

IT'S UP TO US!

By THE CHAIRMAN

Philippine Executive Commission

(Speech delivered at the signing of the Manifesto at Malacañan on February 26, 1943.)

WE are gathered this afternoon in this historic hall of Malacañan to witness the signing and issuance of a manifesto addressed to our people, informing them of the lofty and noble purposes of the great Japanese Empire and appealing to their patriotism so that the difficult task of material and spiritual reconstruction of our country may be soon accomplished. This manifesto will be signed by the members of the Executive Commission and of the Council of State, all of whom are well known to the masses of our people.

"The condition for the attainment of Philippine independence has been placed by Japan in our hands. The realization, therefore, of our national freedom is now up to us. I am sure that each and every Filipino who aspires for the freedom and independence of his country will actively and unhesitatingly exert his utmost to bring about the desired reconstruction, a prerequisite to the grant of that independence.

"We particularly appeal to the misguided remnants of the USAFFE who are still in hiding in the mountains to abandon their futile resistance to the Imperial Japanese Forces and the Filipino administration under their guidance. By so doing, they will be able to live in peace and tranquillity and contribute their share to this gigantic and historical task of nation-building, not only for their benefit but also and to a greater extent for the benefit of their country and people. We are likewise especially happy that this manifesto is being issued on the occasion of the convention of Provincial Governors, City Mayors and Senior Inspectors of Constabulary who are present here. I have no doubt that all of them will gladly cooperate in disseminating the proper information so that complete peace and order may be reestablished throughout the Philippines and the work of reconstruction successfully undertaken and completed to the end that the independence of the Philippines may be attained in the shortest possible time.

"Now, the Commissioner of the Interior will read the manifesto."

MANIFESTO OF INDEPENDENCE

To the Filipino People

INDEPENDENCE is finally within our reach! Japan is waging a sacred war for the purpose of liberating the Orient from Occidental domination. In pursuance of that noble cause, now happily on the point of attainment as a result of her brilliant successes on air, land and sea, she offers us the honor of independence and the blessings that it implies.

This generous and unparalleled offer, Japan has solemnly made to the Philippines with the sincerity of a friend and protector. Her friendship for us is traditional. As far back as the sixteenth century, her samurai warriors offered to join our ranks to smash the Spanish yoke. During the Philippine Revolution, a number of her sons volunteered to fight and die side by side with their Filipino comrades-in-arms. Nor was that all. Long before the outbreak of the current Greater East Asia War, her Imperial Government freely and unreservedly declared that she had no territorial ambition in the Philippines. This declaration the Imperial Japanese Forces reaffirmed when they occupied Manila early last year. They had come here, they announced, merely to fulfill Japan's "sacred mission, the establishment of Asia for the Asians, the Philippines for the Filipinos."

Time and again the highest Japanese representatives in the Philippines—the Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Japanese Army and the Director General of the Japanese Military Administration—repeated this inspiring assurance. True to her lofty and ennobling mission, Japan went farther. She avowed through her Premier, General Hideki Tozjo, before the Imperial Diet on January 21, 1942, that: "As regards the Philippines, if the peoples of those Islands will hereafter understand the real intentions of Nippon and offer to cooperate with us as one of the partners for the establishment of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, Nippon will gladly enable them to enjoy the honor of independence."

Japan's solemn promise, which brought new hope to all conquered and oppressed peoples in the Far East, Premier Tozjo reiterated a year later. Speaking before the same distinguished body, on January 28, 1943, he said: "Substantial progress is being made in the degree of cooperation rendered to the Japanese Empire by the people of the Philippines as well as in the restoration of internal peace and security. Under these circumstances and on condition that further tangible evidence of cooperation is actively demonstrated it is contemplated to put into effect the statement made previously on the question of Philippine independence in the shortest possible time."

Firmly resolved as we are and have always been to attain our independence, we would be unworthy indeed of our race and that liberty which our martyrs and heroes have sanctified with their blood if we did not exert our utmost to surmount every obstacle placed in our path to freedom and nationhood. But first of all let us be united. We have a common cause, a common destiny. Let us all cooperate with our true liberators to the limit of our capacity and ability. Let the misguided remnants of the USAFFE who are still hiding in the mountains abandon any futile resistance which at best can only mean unnecessary sufferings and sacrifices of our people. To normal life let everybody return as the rest of us have done, certain that it is there, and not in the fastnesses of the mountains, where we all can best strive for the peace, happiness, and prosperity of our fatherland.

Why continue resisting those who have honestly, sincerely, and bravely shown by deed that they are really doing their best to make us free? Japan could have treated us as a conquered enemy, imprisoned our soldiers for the duration of the war, and devastated our country. But this she did not choose to do. Instead, she allowed us from the beginning to direct our administration under the benevolent guidance of the Japanese Military Administration. She freed our imprisoned soldiers, and with her own hands repaired the ravages of war. She went beyond that. She taught us the value of discipline, increased our national consciousness and showed us by precept and example the real meaning of racial dignity. By cooperating with Japan actively and in full measure, we emancipate ourselves from political domination and economic exploitation and win for ourselves the honor and glory of independence.

We, therefore, appeal most earnestly to all our countrymen to join and help us in the titanic task of reconstruction of our own country and in the complete reestablishment of peace and order throughout the land. Let us avoid further suffering, bloodshed and destruction. Let us build and reconstruct our country and heal the wounds of the past, for it is only in this way that we can realize within the shortest possible time our supreme aspiration to be free and independent.

MANILA, February 26, 1943

(Sgd.) JORGE B. VARGAS
Chairman of the Executive Commission
Chairman of the Council of State

(Sgd.) JOSE P. LAUREL
Commissioner of the Interior
Member, Council of State

(Sgd.) TEOFILO SISON
Commissioner of Justice
Member, Council of State

(Sgd.) CLARO M. RECTO
Commissioner of Education,
Health, and Public Welfare
Member, Council of State

(Sgd.) JOSE YULO
Chief Justice of the
Supreme Court
Member, Council of State

(Sgd.) SERAFIN MARABUT
Auditor General and Director
of the Budget
Member, Council of State

(Sgd.) JORGE BOCOBO
Associate Justice of the
Supreme Court
Member, Council of State

(Sgd.) ANTONIO DE LAS ALAS
Commissioner of Finance
Member, Council of State

(Sgd.) RAFAEL R. ALUNAN
Commissioner of Agriculture
and Commerce
Member, Council of State

(Sgd.) QUINTIN PAREDES
Commissioner of Public Works
and Communications
Member, Council of State

(Sgd.) BENIGNO S. AQUINO
Vice President and Director
General, KALIBAPI
Member, Council of State

(Sgd.) FRANCISCO LAVIDES
Executive Secretary to
the Commission
Member, Council of State

(Sgd.) LEON G. GUINTO
Mayor of the City of Manila
Member, Council of State

(Sgd.) EMILIO AGUINALDO
Member, Council of State

(Sgd.) RAMON FERNANDEZ
Member, Council of State

(Sgd.) MIGUEL UNSON
Member, Council of State

(Sgd.) CAMILO OSIAS
Assistant Commissioner of
Education, Health, and Public
Welfare
Member, Council of State

(Sgd.) ARSENIO BONIFACIO
Assistant Commissioner
of the Interior
Member, Council of State

(Sgd.) VICENTE MADRIGAL
Member, Council of State

(Sgd.) RAMON AVANCEÑA
Member, Council of State

(Sgd.) ALEJANDRO ROCES
Member, Council of State

(Sgd.) PIO DURAN
Director of General
Affairs, KALIBAPI
Member, Council of State

(Sgd.) JOSE VELOSO
Member, Council of State