

## THE PHILIPPINE FLAG AND THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE PHILIPPINE FLAG that flies side by side with the flags of the 31 other United Nations, and the Philippine National Anthem, still sung in the Philippines and wherever Filipinos gather to celebrate a national occasion, are rich in history. They recall the story of a brave people and their struggle for freedom and nationhood.

### *The Philippine Flag*

Long before the Royal Standard of Spain ever flew over the islands, following the discovery of the Philippines by Magellan in 1521, the Filipinos had been using several banners to represent various sections of the Archipelago. None of these, however, stood for the Philippines as a nation. Each chieftain had his own standard as a rallying point. Not until about the end of the 19th century, during the Philippine Revolution did the Filipinos have a national flag.

The first Philippine flag was designed by members of the *Katipunan*, the secret revolutionary society which led the rebellion against Spain. Its red background represented the blood of the members of the society, pledged to the honor of the Motherland. A sun in the center symbolized the rising *Kalayaan*, or Liberty. There were variations of this original flag, notably those of Generals Pio del Pilar and Gregorio del Pilar, whose designs anticipated the white equilateral triangle and the two horizontal strips of the present Sun and Stars.

This flag, borne proudly through the first year of the Philippine Revolution, was hauled down December 27, 1897, with the signing of the Pact of Biak-na-Bato, under whose terms the revolutionists laid down their arms. A change had been made in the design at the Naic Revolutionary Conference of March 17, 1897. The letter "K" was removed and the sun was given a mythological face.

The Philippine flag assumed its present form early in 1898. It was designed and adopted by the *Junta Patriotica*,

the council of exiled Filipino leaders at Hongkong, and was brought home to Manila by General Emilio Aguinaldo on May 19, 1898. A few days later, on May 28, the flag received its first baptism of blood and fire; and in succeeding battles was borne triumphantly by Aguinaldo's men.

It was officially unfurled and declared the flag of the short-lived Philippine Republic on June 12, 1899, at Kawit, Cavite, and it witnessed the inauguration of the Republic of the Philippines at Malolos, Bulacan, on June 23, 1899. The same flag saw victory as well as defeat in the Filipino-American War until the capture of General Aguinaldo by the Americans at Palanan, Isabela, on March 23, 1901.

During the first years of the American occupation, the display of the Filipino colors produced such repercussions that the Philippine Commission, on August 23, 1907 passed the Flag Law, which forbade the display of the flag anywhere even in Filipino homes. During every legislative session from 1908 to 1914, efforts had been exerted by Filipino leaders to secure the repeal of that law.

Success came on October 22, 1919. In the same year, October 30 was designated as Philippine Flag Day. In 1932 by virtue of Philippine Public Act No. 3837, approved November 29, the last Sunday of May each year was designated as the Flag Day of the Philippines, and has been celebrated as such ever since.

The colors and design of the Philippine flag are significant. White stands for purity and peace, blue stands for patriotism, and red stands for bravery. The white triangle, which has equal sides, has three golden stars representing the union of the three major regions of the Philippines: Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao. The eight rays of the golden sun stand for the eight original provinces which started the war of liberation from Spain. In

peacetime, the blue stripe is above the red; in war, the red is moved to the top.

And so it was in the Battle of the Philippines—red field over the blue, the Philippine flag flying side by side with the American Stars and Stripes, through the tragic days of Bataan and Corregidor. Again it has suffered defeat, but when the day of victory comes, as surely it will come, the Sun and Stars will float in the breeze again over a peaceful, independent Philippines.

#### *The Philippine National Anthem*

With the birth of the Philippine Republic, around the turn of the century, the Filipino people felt a great need for some means to express the national sentiment of unity born out of the war. The creation of the National Anthem filled this want.

The National Anthem came to life through the joint efforts of Julian Felipe, a music teacher and composer, and Jose Palma, a poet and soldier, a private in the ranks. Working independently of each other, but guided by the same national inspiration and lofty feelings, their combined authorship produced this valuable contribution to Filipino music and poetry—a worthy reflection of the artistic and cultural development of the country as well as an expressive sentiment of the young Republic's political life.

The circumstances surrounding its composition are historically interesting. On Saturday, June 4, Julian Felipe joined Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo in the town of San Francisco de Malabon. He was recommended by General Trias to Gen. Aguinaldo, as a pianist and composer. Don Emilio wanted a national march, serious and majestic, and so he requested Julian Felipe to compose one, a task which the latter agreed to perform.

Professor Julian Felipe purposely injected in his musical composition some melodious reminiscences of the Spanish Royal March in order to preserve the memory of the old metropolis; a characteristic which, though vaguely, is noticeable in the initial measures of the Philippine National Anthem.

Late in the afternoon on Sunday, June 12, 1898, the Act of Proclamation of

the Philippine Independence took place. After the reading of the proclamation, our national flag was displayed, and the band of San Francisco de Malabon played for the first time the *Marcha Nacional*.

For the purpose of popularizing the *Marcha Nacional*, as the National Anthem was then called, Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo ordered the author to prepare sufficient copies for distribution in the different towns in the Philippines.

Commodore Dewey, Commander of the American Squadron then anchored at the port of Cavite, requested the author of the *Marcha Nacional* to give him several copies to be sent to the United States.

The words of the anthem were written a year after the music was composed. Jose Palma, a young poet wrote the poem in Spanish and originally titled it "Filipinas." Into this poem he poured the patriotism, the hopes, the character, the emotions, the love of

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freedom of the Filipino people, set against a beautiful background—the Philippines.

Unlike the flag, the Philippine National Anthem was not forced upon the people by any formal executive proclamation; it was tacitly adopted after it had undergone the ordeal of assented growth, spontaneous popular acceptance, general and continued usage as well as governmental sanction.

At first the American military and civil authorities frowned upon the playing of the Philippine National Anthem in Filipino homes and gatherings, during the early part of their Philippine occupation. In the course of time, however, the severity of the unwritten law relaxed and the policy was modified to the extent of allowing it to be played or sung on condition that it was to be followed by the Star-Spangled Banner.

The words of the National Anthem:

#### *FILIPINAS*

*Tierra adorada,  
Hija del Sol de Oriente,  
Su fuego ardiente  
En ti latiendo esta,  
Patria de Amores  
Del heroismo cuna,  
Los invasores  
No te hollaran jamas.*

*En tu azul cielo, en tus auras,  
En tus montes y en tu mar  
Esplende y late el poema  
De tu amada libertad.  
Tu pabellon, que en las lides,  
La Victoria ilumino,  
No vera nunca apagados  
Sus estrellas y su sol.*

*Tierra de dichas, de sol y amores  
En tu regazo dulce es vivir,  
Es una gloria para tus hijos,  
Cuando te ofenden, por ti morir.*

The English version of the anthem was written by Camilo Osias, Filipino educator.

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## RULINGS OF THE GENERAL AUDITING OFFICE

**WARRANTS OR CHECKS FOR ADVANCE SALARIES NEGOTIATED TO THIRD PARTIES CONSIDERED ORDINARY PRE-WAR OBLIGATIONS.**—Officials, employees, and laborers who had received at the outbreak of the war treasury warrants or checks covering their three months advance salary and who have negotiated the same to third parties, do not come within the purview of Commonwealth Act No. 676 because in so far as they are concerned, they have already received their advance pay from the parties to whom they negotiated the warrants or checks. It is for this reason that the said treasury warrants and checks are considered ordinary pre-war obligations, the settlement of which does not come under the provisions of said Commonwealth Act No. 676.—*2nd Ind., May 16, 1946, of Aud. Gen. to Prov. Treas. of Neg. Or.*

**REINSTATEMENT UNDER SECTION 260, ADM. CODE CONSTRUED.**—Respectfully returned to the Secretary of Finance, Manila, concurring in the view of the Office-in-Charge of Civil Service as expressed in the last paragraph of the next preceding indorsement to the effect that “the reinstatement contemplated in Section 260 of the Revised Administrative Code refers to a reinstatement following exoneration and not one’s appointment or re-appointment without regard to the administrative case pending against an employee or official.” It may also be added that the reinstatement therein contemplated refers to a reinstatement to the same position occupied by the official or employee concerned at the time of his suspension, and not to an appointment to another position. As it does not appear herein that Mr. Honrado has been reinstated in the service as a result of his exoneration from the administrative case against him, and inasmuch as he has not been reinstated to the same position he was holding at