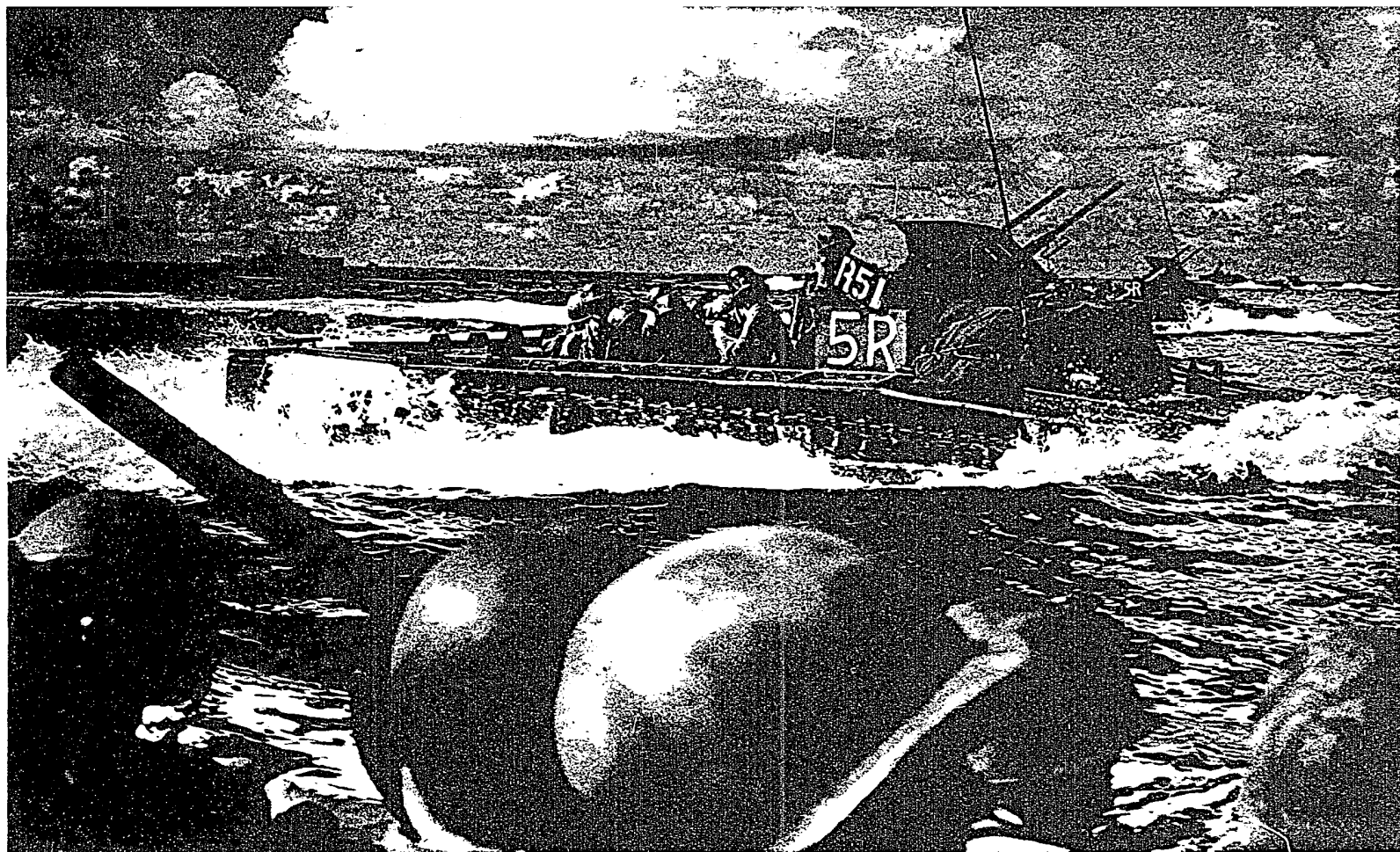


# The Philippines Await Their D-Day: General Romulo sees his people ...

By BRIG. GEN. CARLOS P. ROMULO

New York Times (1923-Current file); Oct 22, 1944; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times

pg. SM5



On the road back in the Pacific—Infantrymen riding an amphtrac in the first assault wave against a Japanese-held island.

## The Philippines Await Their D-Day

**W**E have begun our long trek back to the Philippines and we have a fairly good idea of the condition in which we shall find the people who are held prisoner in these captive islands. I wish I might explain the means by which, over the war barriers, we have kept our fingers on the pulse of the Philippines.

That remains for a happier day, after victory.

Since the day of escape from Manila before the hordes of onswarming Japanese and the joining with General MacArthur on Corregidor I have fitted together the changing pictures of life in the Philippines. Glimpses, grooving together like scrollwork, are given to us by short-waved reports, messages smuggled out past the Japanese conquerors, men and women who have escaped, and by other means.

This we know, the Filipinos who remain alive are a new people, united as they have never been before.

The average Filipino, as I knew him before Pearl Harbor, had a child's confidence in America.

America was his mother, and he looked to her for protection against the threats that rose from the Rising Sun. Other men

**General Romulo sees his people united and eager to renew bonds with America.**

By BRIG. GEN. CARLOS P. ROMULO

Resident Commissioner of the Philippines

in near-by countries quaked at the threat of the Japanese, but the Filipino felt secure under the flag of America, the most powerful nation in the world.

And what happened?

Bataan — and surrender. The Filipino watched the Nipponese rip down the Stars and Stripes and wipe it in the dust of the Philippines. He heard the screams of "Banzai!" that hailed the fall of the white democracy. He was perhaps marched off beside the whipped Americans to prison camp. Whether in or out of barbed wire, he himself was a prisoner. Trapped, because America had failed to protect him, the Filipino was disillusioned and bitter.

Nor was he alone in his bitterness.

**O**N that last night when we fled from falling Bataan I saw Filipino soldiers and American soldiers staggering together

along the road to defeat, and the bitter words spoken by white men and brown that night I am trying to forget, for the pride of America and my own.

Here, in the captive Philippines, was a psychological situation ripe for the hands of the Japanese propagandists.

Propaganda feeds on bitterness and disillusion. The Japanese propaganda is the slyest ever devised.

It is based on racial distrust; the rubbing of salt into half-healed wounds. In the Philippines these wounds were small individual hurts that had all but passed unnoticed at the time by both wounder and wounded. Over and over the propagandists from Tokyo stressed the fact that the Filipinos were also Orientals and as such had been snubbed by white men. Instances were recalled across the years in which a Filipino had been denied access to the Army and Navy Club in Manila.

Snubs given by members of the Army and Navy set, no matter how many years back, were enlarged upon.

Day after day hiring radio announcers jeered at the white man who had lost face.

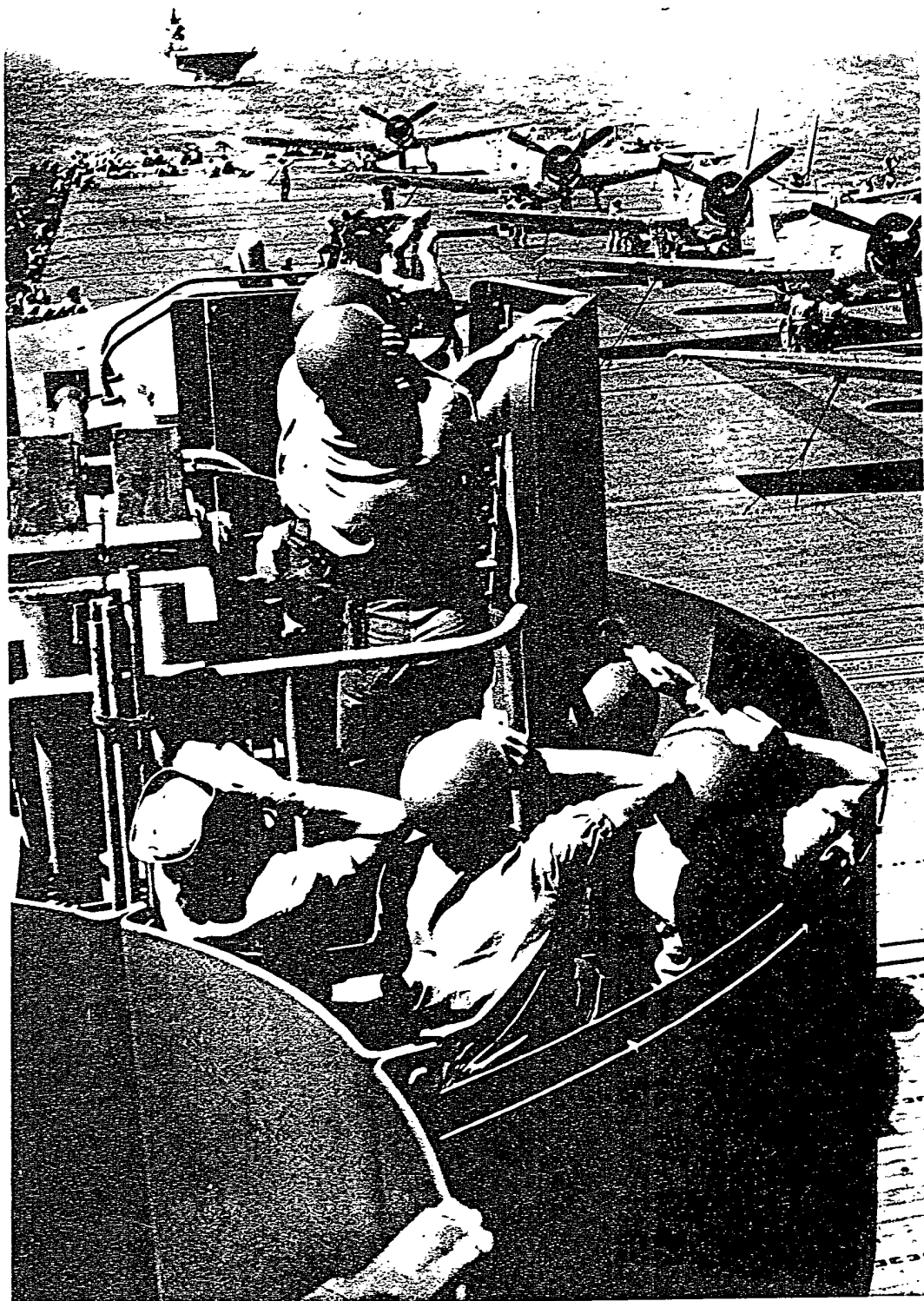
The sore and resentful Filipino listened to the propaganda. In some cases he found truth in the charges. There had been undoubtedly some racial snobbery, even in the democratic Philippines. There were young men, students as a rule, who remembered times they had been invited to certain clubs in Manila only to be refused entrance at the door. The urban Filipino, with centuries of European culture behind him, remembered and resented these hints of superiority.

**B**UT, on the other hand, this same Filipino had perhaps fought at Bataan. And behind him were the older generation.

These were the men of the fields and of the factories. They were men who had been born poor and who remembered, or who had heard their father speak of, the days when a serf of the Philippines slaved his life away without a hope of ever owning his own land, or his own hut, or a carabao to plow his rice fields.

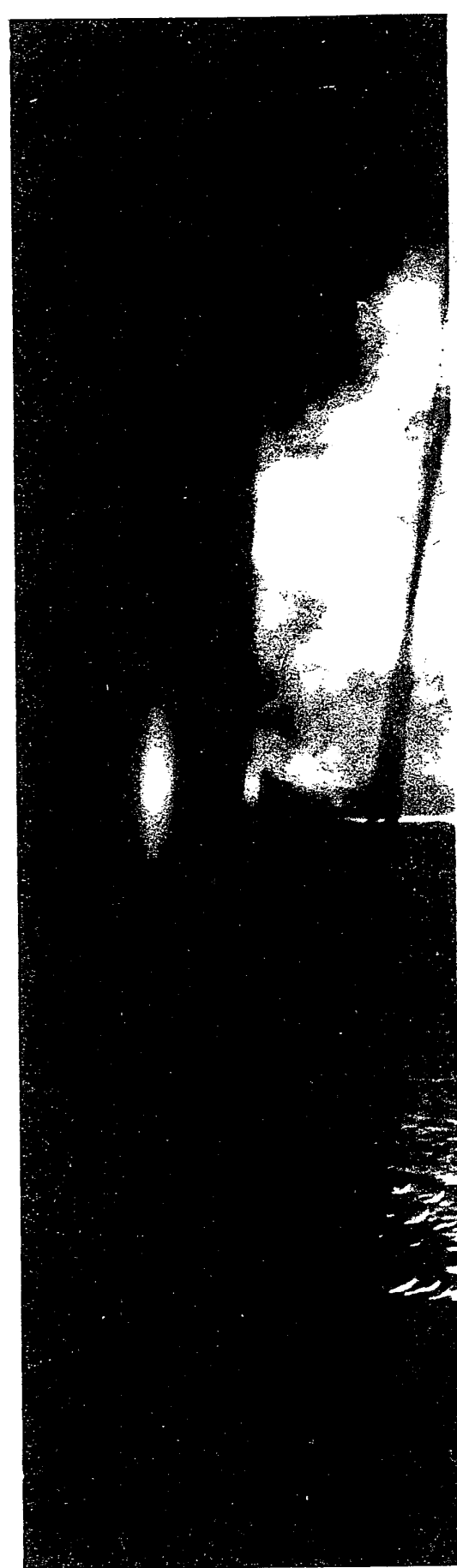
This hopeless- (Continued on Page 42)

# Pacific Task Force



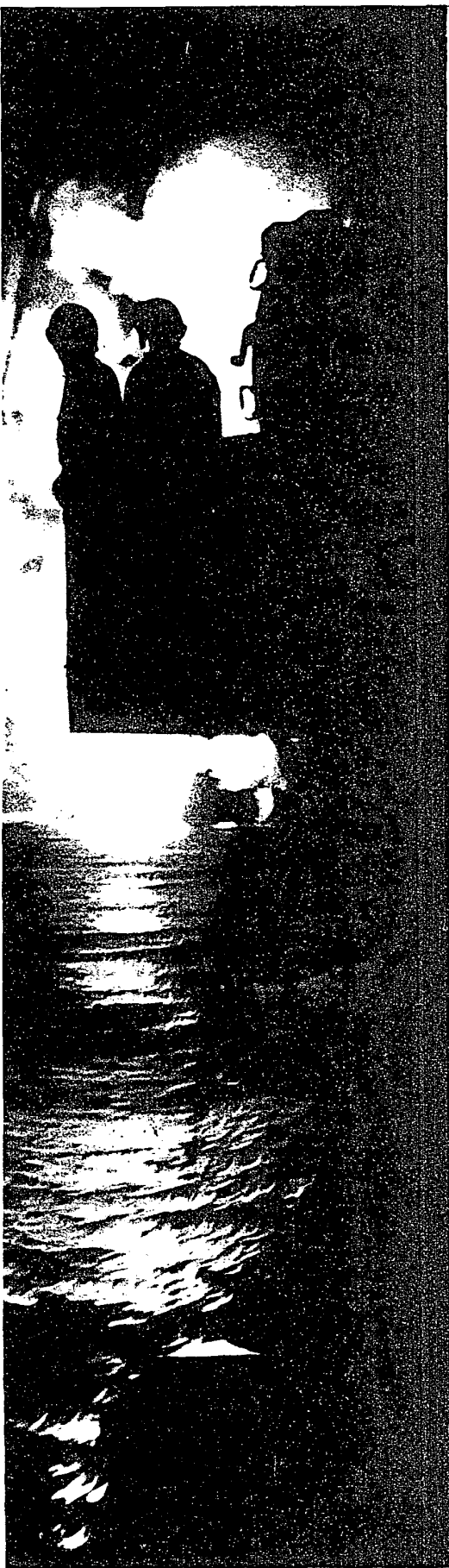
## PLANES

U. S. Navy task forces, with fleet-borne airpower playing a dominating role, are smashing at Japan's inner defenses. Here observers aboard a carrier scan the skies as planes stand "at ready."



## SHIPS

Heavy guns of a U. S. cruiser, supplementing the rifles of the big battle-



ships, light up the dark waters of the Pacific as enemy targets are detected in the distance.



**MEN** Back from a combat tour over enemy positions, an air group commander aboard a carrier describes to officers and men how he shot down a twin-engined Jap bomber.

# Philippines Await D-Day

(Continued from Page 5)

ness had been changed by America.

American methods had assisted the poor Filipino of yesterday to a living wage and had enabled him to send to high school, perhaps even to college, this son who was now being whipped into resentment of long-forgotten snubs.

**I**N the Philippines we listen with respect to the opinions of our elders. The young man remembered the respect his father had for America; he remembered, in time, his own.

American occupation had not meant poverty and degradation for the Philippines. It had meant economic prosperity and equality.

No matter what bribes were offered, the Japanese could not find a single Filipino able to testify he had ever been exploited by an American.

The young are essentially fair. The young Filipino looked back to a thousand evidences of fair dealing on the part of the Americans and balanced against these were the constantly growing record of atrocity and ruthless dealing on the part of the Japanese invaders. In the first place the very word invader is a hated word.

It is a word we had hurled against the Japanese long before they bombed our cities. Infiltration is invasion in a less violent form, and the Japanese had been practicing it in the Philippines twenty years before Pearl Harbor.

We had all that time been suspecting them as a nation and resenting them as a people. In the Philippines we did not mingle with them. They crowded in with us, but we were separate. The Japanese had their own schools, restaurants and barber shops. Even in the process of infiltration, pushing their way in where they were not wanted, they were people apart.

**O**N the other hand, we were friendly with the Americans. We had no separate residential districts. Every Filipino I knew who had any social sense whatever had a host of American friends with whom he shared his interests — business, religious and social.

All this the Filipino under Japan remembered. He made his decision shortly after the fall of the Philippines. He heard it in America.

It was this: "I will stand by America."

Now, after two years under the heel of the Japanese, the Filipino has not gone back on his word. If for a time, apparently, a few young hot-bloods seemed to waver, it is because youth is willing to listen to anything new, and he was interested in hearing what the Japanese had to offer.

He knows, after two years. He has seen with his own eyes things too fearful ever to be forgiven.

He saw the Japanese he always distrusted and feared swarm into his country, burn his church and his home, leave his children

maimed and his wife ravished.

He sees famine in our rich Philippines, where no one ever went hungry.

This is his fault, the Japanese overlords tell him sneeringly.

If he will not plant rice, what can he expect but hunger?

But why raise rice for the Japanese? Why catch fish if the Japanese confiscate his catch?

The Filipino, in his own country, lives in abject fear. Every move he makes is spied upon and suspected. His home is entered and ransacked without warning.

He must bow to every Japanese sentry he passes or his face will be slapped.

**W**HEN, under American rule, was a Filipino obliged to bow before an American sentry? The ordinary treatment he receives at the hands of the Japanese is of a nature he would have resented desperately at the hands of the Americans; from Americans it would be unexpected and unheard of. The inherent decency of the American is always in his memory; these days, in the Philippines.

Among his minor grievances is the loss of the American motion pictures that were his delight. Only Japanese pictures are shown, and he hates these. He understands neither their speech nor their psychology.

He misses his radio programs. Before the war there were 108 radio stations in the Philippines. The few that are left are mouth-ing Japanese propaganda. He does not regret the loss of those which were destroyed, as he himself destroyed them rather than let them fall into Japanese hands. But he loved music, entertainment, gaiety, and now he would not dare laugh if he could.

In the schools he built with such pride and the help of America, his children, their hair clipped Japanese fashion, are compelled to speak Japanese and to bow each morning in the direction of Tokyo.

America, through its motion pictures, radio, educational facilities and personal contacts, gave him access to the entire world.

Japan gives him access only to Japan.

**A**LONG Taft Avenue and Dewey Boulevard, in Manila, streets named by the Filipinos for Americans to whom they were grateful, he has seen the Filipino patriots who refused to collaborate with Japan crucified and left to die.

Lying on the earth in the public squares he sees the slim bodies of young boys who have refused to work in the Japanese labor battalions. In rows they lie there, exposed all day to the heat, their dazed young faces turned up to the sun. And how hot the sun can be, at noonday, in our Philippines!

And the women?

No one dares ask. He is afraid, always, to think what is happening to the Filipino women.

The labor standards of which

(Continued on Page 43)



# Philippines Await D-Day

(Continued from Page 42)

he was so proud have been reduced to oriental level. Cloth can no longer be bought. He is wearing again the native weaving, the sort of dress his poor grandfather wore. He is back again in that grandfather's time, and worse. His slow, harsh road to progress, accelerated in the past half century by America, has been blocked. This is slavery far worse than his grandfather knew under the Spanish kings.

He has had time to remember, these past two years, how white men and brown worked together, sharing the same dream for a free and enlightened Philippines.

He has remembered, too, how prayerfully white men and brown watched shoulder to shoulder on Bataan for the American planes that never came.

He is now lifting his eyes to the skies above Luzon for glimpses of the American planes that will set him free again.

**O**UR contacts reveal that the Filipino is now one with a nation united in hatred of the Japanese and renewed faith in democracy. This is not wholly owing to the pragmatic fact that America is the only country that can bring about his liberation. There is a deeper and more emotional reason,

In the Philippines, waiting to welcome us back, are the veterans who fought beside Americans against the Japanese and who capitulated, with Americans, on Bataan, Luzon, Corregidor. They were captured, with Americans, after their last shared hope was gone. They were marched, beside Americans, under Japanese bayonets to the prison camps at Cabanatuan and Davao. They worked, beside Americans, at slave labor under Japanese whips.

A few, Americans and Filipinos together, escaped. These were the patriots who fought the Japanese from within, who, allied with the loyal citizenry, formed the nucleus of the patriot army that has done so much harm to the Japanese. They paralyzed communications and rail service. In secret they fought the Japanese every step of the way. They have made difficult the holding of the Philippines. They will assist in its liberation.

Long before Bataan there was the sense of amity between us.

**H**OW can the Filipino recall except with fondness the American schoolmarm who taught him his first lessons? How can he remember with anything but appreciation the American business man who gave him his first job, at a fair salary, and who never exploited or cheated him but treated him fairly, in man-to-man fashion?

The Filipino who fought for democracy had before him the ideal of American heroes as well as Filipino. He had been brought up on the legend of Lincoln and

Washington, as well as of Rizal and Quezon.

Linked forever to America, looking to America for liberation, and unanimous in its hatred of the Japanese, a united Philippines is waiting to rise with us against the common enemy. In the meantime the loyal Filipino can only take to the hills as a member of the patriot army. He is in hiding there, with thousands of others, starving, hoping, sallying forth to make any trouble he can, and constantly searching the skies for the silver wings that will signal hope to the Philippines.

**W**ILL our beautiful Manila, once the city of such peaceful gaiety, become another Paris on that day of liberation? Will it rise up in bloodshed and individual reprisal against its oppressors?

I speak for myself and for the nation of Filipinos under the Japanese heel, whose emotions I have been called upon to translate for the past two years across the barriers set by war. I know what I shall do if I am in Manila on that day.

Two years ago, following my escape from Bataan, I should not have felt this way. When I came to America I had in mind only the small individual snapshot the single soldier may have of a vast arena of action. My family was lost, my head had a Japanese price on it, I had sacrificed everything that made life beautiful. But I was curiously unembittered. Perhaps I was spiritually too benumbed to know bitterness.

That was two years ago. Since then I have talked with others who escaped from the Japanese. I have read and listened to the reports that come to us out of the captive Philippines. I can no longer look upon the Japanese as a benighted and misled individual.

**M**Y own experiences, magnified a thousandfold, have crystallized my hatred.

We who plan to return soon to the Philippines look forward with longing and with dread to the day when we begin driving the enemy out of Manila. President Quezon once expressed our fears: "If they were brutal in their success, in retreat they will be savage."

Knowing them as I know them now, I am certain of my own reactions. If I find myself in Manila on the day the first American shells and the first American planes storm over Manila Bay, I shall hunt through the streets of my beloved city until I uncover my first Japanese, and I shall slit his throat.

In this I am not alone. Seventeen million Filipinos share this feeling. This we know.

We know that in Luzon, American and Filipino flags are hidden, rolled together, awaiting the day when they can be set again over a free, loyal and united Filipino people, welcoming America back to the Philippines.