

RECORD OF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE IN WORLD WAR II

(Address of President Manuel L. Quezon at the Banquet held in the John Eager Howard Room at the Hotel Belvedere at 7 P.M., January 16, 1943)

Mr. Chairman,
Members of the Bar Association of
Maryland:

I appreciate more than I can say your invitation that I be your guest of honor on this occasion, and I thank Senator Radcliffe for the invitation he has extended to me in your behalf.

Today, as you know, the Japanese occupy my country. But before they succeeded, we fought them to exhaustion, despite overwhelming odds. Even now there are still many Americans and Filipinos who have refused to surrender. They are in the hills, still resisting. We will continue to fight them until the American forces arrive in sufficient numbers to throw the Japanese out of the Philippines. We have not accepted defeat in the Philippines. The word is victory, and it will come. The Japanese occupation of our homeland we see only as a passing—though tragic—phase of our history. Our eyes are on the future, and on the happiness and freedom which the future holds for us.

The record of the Filipino people in this war has been written in blood, and it is a record of which you and I can be proud. It is a record of unflinching loyalty to the United States, a record of heroic deeds. It is a record without parallel in the Orient, and—I may add—in the history of colonialism.

In the case of China, which fought and is fighting Japan with a courage and determination that is the admiration of the world, she is defending her own sovereignty and her own flag. In the Philippines, it was your flag and your sovereignty that were assailed. It is true that it was our country that was invaded. But so was Indo-China, and Burma, and Malaya, and the Netherlands East Indies, where the flags of foreign countries were flying. Have the natives of these countries fought the invader? Except for those who were enlisted in the regular armies of these

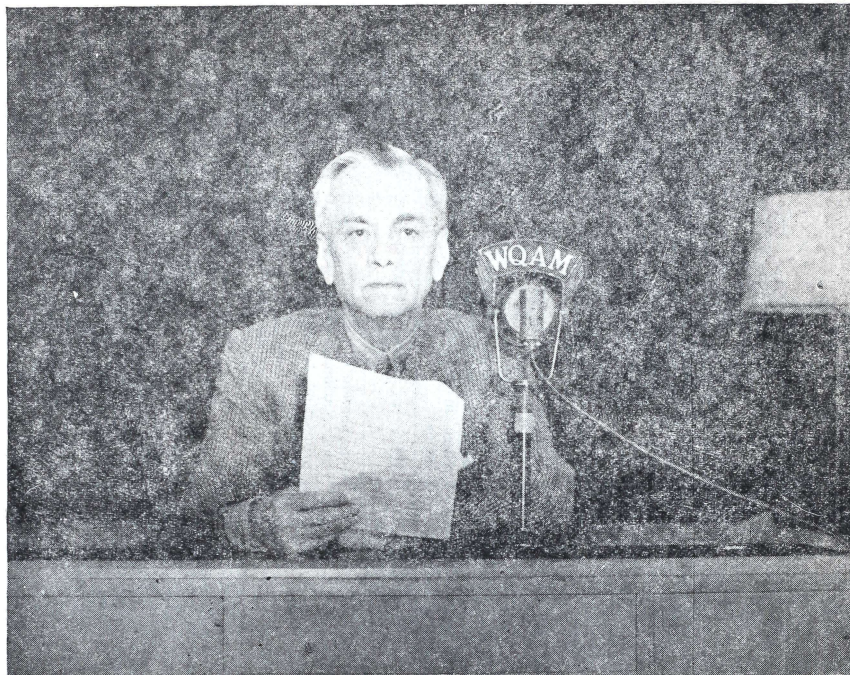
sovereign nations, no one else among them took part in the war by the side of the governments to which they owed allegiance. Certainly, the people as a whole did not fight.

Why was there this vital difference in the Philippines? The answer is that, when we fought for your flag, we were fighting for our own freedom; when we resisted the invasion of our country, we did so because we knew the Philippines was our country not only de facto but de jure. And we were loyal to you, to your flag and your country, not because under international law we owed you this allegiance, but because you have won our undying friendship and affection—because you did by us what no other colonizing power has done by the people who had fallen under their sway. For you have been our benefactors and liberators, and the presence of your flag in the Philippines was the symbol of our freedom. It was there only to allow you to finish the work you had started to do—to help set up an independent Philippine Republic.

That is why not only the regular Filipino soldier fought by your side, but our own citizen army. That is why not only our citizen army, but the whole civilian population, to a man, answered the call of duty and did their part in resisting the enemy.

The immense majority of General MacArthur's infantry—that superb military commander—was composed of Filipinos, and 20,000 of our young men laid down their lives in the Battle of the Philippines—many, many more than the lives lost by their heroic brothers, the Americans.

According to official United States Government statistics, America has lost some 8,000 soldiers, sailors and merchant seamen on all fronts everywhere in the world since the war began. In this figure are included those Filipinos who were serving in the Regular Army of the United States, and



the total is less than half the number of those killed who were serving in the Philippine Army.

And now let me tell you why the Filipino people fought by your side to the bitter end.

By the time Admiral Dewey came to Manila, the Spaniards were able to offer only a token resistance. America's war against Spain was fought, in the Philippines, with the aid of the Filipinos themselves.

After the last crumbling remnant of Spain's Empire was forced out of the Philippines, the Filipino people felt that the time had come for self-government. Their hopes were not realized. And there came instead several years of bloodshed between Americans and Filipinos.

After the early years of bitterness and distrust, the Filipino people began to know and understand the real purpose of America. They realized that

the American people were not embarked on a ruthless imperialistic policy. In the words of President McKinley: "The Philippines are ours, not to exploit but to develop, to civilize, to educate, to train in the science of self-government. This is the path of duty which we must follow or be recreant to a mighty trust committed to us"

Each American President who followed McKinley reiterated this thought in his own words. During the administration of Woodrow Wilson, the Congress of the United States enacted the Jones Law, which promised independence when a stable government could be established in the Philippines. This pledge America kept. Your own Senator Tydings, under the administration and with the recommendation of President Roosevelt, introduced the Bill in 1934 that fulfilled that promise. In the course of the debate on his Bill

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in the Senate, referring to the war between Americans and Filipinos, Senator Tydings said: "That war never was intended. We (Americans) never intended to stay there. We promised the Filipinos that, if they would cooperate with us, we would stand by them and give them their country . . . In Heaven's name, is it too much to ask under these circumstances that we give them every chance to work out a just destiny under their own flag, and that they shall have all the assistance we can give them?"

In 1934, the Tydings-McDuffie Act was passed. The Filipino people will be eternally grateful to Senator Tydings for sponsoring this legislation. I repeat: The battle we fought on Bataan and Corregidor less than a year ago was fought because of the spirit that lay behind the Act which bears the name of the gentleman from Maryland.

It might have been easy for us to delude ourselves into accepting the siren song of Japanese propaganda, which told us that Japan was waging war only against the United States, and not against the Filipino people. They pounded the Philippines with this propaganda. But they failed completely, because we know what Japan had done in Manchuria and in China. And we contrasted their deeds with what America had done in the Philippines.

Under your flag, we had tasted freedom, and no people who have known the blessings of liberty will want to live without it. Under the terms of the Tydings-McDuffie Act, the Filipino people had established the Government of the Commonwealth under a Constitution of our own making, in preparation for complete independence.

That is why the Filipino people fought. They fought for freedom. They fought because they know that America had made a promise, and that she would keep that promise. They fought because they respected themselves and knew that they—like any other nation—had a right to determine their own

destiny as part of the interlocking society that is the human race.

All this, I am sure, was somewhere in the mind of Jesus Villamor, the young Filipino flier who led a squadron of six obsolete planes to battle fifty-four Japanese bombers somewhere south of Manila.

It was the impulse which caused the Filipino soldier to hold his own helmet over the bare head of General MacArthur while the shell fragments tore into his hands on Corregidor.

It was etched deep in the soul of the Filipino school teacher who preferred to die rather than obey the Japanese order to lower the American flag and fly the Philippine colors alongside the "Rising Sun" over his little village schoolhouse.

The school teacher was paying tribute to the solidarity between the United States and the Philippines—a solidarity that will live even when, one day soon, the Philippine flag flies alone over our schoolhouses. That will be on our day of independence, when the Philippine Republic takes its place among the family of sovereign states.

When our flag flies alone over the Philippines, your Star-Spangled Banner—which has outlived the bursting bombs of Fort McHenry and of Corregidor—will always wave in our hearts, and your friendship will always be cherished by every one of us above the friendship of any other nation.

Here in Maryland, before you, the citizens of the Free State I want to pay tribute now to Senator Tydings, co-author of the Philippine Independence Act, and to all his colleagues in the United States Senate and House of Representatives. As for your President, under whose leadership the Tydings McDuffie Act was passed, and who was co-author of the Atlantic



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RAMON Z. ESTANISLAO
Mayor of Dinalupihan, Bataan

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Charter, his name will be written in history as one of the world's greatest spokesmen of freedom and human dignity.

The tides of war and destruction have swept over the Philippines since the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act. Today a new situation exists there. The years of peace and progress foreseen in the Philippine Independence Act have been scarred by Japanese aggression.

The Pacific war has taught us a lesson—both the United States and the Philippines. President Roosevelt doubtless meant this when he said, while the battle was raging in Bataan: "I give to the people of the Philippines my solemn pledge that their freedom will be redeemed and their independence established and protected. The entire resources in men and material of the United States stand behind that pledge."

I hope that we shall have the full support of both Senator Tydings and Senator Radcliffe in carrying out President Roosevelt's pledge on behalf of the American people.

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RAMON Z. ESTANISLAO
Mayor of Dinalupihan, Bataan
Personal Circumstances. — Born on June 22, 1902, in Dinalupihan, Bataan and married to Margarita Malibiran with whom he has six children.

Educational Attainment. — Completed the primary, intermediate, and third year, high school courses.

Experience and Activities. — Sanitary inspector in Dinalupihan; clerk in Tukop Sugar Central; classroom teacher; chief of police and municipal secretary for six years in Dinalupihan. Initiated the erection of concrete monument to Liberty, Andres Bonifacio, Bataan Heroes and Unknown Heroes in 1946-47.

Hobbies. — Reading and poultry raising.

Motto. — Patience and Diligence are stepping stones to Success.

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What America did in the Philippines in time of peace has repaid her well in her hour of peril and in terms of the esteem and respect of all mankind. I speak for the people of the Philippines when I express our lasting recognition of America's honorable and high-minded policy. Today, in the midst of war, the whole world looks to you to add even greater lustre to your name and reputation as the champion of human freedom.

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