

THE FIFTH POWER

By LUDWIG S. ADAMS

During the first days of the Occupation, Nippon propaganda painted glowing accounts of the exploits of the Japanese forces throughout the course of their ephemeral conquest in South East Asia.

We may say that the Japanese, like their German colleagues, always took special concern in filming the authentic achievements of their strength for war.

With such news in motion picture, they nourished the popular mind and in this manner, well-nigh, succeeded in maintaining high the morale of their people—until the sudden collapse of Fascism took place in Europe and Japanese Imperialism in the Far East.

Thus we have seen, for instance, the dramatic surrender of the English General Percival, the gallant defender of Singapore, in the presence of the arrogant and severe Gen. Yamashita, the well-known "Tiger of Malaya" who was subsequently "tamed in the Philippines."

We were really terrified by the merciless surprise attack at Pearl Harbor at the break of day on Dec. 7, 1941 by a suicide squadron of Nippon plane bombers that carried out the savage onslaught while Pearl Harbor was still asleep.

It cannot be denied that these striking events, narrated to our people in the light of facts, brought about the demoralization in the passive resistance of the Filipinos, still conscious of their inevitable defeat in an unequal fight.

In fact, not so few of their most prominent citizens came to swear allegiance afterwards—perhaps against their best wishes—before the powerful invaders of the Philippines, persuaded to a sure belief that the Americans shall never return.

At that time we already saw the fall of the Philippines, and soon after this, we learned of the capture of Singapore and other British possessions in the Far East while Hollandia and even Burma fell likewise before the irresistible Japanese assault.

Many prominent Filipinos were entirely convinced of the fact that the Japanese were really insured to war and could win the strife at least in the Far East, and they predicted that the war would last so long with disastrous effects for both powerful nations: the United States and the Japanese Empire.

Now, it is clear that they were not so accurate in their mathematical processes upon the final outcome of the war in the Orient. But, it is really illicit for those Filipinos of mental fortitude to demand their political independence before the then masters of the situation who have conquered the Philippines by superior force?

Is it high treason or unsung heroism?

The kinetoscope, as an excellent means of effective propaganda, is of limitless possibilities to win a cause.

Shortly before the war broke out, Charlie Chaplin, the wealthy American movie actor noted for his ludicrous style,

almost single-handed, flattened Fascism in the United States.

This is paradoxical.

The American people were divided then into two camps on the burning question of isolation of the United States toward the European turmoil.

Charles Lindbergh, the young idol at that time of the American public, had already approached the microphone advocating the isolation of the United States.

On the other hand, Benito Mussolini and Adolph Hitler had reached the summit of their total power and the whole world was in intense affliction for the war that was about to break out into a flaming fury.

And Charlie Chaplin, suddenly, split everyone's side with laughter when he came to stage himself, with his little mustache, as the "Dictator".

In short, the famous American movie-actor who holds the distinction of having been decorated with the French Legion of Honor, succeeded, unquestionably, to portray vividly the evils of dictatorship before the general public.

The U. S. State Department had fully realized the capital importance of the movies in relation to what we call PROPAGANDA.

A series of veritable accounts on the activities of foreign espionage and other underground elements and the corresponding heroism of upright and dauntless public servants in bringing to light so great and cleverly contrived conspiracies have already been filed in the archives of the State Department in beautiful Hollywood productions.

A sound and reliable motion picture instills in our mind great things.

We still recall "The Sign of the Cross," the artistic "Quo Vadis" and the "Last Days of Pompeii" truthful reproductions of the classic aeon when the Christian tenet came forth to achieve victory over paganism.

Nowadays, we use to hear still from the severe lips of many partial critics that the movies have led many of our young men and women into perdition.

They pronounce to be wrong such immoral acts in many a Hollywood production.

It must be pointed out, however, that a sinful act, for instance, in a convincing argument is not to be omitted, indeed, or we should disfigure and disguise in its fairness the naked truth.

We really believe that to fight the evil it is necessary for us to know it perfectly.

Finally, it is well known that in a democratic form of government there are three powers, to wit, the Executive, the Legislative and the Judicial. It is said that the Press is the fourth power. If it is true that the movies agitate the popular mind and may as well develop and cultivate mentally and morally the toiling masses, we must admit then that the movies constitute in a democracy THE FIFTH POWER.

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