



## Chapter 7

# THE FILIPINOS



The history of Filipinos in the United States is, in one way, different from that of all other Asian ethnic groups in the United States: Their history was, initially, a direct and unforeseen result of American imperialism. Because of this, Filipino Americans enjoyed, for a time, a unique status among Asian immigrants. They were not "aliens" but enjoyed a "privileged" status as American nationals. In other ways, the early history of twentieth-century Filipino immigrants bears a resemblance to that of other Asian migrations.

### BACKGROUND

The earliest Filipinos were students; then, largely in the 1920s and early 1930s, came farm laborers; finally, after 1965, came what some writers have called the "third wave" of Filipino immigrants—educated, upwardly mobile professionals and would-be entrepreneurs, similar to those coming from India. We now know that long before the American conquest of the Philippines in 1898 there were handfuls of Filipinos settled in the United States, almost all of them having come via Mexico as a result of Spanish imperialism. As early as the eighteenth century there was a tiny group of such immigrants in and around New Orleans, and there may well have been other Filipinos in what later became the United States.<sup>1</sup> But there was no connection between these pioneers and twentieth-century Filipino migrants.

The Spanish-American War of 1898, a series of disconnected skirmishes on land and sea over a period of ninety days, was called by one contemporary a "splendid little war." At the cost of 389 combat dead, the United States humbled once-mighty Spain, drove her from the New World, and, in the process, gained a protectorate over Cuba and took possession of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippine Islands. In addition, in the wave of martial patriotism that flooded the United States, Congress agreed to annex Hawaii, which it had refused to do earlier.

But the relatively bloodless Spanish-American War was followed by the bloodier and much longer Philippine-American War, which the American government called the Filipino Insurrection. This was an early and unsuccessful example of a third-world anticolonial war, what some would call a war of national liberation. A segment of the Filipino people, who, under the leadership of Emilio Aguinaldo (1869–1964), had been resisting Spanish rule, proclaimed themselves independent after the United States defeated Spain, but the Americans refused to recognize their government and insisted that the Filipinos were not ready to rule themselves.

To establish American sovereignty firmly, an army of 100,000 was shipped to the islands, and, in the guerrilla war that followed, both the Americans and their opponents resorted to the kinds of atrocities that irregular warfare usually breeds. The Filipino "insurrection" was officially ended in 1902, although some fighting continued in the southern Philippines for several years. Altogether 4,243 American soldiers were killed "pacifying" the islands and many times that number of Filipinos, both guerrillas and civilians. After the fighting was over, the first American civilian governor of the Philippines, William Howard Taft, began nearly half a century of avowedly benevolent despotism by proclaiming his concern for the welfare of the people of the Philippines, whom he described as our "little brown brothers." United States leaders soon realized that the Philippines could not be defended in case of war, so the Filipinos were promised independence by 1945. World War II unavoidably delayed that timetable, but the United States did grant the Philippines independence in 1946. (The United States maintained military bases there, chiefly naval facilities on Manila Bay and the northern Luzon air complex at Clark Field, until 1992.)

The more than 7,000 Philippine Islands lie off the shores of Southeast Asia and today have a population of some 78 million persons. The islands were visited by the Portuguese explorer Fernando Magellan in his circumnavigation of the globe in 1521. Later in the sixteenth century, Spain took possession of the Philippines. Most of the Filipinos, Malaysian people ethnically, had been converted to Roman Catholicism long before the Philippine-American War, although a considerable population in the southern Philippines, particularly on Mindanao, had been converted to Islam. Although there are many languages spoken in the Philippines—all of them of the Malayo-Polynesian group and enough alike that most are mutually

understandable—just three indigenous languages are spoken by about 85 percent of the population: Visayan, a language of the central Philippines, is spoken by about 44 percent; Tagalog (now Filipino and since 1946 the official language), a language of central Luzon, is spoken by about 25 percent; and Ilocano, a language of northern Luzon, is spoken by about 16 percent. In addition, both Spain and the United States imposed their own languages; thus the educated elites have spoken Spanish or English. Virtually all of those who have immigrated to the United States have been Roman Catholics, and a majority have been Ilocano speakers.

### THE PENSIONADOS

The first Filipino immigrants to the United States were students, the *pensionados*, who were chosen, financed, and sponsored by the U.S. government. This program, which lasted from 1903 to 1910, provided several hundred students with practical training. In 1907, for example, 183 students were reported at forty-seven American educational institutions, largely in the Midwest. The two largest enrollments were at the University of Illinois (13 percent) and Purdue (11 percent). Education attracted forty-four students; civil engineering, thirty-two; agriculture, twenty-three; mechanical engineering, nineteen; and medicine, seventeen.<sup>2</sup> Thousands of Filipino young men, usually underfinanced, continued to come to the United States to study. One early scholar of the Filipino American experience, Benicio T. Catapusan, himself a student who earned a Ph.D. in sociology at the University of Southern California in 1940, estimated that between 1910 and 1938 some 14,000 Filipinos had enrolled in American educational institutions. Most, for one reason or another, were never able to complete their studies, but the bulk of those who did—from institutions such as the University of California, Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, Northwestern, Stanford, the University of Washington, and Yale—returned to the Philippines to occupy important positions in government and business.<sup>3</sup> The majority of those who stayed in the United States usually plied the manual labor occupations that employed most Filipino Americans in those years.

One of the survivors of that experience told an interviewer in Portland, Oregon:

When I finished high school in the Philippines I intended to study agriculture at Oregon State University. I went and looked at the campus. Then the depression came. It was hard for me to find a job. I found a job in the fraternity house, waiting tables for room and board. I was not able to continue my studies. When the depression was over, I thought I was too old. I said I would rather work. At that time we were not able—even with how educated we were—the only jobs to do were odd jobs: cooks, janitors, waiters, busboys, and farm work, but there were no white collar jobs.<sup>4</sup>

A surprising number of Filipino intellectuals lived and worked in America, the most notable of whom was Carlos Bulosan (1911–1956), who spent the last twenty-six years of his life here. Bulosan and others came to the United States filled with democratic ideals they had learned in American-run schools and with an unrealistic vision of what their life in the United States would be like. Thus their reaction was often bitter. As Bulosan wrote to a friend:

Do you know what a Filipino feels in America? . . . He is the loneliest thing on earth. There is much to be appreciated . . . beauty, wealth, power, grandeur. But is he part of these luxuries? He looks, poor man, through the fingers of his eyes. He is enchained, damnably to his race, his heritage. He is betrayed, my friend.<sup>5</sup>

### THE SECOND WAVE

But as with most other immigrants, it was economic rather than intellectual aspiration that motivated most Filipinos who came. The *Manilla Times* described it very well in 1929:

The migrating Filipino sees no opportunity for him in the Philippines. Advertise in a Manila paper and offer a job (at below a living wage) and you will get a thousand applicants. Make the same offer in any provincial town, and the response will be twice as great, comparatively. Is it any wonder, then, that the lure of pay four to ten times as great, in Hawaii or the United States, draws the Filipino like a magnet? Plus the certainty he feels that he will get a job?<sup>6</sup>

The first important magnet was Hawaii, where, after the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907–1908 made it impossible to continue to recruit male Japanese laborers, the Hawaiian Sugar Planter's Association (HSPA) began to recruit workers in the Philippines. Between 1909 and 1934, according to the careful work of Mary Dorita Clifford, the HSPA arranged for 119,470 Filipinos to come to work in their sugar fields and mills. Of these, 86.6 percent were men, 7.5 percent women, and 5.9 percent children. Most of those who came were under three-year contracts. Upon expiration of the contracts, some continued to work in Hawaii, others went back to the Philippines, and still others went on to the West Coast of the United States.<sup>7</sup> Table 7.1 shows the number and incidence of Filipinos in Hawaii's population.

The migration of Filipino laborers to the American mainland, either from Hawaii or directly from the Philippines, was primarily a product of the post-World War I years (see Table 7.2).

Filipino laborers occupied exactly the same niche in California agriculture as their Asian predecessors had, except that by the end of the 1930s, significant numbers of them were working for Asian American agricultural entrepreneurs, most of whom were of Japanese ethnicity. As both the

**Table 7.1 Filipinos in Hawaii, 1910–1990**

Year	Number	Percent of Population
1910	2,361	1.23
1920	21,031	8.22
1930	63,052	17.17
1940	52,569	12.42
1950	61,062	12.22
1960	69,070	10.91
1970	95,354	12.41
1980	109,203	13.08
1990	168,682	14.87

Source: U.S. Census.

Hawaiian and California data show, the pre-World War II Filipino migration was overwhelmingly male (94 percent in 1930).

Unlike earlier Asian immigrants, Filipinos actively sought white female companionship, and this overt sexuality enraged much white opinion. California newspapers focused on commercial dance halls, some of which catered exclusively to Filipino men, where, at 10 cents a dance of only momentary duration, an agricultural worker could spend a week's wages in an hour or two. Headlines in the *Los Angeles Times* tell the story:

Taxi Dance Girls Start Filipinos on Wrong Foot  
 Lonely Islanders' Quest for Woman Companionship Brings Problems of Grave National Moment  
 Mercenary Women Influence Brown Man's Ego  
 Minds Made Ripe for Work of Red Organizers<sup>8</sup>

Although the focus of nativist attention was on these transitory commercial sexual relationships—and several of the anti-Filipino riots began in

**Table 7.2 Filipino American Population, 1910–1950**

Year	Continental United States	California	Percent in California	Males in California	Females in California
1910	406	5	1.2	—	—
1920	5,603	2,674	47.7	—	—
1930	45,206	30,470	67.4	28,625	1,845
1940	45,876	31,408	68.5	—	—
1950	61,645	40,424	65.8	30,810	9,605

Source: U.S. Census.

and around dance halls—a significant number of more lasting interracial relationships took place. Some involved marriage, and Californians discovered, to their horror, that the existing miscegenation statutes forbade marriages only between white persons and Negroes, mulattoes, and Mongolians. Although California Attorney General U. S. Webb, a racist of long standing, conveniently ruled that Filipinos were Mongolians, he was reversed by the courts. So in 1933, California amended the statute to include "members of the Malay race," and within four years, Filipino-white marriages were also forbidden in Oregon, Nevada, and Washington.<sup>9</sup>

We know very little about these interracial marriages in general, but Barbara Posadas in a sensitive study has examined a number of Filipino-white marriages in and around Chicago in the pre-World War II years. Almost all of these were marriages between Filipino men and the daughters of eastern European immigrants; they were the foundation of a small but stable Filipino American community in Chicago, some of whose breadwinners were Pullman porters.<sup>10</sup> There were clearly more such marriages in the Far West, but no one has published findings about them.

In addition to agriculture and menial service jobs, such as dishwashing, Filipino workers also played a significant role in Alaska's fish canneries. Most cannery workers were recruited in Seattle, which became the major non-California center of Filipino American population. One cannery worker wrote in his diary for June 1924:

Worked in the ship unloading salmon cans, at \$.75 an hour. It was my first time in America to work. Worked exactly ten hours. Donning the overall for the first time in my life, handling the wheelbarrow, and carrying salmon boxes, was a thrill and an unforgettable experience. . . . Was laughing at the easy job and easy money. \$.75 for working 10 hours. In the Philippines it takes a month for a policeman to earn that. Such is the better prospect of life in this beautiful country.<sup>11</sup>

This worker and others soon discovered that if wages were higher, so were living costs. They also learned that canning runs last only for the summer months. Their involvement in the Alaska canning industry—by 1930 they outnumbered all other ethnic groups combined by about two to one—brought many Filipino Americans into contact with the trade union movement. More than any other Asian American group of this era, they became involved in both union activities and radical politics. This, however, did not stop the American Federation of Labor (AFL) from agitating for their exclusion. Starting in 1928, national AFL conventions passed a series of resolutions such as the following:

Whereas, the desire for cheap labor has acted like a cancer . . . destroying American ideals and preventing the development of a nation based on racial unity; and

Whereas, . . . this desire has exploited the Negro, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Hindus, as in turn each has been regulated and excluded; and

Whereas, the Malays of the Philippines were in 1924 omitted from the general policy excluding all who cannot become citizens; and

Whereas, there are a sufficient number of Filipinos ready and willing to come to the United States to create a race problem equal to that already here . . . we urge exclusion of Filipinos also.<sup>12</sup>

Although labor took the lead in opposing Filipino immigration, even before the Great Depression of the 1930s stemmed the migration, a broadly based anti-Filipino movement developed in California and elsewhere on the Pacific coast. Beginning in 1929 there were anti-Filipino riots in Watsonville and other small central California cities. Civic organizations, such as the Los Angeles and northern Monterey County chambers of commerce, deplored their presence. In 1930, one California judge declared from the bench that Filipinos were but ten years removed from the breechcloth. Another, after the depression had set in, insisted that "it is a dreadful thing when these Filipinos, scarcely more than savages, come to San Francisco, work for practically nothing and obtain the society of white girls. Because the Filipinos work for nothing, decent white boys cannot get jobs."<sup>13</sup>

In many ways the anti-Filipino agitation resembled that of previous anti-Asian movements. C. M. Goethe, a Sacramento businessman associated with the nativist Joint Immigration Committee, ignoring the absence of women in the Filipino migration, argued that 10 million American blacks were descended from "an original slave nucleus of 750,000" and insisted that "Filipinos do not hesitate to have nine children," which means "729 great-grandchildren as against the white parents' twenty-seven."<sup>14</sup> But, as suggested earlier, the fact that the Philippines was an American possession and Filipinos were American nationals made the majority of Congress unwilling to exclude them along with all other Asians, as a bill first introduced in 1928 proposed to do. After six years of discussion and debate and one presidential veto, Filipino immigration was tied to independence for the Philippines. The Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 successfully combined the two issues. The Philippines were promised independence in 1945, and, effective almost immediately, Filipinos were given an annual quota of fifty immigrants, half of the previous minimum. This was at least a small defeat for exclusionists such as Senator Hiram W. Johnson, who had wanted total exclusion.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, Filipinos remained "aliens ineligible for citizenship." To demonstrate further that Filipinos were unwanted, Congress in 1935 passed resolutions providing free passage on army transports for Filipinos desiring to return home. Although the resolution spoke of "humanitarian" considerations, its Senate sponsorship by Hiram Johnson indicated the true motives of most of its supporters. As it turned out, only 2,190 Filipinos took advantage of the offer.

For the rest of the 1930s, Filipinos, like other noncitizens, saw their relative economic status undermined. A fairly large number, 7,869 in 1930, were employed in the American merchant marine. In 1936, Congress ep-

acted legislation mandating that 90 percent of each ship's crew be American citizens, which eliminated most Filipino jobs. Ironically, Filipinos were still allowed to serve in the U.S. Navy, where they were restricted to menial employment as mess stewards. Although the U.S. Civil Service Commission allowed Filipinos, as nationals, to take examinations for federal jobs, this was of little use to Filipino Americans who were uneducated (in Chicago there was a small group employed in the post office). Most states had laws that required that practitioners of all kinds of activities—from doctors to plumbers to barbers and hairdressers—be licensed and often insisted that all licensees be citizens. During the worst of the depression, Filipinos were barred from federal relief, until in 1937, Federal Relief Administrator Harry L. Hopkins made them eligible, but on a nonpreferential basis.

Between 1934 and the end of World War II, no significant migration from the Philippines occurred, and the heavily male Filipino population aged and declined. The onset of wartime prosperity and the removal of Japanese Americans from West Coast agriculture created economic opportunities for Filipino Americans, and the overglamorized media portrayals of all Filipinos as loyal friends of America and enemies of Japan made them, along with Chinese Americans, at least "assistant heroes" in the great Pacific war. In 1946, as a reward for this loyalty, Congress made Filipinos eligible for citizenship, and President Truman boosted the quota for the Philippines to a "normal" 100 annually.

### THE THIRD WAVE

However, as was true with other groups of immigrants from Asia, non-quota immigrants—usually close relatives of U.S. citizens—far outnumbered quota immigrants. For the thirteen years of the McCarran-Walter Act, 1953–1965, when a quota of 100 was in effect and would have yielded a total of 1,300 immigrants, the Immigration and Naturalization Service recorded 32,201 Filipino immigrants. In addition, even larger numbers of nonimmigrants—tourists, businesspeople, students—were admitted, and many of these became permanent additions to the American population. In 1963, for example, 3,618 Filipino immigrant entrants were outnumbered by the arrival of 13,860 nonimmigrants. Thus in the twenty years after World War II, many more Filipinos entered the United States than in the previous half century. The scrapping of the quota system in 1965 transformed immigration from the Philippines, and in all of the years since then, the Philippines has been one of the chief suppliers of immigrants to the United States. Table 7.3 illustrates that growth and includes Filipinos on the mainland and in Hawaii.

Not only has the post-1965 immigration changed dramatically the size of the Filipino American population, but it has radically changed its compo-

sition as well. Perhaps two-thirds of the immigrants since 1965 have been of the professional classes, particularly health professionals. Filipino American nurses are the most conspicuous single group of employed Filipinos, and in part because of them, a greater percentage of Filipino American women were in the labor force in 1980 than were any other group of Asian American women. Filipino Americans had about as much education as white Americans and slightly less than East Asian Americans. But they were strikingly better educated than Filipinos who stayed in the Philippines. In 1980 just over a quarter of all Filipinos aged 25 to 29 in the islands were high school graduates; of those in the United States who were recent immigrants, the figure was almost 85 percent. The median income of Filipino American full-time workers in 1979 was \$13,690, well below that of most other Asian American groups and about halfway between the wages of white American workers on the one hand and black and Hispanic workers on the other. But partly because of the greater employment of Filipino American women, only 6.2 percent of their households were in poverty, a rate below every other group (including whites) except Japanese Americans. Another reason was that recently arrived Filipino American households were larger than those of other ethnic groups. In 1980 such households contained, on average, 5.4 persons, 60 percent of whom were *not* nuclear family members. By comparison, all Filipino American households averaged only 3.6 persons, only a sixth of whom were not, as the census put it, "householder, spouse or children." Such larger household units are and have been typical of recent immigrants. Filipino Americans are highly concentrated in California and Hawaii, where in 1990 almost two-thirds of them (64 percent) lived. Of Asian American groups, only Japanese Americans were more concentrated in those two states, with 71 percent of them living there.

In common with most immigrant groups, it is the diversity of the Filipinos that is most striking. There are the first-generation old-timers, primarily males who emigrated in the 1920s. These survivors can often be found living in dingy hotel rooms in California valley towns—Stockton is one favorite—or in urban centers such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Honolulu. Many had lived their lives as itinerant fruit pickers; Filipino

**Table 7.3** Filipinos in the United States, 1960–1990

Year	Total	Male	Female	Percent Female
1960	181,614	114,179	67,435	37.1
1970	396,731	183,175	153,556	45.6
1980	774,652	374,191	400,461	51.7
1990	1,419,711	656,765	762,946	53.7

Source: U.S. Census.

labor gangs were known for their efficiency in the fields and their strong work ethic. There was little acculturation and integration among them, except for the few who "out-married" and started family life.

The American-born second generation shared many of the problems that children of other Asian immigrants faced: a lack of social acceptance, low income, negative self-image. In contrast to some of the other Asian groups, there was little encouragement to obtain higher education. Even those who wanted to go to college frequently found the financial burdens an obstacle. Further, they knew little about the roots of their culture and yet could not gain full acceptance into the mainstream. Questions of an identity and some understanding of their role in America became major preoccupations during the civil rights struggles of the 1970s. It is also interesting to note that when Asian Americans were deemed ineligible for affirmative action consideration by the University of California system in the 1980s, protests were mounted, and the Filipinos were then included in such programs.

World War II veterans made up another important element in the community. Many had arrived in their adult years, most with impressive-sounding diplomas that did not qualify them for much in the new country. They had served with the Filipino Scouts during World War II or as mess stewards in the U.S. Navy; they had lived under armed forces discipline and shared a mixture of high patriotism and a naive view of life in America. Although life in the United States was marginal—poor housing, low-status jobs, and minimal income—it was deemed better than what they could have expected in the Philippines. Acculturation and participation in the American mainstream were minimal. Many continued to retain close ties with the Philippines and to live within their own cultural network.

The newly arrived make up the bulk of the current Filipino population. As with the other fast-growing Asian groups, their numbers are the result of the 1965 immigration legislation. Reasons behind their immigration are familiar—unstable economic and political conditions in the home country, family reunification, and the expectation of better economic and educational opportunities in the new country. Many come with advanced training—medical degrees are common—and some are able to continue their careers. Many others, however, find difficulty in obtaining jobs commensurate with their past background. Filipino lawyers may find work as clerks; teachers, as secretaries; dentists, as dental aides; and engineers, as mechanics. Still, a low-paying job in America often pays more than a higher-status job in the home country.<sup>16</sup>

Alfredo Munoz's study of the adaptation of the Filipinos contrasted the different lifestyles and the subsequent transformation in the new country.<sup>17</sup> Whereas a more leisurely pace would be appropriate in the Philippines, immigrants learn that the American style calls for work with a vengeance. Moonlighting becomes a new way of life; the goal of making money and retiring in the Philippines has become popular.

The new immigrants face a variety of problems, including education, finances, unemployment, child guidance, and the elderly. Culture shock, racism, credentials, and licensing are other issues.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps the major problem of the Filipinos has been their lack of cohesion. There are island differences, different languages, ideological rifts, and subgroup cultures that separate the community. It appears difficult to form a unified Filipino organization because of the strength of local groups and their competing loyalties. Filipino organizations tend to multiply rather than to unify.<sup>19</sup>

Tania Azores studied Filipino high school seniors in the 1980s and found that a very high percentage had aspirations for a college education.<sup>20</sup> However, many of them lacked the grades. Azores suggested three possible reasons for this dilemma:

1. Filipino students have unrealistic expectations.
2. High aspirations may not be linked to personal commitment.
3. Students may feel that there are characteristics other than grades that define a good student.

Her findings contradict a commonly held belief that many Filipino Americans do not aspire toward higher education.

Pyeong Gap Min compared Filipinos and Koreans in terms of their orientation toward small business.<sup>21</sup> Koreans turned to small business because of language difficulties and other disadvantages in the labor market, whereas Filipinos, who were less disadvantaged in language and were more familiar with American practices, were able to bypass the small-business model. Koreans also had the availability of family and other kinship networks for the intensive labor often required in small business; there were also such factors as the industrialization of South Korea and import-export ties. In contrast, the English-speaking Filipinos, especially those with degrees in medicine and nursing, can find employment relatively easily outside the ethnic community.

Nevertheless, when looking at the group as a whole, Filipinos suffer from economic inequality. Researchers analyzed the status of Filipino Americans in California.<sup>22</sup> Using the 1980 census, they found that Filipinos remained in a subordinated position in relation to other Asians and the white majority, whether "sailors or professionals, educated or less educated, skilled or unskilled." They were often clustered in the secondary labor market, where the pay is low and mobility is limited.

## MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

A very large percentage of the women who have been the dominant group among post-1965 immigrants from the Philippines have been nurses and, to a lesser degree, occupational therapists trained in the Philippines. In the

United States they are most likely to work in relatively low-paying entry-level jobs in public hospitals. Although English is the second language of the Philippines, many immigrants have had on-the-job difficulties because of language deficiencies, and in 1998 American immigration authorities began to require that these professionals pass English-language examinations such as the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), the TWE (Test of Written English), and the TSE (Test of Spoken English) to get the "green card" necessary for legal employment or, in the case of nurses already established in the United States, to have their green cards renewed.

Dexter B. Rosario, a Los Angeles-based immigration lawyer, has established an English-language review school in Manila to prep nurses for these examinations. The tuition is expensive by Philippine standards; in addition, they must pay a total of \$225 to take the tests. Once certified in English, these women can begin at \$16.75 an hour in Los Angeles, with lots of overtime. Rosario claims:

A lot of nurses own big homes in Los Angeles, earning more than their husbands do, living very comfortably. There are the middle-aged nurses, with a lot of experience and continuing education, with therefore higher rates. \$45 an hour is ordinary for them. . . .<sup>23</sup>

Filipino doctors, many of them with some U.S. training, have been among the beneficiaries of the 1994 American law that allows foreign-born, noncitizen physicians to stay in the United States after their student visas expire if they agree to practice in areas without enough medical staff. In 1998 some 22,000—almost a fifth—of the 104,000 medical residents training in U.S. hospitals come from other countries. Most come here on visas that require them to leave at the end of their training, presumably to apply their medical knowledge back home. The 1994 law gives each applying state twenty such immigration waivers annually and thirty-eight states have taken advantage of it. Minnesota, for example, has used forty-eight waivers since 1994 and in 1999 used all twenty of its waivers for the first time. One of the twenty was Dr. Rommel Aquino, a Philippine-born family-practice physician, to Duluth, Minnesota's Bay Area Health Center.

Aquino is just one of perhaps 150,000 foreign-born doctors practicing in the United States in 1998. They represented about a quarter of the 600,000 physicians in America. The Philippines, along with India and Pakistan, furnished the largest contingents of foreign doctors. Many of these doctors work in places that most American-born physicians shun, and, on average, earn significantly less than American-born doctors but much more than they could earn in their home countries. In addition, their families live in a more secure and more advantageous environment.<sup>24</sup>

## EFFECTS ON THE PHILIPPINES

A few Filipino Americans have arrived as political exiles in recent decades, largely exiles from the dictatorship of Ferdinand E. Marcos, who ruled the Philippines from 1965 to 1986. Most prominent of these exiles were Benigno S. Aquino and his wife, Corazon. Benigno returned to the Philippines to lead the opposition to Marcos but was assassinated, with apparent government complicity, upon his arrival at the Manila airport on August 21, 1983. His wife then took up the reform cause and daringly challenged the dictator. Although she was counted out in an election, she was so clearly the winner that Marcos and his wife, Imelda, were forced to flee into exile outside Honolulu.

Despite some political reforms and a popular government under "Cory" Aquino and her successor, the same lack of economic opportunity for educated persons that led hundreds of thousands of Filipinos to emigrate in past years continues to prevail. Only a minority of these immigrants—50,000 to 60,000 a year during the 1990s—could get to the United States, while another 10,000 went to Canada. Most of the rest go to Asian countries where wages and working conditions are far from ideal. But these overseas workers provide, by their remittances home, some \$6 billion annually to the Philippines, about 3 percent of the nation's gross domestic product.

## POLITICAL PROGRESS

In 1994, for the first time, a Filipino American won a major political office. Benjamin J. Cayetano (b. 1939) got married just after high school and moved to Los Angeles. Commenting later about his early life in Hawaii, he noted that he had "never met a Caucasian who wasn't a boss." In California he earned a B.A. at UCLA and a law degree at Loyola University in 1971. Returning to Hawaii, he moved steadily up the political ladder, serving two terms in the Hawaiian House of Representatives, two terms in the state senate, and two terms as lieutenant governor, before winning the governor's chair in 1994. He was reelected in 1998. A winner of eight consecutive elections in a multiracial state, he explained his formula for political success:

The only way to overcome the racial issue is to find common ground. . . . My campaigns have always been mixed—issue-oriented and performance-based. . . . My advice for candidates is to run a broad-based campaign for all the people. I've seen Filipino candidates run for office spending time only in the Filipino community and the result is predictable—defeat.<sup>25</sup>

## THE FUTURE OF FILIPINO AMERICANS

By the year 2000 Filipinos, who had been very little in the mainstream press, had become the most numerous Asian American group. As long as American immigration laws remain roughly the same and the economic and social conditions in the Philippines stay as they are or deteriorate, similarly high levels of Filipino immigration may be expected.

Surely the growing numbers of American-born children of the middle class and professional immigrants will play a larger role in twenty-first century America than their predecessors played in the twentieth. The nature of that role is yet to be determined.

## NOTES

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