INTRODUCTION

The sudden death of President Magsaysay, just a little more than ten years after the Philippines had attained political independence, seemed to many persons to mark the end of an era. To most Filipinos it seemed an almost unbearable national calamity.

This tragedy focused attention on the Filipino people and their problems. It was necessary to review and to judge what had been done by them and by their American associates, in the light of all that had happened. After Magsaysay's death there was some taking of inventory, some attempt to balance the books. This wasn't "the end of the world," as some Filipinos said they felt it to be. But it was one of those stopping places, where there is a pause for breath and reflection.

What had been carried out in the Philippines by Americans and Filipinos was an unusual political and social experiment. An attempt had been made to bring together a diversity of motives in some sort of program for progress. The Filipinos had agreed, reluctantly at times, to channel their sense of nationalism into a productive and conservative course. The United States had pledged, on the other hand, that the validity of the claims of this nationalism would be respected and that its goals would ultimately be achieved.

The form of this "revolt" against "colonialism" was unique. It came to be, in the end, a joint effort of two peoples to bring about a relationship that would be fruitful to both. It was also an effort to set up in Asia a working democracy

grounded in concepts that were not entirely Asian. It was an effort, often unconscious, to bring about a better synthesis of East and West. Individual Filipinos and Americans, in their relations with each other, often sensed this. Translating this sense into large political forms was a different and sometimes more difficult matter.

In the end, the political goal was reached—and not, as has too often been suggested, merely as a product of war. It was the product of an evolutionary process that would have come to its eventual fruition regardless of external disruptive forces. Philippine independence and freedom were not born on Bataan. They were born in the minds of Filipinos and Americans who had worked during long years for their ultimate consummation.

What would happen after this end was achieved was a matter of interest and concern. Could the Filipinos sustain the new responsibilities that they had so joyfully assumed? Was it possible to establish in Asia a different type of government and a different type of relationship between the rulers and the ruled? Had the periods of trial and error been really profitable? Could the great "Asian experiment" succeed?

These were the questions that the first decade of Philippine independence was required to answer. And the first decade was turbulent, unhappy, and insecure. It came to an end with the death of the one man, Magsaysay, who seemed to hold up, in his person the highest hopes of success. It was only natural that when he died it should be asked, "Can the great experiment go on?"

The pages that follow are an attempt to answer some parts of that question. Necessarily, they must trace the origins of the concept of Philippine freedom. They must show what had been tried and what had been done. They must attempt to obtain focus and perspective. The present derives from the

past. One decade does not stand alone. But one decade can be a revealing period of demonstration.

If the relationship of Filipinos and Americans has been unique, it has also been singularly rewarding. Out of the welter of cross-purposes, conflicts, and misunderstandings, out of the trials and perils of charting new courses, out of the very adjustment of East to West and West to East, has come a new conception of fraternity and joint dedication. We are no longer strangers to the Filipinos, nor they to us.

What has prevailed is a great idea. It has been recognized and embraced. Men can be free, and rejoice in their freedom. They can work for, and fight for, that freedom. They may come from the nipa houses of Luzon or the cottages of Vermont, but they can be brothers. This we have learned.

It should not be unprofitable, therefore, to trace some of the elements in our learning. To that end this book is dedicated.