

## NOT BORN FOR DEATH

By Dr. CARLOS P. ROMULO

America's soldiers who came to the Philippines in 1898 came by force of arms. The country was in the hands of the Filipino revolutionists, who had all but taken the last stronghold of Spanish domination—Manila. The city had been completely surrounded by the revolutionists, and the Spaniards had made overtures for peace.

Then, Admiral Dewey defeated the Spanish armada, in Manila Bay, and the Americans occupied the country against the armed opposition of the Filipinos. Because of America's superior arms, the Filipinos were soon subdued.

In this action and in the Japanese subjugation of the Philippines in 1942, the invaders overcame the Islands by force. But there was this difference:

The Japanese didn't conquer the Filipinos. With all of their heavy occupation forces, they could not cope with the guerrillas. The Americans, on the other hand, did not contend with guerrillas. After winning their battles, the Americans conquered.

How did the Americans conquer? Not by force of superior arms, but by goodwill. After the military victory, American arms lost their meaning.

Then, the real conquest began, the conquest in which human understanding and human faith were implicit. This conquest was predicated on the pledge, since then redeemed, that America had come not to hold a people in subjection, but to help them on the road to self-government and independence.

To his everlasting credit, the first American teacher in the Philippines spread the knowledge and spirit of good fellowship which made possible the friendship between his people and the Filipinos. After the capture of Aguinaldo, the American put down his gun and started a school.

At first, he went out to look for pupils. These were hard to get, and some had actually to be captured. But this was not for long.

After knowing the teacher, the children came to class regularly. Then more came, and more, until the school was crowded and children had to beg for admission. Thus began the American public-school system in the Philippines.

I am a product of that system—and proud of it. Thousands of others feel the same for having come from a school which not only taught them grammar and history and mathematics but also the ways of freedom.

Just two years before the Americans came, the Spanish colonial tyrants had executed the Filipino hero, Jose Rizal, for daring to think like a free

man, without fear. From then on, the Filipinos prized freedom more than anything else; nothing could have stopped them from fighting for it. It was a happy circumstance that the American teacher was right on the scene to let them have that freedom and enjoy it.

We owe it to the American teacher that we are today a democracy conscious of our vital part in the great movement to hold secure the fundamental freedoms of man. He taught us respect for the right of the individual to speak his mind and stand for his liberties. He trained us to be understanding of others' views. Under his code, we learned to abhor all totalitarian regimentation of the mind.

When the first American teacher began his career in the Philippines, we had the pleasant sense that he was not going to hold us prisoners, that he was going to be our friend. He never was exclusive; he constantly mingled with our people.

He played with our children, visited our parents in our homes, joined us in our fiestas, consoled with us in our sorrows. Pretty soon he was a real part of our community, not only as a teacher but also as staunch companion.

Other Americans came to the Philippines to help us make our laws, teach us the science of government, train us in business and economics. But their contribution to our community advancement was nothing compared to what our American teacher taught us about George Washington, Patrick Henry, Abraham Lincoln, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson, and about Lexington and Bunker Hill and Valley Forge. Of these and other good and enduring memories, our American loyalty is made.

When Japanese forces occupied the Philippines, the first act of their propaganda corps was to outlaw every vestige of Americanism. The words "United States" were proscribed; every article on which they appeared was banned. Japanese products were introduced. Japanese slogans and songs were forced on the people.

Of course, at bayonet's point, the Filipinos did as told. But inwardly, they laughed. It was all funny to them, being told what to like and what not to like. New labels could not change things.

The would-be conquerors, aided by organized force, were powerless before our ineradicable love of America. This love was formed half a century before, in the hearts of the people. It was planted and nurtured there by the first American teachers. This love was not born for death.—From *NEA Journal*.