

## THE MALOLOS REPUBLIC

President Emilio Aguinaldo after having been sworn into office at the basilica of the Barasoain Church on January 23, 1899, realized more than ever the tremendous challenge of his office. With fervor he said: "Great is this day, glorious this date and forever memorable in which our beloved people is raised to the apotheosis of Independence."

This significant event in the annals of our political history was the culmination of a long painful, most frustrating process lasting more than three hundred years. To commemorate the momentous event, people in different parts of the country rejoiced with jubilation. Those who managed to go to the rustic town of Malolos, the thousands who came from Manila and the surrounding provinces, took part in the parades and rejoicings in their gala attires.

The streets of the town lined with beautiful bamboo arches decorated with palm

leaves accentuated the festive air. The homes were decorated with the Filipino flag indicative of the patriotic fervor that prevailed. The brass bands which provided martial music in their multi-colored uniforms lent color and life to the festive mood. The countless number of Filipino troops in their blue-striped rayadillo uniforms were also in high spirit, positive indications of their high morale and their indifference to the severe and harsh conditions of the times.

The inauguration of the Malolos Republic better known as the First Philippine Republic was indeed the very realization of the aspirations and ideals of our forebears. Two days earlier, an equally significant event came to being when the Malolos Constitution, the precursor of our present constitution was promulgated, the enforcement of which was immediately effected and was a fitting expression of the sovereign will of the people.

The constitution of the First Philippine Republic consisted of a Preamble with 101 Articles and an additional article. The Preamble clearly worded runs thus: "We, the Representative of the Filipino People, lawfully convened, in order to establish justice, provide for common defense, promote the general welfare and insure the benefits of liberty, imploring the aid of the Sovereign Legislator of the Universe for the attainment of these ends, have voted, decreed, and sanctioned the following: . . ."

The Malolos Constitution provided a free and sovereign Republic of the Philippines. The Republic was "popular, representative, alternative and responsible." It contained a Bill of Rights to safeguard the rights of the citizens as well as the aliens. The executive power was vested in the President of the Republic who was elected by the members of the assembly. He was assisted by his cabinet composed of all the department secretaries. The legislative power was vested in the Unicameral Assembly of Representatives duly elected by the people for a term of

four years. The judicial power was vested in the Supreme Court and in other courts of justice.

All department secretaries were presidential appointees but were responsible not to the President but to the Assembly. The appointment of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court was left to Assembly with the approval of the Council of Government composed of all the department secretaries.

The term of office of the chief executive was for four years and may be reelected. In the event that the Chief Executive died in office, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court temporarily took over the prerogatives of his office. When the Assembly is not in session a Permanent Commission was created to discharge the legislative functions.

The Constitution in the opinion of Justice Malcolm conformed "to many tests of a good written constitution and did faithfully portray the aspirations and political ideas of the people." The same view was expressed by the late Dr. Joseph R. Hayden as he wrote:

"This organic law was a free expression of the type of

state to which the articulate Filipinos aspired at the end of the Spanish regime. The state was democratic and liberal and was pledged to a careful regard for the protection and development of the masses of its citizens. In these important matters there is a remarkable consistency between the Malolos Constitution and the organic law of the Philippines adopted in Manila thirty-six years later."

President Aguinaldo did rightfully well when he considered it as "the most glorious token of the noble aspiration of the Philippine Revolution and an irrefutable proof before the civilized world of the culture and capacity of the Filipino people for self-government."

The framers of the Constitution of the First Philippine Republic came from all walks of life from the different parts of the Philippines among whom were the following: Pedro A. Paterno, President of the Malolos Congress; Gregorio Araneta, Secretary; Pablo Ocampo, Secretary. The members were Mariano Abella y Isaac, a lawyer from Naga City; Gregorio Aglipay, a priest from Batac, Ilocos Norte;

Gregorio Aguilera, newspaper publisher from Lipa, Batangas; Sofio Alandi, lawyer from Tayabas or Quezon Province; Jose Albert y Mayoralgo, physician from Manila; Jose Alejandrino, engineer from Arayat, Pampanga; Raymundo Alindada, lawyer from Nueva Viscaya; Leon Apacible, lawyer from Balayan, Batangas; Tomas Arejola, lawyer from Ambos Camarines; Patricio Bailon, lawyer appointed to represent Burias; Santiago Barcelona, physician from Pulilan, Bulacan; Ariston Bautista Lim, physician from Sta. Cruz, Manila; Alberto Barretto, lawyer from Zambales; and Jose Basa y Enriquez, a lawyer from Cavite.

The group also included: Felix Bautista, a doctor from Malolos, Bulacan; Higinio Benitez, lawyer from Manila; Vito Belarmino, a military officer from Silang, Cavite; Felipe Buencamino, lawyer from Bulacan; Felipe Calderon, a lawyer from Tanza, Cavite; Marcial Calleja, lawyer from Malinao, Albay; Fernando Canon, engineer from Biñan, Laguna; Telesforo Antonio Chuidian, a businessman from Manila; Graciano Cordero, a physi-

cian from Pagsanjan, Laguna; Jose Coronel of Indang, Cavite; Mena Crisologo, writer from Vigan, Ilocos Sur; Mariano Crisostomo y Lugo, lawyer from Atlag, Malolos, Bulacan.

Sebastian de Castro, physician appointed to represent Pangasinan; Arsenio Cruz Herrera, lawyer from Tondo, Manila; Antonio Feliciano, another representative from Pangasinan; Jose Florentino Fernandez of San Miguel, Manila; Felix Ferrer Pascual of Manila; Melencio Figueroa, engraver from Areval, Iloilo; Vicente Foz, lawyer of Vigan, Ilocos Sur; Perfecto Gabriel, lawyer from Mindo-

ro; Martin Garcia of Ilocos Norte; Ariston Gella, pharmacist from Antique; Manuel Gomez Martinez, physician from Manila; Salvador Gonzales of Samar.

The Philippine Republic unfortunately did not live long. A few days after its inauguration it faced the grim and cruel reality of survival. The so-called American Friends of General Aguinaldo and the Filipino people finally showed their true color. On February 5, Filipino soldiers had to fight the Americans in defense of their honor, dignity and freedom. — *By Pedro A. Gagelonia, in Variety, January, 1966.*

## TRAINS

One time Winston Churchill almost missed a train and Mrs. Churchill was alarmed. Sir Edward Marsh, Churchill's private secretary, tried to calm her by saying, "Winston is such a sportsman, he always gives the train a chance to get away."