong may puso*”) to commit a month-long spate of robberies. Very probably, Bonifacio and other KKK leaders had already been thinking along the same lines, and quite possibly an alliance with one outlaw band had already been forged. Tomas Remigio recalls telling Bonifacio around this time – mid-1896 – that the Spaniards in the government office where he worked had been talking about a series of robberies in San Juan del Monte. The Spaniards had said the perpetrators were not really bandits, but belonged to an association that wanted to make trouble. Bonifacio, says Remigio, seemed to know what was happening but did not want to discuss the matter.<sup>9</sup> Valenzuela himself, after his surrender, told his Spanish interrogators specifically that the robberies in San Juan del Monte had been committed upon Bonifacio’s orders by a group headed by a bandit known as “Laong”.<sup>10</sup> Later, in August, Laong and his group joined the revolutionists when they gathered in Balintawak, and carried out a series of raids on the Chinese-owned *sari-sari* stores in the locality.<sup>11</sup>

### **Stretching the realm of possibility**

It is impossible to say whether Unang Quidlat’s response to Valenzuela’s plans is representative of the comments other Katipunan members would be making. Some of his ideas look frankly unwise or impractical. Training camps where KKK troops could practice firing cannons, for example, would have been hard to keep secret even in the Sierra Madre. Sinking a ship in the San Bernardino Strait to create a blockade would not have worked, because the Strait is 4-5 miles wide and generally some 30-100 fathoms deep. Buying weapons from Japan on credit also sounds fanciful.

### **Cutting the cable**

But Unang Quidlat also has better ideas. One of the main targets during the initial attack, he suggests, should be the Spanish communications center, and if it could not be taken quickly the revolutionists should sever the colonial administration’s link with Madrid by cutting the telegraph cable to Hong Kong. The first section of this cable ran above ground, to Bolinao in Pangasinan, and later, in April 1898, it was cut at the Bolinao end.<sup>12</sup> What the saboteurs had done, the Governor General remarked at that time, was “a very simple matter,” and he thought it “strange that during the war this has not been done a hundred times.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Tomas A Remigio, Untitled memoir headed “Sinomang nagmamakabayang ang hangad at ang kapakinabangan ng sarili niya, ay walang mabuting katapusan,” n.pub, n.d., 6 [Guillermo Masangkay Papers, UP Diliman], quoted in Soledad Borromeo-Buehler, *The Cry of Balintawak: A Contrived Controversy*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1998), 30. It would be interesting to know whether the Guardia Civil recorded any increase in larceny and lawlessness in the months prior to August 1896.

<sup>10</sup> Pio Valenzuela y Alejandrino, Declaration dated October 21, 1896 in Wenceslao E. Retana (comp.), *Archivo del bibliófilo filipino*, vol.III (Madrid: Imprenta de la Viuda de M. Minuesa de los Rios, 1897), 297. Laong is said to have been Gregorio Tapalla, a *tulisan* originally from the town of San Francisco de Malabon in Cavite. Alvarez, *The Katipunan and the Revolution*, 255.

<sup>11</sup> Borromeo-Buehler, *The Cry of Balintawak*, 34-5.

<sup>12</sup> *The Straits Times*, April 20, 1898.

<sup>13</sup> Memoria dirigida al Senado por el Capitan General D. Fernando Primo de Rivera y Sobremonte acerca de su gestión en Filipino (Madrid, August 1898), in *The Philippine Insurrection Against the*

## What if...?

“The capture of Fort Santiago will be easy,” Unang Quidlat says. Was his optimism in any way rational, or was it plain crazy? He did have a rough knowledge of the enemy’s strength. If the attack was opportunely timed, he reckoned, the number of Spanish artillerymen inside the Fort might be as few as 150. In fact, the full muster of the Regimiento Peninsular de Artillería in the city was only around 200, so the number on duty might sometimes have been even lower than Unang Quidlat thought.<sup>14</sup>

Unang Quidlat would also know that the Artillería was the only “Regimiento Peninsular” in the colony, in other words the only regiment composed entirely of Spaniards – Madrid had felt it prudent to bar *indigenas* from the artillery since the Cavite mutiny of 1872. All other army units and the Guardia Civil were mixed, the senior and middle-level officers generally being Spaniards and the lower ranks being entirely native. In a time of crisis, Spanish officials feared, the native troops might waver; their loyalty and steadfastness were “hypothetical” (“*ser objeto de hipotesis*”).<sup>15</sup>

There is nothing in Unang Quidlat’s letter, however, to suggest that he or the Katipunan leadership had any expectation that the Filipino soldiery or police would join the insurrection and turn their guns on their Spanish officers. The KKK did have a few members in the armed services, but they were dispersed in different units, so the prospect of a concerted, coordinated mutiny in mid-1896 was quite remote.<sup>16</sup>

Nevertheless, Unang Quidlat had good reason to believe that the enemy’s strength in Intarmuros was not hugely daunting. Most of the colonial army, including six of the seven infantry battalions, was stationed in Mindanao. At the moment the revolution began in Manila and the surrounding provinces, the Governor General later reported, he had at his immediate disposal just four artillery companies, five infantry companies, one company of engineers, a squadron of cavalry and the Guardia Civil. Together, these forces “totaled only 500 soldiers and about a thousand natives.”<sup>17</sup> Some of these, moreover, were based outside the city, in Cavite and other nearby provinces.

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*United States*, a compilation of documents with notes and introduction by John R. M. Taylor, vol. I (Pasay City: Eugenio Lopez Foundation, 1971), 346-7.

<sup>14</sup> José M. del Castillo y Jiménez, *El Katipunan o el filibusterismo en Filipinas* (Madrid: Imprenta del asilo de huérfanos del S. C. de Jesús, 1897), 103.

<sup>15</sup> Sastron, *La insurrección en Filipinas*, 193.

<sup>16</sup> The only known mutiny in Manila was a brief, localized revolt by *carabineros* (customs guards) in the captain of the port’s office in February 1897. Frederic Sawyer recounts that the mutineers “made off with some rifles and ammunition. [Spanish] volunteers and some troops hastily called together pursued the rebels through Tondo as far as the Leper Hospital, till nightfall, the last volley being fired at 6.15 p.m. In this affair the mutineers lost a great many men, but some of them got away and joined [up with the forces of the Katipunan].” Bonifacio naturally applauded this revolt when he got the news, but it is not clear whether it was actually instigated by the Katipunan. Frederic H. Sawyer, *The Inhabitants of the Philippines* (London: S. Low, Marston & Co., 1900), 89; Andres Bonifacio Letter to Emilio Jacinto, circa March 15, 1897, in Richardson, *Light of Liberty*, 313.

<sup>17</sup> *Memoria que al Senado dirige el General Blanco acerca de los últimos sucesos ocurridos en la isla de Luzon* [Madrid: Establecimiento tipográfico de ‘El Liberal’, 1897], 3.

It is conceivable, therefore, that the force of 600 well-armed Katipuneros envisaged by Unang Kidlat could have overwhelmed the defenders of Fort Santiago and the other Intramuros strongholds in a well-timed and coordinated surprise attack. If large quantities of weapons could be seized from the Spanish arsenal and distributed to the Katipunan's fighters in the suburbs and countryside, it is conceivable too that the revolution could have liberated a swathe of central and southern Luzon.

But what would have happened next? Even if the Governor General and other leading officials were killed, even if the telegraph cable was cut, news of what was happening in Manila would soon reach the Spanish navy commanders in Cavite, and then the commanders of the infantry regiments in Mindanao, and then Madrid. An intense counter-offensive would be mobilized very quickly. Within weeks if not days, as later happened in reality, Spanish ships would steam out of Barcelona, Cadiz and Valencia carrying troops by the thousand to fight the rebellion. Winning the battle for Intramuros would not be decisive. The *huling pakikilaban* could only be won by a hard, protracted war.



## The Tagalog text

*Sa canilang camahalan*

*Ang unang quinalaban ng aquin pagsulat ay ang masama cong pananagalog, nguni,t, tinalo ang pagaalangan ng gusto, tangi pa, sa malaqui cong pag-asa na ang maguiguin mali at culang, sila na ang magtatama at magpupuno.*

*Maikli ang aquin isip at ualan ano pa man, talos na paraan, liban sa ipinahayag ng capatid na Dimas Ayaran, at dito halos lahat, magmumula ang inacalang dapat gamitin sa huling paquiquilaban.*

*Batid marahil na nila, ang paraan natuclas at sinalaysay ng capatid na Dimas Ayaran na punoan ang paquiquibanga sa loob at maaaring isabay ang labas, magaan naman magagahis ang fuerza de Santiago pinacaunan cailangan ng tayo,i, madali nang macasamsam ng armas, salapi at pagcain, cun sasalacayin ng de 5 a 6 ng umaga at a las 11 1/2 ng arao, pagca,t, matatagpuan nagsisicain o matutulog, cacaunti naman ang cacalabanin, culang pa mahil [sic] sa isang daan at limang puong artillero, nguni,t, may cahirapan laman ang pagpapasoc sa loob ng Maynila ng manga tauong magsisisuboc ng paquiquilaban, at sa bagay na ito,i, may inisip din siang tatlong munucala na dala na ang aquin pinili.*

*Yaman na ilagda ang napulot na paraan, ay aquin isusunod ang tadhana ng sarili cong caisipan:*

*Ang unang bagay na dapat gauin ay mag-padala ng ualong tauo sa Japon na pagcagastahan, upan macapag-aral na ualang patid ng tuncol sa cañon cahit isan buan at cung mangatuto na,i, dito ay pacuui [?], lalong mabuti,i, cung macapaguui ng canon maliliit ay magdala at magturo cahit pitong arao sa bundoc ng Sn Mateo*

*o caya naman tayo,i, bumayad ng taga Japon marurunong ng cañon cung maliuag o di mangyayari ang tayo,i, magpaaral.*

*Dapat magcaroon tayo ngayon ng liman daan fusil at ganoon din damin revolver at mga cailangan ibabala na itatago sa bundoc ng Sn Mateo at mapag-aralan o sa lugar na di maquiquita.*

*Isipin ang paraan na macapagtaanan sa Dapitan ang capatid natin si Rizal at pumaroon sa Japon na magsama pa ng tatlo o dalawang macacatulon, ng siya ang ati,i, doo,i, maguin representante, marami marahil ang di aayon na si Rizal dito,i, umalis at uiuicin siya,i, para general en jefe; datapua,t, malin acala, si Rizal laman ang dapat maguin representante; pagcat, hayag ang calaquihan ng canyang calulua. Sabio, siya,i, marunong ng sari sarin salita at balita pang ang macausap nya,i, nahihibo na catamisan ng pangungusap, isang bagay na totoong cailangan, upan ang bala,t, sabihin ay madalin ayunan. Isan paraan ng pagtataanan ay bumayad ng vapor doo,i, padaanin, siya,i, magdisfraz ng pagsacay at itungo sa ibang lugar. Malayo naman nilang ibintan na cung caya umalis ay dahil sa inaacalan laban, cundi sasabihin nahihirapan na sa pagcatapon.*

*Ang lahat ng ito,i, cailangan ay salapi, magcacaroon madali, pumili ng mga tulisan at tauong may puso na mga isang daan; at ito,i, papag loobin sa bayan mayayaman ng Provincia at sa nalalaan may salapi paris ng convento ng Guadalupe, at tuloy itataga na ang buhay ng ilan sa canila.*

*Ito nama,i, madali, isang buan mang loloob, tatlon buan ang pag-aaral sa Japon paroo,t, parito, isabay na rito ang paguisip at pag-gagaua ng pagtatanan ni Rizal o dagdagan pa ng isa, gayon din naman ang pagbili ng mga fusil, sa loob ng lima o anim ay nahahanda na ang lahat at maaari ng magpasimula, cahit ualan fusil na sarili.*

*Cung si Rizal ay di macapagtaanan, paparoonin ang iba.*

*Pagcacaroon na natin ng representante sa Japon; uala man o mayroon tayon cañonerong tagalog o japoses ay gauin naman ang paghahalal ng isang general en jefe at mga tauong maguiguin miembro ng atin gobierno.*

*Papaghandain mangag-arms ang lahat ng capatid sa Sn. Juan del Mte, Mandaloya at Pasig at mga capatid na na lalapit sa tatlong bayan, cahit lahat ay itac cung ualang revolver at fusil, biguian ng cabecilla tig-isa ang tatlong lugar.*

*Maghanda ang taga Provincia, cung malayo sa Maynila at saca cacaunti, magsipisan na sa taga Sn. Juan del Mte, cung malapit huag ng magsiquilos.*

*Ang mga taga Cavite,t, bayan na lalapit, mag-arms; nguni,t, huag din aalis sa canila.*

*Ang na sa bundoc ng Sn. Mateo, papaghandain din.*

*Humirang ng tatlong daan tauong pilin pili sa cautusan ng isan cabecilla at apat na oficiales sucacat macahalili at macatulong, ang tatlong daan ito,i, itatadhana sa*

*pag-agao ng fuerza de Santiago sa isan arao na dapat malaman ng lahat ng cabecilla*

*Sa arao na aagauin ang fuerza de Santiago ay magcaroon pa ng tatlong daan sa manga casco sa may puerto ng Sta Clara.*

*Ang paraan gagauin ng pag agao sa fuerza de Santiago ay ang sinabi ng capatid na Dimas Ayaran, papasuquin sa loob ng Maynila ang tatlong daan tauo sa araw na may cumpil, ang iba,i, cumalat sa mga daan, ang iba,i, magsilagay sa may Catedral, ang iba,i, sa mga bahay na dapat upahan lalong mabuti,i, sa malapit sa Maestranza. Sa Maestranza,i, papasuquin sa horas na nararapat ang isan daan at liman puo, sa manga nag-iingat ng cañon sa tapat ng Jesuitas ay apat na puo, sa cautusan ng cabecilla at manga oficiales, pagbilinan ang nasa manga casco na sa paglalaban ay pumasoc na bigla at umabuloy, ganoon din naman ang na sa manga daan at patain ang sa canila,i, macahadlan. Sa pagagao sa loob ng Maynila cailangan maagao natin ang Central de Comunicaciones at ng huag nilang maitelegrama sa España o caya putulin ang manga cable.*

*Sacalin maagao na ang Maynila, sa pamamag-itan ng isan judiatan, nangangabayo o manga cuitis ay dapat malaman ng pulutong sa Sn Juan del Mte, Mandaloya, Pasig at San Mateo at sa ibang lugar, upan ang manga taga apat na bayan ay mapagpapatay o hulihin ang mga castila at maguin canila na ang bayan, at sila,i, pumili ng liman daan at pacunin ng armas na naagao sa Maestranza at isang libo pang abuloy. Ang manga taga Sn Mateo ay magsibaba na at ang maraanan bayan ay canilahin, patain din o hulin ang mga cura,t, castila.*

*Ang manga tauong na sa Maynila, icalat agad agad ang armas sa S. J. del Mte., Mandaloya, Pasig at Sn Mateo at dapat na nilan pasimulan ang pagsisigao na ang castila,i, magsipag presinta at cundi,i, gugutumin o papatain.*

*Pagdatin ng isan libon abuloy na galin sa Sn J. del Mte at Mandaloya, pasimulao [sic] ang pag-agao sa mga arrabales at pagsamsam ng salapi. Ang pagagao sa manga arrabales ay mangyayari na lalon mainam ay isabay o ihuli laman ng caunti sa pag-agao sa Maynila cung sacalin mayroon ng armas capag caraca, isan bagay pan icacadali ng pagsamsam sa Central de Comunicaciones.*

*Sacalin naagao na, itelegrama sa naciones extranjeras ang saludo ng ating nabangon bayan, sabihin ang naagao na,i, malaqui at tayo,i, may gobierno na mayroon talagan lugar na quinalalaguian, upan tayo,i, maguin simpatico sa canila.*

*Sa atin representante ganoon din at malayo pa ang paglalaban mabuti,i, sa canyan pamamagitan ay may manga paparito ng buque japones talagan sa ati,i, abuloy na may laman municiones na atin musian [?] uutangin [?].*

*Cung cacañonin tayo ng mga buque de guerra español ay cañonin din naman cung tayo,i, may cañonerong tagalog o japones at cung uala,i, magtago sa cubli. At sa mayroon man tayong cañonerong tagalog o japoneses ay sapagca,t, malapit, na ang mga buque de guerra ng castila ay cunin ang Cavite; caya, pagcacuhan pagcacuha natin ng Maynila ay laebain agad sa daan patag (sa daan por tierra)*

*ang Cavite,t, baca sacalin macuha pa ang mga castila o canila ma [sic] naman nacuha na; sa bagay na ito, mabuti,i, sa mga daan patumpa sa Cavite o sa Cavite ay mayroon na tayong mga tauong nahahanda, bibiguan na laman ng doo,i, tutungo ng sucat armasin o cung tayo,i, may casangcapan na isipin maisabay ang paglalaban sa Cavite.*

*Cung atin na ang Maynila at mga arrabales, tupahin naman ang bandan Bulacan at Malabon na agauin at ang manga capatid na andodoon ay magsisama para gayahan sa canila ng bayan at ganito rin naman ang gagawin ng mga capatid sa bandan Cavite, pagdatin doon ng manga tagalog [sic]; nguni,t, cung sila,i, marami, sa pagcacuha ng Maynila, sila,i, manamsam na ng mga bayan canilan magagahis at ito,i, padadalhan agad ng casangcapan.*

*Hindi natin dapat catacutan ang manga buque de guerra ng castilla; pagca,t, ito,i, mauubusan ng bala at bucod pa sa gutom.*

*Tayo naman ay di na cacaunti; pagca,t, ang Estados Unidos ay ng magrebelion, iisang libo ang unan tauo ni Washington, ganoon malacas pang nacion ang calaban.*

*Isa pa,i, cung macuha na ang Maynila at tayo,i, may imprenta na ay gumaua agad ng reglamento na dapat sundin at icalat sa mga cababayan.*

*Hindi dapat calimutan ang pagsamsam ng pagcain sa mga almacén, salapi sa tesoreria at Administracion, sa lahat ng lugar na macucunan at sa mga tagalog na mayayaman sa ati,i, ayao umabuloy ng dapat.*

*Cung gusto natin tayo,i, huag ng mapasoc dito cung di may cahirapan ay lubugan caya natin ng vapor mercante ang estrecho de Sn Bernardino; nguni,t, tayo ma,i, di naman [?] capaglalabas at masoc.*

*Dapat naman natin ilagan sa paglalagay ng cabecilla ang mga tauong masasabi na ualan educacion, ng upan tayo,i, maguin simpatico rin sa canila. Cahulihulihan ay naquilala natin, ayon sa paraan natuclas na ang capatid na Dimas Ayaran ay mabutin general en jefe at na pagquiquilala rin sa canyan pananalita.*

*(Unang Quidlat)*

*Cung mabago ang mga calagayan sa ano pa man dahilan, lalo na cung di matututop ang fuerza de Santiago ay pag nagpuprecision [?] ng fiesta ng Corpus o caya Sn Andres ay atin halucayin na ang procesion at dito na tayo mangagao; sa bagay na ito,i, mabuti naman ay madalan tayo rito agad ng armas ng mga buque japones o caya pag pa magsimula.*

*Unang Quidlat*

*Sa caramihan ng may pamagat na Quidlat ay ipifirma co mula ngayon ang =  
Unang Quidlat*



The first thing that must be done is to send eight people to Japan, with funds to enable them to study, without interruption, even just for a month, the use of cannons. When they have been trained and return here, it would be best if they could bring back some small cannons with them. They could then train people to operate the cannons in the mountains of San Mateo, just for a week or so. Alternatively, if this would take too long, or if it is not feasible to acquire the skills ourselves, we could hire people from Japan who are expert in cannons.

We should now get 500 rifles and as many revolvers, together with the necessary ammunition, hidden in the mountains of San Mateo, and we must ensure they are in a place where they cannot be discovered.

Consideration should be given as to how to enable our brother Rizal to escape from Dapitan and go to Japan, together with two or three helpers, to be our representative there. Many people will perhaps not agree that Rizal should leave here, and will say that he should be the general-in-chief. However, it would be wrong to suppose that Rizal would just be an ordinary representative. He is learned, knows several languages, and it is also said that people to whom he speaks are readily persuaded by the sweetness of his words, something that is truly needed if matters have to be agreed quickly. One way to arrange his escape would be to charter a steamboat to go there [Dapitan]. He would board the boat in disguise and depart for another place. It is unlikely they [the Spaniards] would accuse him of leaving because of a planned revolt; rather they would say he could no longer endure his exile.

For all of this, money is needed. To get it quickly, choose bandits and people of courage, about a hundred, who will commit robberies in the rich towns of the provinces and places where money is held like the Convento of Guadalupe, where they can already proceed to cut short the lives of some of them.

All this will not take long. One month of brigandage, three months for the training in Japan, travel there and back, and concurrent with this the planning and execution of Rizal's escape. Better add another month for the purchase of rifles, so that within five or six months everything should be prepared, and it will be possible to start, even if we do not yet have rifles of our own.

If Rizal is not able to escape, someone else should go there [to Japan].

When our representative is there in Japan, whether or not we have Tagalog or Japanese cannoneers, we should arrange the election of a general-in-chief and the people who will be members of our government.

Arrangements should be made for all the brethren in San Juan del Monte, Mandaluyong and Pasig, and the brethren near those three towns, to be armed, if not with revolvers or rifles then at least with bolos, to be distributed by the commanders in each of the three places.

Prepare the people in the Provinces who are far from Manila and few in number to join together with the people in San Juan del Monte. Those who are near [to Manila] should stay where they are.

The people in Cavite and nearby towns should be armed, but will also stay where they are.

Those in the mountains of San Mateo should also be prepared.

Assign 300 selected people under the orders of a commander and four officers to act as reserves and to provide support. These 300 people will be deployed to the assault on Fort Santiago on a date that must be made known to all the commanders.

On the day that Fort Santiago is to be captured, there will be another 300 people in *cascos* [cargo barges] by the Santa Clara jetty.

The method by which Fort Santiago will be captured is as described by Brother Dimas Ayaran. On the designated day, the 300 people will go into Manila [Intramuros]. Some will disperse in the streets; others will mingle at the Cathedral; and others will be positioned in houses that will need to be rented, preferably close to the Maestranza [Arsenal]. At the appointed hour, 150 will enter the Maestranza, and 40 will take care of the cannons in front of the Jesuits. Upon the orders of the commander and officers, those in the *cascos* will be ordered instantly to join the battle and lend support, and those in the streets will do likewise, killing anyone who tries to stop them. During the attack inside Manila [Intramuros], we need to take the Communications Center so that they cannot send telegrams to Spain, or else we should cut the cables.<sup>18</sup>

As soon as Manila has been captured, messages will be sent by couriers on horseback, or rockets fired as a signal, to tell the groups in San Juan del Monte, Mandaluyong, Pasig, San Mateo and other places, so that the people in those four towns can kill or arrest the Spaniards and make the towns theirs. They will then select 500 people to come and collect the weapons seized from the Maestranza, with a further 1,000 in support. The people in San Mateo will come down [from the mountains] and enter the town, killing or capturing the priests and Spaniards.

The people in Manila will immediately distribute the arms to [the people from] San Juan del Monte, Mandaluyong, Pasig and San Mateo, and should begin calling out to the Spaniards to surrender, or else be either starved or killed.

Once the 1,000 reinforcements from San Juan del Monte and Mandaluyong arrive, the capture of the districts outside Intramuros can begin, together with the seizure of money. It would be best if the districts could be attacked at the same time, just after the capture of Manila, provided we have got the weapons.

The seizure of the Communications Center is another thing that needs to be done quickly. Once that is captured, our nation in arms should send telegrams of greeting to foreign nations, telling them we now occupy extensive territory, have established our own government, whose authority we are consolidating, and wish to have friendly relations with them.

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<sup>18</sup> It is not clear what Unang Quidlat means by the “Central de Comunicaciones”. He mentions it in the context of the attack inside Intramuros, and so may be referring to a facility within the Dirección de Administración Civil on Calle Audiencia, or perhaps to the Intramuros telegraph station. However, the Administración General de Comunicaciones and the Estación Central were north of the river in Binondo, on Escolta.

It would be good if our representative there [in Japan], well in advance of the conflict, could arrange for a Japanese ship to come to our assistance, carrying munitions that we could buy on credit.

If we come under cannon fire from Spanish warships, we should return the fire, provided we have Tagalog or Japanese cannoners. If we do not, we must take cover. The reason we need Tagalog or Japanese cannoners is that the Spanish warships will soon attempt to take Cavite, so when we have taken Manila, we should immediately go by road to Cavite, whether it has yet to be taken by the Spaniards or has been taken already. In this regard it would be good to have people ready on the roads leading to Cavite, and within Cavite, so that we can give them the necessary weapons and equipment for the fighting in Cavite to be synchronized.

Once Manila and its districts are already ours, the offensive can proceed in Bulacan and Malabon, and the brethren in those places can join together in the same way to secure their towns. The brethren in Cavite will do likewise when the Tagalogs [people from Manila (?)] arrive there [with weapons and equipment]. But if they [the brethren in Cavite] are many, they can seize their towns as soon as Manila has been captured, and the equipment can be sent straight there.

We do not have to fear the warships of the Spaniards, because they will run out of ammunition, and their crews will get hungry.

We are not really few. When the United States was in revolt, in fact, Washington at first had just 1,000 people, and yet their enemy was a powerful nation.<sup>19</sup>

Another thing is that when Manila is taken and we already have a printing press, we can immediately publish the regulations that must be obeyed, and distribute them to our compatriots.

In every place that we take, we must not forget the confiscation of food from the warehouses, and cash from the Treasury and Administration, and from the wealthy Tagalogs who do not want to contribute as much as they should.

If we wanted, in order to block access here, it would not be difficult to sink a merchant ship in the San Bernardino Strait, but this would mean that we too would not be able to come and go.

We should avoid appointing people who are said to be uneducated as commanders, but we should be friendly towards them.

Finally, we recognize from the proposals drawn up by Brother Dimas Ayaran that he would be a good general-in-chief. He is also recognized for his eloquence.  
Unang Quidlat

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<sup>19</sup> Unang Quidlat may be thinking here of the 1,000 or so Minutemen and militia involved in the first engagements of the American Revolutionary War, the Battles of Lexington and Concord in April 1775. By the time Washington took command of the Continental Army in June 1775, however, it numbered between 10,000 and 15,000 men.

If the situation changes for any reason, especially if Fort Santiago cannot be captured, we could take advantage of the feast of Corpus Christi, when the procession is being held, or maybe that of San Andres.<sup>20</sup> We could disrupt the procession and mount our attack at that time. In this case, it would also be good to be sent arms by Japanese boats immediately so at least we are ready to start.

Unang Quidlat

Because many people are now using the alias “Quidlat,” I shall sign myself in future “Unang Quidlat”.

### **Annexe**

A proposal that has already been fully agreed.

It would be possible to request Japan to attack here.

When they arrive here to mount the attack, we will launch our revolt. If the Spaniards are defeated, they [the Japanese] could follow here what they have done in occupying three islands off the coast of Korea.<sup>21</sup>

We must however consider whether, if we changed masters, our situation might be even worse, and our fate might be even greater hardship, because they would have the strength to crush us here.

But if the arrangement made here was like the one they adopted in relation to the three islands I mentioned, then we could accept it.

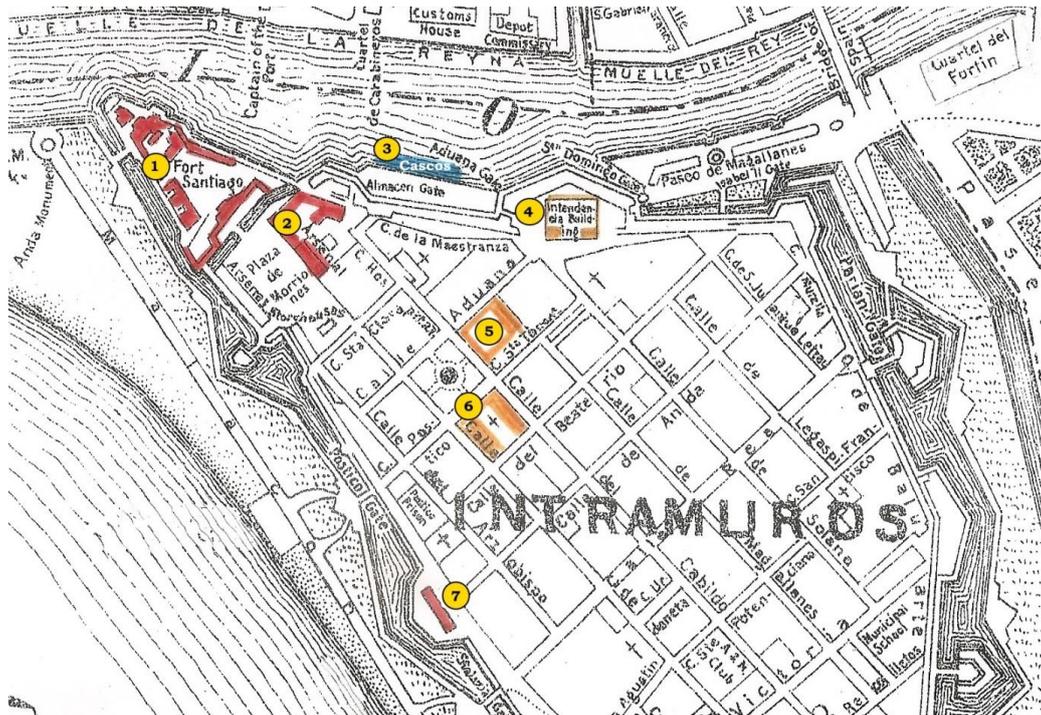
Unang Quidlat



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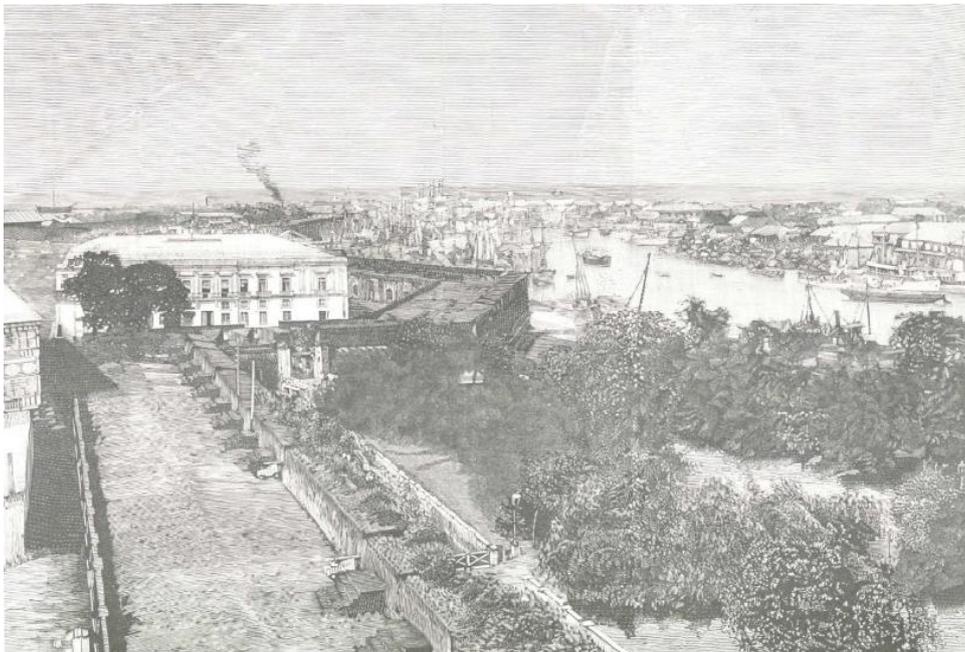
<sup>20</sup> The feast of Corpus Christi is celebrated either 60 days after Easter (if the feast is celebrated on a Thursday) or 63 days after Easter (if it is celebrated on a Sunday). This means that in 1897 the celebration would have been on either June 17 or June 20. The feast of San Andrés is celebrated on November 30.

<sup>21</sup> It is not known what Unang Quidlat means here. After the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-5, the Treaty of Shimonoseki granted Japan sovereignty over the Liaotung Peninsula, Formosa (Taiwan) and the Pescadores Islands. It is possible Unang Quidlat mistakenly thought the latter were off the coast of Korea (rather than Formosa), or perhaps islands close to Korea had figured in reports he had read about the diplomatic wrangling that followed Shimonoseki.



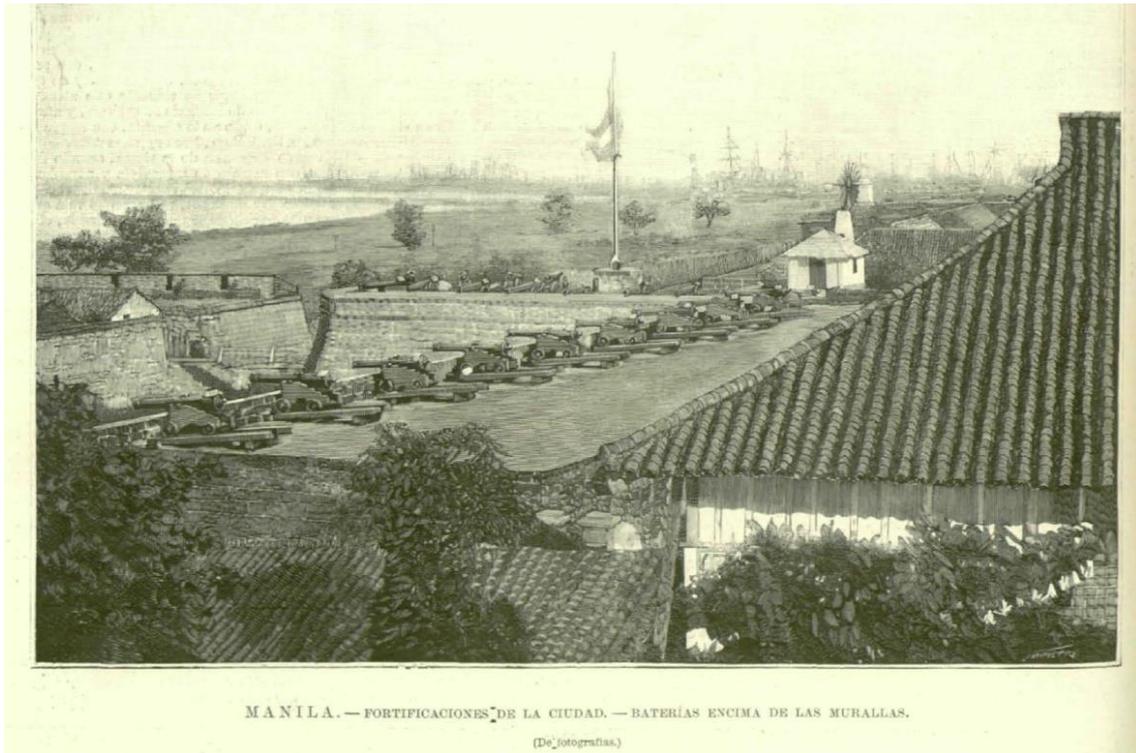
### The planned attack inside Intramuros

1. Fort Santiago
2. Maestranza (Arsenal)
3. Jetty where *casco*s would be moored, near the Monasterio de Santa Clara
4. Intendencia (Treasury and Mint)
5. Ayuntamiento (City Hall)
6. Manila Cathedral
7. Cannons “in front of the Jesuits”

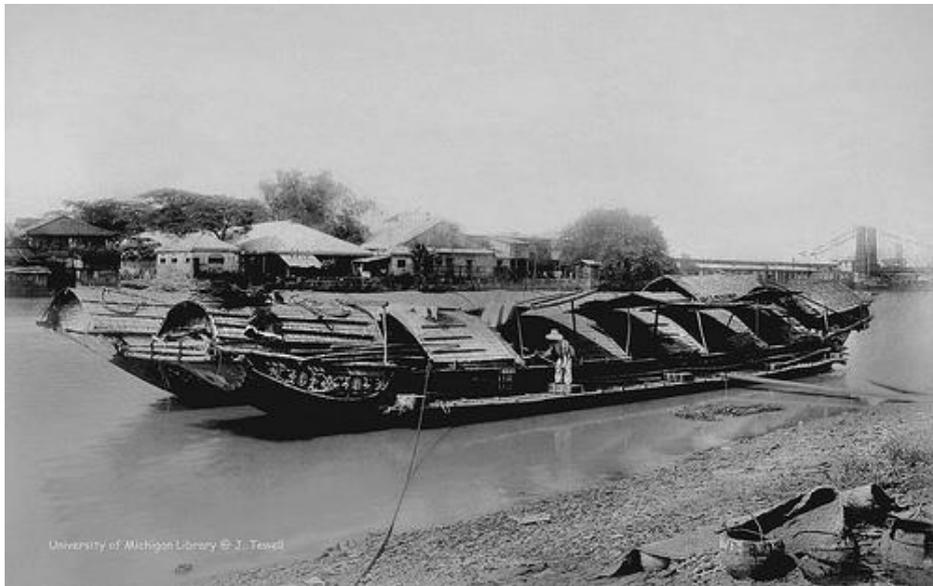


View along the northern walls of Intramuros facing the River Pasig, looking past the Intendencia (Treasury) building in the middle distance towards Fort Santiago somewhere beyond.

[*La Ilustración Española y Americana*, XLI: IX (March 8, 1897)]



Cannons on the western walls of Intramuros facing Manila Bay  
[*La Ilustración Española y Americana*, XL: XXXV (September 22, 1896)]



Cascos on the Pasig, upstream from Intramuros  
[University of Michigan Library (c) John Tewell]