


# Diasporic Intelligences in the American Philippine Empire: The Transnational Career of Dr. Najeeb Mitry Saleeby

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# DIASPORIC INTELLIGENCES IN THE AMERICAN PHILIPPINE EMPIRE: THE TRANSNATIONAL CAREER OF DR. NAJEEB MITRY SALEEBY

**Abstract**

This article assesses the complex career of Najeeb Saleeby (1870–1935): a Lebanese Protestant physician who became naturalized as a US citizen while serving the American colonial occupation of the Philippines. Saleeby was valued as a cultural intermediary whose facility with Arabic and Islam empowered his rise as the foremost American expert on the Muslim Moros of the southern Islands of Mindanao and Sulu. Saleeby's story dramatizes the political advancement possible for an educated "Syrian" who aligned his mission with the American "duty" of teaching self-government to the Filipinos. However, his own background as a migrant from Asia and his sympathy for Moro history and culture raised unfair suspicions about his ultimate allegiance. Dr. Saleeby never settled in the United States but dedicated his whole career to the welfare of the Filipino peoples through his medical profession, his post-colonial advocacy for bilingual education, and his criticism of how imperialism compromised American democracy.



Figure 1: Najib Saleeby

## INTRODUCTION

In 2004 the meeting ground in the U.S. Embassy in Manila was dedicated the "Najeeb Saleeby Courtyard" in honor of a *muhajir* from Beirut who, after beginning the process of becoming naturalized as an American citizen, moved to the Philippines in 1901 under the auspices of the United States military occupation of the Islands.[2] That Saleeby's

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name was commemorated at the transcultural crossroads of US American power in the independent Philippines globalizes the mobile complexities of what Alixa Naff has called the Lebanese process of "becoming American."[3] Saleeby's career epitomized the intersecting latitudes of the transnational professional: he was a Lebanese Protestant who migrated to United States when he was twenty-six—staying in the United States for less than three years—who then dedicated himself to a thirty-five year career in the Philippines, only returning to the Middle East once for a brief visit. The fact that Saleeby's life unfolded in the "unincorporated territories" annexed by the United States whose peoples were themselves struggling for independence complicated his encounter with American democracy. Examining Saleeby's transnational negotiations provides an opportunity to investigate how diaspora and empire intersected in the life of an important intermediary whose story has not been fully told. Saleeby was a cultural broker whose intelligence, sensibility, and ethical principles made him an important contributor to American attempts to control the Islands and eventually a cosmopolitan critic of the imperialism of these colonial operations.

Najeeb Mitry Saleeby was born in 1870 in the village of Suq al-Gharb and graduated from Syrian Protestant College (now American University of Beirut) in 1888. Charting Saleeby's professional path reveals a thinker who achieved renown not only for his skills as a surgeon and administrator, but also as an educator, historian, scientist, linguist, and ethnologist. His extensive migrations and multiple vocations exemplify the diasporic contradictions of the *mahjar* during the historical period in which open immigration to the United States was paralleled by the expansion of American imperialism into extra-continental islands. Saleeby's advanced education, professional status, and Protestant faith converted him to the paternalist elitism of American noblesse oblige. He became entangled in the paradoxical duty of offering his intellectual talents to prove his fitness as an emergent citizen of the United States while preparing the people of the Philippines for their own democratic self-government. His powers of perspective were amplified because he came from an Orthodox family who had converted to Protestantism—the name Saleeby is derived from the Arabic word for "cross"—who then became in the Philippines a student of the complex belief systems of the Muslim Moros of Maritime Southeast Asia.

There has been limited examination of the place of Middle Eastern immigrants in the Philippines and this case study contributes

a field that needs further study.[4] The few writers of Philippine history who attend in any detail to the history of American intercultural engagements with the Muslim Moros each attest to the importance of Saleeby's intellectual leadership in shaping these relations. Yet a fuller account of his career has not been possible because Saleeby's personal papers have not been preserved.[5] A recent interpretation of his imbrication within American empire is Isa Blumi's reading of Saleeby as an "external Ottoman surrogate" whose knowledge and research made him a useful "intermediary" for enforcing American sovereignty over the Moros.[6] This is a crucial dimension of his role; however, it is also important to explore the potential for anti-colonial critique that emerged from his approach and to examine how Saleeby's own cultural differences diversified and created conflict within the American imperial project. Saleeby was a political figure whose immigrant background and cosmopolitan empathy ultimately compromised his ability to rise as a colonial leader. He was seen by some as a threat to the racialized hierarchy that characterized American military sovereignty in the Moro Province. When Saleeby died in Luzon in 1935, soon after the inauguration of the Philippine Commonwealth, his career had encompassed the entire period of direct American political control in the Islands as well as embodied evolving strategies for dealing with the responsibilities of an imperial power ironically dedicated to eventual decolonization of the Islands.

After Najib Salibi graduated from the School of Arts and Sciences in 1888 (his name was then anglicized with i's and not e's and a y), he continued as a graduate student and instructor of medicine at Syrian Protestant College where his younger brothers would also graduate. Saleeby experienced a university culture in which Americans held all the positions of leadership that had recently shifted the language of teaching from Arabic to English, the medical school being the last to change.[7] Partly because the Ottoman authorities had not granted SPC the right to grant medical diplomas, Saleeby emigrated in 1896 to New York City where he completed his training as a physician the following year at Belleview Medical College (later the New York University School of Medicine).[8] Dr. Saleeby left a fourteen-month internship at Brooklyn Hospital in 1898 to enlist as a contract assistant surgeon in the American army during the Spanish-American war. His reasons for joining the military are not clear; perhaps he did not see his internship translating into a good position or thought that service in the army was the best way to get more medical experience and to dramatize his allegiance to his adoptive country. Saleeby was posted in

Cuba at Camp Columbia where for a year-and-a-half he gained valuable practice carrying out anatomical research on tropical diseases, including performing autopsies of thirty-two soldiers who had died from typhus. Saleeby's courage in speaking his own mind was evident in a diagnostic report that directly challenged his superior's hypothesis that 159 sick soldiers had contracted dengue fever.[9] He witnessed in Cuba the rising star of another medical doctor, Leonard Wood, who served as American Military Governor of Cuba. Between 1903 and 1906 Woods and Saleeby were members of the Executive Council for the Moro Province after Wood's "Rough Rider" friend President Theodore Roosevelt reassigned him to be its first Governor.

ISLAMIC INTERMEDIARY: THE EVOLUTION OF A MORO EXPERT

Dr. Saleeby followed the US Army to its actions in the Philippines where he enlisted as a Captain and Assistant Surgeon in the Volunteers and was ordered on 13 May 1901 to proceed from Manila to Malabang on the southern coast of Mindanao, the homeland of the Magindanao Moros. His understanding of both Arabic and Islam soon became important resources for the American military occupiers, few of whom knew much about the people they were colonizing. In August, commanding General William August Kobbé sent some letters in the Moro language to Saleeby with inquiries about the hierarchy of Islamic leadership. Saleeby explained the status of the Sultan in Turkey and related that the Arabic script of the Moro language was as different from Arabic as Japanese was to English if it were written in English characters, but that "one that knows Arabic can master the Moro language with comparative ease."[10]

Saleeby made the most of his posting by dedicating his free time and leaves to learning about Moro cultures. (He found a fellow Lebanese named Said Hashim cultivating the rich soil of the Rio Grande Valley, the second largest river in the Philippines, which Saleeby felt "could easily be made a paradise."[11]) As evidence of the improvisational nature of empire, Saleeby's understanding of the Moros came to be valued by the American authorities more than his medical knowledge and he was soon assigned to work with the highest ranking military officers as an intelligence officer for Moro affairs during the military campaign against the Maranao Moros.[12] The Maranaos had never been conquered by the Spanish and some fought a jihad in resistance to intrusive American enforcement of sovereignty over their ancestral Muslim homelands in the Lake Lanao region of inland Mindanao. Writing in May of 1902 from Camp Vicars, near the site where Bayang *cotta* (fort) had just been destroyed by U.S. Army, Saleeby explained that because Arabic was literally his mother's tongue in which he had also received formal education, he could write the Moro language "with greater facility and accuracy than the Moros themselves." His acquaintance with Islam from his upbringing in



Figure 2: Map of the Moro Province, 1903

Lebanon had also provided him "another advantage and another inducement to take interest in Moro study." He explained how during the previous year he had cultivated "a strong friendship and an intimate acquaintance with almost every prominent datu [leader] in the Rio Grande Valley."[13] Saleeby was the only American in the army able to communicate without an interpreter with many of the Arab and Afghan sharifs who had migrated across the Indian Ocean to serve as advisors of Moro sultans and datus. Saleeby's initial strategy was thus to use his facility in Arabic to access the intercultural knowledge of respected Muslim religious leaders who had continued the historical migration east from the Middle East and married and settled with different groups of Moros. Though he discovered that many of the local Moro *panditas* (clergy) knew little Arabic or Islamic doctrine, he befriended Magindanao Datu Kali Adam and Afghan Sharif Mohammad Afdal, from whom he gained deep access to Moro customs and creeds.[14] Although Saleeby confessed that "I am not a missionary, nor do I intend to be the missionary," his "natural preparedness" and incomparable influence with the Moros inspired in him a "sense of duty" to take part in the "great undertaking" of introducing them to modern Western ways. He worked with educated Moros to develop his own capacity to converse in Tausug and Magindanoan and to read and write their scripts. Setting aside his pursuit of further medical expertise, Saleeby committed himself to documenting Moro history, religion, government, and folklore as a means of assisting American officials to understand how to approach the unconquered Muslims they had annexed as their wards.[15]

Saleeby was celebrated for his "special powers of mind" and "an unusual understanding and command" which led in February of 1903 to his honorable discharge from the military and his appointment as Assistant to the Chief of the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes in charge of Moro Affairs.[16] Saleeby's initial military appointment to Mindanao and then his reassignment from army surgeon to ethnographer in the field exemplifies Laura Anne Stoler's notion of "imperial formations as supremely mobile practices of dislocation."[17] For the next six months Saleeby explored the islands of Sulu and Mindanao with his superior David Barrows (who would in August

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become Superintendent of Education of the Islands and later become the president of University of California at Berkeley).

Figure 3: Official Seal of the Moro Province, 1903–1913

Two bladed weapons used by Moros, the barong and the wavy kris, are crossed in front of a map of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. A Moro sailing vessel, the vinta, is portrayed in the foreground. The crescent symbolized the Islamic faith of the Moro peoples.




Saleeby focused on collecting the genealogies (*tarsilas*) of migration to the islands, conversion of its peoples to Islam, and the codification of a legal system that melded sharia with traditional customs. He made many sailing journeys to locate authentic copies of Moro documents only to confront datus who denied possessing them, eventually gaining access to some after "two years and a half of persistent endeavor and inquiry." Saleeby viewed himself as an unbiased scientist "capable of seeing things from the standpoint of a Sulu as well as of a Spaniard" and saw the recovery and publication of Mindanao and Sulu history and the modernization of its legal codes as key elements in the "regeneration" of the Moros and the preservation of their religious freedom and dignity.[18] Saleeby eventually acquired thirty-three Moro manuscripts (as well as weapons, brass work, and other objects), which he planned to publish and translate into English, and eventually were purchased for exhibition by the Philippine Museum in Manila in 1908. James A. Le Roy, a secretary to the Philippine Commission and scholar of the Philippines, who met Saleeby in August of 1905, applauded his *Studies in Moro history, laws and religion* for offering "more real knowledge of Moro history, customs and beliefs, than was brought to light perhaps during the entire period of Spanish rule" and "show plainly the sort of work which alone can lead us to an accurate understanding of the Moros, or gain us any position in their territory other than that held by mere force."[19]

By gathering the genealogies of Muslim migrations east across the Indian ocean from the Middle East—a venture expanded by the

recent scholarship of Engseng Ho[20]—Saleeby discovered what Brian Keith Axel has called a "diasporic imaginary" that connected the Philippines back to the region of his birth.[21] These intersections made the cosmopolitanism of his own passage from the other direction as part of the American imperial expansion across the Pacific more fully global. This perspective fostered the emergence of what Andrew Arsan calls the diasporic capacity of the interloper "to live in several points of the globe at once" and helped Saleeby to feel at home in the Philippines on the other side of Asia from his native land and to view his professional services there on both local and worldly scales.[22]

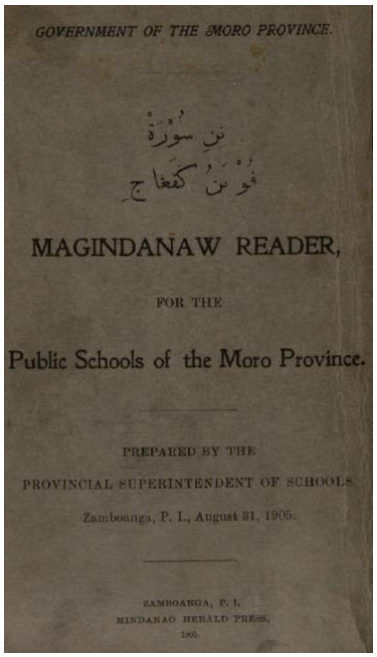
Saleeby viewed the Moros as inhabiting the easternmost reach of the Islamic *umma* whose civilization, cosmopolitan connections, and cultural histories had been either effaced or maligned by the strong prejudices that Americans had adopted and adapted from the Spanish, especially with regard to their allegedly violent and barbaric savagery. Nevertheless, when Saleeby compared the Islam of the Moros with the Muslims he had known in Ottoman Syria he found it to be a "a mere veneer of external observances covering an animistic faith."[23] Saleeby saw that many Moro *panditas*, the Sanskrit root of which itself signalized to him a deeper Hindu history and Aryan diaspora, practiced rites not sanctioned by orthodox Islam, which he interpreted as the incorporation of "wrecks of former beliefs" into the expression of Muslim faith. "To request an explanation for such actions or beliefs," Saleeby found, "is taken as an insult to his faith."[24]

In August of 1903, Governor-General William Howard Taft pragmatically acknowledged the merit of Saleeby's intelligence by appointing him the civilian Superintendent of Schools of the newly created military Moro Province. Saleeby would serve *ex officio* on its Executive Council with its new Governor Leonard Wood, recently and controversially promoted to Major General, for the next three years. Saleeby thus became an important officer of an American governing body, providing an early exception to Philip Hitti's 1924 assertion that "Syrians cut no figure in the political life of this nation."[25] This was possible because of the colonial form of military-civil governance in the Moro Province that gave General Wood great latitude to act through his Council as an executive, legislative, judicial, and fiscal authority separately from the Insular Government. (The first democratically elected Philippine Assembly was not established in the Islands until 1907 after Saleeby and Wood had left Mindanao and it did not have any authority over the "special provinces" of "non-Christian tribes" that included the Moro Province until 1916.) Saleeby had been

appointed to this non-democratic government under a military Governor who headed it and had to work hard to align his duties with Wood's expectations. Saleeby's special intelligence about the Moros and intimate access to their cultures enabled him, as he claimed," to win "the confidence of the people whenever my duties brought me in contact with them."[26] Saleeby's own cultural differences were initially dismissed because of his education, his manners, his religion, his talents, and his willingness to display the respect of a subordinate. In his first report as Moro Province Governor, General Wood cited Saleeby "for efficient and painstaking performance of the duties of his office," which also included responsibility for the sanitation and health of the Province.[27]

Saleeby sacrificed any advancement in his medical profession during the years he dedicated to promoting intercultural education between Moros and Americans. In this enterprise he was again bolstered by his experience in Lebanon of dealing with diverse religious communities. His successes included smoothing out conflicts with Jesuit priests resentful of the imposition of American public schools. Saleeby was committed to opening new schools in the Moro Province. In 1904, only two out of 42 schools were exclusively serving the Moros. Yet he faced the huge challenge of "securing competent native teachers."[28] He developed ways to prepare students to become assistant teachers and encouraged Moro students to present in school ceremonies, such as a declamation by Ankasa in the Moro language on "Knowledge" (or, more insidiously, the whole Moro Boy's School singing the "coon" song "How to Spell Chicken."[29]) The website of Western Mindanao State University traces its history to the Provincial Secondary School set up by Saleeby in Zamboanga in 1904.[30]

During this time Saleeby fostered his life-long philosophical investment in what later came to be called bilingual education. Saleeby employed learned Moros and Arabs to prepare dictionaries to assist Americans to learn the local languages and these men collaborated with him in creating school readers in the two main Moro languages Sulu (Tausug) and Magindanaon. These textbooks translated elementary primers into Arabic script using type that he arranged to be sent though his diasporic networks in Beirut.[31] Saleeby argued that, since Moros understood neither English nor Spanish and most would not be able to for at least a generation, the Moros had a right to immediate education in their own dialect, "which they prize as dearly as their religion," so they might spread "ideas of American culture" to the unschooled. Saleeby argued that Moro children only learned enough Arabic words to read the Qur'an without understanding their meanings, a course he found "unsatisfactory and objectionable."[32] He supported the local *pandita* schools and even got the Executive Council to agree that the Qu'ran could temporarily be used in the schools until other curriculum could be prepared.[33] The editor of the *Mindanao Herald* found Saleeby's personal work in bilingual curriculum was a key "means of creating confidence in the minds of the leaders of thought among the Moros that we are seeking their best interests" and that "all religions look alike to the common school system."[34] Late in 1905, Saleeby made a long journey to Manila where, after his short comments at a convention of school superintendents from around the Islands attracted so much interest, he was urged to make a full public address on the subject "The Moros – Past and Present" at the Philippine Normal School.[35]


GOVERNMENT OF THE MORO PROVINCE.

MAGINDANAW READER,

FOR THE

Public Schools of the Moro Province.

PREPARED BY THE

PROVINCIAL SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS.

Zamboanga, P. I., August 31, 1905.

ZAMBOANGA, P. I.
MINDANAO HERALD PRESS.
1905.

Figure 4: Cover of reader edited by Saleeby

Saleeby played another important role as diplomat when he was asked by Wood's aide-de-camp and Provincial Secretary George Langhorne, governing in his absence, to travel back up the Rio Grande Valley, the site of his original engagement with the Magindanaos. There he spent several weeks attempting to induce the leader Datu Ali to surrender after he had taken up arms against the United States in

response to Wood's outlawing of slavery. Although Saleeby was able to convince Datu Ali to agree to surrender his arms, pay his taxes, and swear an oath of allegiance to support the American government, Langhorne rejected the offer arguing that "[e]very concession to an Asiatic, as a general rule, is a mistake" and that it was better to get rid of him entirely. Datu Ali was finally ambushed and killed by special American troops in 1905. Saleeby's diplomacy nevertheless emphasized his capacity as a cultural broker and Wood cited his service as "valuable and hazardous."[36]

Saleeby's skills as an intermediary were evident earlier in his work on the Tausug Moros on the island of Jolo. Saleeby delivered a fifteen-page research report to Wood in 1903 that challenged the Sultan of Sulu's power and authority under the Treaty of Paris with Spain. His report confirmed Wood's opinion that the subsequent Bates Treaty the United States had made with him should be abrogated because of the Sultan's ineptitude in controlling his peoples. However, Saleeby argued that the German interpreter involved in those early negotiations was guilty of "intentional mistranslations" in the Tausug version of the Treaty that had led the Sultan to believe that he retained a sovereignty that the United States did not admit.[37]

Saleeby's independence and dedication to justice and truth can be seen by the formal charges that he brought against Bates' translator, Eddie Schück, whom he accused of deception. Article I in the English version reads "The sovereignty of the United States over the whole Archipelago… is declared and acknowledged." Schück's translation from the Sulu version reads "The support, aid, and protection of the Sulu…Archipelago is in the American nation."[38]A Board of Officers was twice convened and eventually ruled, based in part upon Schück's reputation for honesty and the fact that he was in the employment of the United States, that the translation had been "faithfully and conscientiously made."[39] The fact that the government upheld Schück's translation and rejected Saleeby's interpretation dramatized the distrust his sharp intelligence could produce when he challenged American operations. His situation confirms Laura Anne Stoler's claim that "agents of imperial rule have invested in, exploited, and demonstrated strong stakes in the proliferation of geopolitical ambiguities."[40] After 1915, Saleeby's contentions were in fact upheld by a government-sponsored retranslation of the Tausug Bates Treaty which acknowledged the "Sultan's reasonable belief that he had not surrendered his sovereignty."[41] A Filipino attorney noted that "[w]hile the English version of the Bates treaty recognizes American

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sovereignty in Sulu, the vernacular Joloano-arabic-script version does not," a finding confirmed by H. Otley Beyer, a professor of anthropology at the University of the Philippines: "The word 'sovereignty,' or a word of equivalent meaning, dos not appear in the Sulu text."[42]

## INTELLIGENCE THREAT: SALEEEBY AS SUSPECT ASIATIC

Saleeby's forthrightness, his expertise and influence with the local Muslims, as well as prejudices about his "oriental" background raised suspicions with some American officers about his ultimate allegiance. His privileged intelligence threatened to rupture the authority they were working to establish by exposing the reality that Americans were themselves migrants to the Philippines as well as their ironic duty of bringing democracy to peoples who themselves did not want it. Wood wrote in his diary that "Saleeby is an unknown quantity, has a good deal of the Oriental about his way of doing business."[43] Wood's anxiety about Saleeby's American credentials can be seen in his dismissiveness when he vetoed Saleeby's proposal that a fellow Syrian be selected for service in the Moro Province: "we can get good interpreters here and in any other capacity men of this class are of little use, unless they have been enough in America to get something of our ideas and methods."[44] Wood wrote to Hugh Lenox Scott, District Governor of Sulu (a position to which Saleeby aspired), "if you find that Saleeby is mixing up in Jolo intrigue I wish you would let me know. I regret very much to say that I do not feel entirely easy about him. I may be exceedingly unjust with him in feeling this way but it is an uncontrollable antipathy; I am rather inclined to trust intuition and first impression."[45] Scott later interrogated two Moros by asking them why they had gone to Saleeby for advice about their legal troubles and had called him "President of the Moros," an allegation they denied. Scott then lectured them that he had "no executive function," and warned them that "look[ing] up to Dr. Saleeby in matters outside of school matters" would get them into trouble as it had with others.[46]

Saleeby dissembled his differences with Governor Wood as they worked together on the provincial Council. James Harbord, who had organized a Constabulary soldiered by Moros, remembered that Saleeby's ability to speak the Moros' languages and heal their physical ailments "gave him a strong hold on them." However, Harbord pointed out that his disposition to be "naturally sympathetic" toward them contrasted with Wood's own inclination to "be rather hard on them."[47] Indeed one of the tragic dimensions of the military

government the Americans instituted in the Moro Province derived from the fact that army officers needed to be seen as active soldiers to be rapidly promoted when they were reassigned. This situation often led – especially in this peripheral part of the Philippine Archipelago – to a predilection to demonstrate their power on the battlefield, the one place where Americans could be assured of their ultimate authority. ndeed, Wood culminated his tenure as Governor of the Moro Province by ordering troops to kill hundreds of Tausug Moros in the crater of Bud Dajo on Jolo, leading to domestic outrage over the wanton slaughter that included women and children.[48]

The forces that Saleeby confronted is revealed in letters that Maud Huntley Jenks sent home during her visit with her husband in November of 1903 to Zamboanga, the headquarters of the Moro Province, where they were hosted by Dr. Saleeby in Governor Wood's absence. Albert Jenks had replaced David Barrows as Chief of the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes (renamed The Ethnographic Survey) and was seeking to organize the emplacement of Moro villages in the Philippine Exposition at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis. Maud Jenks described Saleeby as "dark-skinned, and speaks English well but with quite an accent" and was gratified that he treated them "very nicely" and generously agreed to help. Jenks reported that on one of their tours Saleeby criticized the direction of Wood's policy with the Moros, which led to a disagreement with her husband that she feared would interfere with their arrangements. "'Well, you see the fruits of it,' Saleeby explained, 'The Moros want to be left alone for a while." Albert Jenks retorted in full support of Wood in language that expressed some of the prejudice against Moros and fear of their reprisals against Americans. "'Yes, to kill a few more Christians—each of whom, the Moro believes, will become his slave in his future life.'"[49]

Early in 1905, these differences would provoke a crisis that eventually ended Saleeby's political career as an officer in the American administration. An examination of this predicament reveals the strong ethical principles of Saleeby and suggests that the American military government in Mindanao and Sulu was not willing to allow a civilian veteran doctor born in Lebanon to rise in its ranks even if he was professed the expert on the peoples the United States were colonizing and attempting to "civilize." The bolt came from Act 1283 passed by the Philippine Commission that indicated that Saleeby's office of Superintendent of Schools might be removed and consolidated under the authority of the Governor of the Moro Province. The law also revised the duties of the Superintendent in ways that indicated to

Saleeby the need to restrain his authority. His power to fix the salaries of the teachers and the curriculum they would teach now required the approval of the provincial Governor for the former and the provincial Council for the latter. The act also removed the phrase "as soon as practicable" from the rule that "The English language shall be the basis of the public-school instruction."

Saleeby resented this law and, suspecting that Governor Wood was attempting to usurp his role, tendered his resignation, which Wood was able to forestall for the remaining fourteen months of his tenure.[50] The Governorship of the Moro Province passed to Brigadier General Tasker Bliss who was unwilling to offer this promotion to Saleeby, even though Bliss would find himself crippled by a shortage of experienced staff during his first years in office. The most immediate reason was the desire of the two Generals, Wood and Bliss, to keep a military man—what Bliss called "a man of my own kind"—in the role of Secretary because their superior rank would forestall any conflict. Even though Wood stated that Saleeby would be a "most efficient secretary" and had never cast a dissenting vote on the Council, the appointment of a civilian as Secretary of the Province opened the precedent that a succeeding secretary might oppose the military's authority. Although army leaders would soon be pushed to relinquish this position, they were at that time unwilling to sacrifice any influence in the Province to a more democratic process, even to the extent of increasing the number of civilian Americans on the Council and promoting the man most versed in the cultures of the people they hoped to lead. The fact that the Moros themselves had no representation in the government the United States had instituted in their behalf, and that American military officials refused to acknowledge the authority of any local leaders and traditions that challenged their orders and values, complicated Saleeby's commitment to teach to the Moros the workings of democracy he had assumed when he joined the national community as an American.

Saleeby, aware of how his ability to engage the Moros had been valued by Wood, lobbied privately to be appointed civilian Secretary of the Moro Province in letters to Wood and Bliss. The editor of the *Mindanao Herald*, Samuel De Rackin, the voice of the American community in Zamboanga, criticized Wood's authoritarian military rule, insisting that Saleeby was "the only man who had ever accomplished anything in the Moro Province," and recommended that he be appointed Secretary, a position supported by a petition drawn up and signed by seventeen other men. These open moves furthered

unfair suspicions that Saleeby was involved in demagoguery or had been caught up in the schemes of others. Bliss resented the publicity for Saleeby's candidacy for Secretary after Saleeby himself had pledged he would leave the matter in the new Governor's hands. Sitting Provincial Secretary George Langhorne insinuated that there had been the "usual underhanded arguments and actions."[51]

A day after Wood left office in April of 1906, Saleeby wrote him a letter that suggests that Wood had once promised him a larger role in the government of the Moro Province:

> The General knows that the primary reason for which I interrupted my professional career was not for the sake of the position of Superintendent of Schools, and that my present efforts are impelled by *a strong desire to attain that position I had expected and to secure that degree of confidence which goes with it*, and without which I feel I can not continue in the service of the government of this province much longer (emphasis added).[52]

Bliss used Saleeby's intimation to Wood that he was considering returning to the United States to take up his medical profession as moral cover to reject his appeal and accept the resulting resignation that became effective on 30 June 1906.[53] The litotes in Bliss's comment about Saleeby indicates his own conflicted nature: "I am not sure that we could not so well cooperate were [he] in any other position."[54] After Saleeby stepped down as Superintendent of Schools Samuel De Rackin hosted a farewell dinner at the Mindanao Club, where he served as President and Saleeby as a member of the Board of Directors. De Rackin's editorial in the *Mindanao Herald* celebrated how Saleeby, under whom his wife had served as a teacher, had evinced "a profound sympathy with the people" and that as a result of his departure, "[t]he Moros have lost a friend impossible to replace."[55] The following year Act 1673 was passed by the Executive Council authorizing the hiring of a new Superintendent of Schools, Charles C. Cameron – who had worked under Saleeby and tried to continue some of his precedents – but as a subordinate government employee with no political role in the provincial government, at an efficient savings of 25 percent over Saleeby's salary.[56]

Saleeby's political fate in the Moro Province dramatizes that what Akram Khater has called the dilemma of diasporic Lebanese—"to

articulate and defend a sense of self in the midst of a larger society that contradictorily sought to 'Americanize' them while shunning them." This dilemma was also experienced by an educated professional in the furthest extreme of United States territory across the Pacific.[57] Frank McCoy, another of Wood's Staff who served with Saleeby on the Executive Council as Engineer (and who had misplaced the only copy of a manuscript Saleeby had written on the Moros), wrote to Saleeby after he left he "had seemed part of the atmosphere of the place."[58] McCoy confided to Wood's biographer a quarter-of-a-century later that Saleeby had a "fine character," was the "real expert on the Moro question," that he had "great influence," and that he was a "natural candidate" to become governor himself. But McCoy's confidences also reveal a degree of bigotry that provides another explanation for his failure to be promoted. McCoy reiterated Wood's view that Saleeby was "hard to handle" and called him "an Asiatic through and through" with a "square Hittite head" who "hasn't the American way of doing things." McCoy felt that Saleeby would have been a "bad governor" because he was too sympathetic with the Moros and sought to slowly understand their cultures through too much talk and too little action.[59] Wood had also incriminated himself to some degree when insinuating to Bliss that he had "hesitated" to share his "conclusions" about Saleeby's "scheme" with him "fearing that after all I was unduly prejudiced," and that "I could not substantiate my convictions by anything definite."[60]

Saleeby's stunted social mobility as an American officer in the military Moro Province demonstrates what Sarah Gualtieri has called the "inbetweenness" and "inconclusivity" of white identity for "Syrian" immigrants. Gualtieri's work explains how affirming a coveted racial status as white remained vulnerable and contained many "contradictions, ambiguities, and discrepancies."[61] Saleeby was able to achieve the rank he did in the Moro Province because he was able to be legally classified as a "free white person" and begin the process of being naturalized as a full citizen. (One of his brothers, Rasheed, had migrated to Australia, across the "Malay Archipelago" from where Najeeb was serving, where the White Australia Policy in 1901 had come to a different conclusion and categorized Lebanese as regional Asians, and therefore "not quite white."[62]) The same elements that may have predisposed Moros to trust Dr. Saleeby—his darker skin, his civilian status, and the fact that he had privileged traffic understanding "Mohammedan" Malays by conversing with them about Islam in his mother tongue of Arabic—were the same ones that,

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combined with his accent when speaking English, had led some American officials to emphasize his "Asiatic" cultural identity. Saleeby's association with Islam may have impeached the whiteness of his cultural identity, similar to how actual Muslim immigrants were refused entry to the United States from Ottoman lands (for them in part because of the fear that polygamy disqualified them from assimilation). References to Saleeby as "Hittite" and "Assyrian" may reflect more than the ignorance of some Americans of the area that had just been labeled the Middle East; they also distanciated Syrian identity to an older and less politically contentious Semitic past that nevertheless had racist undertones and discounted his claim to be a white member of a modern nation. Saleeby's sympathy with the Moro and his tracing of their Islamic "civilization" emphasized his own foreignness as an oriental Asiatic which made him suspect to some American colonial officials who imagined themselves, and the military, as the sole arbiters for defining the civilizing process.

The fact that Dr. Saleeby possessed professional talents that ensured his success in other fields assuaged the military's unwillingness to promote him to the leadership he and many other felt he deserved. That Saleeby possessed these and other forms of cultural power also strengthened his resolve to seek justice in his treatment and respect for the quality of his contributions to the American enterprise in the Islands.

Secretary of the Moro Province was not the only position from which Saleeby was debarred. When Dr. Paul Freer, the first Dean of the newly established Philippine Medical School in Manila, was visiting Zamboanga in October, he offered Saleeby a professorship in anatomy. But when Saleeby came to Manila, the administrators told him that they wanted a doctor who could also research histology and embryology. Saleeby volunteered to teach anatomy without compensation but then withdrew his offer, thinking that he would return and practice in the United States.[63]

## SALEEBY AND HIS FAMILY AS MEMBERS OF THE PROTESTANT ELITE IN MANILA

In March of 1907, Saleeby turned from government service to philanthropic work when Charles Brent, Episcopal Missionary Bishop of the Philippines, offered him the position of medical director of the new University Hospital (later St. Luke's). Brent was seeking to enlarge the eight-bed hospital into more extensive facility, supported in part by

philanthropy from American universities, and sought out Saleeby to be Surgeon-in-Charge. The move enabled him to settle down and reestablish a career as a physician, medical researcher, and hospital administrator to which he would remain dedicated for the rest of his life. St. Luke's developed a reputation for its capacity to treat the sick and featured a free dispensary for the poor; many ill Filipinos—from all around the islands with no other options—ventured there in hopes for cure and care.[64]

When Saleeby migrated to the United States from Lebanon he moved from being in a religious minority, even within the Christian minority itself, to being a part of a liberal Protestant majority that had justified the colonization of the Philippines. In coming to the Philippines Islands Saleeby experienced a community of Catholics and Muslims (as well as "animists") in which newly arrived Protestants were attempting to make civilizational inroads in ways that corresponded with his own cultural upbringing on the far side of Asia. Saleeby's association with the Episcopal Church made sense in many ways, including allowing him to perform through his faith the importance of what Gualtieri calls the "Christian entitlement to share in whiteness."[65] The Presbyterian Board of Missions, which had steered the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut, had been allotted the Visayan Islands in the central part of the Philippines in the comity agreement that had divided up the islands between different denominations. The Episcopalians, who had elected to preserve an archipelago-wide reach to their mission, established the main Protestant Church in Zamboanga. Bishop Brent's approach to a ministry of embodying Christianity through uplifting service—he later preached that "[t]he hospital, the school, and the playground must be our pulpit"[66]—corresponded with Saleeby's own outlook.

Bishop Brent also shared in common with Saleeby a special commitment to the Moros. The Bishop would also appoint Saleeby as Treasurer of the Zamboanga Hospital and to the local advisory committee in the Islands for the agricultural school for Moros he opened in 1916 in Jolo, both of which were funded by philanthropic donations from the United States. Saleeby (who was noted as "Educator, Humanitarian") later provided testimony for a fundraising brochure for the venture which he said "pointed to the nobler and broader idea of religion and the brotherhood of man."[67] Saleeby's civilian status, ethnic difference, and intimacy with Arabic and Islam sometimes made him stand out suspiciously in the politics of the Moro Province. However, in Manila, his profession, education, religion, and

manners comfortably allied him with the American Protestant elite. Even Saleeby's whiteness as an American was more pronounced in Manila whose Filipino residents were sometimes racialized as the very hybrid "Asiatic Malays" and "Mongolians" that the American legal system had defined the whiteness of Syrians against.

As a leading medical doctor, Saleeby became a respected professional in Manila. His "oriental" background and intercultural wisdom led to his installment as "Expert" Mason in the Mt. Arayat Lodge of Perfection that opened in March of 1911. Saleeby's continuing research in both ethnography and medicine was also published in Manila through a series of works, including two articles on the treatment of beriberi with chemicals extracted from yeast and rice polishings. Saleeby's status as scholar led to lecture invitations before its intellectual organizations and an appointment as "Professorial Lecturer on History" at the University of the Philippines.[68]

Najeeb reestablished social relations with his family in Lebanon by inviting four of his younger brothers—Murad, Amin, Fuad, and Illiya (Elijah)—to join him in establishing their homes in the Philippines, dramatizing the commercial possibilities in the Islands for educated professionals. Murad resigned his position as headmaster of the American Mission High School in Lebanon in 1906 and arrived in Mindanao just as Najeeb was leaving office to manage an abaca plantation in Davao owned by John Awad, a Lebanese planter who established his success before the Americans acquired the Islands.[69] Murad became a published authority on tropical agronomy and served as chief of the Fibre Division of the Bureau of Agriculture from 1913 to 1917 before going back into business in copra and mining and establishing Saleeby Fibre Co., Inc. in 1926. Najeeb's younger brother Amin came to Manila in October of 1907 after completing his M.D. at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia and joined the Bureau of Health before going into private practice as a physician.[70] Fuad Saleeby was appointed a clerk in Bureau of Public Works in November of 1910. (In 1921, Fuad and Murad would acquire majority interest in a fifty-year lease on a coal mine on a small island which was so productive that the Japanese took it over after their wartime invasion of the Islands.[71]) The fact that Najeeb and two of his brothers married in Manila white women born in the United States symbolically sealed their own status as Americans. In 1912, Saleeby wedded Elizabeth Gibson from Texas who, after her graduation from Boston City Hospital, had signed up to serve as a nurse in his hospital. Murad married another American nurse, Mayme Teeter, in Najeeb's home in

March of 1914. Another brother, Illiya (Elijah), a pharmacist, married Teeter's sister Laura who was fifteen years his junior in age.



Figure 5: Najeeb Mitry Saleeby (seated at far left), dressed in white ducks, next to his father Mitry Elias Saleeby with brothers and extended family in Manila

## SALEEBY AS CRITIC OF AMERICAN COLONIALISM

Najeeb Saleeby's crowning commentary on his experience as an American administrator among the Muslims took the form of an academic lecture on "The Moro Problem" that he presented before the Philippine Academy in Manila in January of 1913.[72] The lecture reveals the contradictions between Saleeby's paternalistic investment in the ideology of progressive uplift and his deep sympathy for the injustices experienced by the Moros at the hands of their supposed civilizers. Saleeby had hoped that the United States, instead of following the coercive path of the Spanish, would carry out their "sacred trust" (16) by generating a social transformation of the Moros as dramatic as the one that occurred when Arabs first came to the islands and converted them to Islam. Saleeby knew from his own experience that "a great part of the solution" required committed and qualified Americans with "talent and ingenuity," including the capacity to relate to the Moros in their own languages as well as manifest the intercultural civility that would earn their respect (30).

Yet, Saleeby confessed, perhaps with some personal regret, that "competent men of such ability are more than rare" (30). Many

Americans retained prejudices against the Moro as "a black devil incarnate" (12) and carried out unjust and inhumane actions against the very peoples they were committed to raise up. Saleeby reasoned that "[f]orce is not a desireable agent for peace and benevolence" (22) because "cruel warlike measures are certainly disposed to kill good agencies." "The result of such coercion is hatred," he asserted, "and the effect of abuse is enmity" (10). Though Saleeby acknowledged that the Moros were "helpless" in battle against modern American arms, he recognized that "it is a completely different proposition to occupy their land and colonize their country" (15). Saleeby delivered his jeremiad to counter these indignities and insinuated that the "Moro Problem" was really the American problem of imperial benevolence: how to learn to treat the Moros with amity and patience as fellow humans whose rights must be respected.

Saleeby admired the Moros and found them "brave, independent, and unyielding" in their "love of home and family," as well as full of "honor," "dignity, gallantry, and self-pride"(7) for their tenacious resistance and preservation of what they considered their "inalienable rights and privileges"(14). He sympathized with their resentment of "a forceful adoption into what seems to them a distasteful foreign family to which they recognize no blood relation whatsoever"(5). Saleeby's democratic manifesto rang out of his own experience: "The laws of nature are not ambiguous, and man is after all man, whether his skin be white or brown"(13).

Saleeby felt that it was unwise for Americans to ignore or suppress the religious and cultural structures that existed in Moro societies and argued that these forms should be adopted and adapted as the very means both of maintaining law and order and of evolving the development of municipal democracy. Saleeby's philosophy of intercultural governance affirmed that mobilizing the Moros' dedication to Islam and to their traditional leaders (*datus*) provided the most pragmatic way to foster the American colonial goal of "civilizing" them and thereby solve the "problem" of integrating them with Christians in the emergent Filipino nation.[73] Saleeby was quoted as contending that "it is the inefficient teacher who does the student's work and it is an unsuccessful Governor who cannot leave for the dato (sic) the latter's own duties and work."[74]

Brigadier General John J. Pershing, who served as third Governor of the Moro Province after Tasker Bliss left in 1909, was strongly opposed to Saleeby's approach. Writing to Governor-General William Cameron Forbes in 1914 after both had stepped aside from

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service in the Philippines about why he had not supported Forbes' protégé, Edward "Pete" Bowditch, as his successor, Pershing argued that "Bowditch was unduly influenced by Dr. Saleeby's theories" and "ignored entirely the opinions of men who had spent years and years among those people." Pershing caustically and unfairly asserted that "[t]here is not a man in the islands who has as little practical knowledge of the Moro, nor one who has failed more signally in handling the Moro than Dr. Saleeby."[75] Pershing's condemnation is evidence for Donna J. Amoroso's claim that "Saleeby's approach was completely at odds with the military government under which he served."[76] Bishop Charles Brent was more sympathetic but, not surprisingly, rejected Saleeby's belief that "the new order" could be built on "Muhammedan hierarchy," an authority he found weak and "hopelessly corrupt."[77]

Saleeby delivered his address on "The Moro Problem" only two months after the election of Woodrow Wilson (with only 41.8 percent of the popular vote because Taft and Roosevelt ran against each other). This shift altered the American mission in the islands by bringing the Democrats to power for the first time since the Philippines had been annexed. Saleeby sent a copy of his printed lecture to President Wilson's Secretary of War, humbly claiming that his expertise entitled him to "kind consideration" as it was "simply actuated by sincere interest" in the American project in the Moro homelands.[78] When the new Governor-General Francis Burton Harrison began an accelerated process of "Filipinization" in the islands, most long-term American colonials and military officers in the islands were distressed and many left the islands. The Moro Province was dissolved and finally placed under civilian government in 1913, and the army turned over control of Mindanao to the Scouts and the Constabulary, whose own officers began to shift from Americans to Filipinos. Saleeby's intimate allegiance to a particular type of American identity was manifest in his rhetorical question in a 1915 letter to David Barrows: "Haven't they [the Democratic party] any body who can stand on his own legs and do things as an <u>American</u> ought to?," answering that without change, "it would be wiser for us to pack up + go home for good."[79]

Although the "us" incorporated his own allegiance as an American, the problematic question of where home was for Saleeby is key to assessing his transnational experience. Although Saleeby began the process of becoming an American citizen in 1900, his naturalization was complicated by the Ottoman alliance with Germany. It was not completed until he was able to visit Washington in 1919. During the World War, Saleeby was an active patriot against the Turkish, German,

and Austro-Hungarian aggression, presiding over an association of Syrians loyal to the Allies and promoting the Red Cross and the sale of Liberty Bonds.[80] He had to wait until the conclusion of the war in 1920, missing the death of his father a year earlier, for the opportunity to travel back to Beirut for the first time since departing almost a quarter-century earlier. Saleeby was invited to address the first graduating class of the newly named American University of Beirut on "Impressions of the Philippines," and receive an honorary Doctor of Science, the last honorary doctorate to be awarded to a non-President of the University until historian Philip Hitti—who in the year before Saleeby's visit had become the first local scholar from Lebanon to be appointed to a professorship—received one in 1969 after a stellar career at Princeton.[81] Though other members of his family and friends attempted to convince the Saleebys to stay in Lebanon where Najeeb's many skills would be a valuable resource for "the country of his birth," his heart remained in the Philippines, "the land of his adoption."[82] In 1922, after his return to Manila, Saleeby was elected a member of the prestigious American Oriental Society.

Saleeby's exposure to rising Arab nationalism after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the setting up of imperial mandates in the Near East caused him to reflect more directly on the needs of Filipino self-determination in the Far East. (I have found no record yet of how his experience in America's "mandate in Moroland" affected his attitude towards the proposed mandate of the United States in Armenia.) During his journey back to the eastern Mediterranean, he noted that he "was impressed with the new interest educators seemed to be taking in the question of the language of education in foreign fields."[83] In this he was influenced by the ongoing movement to modernize the instruction and transliteration of Arabic rather than reject it in favor of learning English or French. While in Beirut in 1920, Saleeby published *Arabic Romanic transliteration and Arabic reading* with the Sarkis Press.

Saleeby had long been critical of American arrogance in transcribing local place names in ways that the Filipinos themselves could not recognize. In 1909 he had written Rafael Palma, one of the four Filipinos serving on the Philippine Commission, that the "usages" and "wishes" of the natives must be considered because they "are the interested party": "Are we going to teach the native of the Sulu Islands how to name his country?"[84] Saleeby railed that "each American seems to have an orthography of his own," and was active in movements to establish a universal alphabet for Filipino languages that was

consistent and phonetic.[85] Saleeby's rally for language reform continued in 1923 in a paper he read before the Manila Science Club that was published as *The language of education of the Philippines* and later distributed as a pamphlet by the *Manila Daily Bulletin*.[86]

Saleeby argued that it was a wholly unscientific, futile, and detrimental enterprise to provide a "smattering" of English to 1,200,000 elementary school age Filipino children, the vast majority of whom would never be able to put it to any practical use at all in their own villages. In 1924, only 330 American teachers remained in the islands and many "native" teachers had an incomplete grasp of the English language and its pronunciation. He asserted that the selection of English as the lawful basis of instruction in the island had been a "prompt" and "rather instinctive" decision, an "irresistible impulse that came with the flush of victory," fueled by the fact that American teachers themselves knew no Filipino languages (11-12). "It seems the conqueror's privilege to rush to bold measures," he wrote; "Subconsciously he takes it for granted that his language and his ideas are the best, and that they should be for his wards" (51). Saleeby's words serve as condemnatory judgments of the inefficiencies of American insularity, and he found "absolutely no compensation or redeeming factor for such harmful policy and [that] it should be discontinued or modified."[87]

Saleeby was not so radical as to reject English as the official language nor deny its utility for the four percent of students at the secondary and university levels of education where it was a "blessing of great magnitude."[88] But he forcefully contended that it was ridiculous, reactionary, and undemocratic to propagandize a foreign language on the basis of the patriotic faith of the colonizers that did not promote the welfare of the masses. A pragmatic and just education in the elementary schools should be in the vernacular, if it was to be a "faithful agent and a real factor in uplifting and civilizing the nation" (51–2) because "every knowledge, principle, idea or scientific fact can be best instilled in the youth in the language he understands best."[89]

Writing on both a personal and political register, Saleeby confessed that "[m]uch that is inestimably dear to the human heart is beyond the capacity of a foreign language to depict or penetrate" (39). It was in his transnational allegiance to the common people of his adopted islands —healing their bodies and educating their minds— that Saleeby, one of the few Americans to stay and remain engaged in the Philippines Islands for a full, long career, was able to shed his imperial identity most thoroughly and emerge as an anti-imperial

cosmopolitan finding common cause with Asians on the other side of the continent from which he had migrated. "To crush local power and throttle native endeavor, and then assert that the vernacular is dead and useless, is hardly fair," he charged (34). "The Asiatic peoples are awakening slowly but surely," concluded Saleeby at the end of his reproach, "the national conscience of mankind is awake and is going to stay awake" (52).

Dr. Najeeb Mitry Saleeby served out his entire career in the Philippines, dying of heart disease at the age of sixty-five in 1935 while directing Notre Dame hospital in Baguio, just one month after the United States turned over the government of the islands to the Philippine Commonwealth. After his death the Episcopal Missionary Bishop of the Philippine Islands, Gouverneur Frank Mosher (who succeeded Charles Brent in 1920), wrote that Saleeby's "vivid personality" was characterized by geniality, but he also noted that "when his righteous indignation was roused his criticism could be, and was, biting, severe; he had none of the fear that leads men not to express their minds."[90] That the Bishop mentions this quality in an obituary suggests how the energies of Saleeby's dissent as well the vigor of his postcolonial protest were key elements of the transcultural intelligence that he developed as a Syrian *muhajir* who became American in the midst of a paradoxical imperialism in which the promise of democracy was provided by the injustices of colonialism.

## NOTES

[1] The author would like to thank Alex Lubin and the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Alsaud Center for American Studies and Research (CASAR) at the American University of Beirut for the invitation to present a version of this essay at the "Transnational American Studies" conference hosted there in January of 2014. He would also like to thank Hillary Jenks, James Grehan, and Tam Rankin, as well as the readers and editors for *Mashriq & Mahjar*, for their astute and helpful comments on earlier iterations of this essay.

[2] This dedication perpetuated the error, including that of historian of Islam in the Philippines Cesar Adib Majul (whose father was a Syrian), which cites Saleeby arriving in the Philippines on the famous ship the *USS Thomas* that transported the large number of American schoolteachers who first established the public school system in the Islands. A review of the crew lists indicates that the Arab doctor on that ship was Dr. Najib Taky-ud-Deen, a

Syria Protestant College graduate who came to the United States in 1899, earned an M.D. from the University of Maryland in 1900, joined the Army as an Assistant Surgeon as Saleeby had, and was ordered to duty as an additional physician on board the ship. *The Log of the "Thomas"* (July 23 to August 21, 1901), 18–9. Majul, "Introduction" to Saleeby, *The History of Sulu* (Manila: Filipiana Guild, 1963), xiv.

[3] Alixa Naff, *Becoming American: The Early Arab Immigrant Experience* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985), 8.

[4] This geographical area was not addressed in the essays in *The Lebanese in the World: A Hundred Years of Emigration* by Albert H. Hourani and Nadim Shehadi, eds. (London: I.B. Tauris, 1992). The pioneering work in this field remains William Gervase Clarence-Smith, "Middle Eastern Migrants in the Philippines: Entrepreneurs and Cultural Brokers," *Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, 32, no. 3 (2004): 425–57. See also *Isa Blumi, Ottoman Refugees, 1878–1939: Migration in a Post-Imperial World* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 108–14.

[5] The very methodology of this article is transnational and reflects in that it was assembled from publications, reports, letters, and documents in a number of different archives, in the Philippines but mostly from collections back in the United States, where Saleeby himself only lived for less than three years. Some of the published works that discuss Saleeby are Thomas M. McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels: Everyday Politics and Armed Separatism in the Southern Philippines (*Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Peter Gordon Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland: The American Government of Muslim Filipino, 1899–1920* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day, 1983), Jeffrey Ayala Milligan, *Islamic Identity, Postcoloniality, and Educational Policy: Schooling and Ethno-Religious Conflict in the Southern Philippines* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Michael C. Hawkins, *Making Moros: Imperial Historicism and American Military Rule in the Philippines' Muslim South* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois Press, 2013); and Robert A. Fulton, *Moroland: the History of Uncle Sam and the Moros, 1899–1920*. (Bend, OR: Tumalo Creek Press, 2007).

[6] Blumi, *Ottoman Refugees*, 113

[7] Betty S. Anderson, *The American University of Beirut: Arab Nationalism and Liberal Education* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 40.

[8] A. L. Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria, 1800–1901* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1966), 287.

[9] *Report of the Surgeon-General of the Army to the Secretary of War* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1899), 285, 241.

[10] Saleeby to Kobbé, 11 August 1901, William August Kobbé Papers, Military Historical Institute, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Kobbé noted in his diary entry on 13 August that he found Dr. Saleeby's answers to be "very satisfactory."

[11]Saleeby to Thomas (?), 13 April 1902, Box 28, David Prescott Barrows Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

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[12] Army doctor Charles Hack noted, "[t]here has been an Assyrian (sic) doctor here who has learned something about the Moro language and ways, so I am sent here to take his place as he can be of so much greater service on the trip than could I." *Journal* (April 1902), 34–35. Hack hoped to replace Saleeby and, while helping him to arrange his writings, learn more about the "strange" Moros. (Hack also wrote that Saleeby had instructed another "Assyrian" army doctor named "Deeus.") (7 September 1902), 74–75. Charles W. Hack Papers, Library of Congress. Saleeby's fellow doctors in the Army, Dr. Hack and Dr. Ralph S. Porter, become committed to collecting Moro objects and stories, and both acquired rare Qu'rans from Mindanao that were preserved in the States after their return. This suggests that intellectual training, rank, free time, and intimacy with the Moros enabled some Army doctors (as well as some chaplains) increased exposure and engagement with them.

[13] Saleeby to Will A. Reed, Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes, 20 May 1902, Box 28, Barrows Papers. The Rio Grande is also called the Mindanao River and drains an extremely fertile expanse of Cotabato on the southern coast of Mindanao.

[14] Perhaps at Saleeby's bidding, the United States Army had deployed Sharif Afdal as their envoy to the Maranaos. However, they dismissed his overtures and accused him of allying with the enemy in "changing their religion, and enslaving their people." *Annual Report of the War Department* (*ARWD*) for 1902, Vol. IX, 484.

[15] Saleeby to Thomas, 13 April 1902, Barrows Papers.

[16] *ARWD* for 1903, Vol. VI, 772–73.

[17] Laura Ann Stoler, "On Degrees of Imperial Sovereignty," *Public Culture* 18, no. 1 (Winter 2006): 137–38.

[18] Saleeby, *History of Sulu* (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1908), 9, 10. James Alexander Robertson, the historian of the Philippines and himself a collector of primary documents, mistook Saleeby as a "native Moro." Saleeby responded that he was a "naturalized American citizen" who was "born in a Christian home." Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robinson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1803*, Volume 43, 1670–1700 (Cleveland, OH: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1906), 102. Errata published in Volume 52, 1841–1898 (1907), 351.

[19] James A. Le Roy, "The Philippines and the Filipinos," *Political Science Quarterly,* 21, no. 2 (1906): 317. John White, an Englishman who led soldiers in the Moro Constabulary, later wrote that Saleeby "for many years faithfully labored to explain Moro and American one to the other." *Bullets and Bolos: Fifteen Years in the Philippine Islands* (New York: The Century Co., 1928), 220, n 1.

[20] Enseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility Across the Indian Ocean* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

[21] Brian Keith Axel, "The Diasporic Imaginary," *Public Culture* 14, no. 2 (Spring 2002), 411–28.

[22] Andrew Arsan, *Interlopers of Empire: the Lebanese Diaspora in Colonial French West Africa* (London: Hurst & Company, 2014), 226.

[23] Quoted in Rev. Henry M. MacCracken, "The United States and the Moros," *The New York Observer* (6 April 1911), 433.

[24] Najeeb Mitry Saleeby, "Moro Magic," Paper No. 3, H. Otley Beyer, Volume VII: Moro Ethnography (Manila, 1906), 3, 71.

[25] Philip K. Hitti, *The Syrians in America* (New York: George H. Doran, 1924), 89. "Except in the case of those trained in the American institutions in Syria and particularly in the American University of Beirut," Hitti acknowledged, "training in the Old World does not qualify for right leadership in the New World" (117).

[26] Saleeby to Barrows, 10 April 1905, Box 28, Barrows Papers.

[27] Wood, "Annual Report of the Governor of the Moro Province," in *ARWD* for 1904, Vol XII, Part 2, 594. Minutes of the Meeting of the Legislative Council of the Moro Province, 2 September 1903, Box 216, Leonard Wood Papers, Library of Congress.

[28] "To Open New Schools," *Mindanao Herald* (28 November 1903), 5.

[29] "Program of the Closing Exercises," *Mindanao Herald* (1 April 1905), 4. Though this was a popular song that ostensibly taught spelling, Sidney L. Perrin's ditty was spelled "Dat's de way to spell 'chicken'," and features a "picaniny" prodigy named Ragtime Joe who was "de only well learned scholar dat holds down his own class." (New York: M. Witmark & Sons, 1902), 3.




[30] http://wmsu.edu.ph/wmsu-timeline (accessed 21 May 2014).

[31] This and other printing presses with Arabic script were later used by Protestant missionaries to translate the Gospels into Tausug and publish school newspapers, and by the Government to establish the *Sulu News*.

[32] *Sulu Reader* (Zamboanga: Mindanao Herald Press, 1905); *Magindanaw Reader* (Zamboanga: Mindanao Herald Press, 1905).

[33] Minutes of the Executive Council of the Moro Province, 8–9 December 1903, Box 216, Wood Papers.

[34] "The Common School," *Mindanao Herald*, 7 January 1905, 4–5.

[35] "Lecture on Moros,"[from the *Manila Times*], *Mindanao Herald*, 2 December 1905, 2.

[36] Langhorne to Wood, 23 August 1905; Wood, "Discussions with Dr. N.M. Saleeby," 16 Apr 1906, Box 43, Wood Papers. Saleeby related how Datu Ali consulted a *pandita* to divine what the Qur'an revealed about the fortune he faced in resisting the Americans. Saleeby, "Moro Magic" (Manila, 1906), 40.

[37] Saleeby to Wood, received on 20 November 1903, Library of the University of Philippines, Diliman.

[38] Schück admitted "the impossibility of literal translation from the Moro idiom into proper English and visa versa" (2). Indeed Schück's translation mirrored the actual negotiations: the Sultan had suggested an article that acknowledged that "my protection lies with the American nation" and to which Bates had responded "that's what sovereignty means" (51). *Treaty with the Sultan of Sulu*, Senate Document No. 136, 1 February 1900, 68, 51.The Tausug word *baugbog* that Schück used for sovereignty really meant protection or defense. The pro-American Sultan's prime minister, Hadji Butu, testified that to him the notion of sovereignty was signified by *gaus* and *baugbog*, power and protection. The episode reveals the deep challenges in intercultural communication caused by the fact that Moros did not speak English and Americans relied on translators, sometimes using Spanish as an intermediary language.

[39] "Proceedings of a Board of Officers Convened at Jolo" (13 and 14 December 1903, March 1904), 2, 8, 12. Box 55, Hugh Lenox Scott Papers, Library of Congress. See Wayne Wray Thompson, "Governors of the Moro Province: Wood, Bliss, and Pershing in the Southern Philippines, 1903–1913" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of California, San Diego, 1975), 44–46, and Fulton, 200–4.

[40] Stoler, 140.

[41] F. W. Carpenter, 2nd Indorsement, 6 February 20, in Francis L. Link, "Translation of the Sulu Text of the Bates Treaty," Paper no 73. H. Otley Beyer, Volume VII: Moro Ethnography (Sulu and Manila, November–December 1919).

[42] Vicente T. Lazo, "The Sovereign Personality of the Sultan of Sulu," Paper No. 65, Ibid. (Manila: 15 October 1919), 5. Beyer to Carpenter, 1st Endorsement (2 January 1920) in Link.

[43] Diary (3 September 1903), Wood Papers.

[44] Wood to Taft, 7 October 1902, Wood Papers, quoted in Thompson, "Governors of the Moro Province," 41.

[45] Wood to Scott, 30 October 1903, Box 55, Scott Papers.

[46] Transcript of conversation between Maharaja Ahang and Hugh Lenox Scott, 11 November 1904, Box 57, Scott Papers. One soldier in Jolo called

Saleeby "Dr. Buzbee." Horace Potts Hobbs, *Kris and Krag: Adventures among the Moros of the Southern Philippine Islands* (self-published, 1961), 86–87.

[47] Harbord to Hagedorn, "Wood's Civil Officials" (10 March 1930) Herman Hagedorn Papers, Library of Congress.

[48] See Michael C. Hawkins, "Managing and Massacre: Savagery, Civility, and Gender in Moro Province in the Wake of Bud Dajo," *Philippine Studies* 59, no. 1 (March 2011), 83–105.

[49] Carmen Nelson Richards, ed. *Death Stalks the Philippine Wilds: Letters of Maud Huntley Jenks* (Minneapolis, MN: The Lund Press, 1951), 163–64.

[50] Saleeby to David Prescott Barrows, 10 April 1905, Barrows Papers.

[51] Tasker Bliss to Leonard Wood, 28 April 1906, Box 68; 21 June 1906, Box 188; Samuel De Rackin to Governor-General Henry C. Ide, 27 January 1906, Box 37, Wood Papers; George Langhorne to Frank McCoy, 28 April 1906, Box 11, Frank Ross McCoy Papers, Library of Congress.

[52] Saleeby to Leonard Wood, 18 April 1906, which he shared with Tasker Bliss, Box 43, Tasker Howard Bliss Papers, Library of Congress.

[53] Tasker Bliss to Executive Secretary (Arthur W. Fergusson), 30 April 1906, Box 43, Bliss Papers.

[54] Tasker Bliss to Governor-General Henry Clay Ide, 25 May 1906, 5, Bliss Papers.

[55] *Mindanao Herald*, 7 July 1906, 4.

[56] Within six years, Brig. Gen. John J. Pershing, who followed Bliss as the third and final military Governor of the Moro Province, was ironically seeking a civilian leadership and felt that Cameron was "entirely at variance with Dr. Saleeby's rather visionary views on Moro government" and "would make a splendid Provincial Secretary or even Governor." Pershing to Governor-General Francis Burton Harrison, 10 December 1913, Box 371, John J. Pershing Papers, Library of Congress.

[57]Akram Fouad Khater, *Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870–1920 (*Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 72.

[58] Frank McCoy to Saleeby, 15 June 1906, Box 11, McCoy Papers.

[59] Hagedorn's notes on interviews with Frank McCoy on 20 March 1930, Box 15, Herman Hagedorn. Mentioned briefly in Hagedorn, *Leonard Wood: A Biography*, two volumes (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1931), 2, 55.

[60] Leonard Wood to Tasker Bliss, 7 May 1906, Box 38, Wood Papers.

[61] Sarah M. A. Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White: Race and Ethnicity in the Early Syrian American Diaspora* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 120, 74.

[62] See Anne Mansour, *Not Quite White: Lebanese and the White Australia Policy 1880–1947* (Teneriffe, Queensland: Post Pressed, 2009).

[63]Saleeby to Barrow, 16 November 1906, Barrows Papers.

[64] "The University Hospital at Manila," *The Spirit of Missions* 74, no. 10 (October 1909), 862.

[65] Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White*, 57.

[66] Dean C. Worcester, "The Moro Problem," a Talk before the Harmony Club of America, January 1914, Box 2, Dean C. Worcester Papers, Bentley Library, University of Michigan.

[67] "National Leaders and Educators Endorse the Moro Educational Foundation Work," Box 59, Charles H. Brent Papers, Library of Congress.

[68]In the 1917 edition of the *Philipenssian*, the yearbook of the University of the Philippines, Saleeby was listed as a "Professorial Lecturer on History."

[69] John or Juan Awad was another fascinating *mahjari* to succeed in the Philippines. A Maronite from Lebanon who moved to Davao in Mindanao before the Americans had arrived, Awad married a local woman, and became one of the original abaca planters in the region. He is said to have converted locals to Christianity, was the first to import Japanese laborers, and acquired title to more tracts in 1916 because of his relationship with Palma Gil, the first Filipino representative to the Philippine Legislature from Davao. Christopher James Collier, "The Politics of Insurrection in Davao, Philippines (Ph.D. Thesis,, U of Hawaii at Manoa, 1997), 61, 99, 218.

[70] George F. Nellist, *Men of the Philippines* (Manila: Sugar News Co., 1931), 274–75.

[71] "Philippine Coal," *American Chamber of Commerce Journal* 22, no. 1 (December 1945): 13. Fuad was the last of the Saleeby brothers to remain in the Philippines; he died in Baguio in 1947, where Najeeb had passed twelve years earlier.

[72] Najeeb M. Saleeby, *The Moro Problem: An Academic Discussion of the History and Solution of the Problem of the Government of Moros in the Philippine Islands* (Manila, 1913).

[73] Thomas McKenna claimed that Saleeby's strategy of promoting the unity of the varied Muslim groups and generating a "new transcendent Philippine Muslim identity" was "the colonial genesis of Morohood." *Muslim Rulers and Rebels,* 106.

[74]Quoted in Delia & Ferdinand Kuhn, *Borderlands* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 108.

[75] Pershing to Forbes, 22 April 1914, William Cameron Forbes Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[76] Amoroso, "Inheriting the 'Moro Problem': Muslim Authority and Colonial Rule in British Malaya and the Philippines," *The American Colonial State in the Philippines: Global Perspectives*. Julian Go and Anne L. Foster, eds. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 137.

[77] Brent to Worcester, 26 September 1914. Worcester Papers, Bentley Library.

[78] Saleeby to Lindley M. Garrison, 6 August 1913, RG 350-5075, Bureau of Insular Affairs, National Archives.

[79] Saleeby to David Prescott Barrows, 4 April 1915, Box 28, Barrows Papers.

[80] Clarence-Smith, "Middle Eastern Migrants in the Philippines," 434–35.

[81] Anderson, *The American University of Beirut*, 48.

[82] "Najib Mitri Saleeby: 1870–1835," *al-Kulliyyah* (January 1936).

[83] Najeeb Mitry Saleeby, *The Language of Education of the Philippine Islands* (Manila, 1924), preface.

[84] Saleeby to Rafael Palma, 5 October 1909, Box 28, Barrows Papers. In 1903, Saleeby had prepared a paper on a "System of Transliteration for the Philippine Islands, or the Filipin Alfabet," "Report of Acting Chief of the Ethnological Survey," *ARWD* for 1904, Vol. XII, Part 2, 567.

[85] "A Universal Alphabet for Filipino Languages," *Philippine Education* 8, no. 5 (11 November 1911), 193. Saleeby had lectured that year before the Philippine Academy on "The Report of the Committee on the Philippine Alphabet."

[86] Saleeby, *The Language of Education of the Philippine Islands* (Manila, 1924)

[87] Saleeby, *Elementary Education Should be Given in the Mother Tongue* [Reprint from *Manila Daily Bulletin*], (9 March 1925), 3.

[88] Saleeby, *Elementary Education*, 3.

[89] Ibid., 2.

[90] F. Mosher, "Obituary of N. M. Saleeby, M. D." *The Diocesan Chronicle* 16, no. 9 (February 1936): 1.