

LET US WIN OUR INDEPENDENCE!

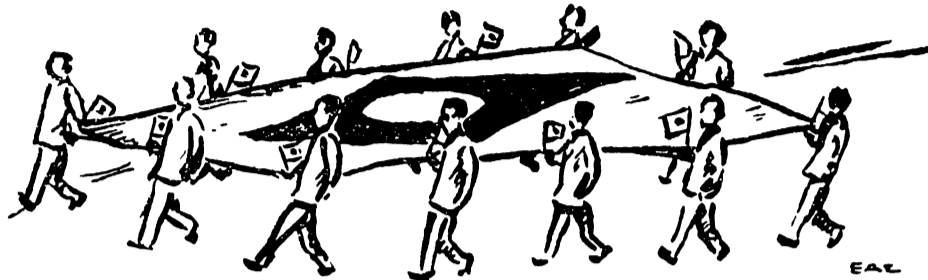
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(Delivered at the town plaza of Dagupan, Pangasinan.)

I shall begin by expressing a conviction which I believe is also the conviction of the people inasmuch as it is the result of recently accomplished facts. When the Japanese Empire decided to risk its very existence in this great Pacific War, she proclaimed to the world in her Imperial Rescript that her purpose was to redeem all Oriental nations which had been for some time subjugated and exploited by the Anglo-Saxon race and that her purpose in coming was not to do likewise but to elevate them to the category of free and independent nations. Hardly a year has passed since the outbreak of the War and the illustrious Premier of His Imperial Majesty has announced that within this year Burma shall become independent, and that the Philippines, too, shall receive its independence within the shortest time possible if we show tangible and definite proofs of loyalty, of cooperation, and of complete adherence to the fundamental policy of establishing a Sphere of Co-Prosperity in Greater East Asia. I told you that I was going to express a conviction and this is it: If we comply with the specified condition, the independence of our country shall be realized unquestionably and positively.

The declarations made by Premier Tozyo are not simple promises. They constitute by themselves an established, definite, and irrevocable policy, not only because they are premised on the example of Burma, but also because they carry the seal of prestige, of the pride, and of the sincerity of the Japanese government. I should like to illustrate my statement with the following example: Suppose that I have a daughter of marriageable age, and that a handsome young man of Pangasinan should wish to marry her. I see that the young fellow is worthy because he is honorable, intelligent, and in a position to shoulder the responsibilities of a family. I say to the young man, "I give you my consent. I shall allow my daughter to marry you. Moreover, I approve of this match with all my heart. The only condition I shall impose is that before your marriage you construct a house for yourselves in which you may live peacefully and happily—a home of your own, inasmuch as it is quite clear that you would like to be independent of your respective families." If this young man were ready and determined to marry my daughter within the shortest time possible, the early completion of the house would depend exclusively upon him; and if he finishes it

within a month, after that he shall be my daughter's husband; if he postpones its completion for a year, he shall not be her husband until after a year; and if he exerts extraordinary effort to finish the house in a week, he can rest assured that after a week he shall have my daughter as his lawful and wedded



wife. Ours is almost an identical case. All that Japan requires is that we repair as soon as possible this common home which has been spoiled by the war. The oriental style of our

house is already deformed by the tastes and desires of the architects in charge of its construction. We are required to take notes of its defects. We should correct these defects first. Then furnish our house that we may live in it and preserve it for all time. If Japan requires this our duty is clear and unmistakable. The Philippines, not Japan, shall reap the reward because besides being the hereditary owners of this home we shall be the sole recipients of the resulting benefits of convenience, of tranquillity, and of security which it shall offer.

Personal Comment

It is on this conviction that I wrote the following declaration as my personal comment on the cablegram which we received from Premier Tozyo.

"The solemn declaration of Premier Hideki Tozyo made in the Imperial Diet of Japan, which is a ratification of the promise of the Government of His Majesty the Emperor of granting the Philippines the honor of independence, deserves the most sincere gratitude of every Filipino. This promise, in the light of accomplished facts as we know them, cannot be regarded suspiciously as empty and meaningless, because it is supported by the example of Burma. According to the very words of the Illustrious Premier which are as follows:

"Under those circumstances and on condition that further tangible evidences of cooperation are actively demonstrated it is contemplated to put into effect the statement made previously on the question of Philippine Independence in the shortest possible time.'

"The early and definite realization of our ancestral aspirations now depends totally upon us, the Filipinos; that is to say, the attainment and realization of our freedom depends exclusively upon the degree of effort and decision of every Filipino for the fulfillment of the required condition. We must demonstrate active and tangible cooperation and the loyalty which is ex-

pected us, not only for the success of the Japanese Military Administration here, but also for the solution of the vital problem of the establishment of the Co-Prosperity Sphere in the Orient.

“This magnanimity of the Japanese Empire towards the Filipino people should be pondered upon conscientiously and fervently by each and every one of us. In the past, the liberty of subjugated peoples was attained only through bloodshed. With the liberation of Burma and the Philippines Japan eloquently demonstrates to the world, a new procedure in the granting of independence to subjugated peoples, inspired exclusively by the generosity of the ruling nation and by the cooperation, sincerity and gratitude of the dominated peoples.

“As Director-General of the KALIBAPI, I feel, now more than ever, highly resolved and determined to commune with the masses and to reach, if possible, even the remotest regions of the country, in order that I may carry out the mission entrusted to the KALIBAPI of informing and convincing the people of the real purpose of the government of His Imperial Majesty, and of the great responsibility which falls upon every Filipino in these decisive moments for the realization of the National Ideal.”

Therefore, if the Filipino people, following my example, wish to realize as soon as possible their marriage to their independence, which may be called the daughter of the Japanese Empire, they should proceed as early as possible with the reconstruction of the New Philippines cleansed of its defects and of the blotches acquired in the course of the Spanish and American regimes, and in which normal life has been resumed. You must understand that the realization of your national ideal rests entirely in your hands and depends absolutely on your firmness of will and your determination. If you fail this time, I shall blame no one but you because the fault shall be entirely yours.

Definition of Kalibapi

ALLOW me at this juncture to tell you about the KALIBAPI. “What is the KALIBAPI?” I shall answer this question thus: You see upon this platform your provincial governor, Dr. Estrada; those who were elected representatives in the last elections—Bengson, for the first district; Perez, for the second; Beltran, for the third; Primicias, for the fourth; and Ramos, for the fifth; you have seen and heard two directors of the KALIBAPI who were, also, elected Assemblymen in the last elections—Director Laurel from a district in Batangas and Director Mendoza from a district in Manila. You, people of Pangasinan, know that Primicias fought against all the others in this

province because he represented a faction of the Nacionalista Party, and that political rivalry in the past was so rabid between him and Governor Estrada because of the elections for governor of the province that to put them together seemed impossible. Director Mendoza was a furious opponent; he was one of those who could not see anything constructive in the acts of the majority; and such were his convictions as an Opponent that he was regarded as “the backbone of the Opposition” against the Nacionalista Party. Why are these men here now, united and together, some advocating our cause actively and others giving our acts their sanction and approval, and all working for the early consummation and success of this national movement? It is because all of them are imbued with the spirit of the KALIBAPI.

You all know, as I do, of our custom of helping a neighbor move his house from one place to another. This readiness to join our efforts to those of others to lighten the weight upon the shoulders of all, this innate interest to consolidate personal effort with the collective effort, in order that the common burden may be lighter, all this is KALIBAPI. When the inhabitants in a barrio for example, the old and the young, men and women, the intelligent as well as the illiterate—make an earnest effort to extinguish the fire which has been discovered in a nipa hut in order that the rest of the hovels may not be burned, thus to conserve this small community whose formation has been accomplished at the cost of years of patience and labor, that act is also KALIBAPI. When the people of a village set up a determined defense against robbers or “tulisanes” who wish to sack their village or harm their women, that gesture is also KALIBAPI. To summarize, KALIBAPI means the destruction of all partisan or individualistic sentiment in order that all citizens consecrate themselves exclusively to the welfare of the nation; KALIBAPI signifies a spontaneous decision to contribute individual effort to collective effort for the early and sure realization of a given proposition; KALIBAPI signifies determination, abnegation, sacrifice when the salvation of the interests or of the prestige of the community is at stake. This is the way I should like to see my fellow-countrymen act: they should be imbued with the spirit of sacrifice and with the readiness to give up personal and individual interest for the cause of the supreme interest of the nation; and when that spirit prevails among us you can rest assured that the New Philippines shall be organized and shall be a worthy member of the coalition of Oriental nations which are resolved to consolidate their forces to form a sphere of common prosperity.

That is why the KALIBAPI has been organized in order that we may have a New Philippines, an Oriental Philippines, a Philippines reoriented, a Philippines which is not halfbred, because it is autochthonous, a

Philippines for the Filipinos. It is necessary for you to know in this solemn moment that the Director-General of the KALIBAPI, its Directors, your governor, your municipal mayors, and all those who compose the KALIBAPI, are serving only their country when they affiliate themselves with this national movement. I wish to efface from the minds of my fellow-countrymen the belief that when we organized the KALIBAPI to promote national unity we became agents of Japan. The KALIBAPI is not a society of Japan nor for Japan; the KALIBAPI was organized for the exclusive benefit of the Filipino people.

"How is it possible for this organization to be exclusively for the Filipino people? How is it exclusively for the Philippines?" This is my answer: The KALIBAPI was organized to form a New Philippines. Before the formation of this Association we had so many defects and vices. To regenerate the country physically and spiritually would profit only her and her inhabitants. Unless she is revitalized and re-oriented she will not be worthy of membership in the Co-Prosperity Sphere. Only after she has been properly reformed will she be worthy and prepared; and only then will Japan, in some respects be profited by the realization of her fundamental program of hemispheric homogeneity.

Fellow-countrymen, this is a vast assemblage in which representatives of the whole province of Pangasinan are present. You know that, formerly, it would have been impossible to gather anywhere in the Philippines without Japanese soldiers on guard. However, in this plaza and around it there are no Japanese soldiers. There are no guards because the KALIBAPI enjoys the confidence of the Military Administration, because the KALIBAPI is intrinsically the mouthpiece of the government and at the same time the means by which the people may come closer to the government. Thus our campaign consists in explaining and clarifying to the masses the purpose and policies of the government, and in listening to the grievances, suggestions, and needs of the people in order to transmit them to the Executive Commission and to the Japanese Military Administration. Formerly, the people were afraid to speak. No one should be afraid, all should speak the truth with absolute frankness, so that if there be any evils they may be remedied. It is true that we have to work for those who are charged with the responsibility of governing the people. But if anyone in authority abuses his powers and goes beyond the limits authorized by law or takes advantage of his authority to cause injustice or evil, come to us and we promise you that that man shall be punished to the full extent of the law. The KALIBAPI has been organized to work for the interests of the people. It was found necessary to establish a medium, a link between the people and their government, for the mutual understanding of both parties; and to fill that gap, the

KALIBAPI was created. Those who love peace and order, those who feel the necessity of complete understanding of the government by the people, and vice versa, may place their confidence on the KALIBAPI.

We Serve the Philippines

THERE are still a great many who from the first day of our service have branded us as traitors because we cooperated immediately with the Japanese Military Administration. To them, then, we and perhaps now all the municipal mayors, all the provincial governors, all the members of the Executive Commission—Vargas, Laurel, Alas, Sison, Alunan, Recto, Paredes, and the great number of government officials and employees were and are still traitors; and this is so, because according to our detractors we have turned our backs on America. These poor ignorant fellows deserve our pity. What does it matter if we turn our back on America if by doing so we turn our faces to the Philippines? They should not ignore the fact that between America and Japan there exists a nation, the Philippines, which we all wish to serve first; a nation which has been involved in this war between Japan and America only because of America's fault. Is it not a fact that by not being pro-American one does not necessarily become pro-Japanese, because between America and Japan there is a more sacred nation to all Filipinos and that is their country, the Philippines?

Is it not true that America is the vanquished nation and Japan the victors? In the past, did we not cooperate with America, did we not serve her, because she was the victorious nation and because she was the only nation that could grant us our independence? In 1898 we did not serve Spain because she was vanquished, we served America. In this present War, America is the defeated nation and Japan is the victorious power. What is wrong in keeping to the norm of conduct which we adopted in 1898? At the present moment, no nation on earth other than the Japanese Empire can grant us our freedom. America can no longer grant us this freedom because she has been driven away from the Philippines. But even if America could give us our independence still I would say with Director Laurel that the independence granted by America would not be as stable as that which Japan can give us, inasmuch as, Japan lies nearer our country and can, therefore, protect us against any foreign invasion.

It seems to me that there are still amongst us people who are of the opinion that to cooperate with Japan is a condemnable act. I should like to tell my fellow-countrymen, and I want to say it with the greatest pride, that I consider it an honor to be able to serve the Japanese Empire. And if to serve the Empire of Nippon is to be pro-Japanese, fellow-countrymen, I want to make the solemn declaration that I am pro-Japanese; and I am so because Japan

is the only Oriental nation that has been able to humiliate and expel from the Orient all the Occidental colonizing powers which for centuries exploited and oppressed us. In 1896 the Filipino people arose in bloody revolution against Spain to drive her away from our country and to establish an independent nation; in 1898 we rose in arms again, this time against America because of our firm determination to liberate ourselves from the Occidental yoke and to govern and administer our own interests. Therefore, what difference is there between what we did in '96 and '98 and what Japan has done for the Orient in recent months? We never wanted the domination of the whites, and Japan has driven the Anglo-Saxon powers from the Orient. We desired to have our independence, and Japan now grants it to us. What more can be asked of Japan? I am pro-Japanese because Japan is the Empire destined by God to grant independence to my country. Look at the pages of Philippine history: we rose in bloody revolt against Spain, nevertheless, after our triumph we fell beneath the domination of America. After 40 years, which we spent campaigning for independence, America fixed the date for the granting of our freedom as the year 1946. Before this date the War in the Pacific came and as America has been vanquished by Japan, it is quite impossible for America to keep her promise. In spite of the fact that we fought against Japan, Nippon, the victor nation now tells us, "We do not only promise you your independence; we also place in your hands the entire responsibility so that you may have it when you want it. Our only condition is that you construct as soon as possible a solid, massive home for your independence in order that when freedom comes you may be able to preserve it for all the centuries to come." Is it not providential that after 400 years of existence beneath the yoke of Occidental nations an Oriental people, our own kith and kin, should come to liberate us from our long years of slavery?

Men of Stamina

I HAVE been told that there are still some guerrillas in Pangasinan. One of the purposes of my present trip here is to speak to the guerrillas. I should like to talk to them because I want them to know the truth. I have been told that a great many guerrillas have already surrendered and not only have they given themselves up but have surrendered their arms. I should like to extend to them my most sincere congratulations, because the guerrillero who surrenders shows, beyond shadow of doubt, a great love of country. That is why if the words of your governor are not sufficient, I have come here to tell you that every guerrillero who surrenders will be treated with clemency. I promise that the guerrillero who surrenders in good faith shall not be maltreated; on the contrary, he will be given his immediate freedom.

I want to tell the guerrillas that if there are guerrilleros here who wish to surrender, but who are afraid to do so for fear of being punished, I hereby offer myself in their place so that I may suffer the penalty, if there be any. I should like to tell them too, that I would feel very happy to have the real guerrilleros as members of the KALIBAPI because this Association needs men of conviction, men of determination. The real guerrillero is a soldier of his country and the KALIBAPI needs men who are determined and ready to shed their blood for our country.

But it is one thing to be a guerrillero and it is another to be a "tulisan", as it is one thing to be a guerrillero of the Philippines and another to be a guerrillero of America. Those guerrilleros who are still in the mountains, as they are remnants of the USAFFE, if they do not surrender in time shall be treated as they deserve to be treated, with severity, because USAFFE means United States Armed Forces in the Far East; and, therefore, they are guerrilleros of America and not of the Philippines. If they are guerrilleros of America it might be better for them to go to that country inasmuch as they show greater love for America than for their own country, the PHILIPPINES. I repeat that the war in our country has not been a conflict between the Philippines and Japan, it has been a war between America and Japan and that the Philippines was dragged into this holocaust only because at the outbreak of the war the American flag was still floating over our country. To make this point clear, that we were not actually at war, it is necessary to state here that the Philippine Scouts, the Constabulary, the Philippine Army, and all Filipino trainees became soldiers of America when they were incorporated into the USAFFE. To substantiate this point, ask them if the salaries which they received even before the outbreak of the war had not come from America. Thus, it is quite plain that the continuation here by the guerrilleros of the fight in defense of America after the surrender of the American forces is absurd and can only bring great harm to our people. I know, too, that these people enlisted in the USAFFE not because they loved America but because of their great affection for the Philippines. The Filipino soldier in the USAFFE fought side by side with America because of the American promise to grant us our independence in 1946; and he fought for the retention of American sovereignty here in order that America might be able to comply with her pledged word. Now that America has fled from the Philippines and, consequently, cannot in any way comply with her promise; and now that the victorious nation with admirable nobility, altruism, and magnanimity offers us the opportunity of realizing our perennial dream of liberty, that is to say, she is granting us what America cannot give us, I believe that the moment has already arrived for all

Filipinos, including all the guerrilleros, to come to the fold of the KALIBAPI and to show that they are real sons of the Philippines.

In concluding if you really wish for the independence of your country, help the KALIBAPI, help your governor, help your municipal mayors. Strive to make peace and tranquillity return to our towns,

try as soon as possible to cultivate your open fields, make an earnest effort to have your schools opened, to have your roads repaired, to have your bridges reconstructed, and in that manner you will enjoy your existence as never before, because thus, and thus alone, will you be invigorated with the life-giving sun of liberty.

