

Once More, After Three Years of Oppression, We Shall Enjoy

By EFRAIN Ma. GUERRERO

LIBERTY

FOR ONE AND ALL

On July 4, 1945

THIS FOURTH OF JULY is specially significant to us Filipinos because we have not celebrated it for the past three years. That is, we did not publicly honor this historical occasion as in years previous to December 8, 1941, with fine speeches, military parades, gay balls and the deafening crackle of fireworks. But we did celebrate it with a muffled prayer or two and a fervent wish in our hearts that the current year would put an end to the insufferable pain of having the Japanese boot on our necks. And I would not be far from the truth were I to assert that its significance rather than dying out during those years of oppression grew in luster proportionately as our sufferings increased in intensity.

To-day, July 4th, 1945, we are once more free to pay tribute to this great American National Holiday. To refresh our minds as to its meaning not only for those who are fortunate enough to be able to call themselves the champions of democracy and liberty and to us who are under their tutelage, but also to those of the rest of the world who even now are still striving for freedom from oppression and slavery.

The principles enunciated in the Declaration of Independence enacted in Philadelphia, on the 4th of July, 1776, by the thirteen original States of America are being carried out not only to the letter but also in spirit as witness the fact that countless American lives have been snuffed out and veritable streams of American blood have flowed both on its own and on foreign soil so that nations and individuals may be entitled to freedom and opportunity under equal laws, freedom and opportunity of their own making and through their own work.

Even now, the fight that was be-

gun one hundred and sixty-nine years ago is still being fought. The forces of evil and oppression are slowly being crushed and excoriated. Light is beginning to break once again over the world's horizon. Of the three original arch-enemies of Democracy, there but remains one: Japan.

History testifies that every major war that the United States has fought has been for the preservation of democratic ideals. The current one is no exception. It has been the strict policy of the American Government to denounce wars of conquest and imperialistic aims.

In 1917 she justified her entry—and properly so—into the First World Conflagration with the coined phrase, "The War To Save The World For Democracy." At present she is again engaged in a struggle to preserve those same ideals. But she has felt no need to justify her entanglement in this conflict with encouraging slogans because Americans, from all walks of life, whether civilian or military, are well aware that this is a battle for the survival of those principles for which the heroes of Bunker Hill and the Crossing of the Delaware bled and died. Through the superhuman efforts of her valiant sons and those of allied nations, she has defeated an enemy whose forces of evil had managed to suppress and stifle the light and warmth of freedom from millions of European homes.

But can one say that the battle has been brought to a victorious end simply because Nazism and Fascism have been erased from the face of Europe? And because soon

the Divine Myth of Nippon's Emperor will meet the same fate in the land of the Rising Sun?

We believe that this is not so. That the fight will not be over just because the last shot shall have been fired and the tides of war shall have subsided. The fight for democracy must continue until the doctrines and principles contained in America's Declaration of Independence have become of universal application in such a manner as to embrace not only those peoples who were already enjoying the blessings of democracy and self-government, and for a time were deprived of their enjoyment, but also those nations which up to the present time are clamoring and fighting tooth and nail for the God-given right to work out their own destiny without foreign control or intervention.

Unless the long cherished dreams and desires of these peoples attain fruition, victory shall not have been gained and the Fight For Democracy could not appropriately be said to have been fought to a glorious finish.

The writer has not lost sight of the fact that amidst the turmoil of warfare there is now being held in San Francisco a United Nations Conference whose primordial aim is to see to it that when peace does come, it shall be a lasting and permanent one. And perceiving that such a blessed state of affairs can only be if justice is done to one and all, great and small, it has taken within its purview the interests of all colonial peoples, indiscriminate of race or

creed. Toward the achievement of this, a United Nations Commission unanimously approved a trustee chapter the primary purposes of which are: to insure political, economic, social and educational advancement of colonial peoples; their just treatment and their protection against abuses; to develop self-government; to take due account of the political aspirations of the people and to assist them in the progressive development of free institutions. This particular chapter of the trustee charter has been hailed by our Filipino representative to said conference as a "charter for all the Colonial Peoples," and a "victory for the whole world."

In particular it would be a signal triumph for the United States—the country who so laboriously laid the foundation for this monument to Man's progress and civilization. May the Builders' hands never cease to toil till the whole structure has reached final form and stateliness. Till its shade shall have afforded protection to nations, one and all. For then and only then will the signatories of the Declaration of Independence be assured that their true wishes

and avowed intentions have been fulfilled. For then and only then will there be a possibility that the coming peace will be real and lasting.

THE BLESSINGS OF DEMOCRACY

In the years before the war broke out in 1941, we of this country have not paid much attention to political forms of government. We took them for granted as part of the life of the people. We never counted our blessings. We just lived in them.

When the international gangsters who called themselves sons of heaven invaded these shores, we received a jolt in our minds. There are forms of government different from each other. And the tyrannous and oppressive control of the invaders made us realize the liberty and the prosperity we enjoyed under the protection of American Democracy.

Now that we are back under the wing, we find that the blessings of Democracy are numerous and desirable. So, blessed be the day on which American democracy was born, and blessed be America on

this day, July 4, 1945.

—GUILLERMO REYES

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