

A Filipino Looks Forward

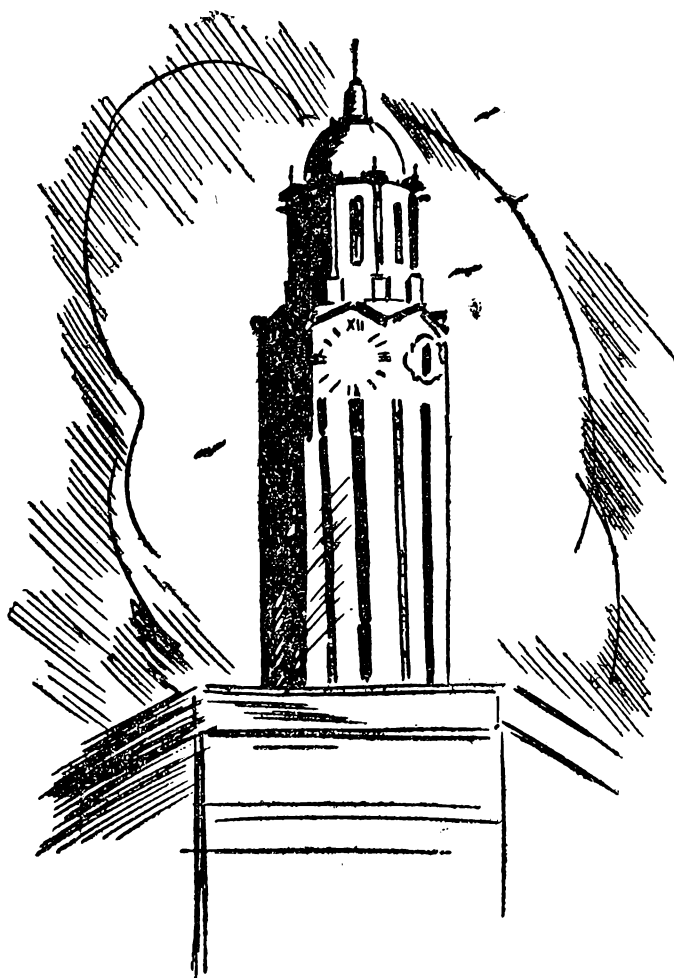
By MARIANO V. DE LOS SANTOS
President, University of Manila

FOR well over a year the Philippines has been involved in a war not of our own making. Our country and our people for the last twelve months or more have gone through sufferings and devastation, the magnitude of which we cannot yet accurately surmise. But from this bloody test and from these sufferings, we have emerged greatly fortified, with rosier hopes and the proud possessor of a new national solidarity and spirit that betoken the birth of a new Philippines. And for this if for no other reason this new year acquires added importance and should be a fresh starting point for greater exertion and a more substantial performance in our journey towards national maturity. We should not only propose to be better; but be determined to accomplish infiditely more than what we have accomplished during the past twelve months.

Nation Making

These are critical days for the Philippines and the Filipinos. Literally we are making history. We cannot and we should not remain stationary or inactive, much less, indifferent to the events that are rapidly taking place in our midst and all around us. We owe it to ourselves to become fully aware of the tremendous significance and far-reaching effects of the changes that are sure to come in the wake of this war of world-wide proportions. An old epoch in our history has ended and a new one is opening up.

By and large, for over 400 years, the Philippines have been drawn away, first by Spain and lately by the United States, from its natural sphere and from its natural associates. An Oriental nation and an Oriental people, during this long interlude, we have always looked up to the Western nations as our only mentors and models. Much to our own disadvantage, we have considered Western ideals, with the exclusion of all others, as the desirable goals of our intellectual and spiritual efforts. Our religion, our form of government, standards of life, nay, our vices and shortcomings, have been mainly of the West; not satisfied in importing many social and basic institutions of the Occidentals, a large proportion of our people likewise



took pride in adopting as their own, the vices and defects of the Westerners.

Rude Awakening

Under the impact of the fateful events that have been happening in our midst since December 8, 1941, our dream of becoming a Western Island in an Oriental sea has ended in a rude awakening. At long last we have come to realize that racial affinity and geographical propinquity are fundamental concepts that find their bases on nature and on stern reality; and that they cannot be made subservient to the less elemental ties of imported or imposed foreign cultures and transient if not expedient political and economic associations.

AS a result and a natural consequence of these drastic changes in the conditions of our country a new outlook on life has been forming, life values have been revised, new ways and new modes of thinking are being adopted; in short, a New Order is being established in our country. A new order that is really and truly *new*, a new order that is not a mere figure of speech or a beautiful slogan coined to entice us into thoughtless submission to a new régime. The New Order essentially means the re-entry of the Filipino nation into the family of the Great East Asian countries on a term of equality with all of them and moved by a strong desire to share with the members of that great family a common prosperity.

A Gigantic Task

At once it could be seen that the creation of a New Philippines is a gigantic but glorious task that will demand from every Filipino a large measure of sacrifice and a great deal of work—hard work, fruitful work. This first new year under the new order should serve first of all as starting point in the development of a new concept of *work*, in a new and more valid attitude towards the real meaning of work. The New Philippines has to be built on the solid foundation of earnest work, conscientious work, productive work, if possible, a work of great art, where the best minds and the greatest hearts among our people should dedicate their full measure of service

and devotion. Our haloed martyr, Rizal, through Fr. Florentino uttered these ringing words:

“The glory of saving a country is not for him who has contributed to its ruin Hate never produces anything but monsters and criminals. Love alone realizes wonderful works, virtues alone can save Redemption presupposes virtue, virtue sacrifice, and sacrifice, love!—*Suffer and Work.*”

Suffer and Work

THE New Philippines may become a beautiful reality only through suffering and work. Work alone can save our country and our people. Fortunately this new philosophy of work is gaining more and more adepts. Work's true meaning is becoming more widely understood.

The New Philippines is, in a manner of speaking, an old ideal long lost that we are trying to recapture in real earnest. To regain the essential qualities of an Oriental people; to reacquire the moral qualities of the old Filipinos that we have almost bartered away for the artificiality of a materialistic civilization; to be baptized anew in the purifying waters of simplicity and the natural and unaffected ways of life of our forbears; and to drink deep in the ageless fountain sources of Eastern cultures and philosophies are all positive efforts and constructive accomplishments that will lead us to the early and successful realization of the New Order.

The late Don Teodoro Kalaw, after a through research, reconstructed the five cardinal rules of our old moral code. He found out that the unaffected people of our barrios have preserved the virtues of *courage, chastity, courtesy, self-control, and family unity*, as they were generally practiced by the old Filipinos. He pointed out that a people with such qualities can proudly claim a place of honor among the best peoples on Earth.

In the New Philippines that we are establishing, we are not only allowed but insistently and urgently encouraged by our Japanese friends to revive as much as possible our indigenous culture and develop to the fullest our strong traits and the true qualities of an Oriental people.

New Education

We are likewise encouraged and afforded the opportunity to re-fashion our educational system to make it more responsive to the needs of our time and more in keeping with our natural idiosyncracies and our surroundings. This step is, indeed, vital to the ultimate fate of our country. As in all crises and in all big undertakings, the greatest need is for men and women adequately trained and schooled in the service of their country; men and women equipped with learning and moral and physical strength to undergo untold sacrifices and to do what is expected of them. During the last year our educational leaders have been busy laying a solid foundation for our new educational system. The coming year should see greater advances in this line, especially in the matter

of training our citizenry for a keener consciousness of their social and collective responsibilities.

More Efficient Government

Space will not permit me to discuss on all of the hopeful trends observable in the present day Philippines. I do not want to close, however, without pointing to another beneficial change brought about by the establishment of the New Order. The governmental structure of the country is being re-organized along simpler lines. Waste and extravagance in our official bureaucracy are steadily reduced and it is hoped that they be totally discarded. Government employees are systematically trained to help and serve the people. The haughty, aloof or indifferent officials who make it a practice to lord over the public are being weeded out. Party politics, which made our government in the past the refuge of lame ducks and inefficiency, find no place in the New Order. Government service in all its various gradations are brought nearer to the people; public service is no longer an instrument of power used by few self-seeking individuals for their self-aggrandizement. Corruption and chicanery cannot thrive for a long time in a government where positions are elevated to the condition of sacred trusts whose main purpose is to promote the well-being and best interests of the governed and not to glorify the officials.

The past year has brought us misery and sufferings; it has occasioned losses beyond recovery; it has tested our endurance and our power of adaptation; it has brought changes that are painful to many. On the other hand, a great many of those some changes will bring forth this year and the years to come untold blessings. Many of our false notions about work, about our rightful place in the scheme of the Universe, our worth as a people, the true meaning of service have all been made clearer to us. With this new wisdom and the added strength that it brings with it we can look forward to the future with greater faith and confidence.

Resolution

As a nation we have survived; our Country remains intact. We are given the privilege and the great opportunity to build a stronger nation and a more prosperous and a happy Philippines. There is a patriotic work for everybody to do. Let no one be like Sr. Pasta whom Isagani, in the *Reign of Greed*, condemned thus;

“When I have gray hairs like those, Sir, and turn my gaze over my past, and see that I worked only for myself, without having done what I plainly could and should have done for the country that has given me everything, for the citizens that have helped me to live, then Sir, every gray hair will be a thorn and instead of rejoicing, they will shame me.”

Let us resolve to do all that is in our power to help build a New Philippines and a New World Order that will insure peace and bring happiness to Mankind.