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## **The Association for Service to the New Philippines (KALIBAPI) during the Japanese Occupation: Attempting to Transplant a Japanese Wartime Concept to the Philippines**

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During the Pacific War, the Japanese government and military attempted to transplant certain Japanese methods and organizations to the occupied countries as part of their administrative policies. Among these were the teaching of Nihongo, the establishment of district and neighborhood associations, censorship of the media and reorientation of education towards Asian and Japanese themes. In the Philippines, as well as in Burma, the Japanese abolished all political parties. In their stead, they created a service association, known as the Association for Service to the New Philippines. Its official name, in the Philippine national language, was *Kapisanan sa Paglilingkod sa Bagong Pilipinas*, or KALIBAPI in short. The KALIBAPI was modeled after the *Taisei Yokusankai* (Imperial Rule Assistance Association) in Japan, and other organizations in occupied Manchuria and China, and was meant to serve the same ends as its counterparts abroad, namely mass mobilization and support for Japan. This paper seeks to examine the Kalibapi and whether or not it achieved its original purposes.

### **I . Precedents and counterparts**

The onset of the Great Depression and other economic problems in the 1930s pushed countries like Germany, Italy and Japan towards military and fascist rule in attempts to solve their problems. This included expansion into neighboring areas for economic resources. Expansion

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was met by resistance and means had to be sought to quell it, as well as mobilize the people both in occupied areas as well as at home to support the military efforts.

Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931, and to mobilize Manchu support, as well as to thwart resistance to occupation, the Japanese military organized the Concordia Society in 1932. As Japan expanded in the Asian mainland, it created the *Hai Min Hui* (New People's Society) in Northern China for similar purposes.<sup>1)</sup>

Similarly, as Germany undertook military expansion in Europe, so-called local service organizations were formed to handle rehabilitation, reconstruction as well as mobilize mass support for the New Order. In Germany proper, the National Socialist Party did away with other political parties and succeeded in establishing a one-party government.

In Japan, a movement towards a one-party system for mass mobilization and in support of government policies was underway to do away with party rivalry and factionalism. Prime Minister Prince Konoye Fumimaro led the way in 1940, announcing his plan to establish a New Political Order for Japan.

In August, Konoye established the Preparatory Commission for Establishing a New Political Order. The body was to think of ways to mobilize the public behind the government and its effort to subdue China, balance powers in government and help end the China conflict. Japan needed a strong domestic structure which could quickly react to any situation which might arise in China. A consolidated domestic front would also allow Japan to adjust relations with other nations and build a new international order. A new political system was needed which

would supplant elections and remove conflict between those governing and governed; a system which would integrate all the people into a nationwide network of political, economic and cultural organizations. This new order would help in formulating and carrying out national policies; it would do away with internal strife, unite the people spiritually and uplift their political ideals and consciousness. The old elite would be shunted to the sidelines as a new nuclear organization would unite all of Japan; in creating this organization the power of the Prime Minister would be strengthened.<sup>2)</sup>

The Preparatory Commission planned to set up two major organizations: a nationwide organization to be known as the *Taisei Yokusankai* (Imperial Rule Assistance Association, hereafter IRAA) and the *Taisei Yokusan Undo* (Imperial Rule Assistance Movement), a popular movement with vocational and cultural components.<sup>3)</sup> The IRAA was a potentially powerful organization, and could replace the Diet and become the center of a truly new, united order. It would have four specific tasks: firstly, helping the government in formulating and executing national policies; secondly, organizing the existing socio-economic-cultural groups; thirdly, assuming a leading position in the Diet; and finally, establishing close liaison between the government and the military. The IRAA would be divided into two, an executive office which would assist in making policy in all levels - national, prefectural, city and village levels, while the other division would be a series of cooperative councils, again on all levels.

The old political parties were dissolved in August 1940 to make way for the new national organization. Specifics of the new organization, particularly its aims and its relationship with

existing branches of government, were not clear, however; some people looked to it as a super body which could unite Japan; the Army and the Navy saw it as a potential tool to further their aims; bureaucrats in government feared it might encroach on their turf.

The IRAA was formally inaugurated as a "public organization" on 12 October 1940. The people looked for a clarification of its aims and character, hoping or fearing the birth of a dynamic new political force. Konoye's speech during the inauguration did not clarify matters: Konoye merely stated that the organization was to "fulfill the way of the subject in assisting the imperial rule." The rest of his speech was general and vague, and to some the objectives seemed similar to an old spiritual mobilization movement.

As a public organization, it was supposed to transcend all political parties, which had been dissolved; membership was open to all, including women and the youth. Training sessions for local organizers were organized, and funding was to be provided mainly from the private sector, particularly the *zaibatsu*.

Its character was still not clear, however, and questions quickly rose as to whether the IRAA was a political party; an administrative organization under the Home Ministry; or a nonpartisan body to mobilize public efforts and build up morale. It was not clear who would have effective power over the organization, and the various government agencies, particularly the Home Ministry, the Army and the Navy, had strong opinions on how the IRAA would act.

The IRAA initially was given both policy-making and executive functions, and since it was open to all, radicals, rightists, liberals and conservatives came under its wing. The policy-mak-

ing branches reacted to economic plans of the government's Planning Board, and recommended more radical economic policies which alienated them from the *zaibatsu*, and hence IRAA funding. Because of this, the IRAA eventually was funded by the government, in which case the budget had to be approved by the Diet. Its character had to be clarified in the Diet discussions, and in the end the IRAA was reorganized into a public organization without policy-making powers.

As revised, the IRAA emerged as an organization to assist in carrying out government policies and mobilize popular support and morale. It was categorically not a political organization. It would be headed by the prime minister as *ex officio* president, but the vice president of the IRAA wielded actual power, running the organization in the prime minister/president's name. It was set up like a department with three bureaus - General Affairs; Organization; and East Asia - with a Central Training Office for training local IRAA officials in mobilizing popular consciousness and opinion. To guide the IRAA was a board of directors who comprised an advisory committee; directors were named from vice ministers, chiefs of the navy and army bureaus, and secretaries of both houses of the Diet. Cooperative councils were established in local levels: prefectural governors served as IRAA branch chiefs and on down to the towns and villages.

The IRAA was not a mass movement per se, being created from the top and not from the grassroots, and it suffered from a lack of genuine public support and enthusiasm. It did not give Konoye the strength he hoped for because the IRAA itself did not owe the Prime Minister

personal allegiance.

It met various problems because of its vague and overly broad nature: it was beset by factionalism and met friction with other agencies of government, particularly the Home Ministry. Bureaucrats feared its potentially overlapping functions, and others felt it unconstitutional. As such it did not become like the Nazi party and failed to unite the nation. It was even criticized by newspapers and Diet members, and was never very popular with - or understood by - the people. In the end it was integrated into the Home Ministry and later, as the war drew to a close in 1945, abolished.

While the IRAA was not, eventually, successful, at the outbreak of the Pacific War in December 1941 it seemed a promising idea, and was transplanted into some of the Southeast Asian countries occupied by Japan. In Burma, political parties were abolished and a single party known as the *Dobama Sinyetha Asi Ayon* (also known as the National Service Organization) was established, incorporating members from all racial ethnic and political groups. The slogan under Japanese occupation was "One Party, One Blood, One Voice, One Command", and the Dobama was supposed to unite the people, support the government and make the people aware of their civic duties. It was to support the government (under Japanese Military Administration) and work for rehabilitation and reconstruction. Headed by the Burmese chief executive, Ba Maw, the Prime Minister of Burma under the Japanese, the organization had an advisory board; it established regional and local chapters, spreading to districts and towns. Schools and institutes were set up to train members in civil defense, and to develop the people's collective

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and individual lives. A Women's Section was set up, headed by Ba Maw's wife.

The National Service Organization was reorganized after the Japanese "granted" Burma its independence in August 1943, and membership was made mandatory for government employees. It was planned to make the organization a training ground for leaders who would serve in various fields of national service and activity, with the organization as a whole striving for complete harmony with the state administration.<sup>41</sup>

In occupied Java, the Japanese also created a nuclear organization, although its character was quite different from the IRAA. In December 1942, the Japanese Military Administration agreed with Indonesian nationalists headed by Sukarno to create a broad nationalist movement. The body became known as the *Pusat Tenaga Rakyat* - Center of the People's Spiritual Power - or Putera in short, and was officially formed in March 1943, after approval from Tokyo was obtained. Sukarno became its head. Like the IRAA, the Putera was not a political party; the Japanese military wanted it to mobilize public participation. Unlike the IRAA, however, the Putera became very popular among lower levels, embodying a strong nationalistic character.<sup>51</sup>

Because it was too nationalistic and limited to Indonesians, the Japanese Military Administration dissolved the Putera and replaced it with the *Jawa Hôkôkai* (Patriotic Service Association). For their own security and for economic support, the Japanese military wanted to include more people in it, among them the local Arabs, Chinese and other nationalities. The *Hôkôkai* then resembled the IRAA and the Dobama in the sense that it made no distinction between races, educational background and occupation. Although the Japanese spoke of uni-

versal brotherhood in the *Hôkôkai*, Indonesian nationalists criticized it and saw it clearly as an organization for Japanese own ends.

The *Hôkôkai* was spread to towns and villages, like the IRAA and the Dobama, and was perceived by the Japanese as an intermediary organ of the Military Administration through which instructions could be given to the people in order to secure their support and cooperation. The Japanese aimed to make it a mass movement, with programs covering a wide range of subjects ranging from basic sanitation instruction to character development, the elimination of Western influences and the cultivation of virtues. The *Hôkôkai* formed labor brigades for factory and farm work, for defense preparations and to aid in the introduction of new farm techniques and crops. Both the Putera and the *Hôkôkai* had lasting effects on the Indonesians, as the Putera served as an agent of nationalism and the *Hôkôkai* made contact between the central government and people possible; neither had been possible under Dutch rule.

After this discussion of the IRAA and similar bodies in Burma and Java, let us now turn to the Philippines and the Kalibapi, and see how it fared.

## II . The establishment of the KALIBAPI.

Japanese policies in occupying the Philippines were basically three: restoring peace and order; establishing a system of self-sufficiency for the occupying Japanese forces, and hastening the acquisition of strategic war resources. The Japanese Military Administration (JMA) which was set up to carry out these policies quickly formed a Filipino Executive Commission which

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they tried to use to mobilize Filipinos and carry out the administrative functions set by the military. The JMA made it a policy not to recognize any existing parties or other political organizations.<sup>6)</sup>

Mobilization and collaboration of the Filipinos was slow to come by, and Japanese military officials recognized that disunity was a problem. In August 1942, the outgoing commander-in-chief of the Japanese forces in the Philippines, Lt. Gen. Homma Masaharu, gave a message to the Filipino people, urging them to unite, disregard minor differences, avoid partisanship and bring reforms to government.<sup>7)</sup>

As the first anniversary of the outbreak of the Pacific War neared, members of the Japanese Military Administration thought of establishing a nationwide service organization to unite Filipinos under Japanese rule. Maj. Gen. Wachi Takeji, Director General of the JMA and second in command of the Japanese occupation forces, worked to create this organization by 8 December 1942. Inspiration for this body came from three sources. One was the IRAA, which was still trying to develop itself; the other was the Concordia Society in occupied Manchuria; and the third was the German policy of creating reconstruction service associations in occupied areas.<sup>8)</sup>

Wachi and others noted the negative effects of the pre-war Philippine political party system and how it led to factionalism, and saw promise in following what had been done in Japan. Wachi thus planned to dissolve political parties and establish a new organization similar to the IRAA. Homma's successor, Lt. Gen. Tanaka Shizuichi approved the plan, as did Tokyo.

As soon as the plan was approved, steps were taken to put it into effect. Col. Utsunomiya

Naotaka, chief of the Department of General Affairs, JMA, went to see the leaders of the various political parties and explained the plan. On 2 December 1942, he took them to the KZRH radio studio at the Escolta where they broadcast the “voluntary” dissolution of their parties as Utsunomiya and other JMA officials watched. Utsunomiya would never forget the sadness in their faces.<sup>99</sup>

Jorge B. Vargas, Chairman of the Philippine Executive Commission, responded: “We leave behind us an era of partisan struggle... With great relief and without regret, we put aside the passions and prejudices, the rancor and rivalry of politics.... As one united people, we must march together with the other nations of East Asia, under the leadership of the great Japanese Empire, to the glorious future that holds our common prosperity and the liberation of our beloved country.”<sup>100</sup>

The military administration rejoiced at the “voluntary” dissolution of the political parties, and announced that the vestiges of American power and authority in the Philippines had been “obliterated.” At that moment, when rapid renovation of the government, society, economy and others was underway, the military administration stated that it was “most expedient and opportune that the existing political parties have decided, of their own accord and through their sincere desire to more fully meet with the present requirements of the country, to dissolve and liquidate their respective organizations for the purpose of fostering closer harmony, concordance, and unanimity among all Filipinos who are devoting themselves, unreservedly, to the reconstruction of their country.” The announcement further added that “the Japanese

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Military Administration expresses its complete agreement to, and high commendation of, this decision and action of the existing political parties, to dissolve themselves,” a move which would eradicate the “ape-like mimicking of the American brand of politics.”<sup>111</sup>

As the political parties were dissolved, a shuffle in the Executive Commission was abruptly ordered by the JMA. Jose P. Laurel, Commissioner of the Department of Justice, was made Commissioner of the Department of the Interior, leaving the former Commissioner of the Interior, Benigno S. Aquino, without a position. Aquino, perplexed at his sudden relief, was called to the JMA offices and told that he would be appointed “to an important post.”<sup>122</sup>

Unknown to Aquino, that “important post” was as Director General of the *Kapisanan sa Paglilingkod sa Bagong Pilipinas* (Association for Service to the New Philippines; Kalibapi) which was about to be created.

The Kalibapi idea was patterned closely after the IRAA and other similar institutions, but had to be couched in the proper Philippine political terminology, to keep in being with Philippine political and legal practice. Vargas thus issued Executive Order No. 109 on 4 December 1942, which was approved by Gen. Tanaka on the same day.<sup>133</sup>

The Kalibapi was established as a “non-political service organization” with its office in Manila. Subject to the rules of the Philippine Corporation Law, it was given powers and provisions as allowed by law insofar as such provisions were “compatible with the terms of the New Order.”

The Kalibapi’s purposes, as stated in the executive order, were as follows:

- 1) To render such services as will bring about the rapid reconstruction of the Philippines and the rehabilitation of its people, for which purposes it shall strive (a) to secure the unification of the people of all classes through the development in them and among them of the conviction that the permanent security, well-being, and happiness of the Filipinos depend on the permanent security of the Philippines; and (b) to coordinate all activities and services of organizations or individuals that are or may hereafter be concerned with the development or promotion of the welfare of the people socially, spiritually, physically, culturally, economically or otherwise;
- 2) To insure a stable foundation for the New Philippines by fostering (a) the cultural, moral, spiritual, and economic advancement of the people by giving advancement to the above-mentioned activities and by invigorating in them such oriental virtues as hard work, faith, self-reliance, loyalty, bravery, discipline, and self-sacrifice; and (b) the development of a more sturdy and vigorous race of Filipinos by attending to the physical development of the people through a wise supervision of physical exercise and wholesome recreational and outdoor activities, particularly sports, and athletic contests;
- 3) To assist the Filipino people in fully comprehending the significance of, and to strengthen their adherence to, the principles of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere;
- 4) To secure for the Philippines its rightful place in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere as a worthy member thereof;
- 5) To adhere strictly to the policies of the Imperial Japanese Forces in the Philippines in

their administration and to render service in the establishment of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere; and

- 6) To do any and all acts which will facilitate the reconstruction of the New Philippines, and contribute to the advancement of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

Any Filipino who was eighteen years of age or above, who was in good standing in the community, and “who identifies himself with the ideals, aims and purposes of the Association” could become a member. This thus opened the Kalibapi to Filipinos regardless of sex, profession, educational background or religion. Membership was to be entirely voluntary and free of charge, although a member could be expelled if he or she committed acts “unworthy of a good Filipino” or did not follow the principles of the New Order. Although the executive order stated that membership was voluntary, it added that no one would be hired to work for the government unless he or she was a member of Kalibapi.

Like the IRAA and the Dobama, the Kalibapi was headed by the chief Filipino executive official, namely the Chairman of Executive Commission, who served as *ex officio* president. The president convened meetings, decided policy and approved the budget, with assistance from an Advisory Board and the Vice President and Director General. All his acts had to be approved by the Commander in Chief of the Japanese forces in the Philippines, to whom the president would submit reports when required.

The Vice President of the Kalibapi was also concurrently its Director General, who wielded



actual executive authority. The Director General was head of the Kalibapi Executive Staff which would execute all measures adopted by the president.

In addition to the President and Vice President/Director General was the Kalibapi Advisory Board, composed of the commissioners of the Philippine Executive Commission who served *ex officio*. Kalibapi bureau and office chiefs, as well as three Directors-at-Large (one each to represent Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao) were other members of the Advisory Board, whose function was to facilitate closer cooperation and coordination between the Kalibapi and the Executive Commission.

The Kalibapi had an Executive Staff, composed of the Vice President/Director General and the chiefs of bureaus and offices of the association.

Like the IRAA, the Kalibapi was divided into bureaus. These bureaus were the Bureau of General Affairs, which took charge of all matters relating to moral, physical, cultural and economic rehabilitation, education, employment and liaison services; the Research and Planning Bureau; the Bureau of Provincial and Municipal Branches and the Bureau of Publicity, which would make use of the press, radio, cinema, posters, rallies, meetings, stage and other media in coordination with proper Japanese military authorities. The bureaus were further broken down into divisions. In addition to the four bureaus was the Office of the Secretary-Treasurer and an Auditor.

The Kalibapi was to establish local chapters in each province, city and municipality in the Philippines. Again like the IRAA and its Burmese and Indonesian counterparts, the provincial

governors and city mayors were to be *ex officio* heads of the local chapters. If conditions allowed, barrio and *sitio* chapters would also be organized. All local chapters were subject to the immediate supervision of the central office.

The Kalibapi was to meet at least once a year in a General Assembly, wherein two representatives from each provincial or city chapter were to attend; regular meetings were set for the second Monday of January whenever possible.

Funds for the Kalibapi would come from contributions made by the Executive Commission or "by entities and persons interested in the aims and purposes of the Association." In practice the JMA provided funds and resources to the Kalibapi, whose budget had to be approved by the Commander in Chief of the Japanese forces in the Philippines.

Executive Order 109 also directed that the emblem of the Kalibapi be a red diamond with a white circle. The white circle was supposed to represent peace and integrity, while the red was supposed to stand for sincerity and patriotism.<sup>141</sup>

To prevent anyone from challenging the Kalibapi, the executive order declared unlawful the creation of any other similar group.

The Kalibapi's officials were appointed on the same day the executive order was signed and approved. Vargas, as Chairman of the Executive Commission, was automatically President of the Kalibapi; the commissioners were also automatically *ex officio* members of the Advisory Board. The all important position of Vice President and Director General was the "important post" promised to Aquino. The JMA placed two staunchly pro-Japanese Filipinos in the Execu-

tive Staff: Pio Duran, pre-war legislator, was made Director of the Bureau of General Affairs and Benigno Ramos, pre-war head of the Sakdal party, which had pro-Japanese leanings, became Director of Publicity. Jose B. Laurel, Jr., son of Jose P. Laurel who was Commissioner of the Interior, had been legal consultant with the Japanese embassy before the war; he was named Director of the Bureau of Provincial and Municipal Branches. Vargas chose Dominador M. Tan, pre-war legislator, to the only position he was apparently allowed to fill, that of Director of Research and Planning. Arsenio N. Luz was appointed secretary-treasurer; Alfonso Mendoza, head of the defunct *Partido Democrata*, was appointed Director-at-Large representing Luzon; Oscar Ledesma, represented the Visayas; and Juan Alano, represented Mindanao. All three regional directors had served as assemblymen before the war.<sup>15)</sup>

Aquino as Director General was a sound choice by the Japanese, as he had had many contacts throughout the Philippines before the war, and particularly so under the JMA, when he was Commissioner of the Interior. He was a captivating and charismatic speaker; he was ambitious, energetic and enthusiastic. He had his own thoughts, however, which did not always jibe with Japanese ambitions, but the Japanese knew that they could rely on him to build the Kalibapi.<sup>16)</sup>

The Kalibapi was made public at a ceremony commemorating the start of the Pacific War. On the morning of 8 December 1942, during the program commemorating Japan's successes, Vargas spoke, saying that in the past, during times of crisis, Filipinos formed "vast popular organizations" and were always willing to do their part. "Inspired by the needs of the Philip-

pines and the challenge of the times," Vargas said, a group of Filipinos had organized the Kalibapi. It was a "significant and epochal movement" for the Philippines, for the Kalibapi was meant for mental education, moral regeneration, physical invigoration and economic rehabilitation of the Philippines under the guidance of the JMA. "It will assist in carrying out the policies and projects of the administration. It will develop even greater cooperation with the Japanese Empire... In a word the Association will be the strong right arm of the administration in the pursuit of our common welfare."

Col. Utsunomiya then read the address of the Director General, JMA: It was a memorable and significant day commemorating the outbreak of the war and the establishment of the Kalibapi. "We are looking forward to its healthy development and glorious success with high hopes and great expectations." The Kalibapi, the Director General stressed, was a new association to encourage Filipinos in the fulfillment of their duties, inspiring pride in being Orientals, and reawakening the idea of nobility in work. The Kalibapi, he continued, also aimed to remove the superficial outlook acquired by Filipinos from the Anglo-Americans. "The fire and enthusiasm of the members of this association will, without question, stimulate and rally the masses, awakening in their hearts love for labor and opening their eyes to the realities of the present."

The Director General of the Kalibapi, Aquino, spoke next. He was overwhelmed by the confidence in him by heads of the administration, and announced his acceptance of the important Kalibapi post. He underlined the fact that Filipinos were Orientals and must renounce the U.S.; they must join the other Orientals.<sup>17)</sup>

Vargas formally called on Gen. Tanaka in the afternoon to report the official founding of the Kalibapi.<sup>18)</sup>

While 8 December was a significant date for the Japanese, a second date, which had more significance for Filipinos, was chosen for the formal oath-taking of the Kalibapi officials, and hence the official inauguration of the association. This was set on 30 December 1942, the anniversary of the martyrdom of Jose Rizal, the Philippine national hero. To add meaning to the inauguration, all the appointed officials took their oath in front of the Rizal Monument at Luneta Park in Manila.

Vargas, as Kalibapi president, spoke on the meaning of Rizal, and how his spirit was embodied in, and would serve as the guide for the Kalibapi. The Kalibapi would make national unification - Rizal's dream - possible; and it would also develop in Filipinos those characteristics which he had considered necessary to build a strong Philippines. Vargas, however, admitted that it was the JMA which had encouraged its formation, conflicting with previous announcements that the movement had been spontaneous.<sup>19)</sup>

Aquino followed, speaking on the Kalibapi's purposes and its need for selfless patriotism, citing examples from Rizal. He showed how the Kalibapi's purposes coincided with Rizal's dreams. In addition to Filipino ideals, the Kalibapi, he stated, would also develop in Filipinos the Oriental virtues of genuine confidence, faith, loyalty and bravery, virtues lost because of Western colonization. He then cited the negative colonial record of the West, the good aims of Japan, and urged all Filipinos to join the Kalibapi enthusiastically.<sup>20)</sup>

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To the Japanese, the Kalibapi was an instrument through which they could mobilize Filipino support for their policies; to those Filipinos who sincerely believed in it, it was a means towards making national unity real. On the occasion of the signing of Executive Order 109, Vargas stated: "The guiding principle of the KALIBAPI has been the construction of a national unity rising above all particular interests free from the petty jealousies and rivalries of our old partisan organization and free from any suspicion of partiality and selfishness. Thus it is hoped to attain a full, unreserved, and unimpeded communication and cooperation between the administration and the people, so that administrative measures, on the one hand, can be enforced with strict impartiality and disinterestedness, and so that the popular will and the common welfare, on the other hand, can be expressed and served without reserve or partisanship. The Kalibapi is thus a magnificent and unrivalled means to secure the whole-hearted support and cooperation of the people with the untarnished fervor of a genuine love of country, free from any stigma of personal ambition, party rivalry or class interest."

According to its supporters, the Kalibapi was epitomized in various traditional and national practices, such as *bayanihan*, the traditional spirit of cooperation in the provinces, the spirit of heroism, and so forth. Echoing its model, one pamphlet stated that "the Kalibapi is really an instrument of good like the *Taisei Yokusan Kai*."<sup>21)</sup>

Like the IRAA, however, the Kalibapi would face various problems even as its leaders tried to make it achieve its objectives. It was similar to the *Hōkōkai* in name, but was more like the Putera in fact. But while in Indonesia the Putera was a step forward, in Philippines, the

Kalibapi was a step backward.<sup>22)</sup>

As 1942 ended, the Kalibapi was a reality, but like its counterparts, it was not a grassroots organization; it had been conceived and created by the JMA, and was being pushed down Filipino throats.

### III. The Kalibapi in Action, Phase I

By the end of 1942, the Kalibapi had become a reality in the sense that it had officers, it had an office (in the Oriente Building in Manila) and began to recruit members.

On becoming a member of the Kalibapi, one had to take the Kalibapi Oath. It read:

On my honor, I solemnly pledge to be loyal to the Japanese Military Administration and the Philippine Executive Commission; never to disgrace the Philippines by my deeds; to place the interests of the nation above those of the individual; to discard all selfish considerations and past dissensions; to develop the native virtues that will give strength and happiness to the Filipino people; to unite my mind, my heart and my efforts with those of my countrymen in the establishment of a Bagong Pilipinas [New Philippines] as a useful unit of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere; and to respect and obey the orders of the 'KALIBAPI' and uphold the ideals for which it stands.<sup>23)</sup>

The oath made any Kalibapi member overtly loyal to the JMA, and as majority of the Fil-

ipinos was hostile against the Japanese and supportive of the Americans, the oath alone was enough to turn Filipinos away from the association, despite its other nationalistic purposes. Like the IRAA, the Kalibapi was a vague concept. Although it was a national service association, and it had its purposes, it did not have any concrete programs and policies to attain its purposes; many people questioned what the organization really was.

The first task of the Kalibapi officials was therefore to explain to the people what the Kalibapi was, to drive home the need for unity, to recruit members and organize local chapters. Aquino started in Manila; on 7 January 1943 he spoke at a youth rally in the Philippine Club, trying to answer the question in many Filipinos' minds: "What, really, is the Kalibapi?" Aquino stressed that it was a service association - service especially for nation building. It was meant to coordinate efforts, so there would be no waste; it would work for cohesive and regimented action instead of individualism. The association aimed to build a nation physically vigorous, economically progressive, culturally pre-eminent, socially prosperous, spiritually revitalized, and morally rejuvenated. It would remove Occidental vices; and would disseminate information on the meaning and significance of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. "It is our purpose, too," Aquino added, "to subscribe wholeheartedly to the policies of the Imperial Japanese Forces in the Philippines, not in fear but in gratitude for all that they have done and are doing for the ultimate welfare and happiness of our people." He concluded by saying: "Orientalism is the basic foundation of this great national movement," and then called on the youth to support the Kalibapi.<sup>24)</sup>

From Manila, Aquino led the Kalibapi officers on stumping tours of the provinces. Symbolically, the first provincial foray was to Malolos, Bulacan, which had been the capital of the erstwhile Philippine Republic in 1898. There Aquino spoke to an assembled crowd on 12 January. Two days later, Aquino was in San Fernando, Pampanga, again preaching the Kalibapi way; the next day was Tarlac, Tarlac's turn, Aquino's hometown, where some 20,000 people were reported to have attended. On 16 January, the Kalibapi party was in Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija. After a two-week rest, Aquino was on the provincial trail again, speaking in Dagupan, Pangasinan on 30 January. In mid-February, Aquino spoke in Baguio and San Fernando, La Union, and on 24 March he was in Vigan, Ilocos Sur. The content of Aquino's speeches, filled with literary quotes and allusions, was the same: the purposes and nobility of the Kalibapi; the need for unity and collaboration with the Japanese; the "true" aims of Japan in the war; the futility of resistance; Aquino's own interpretation of Japanese history, and the need to return to the Orient.<sup>25)</sup>

Crowds attended the Kalibapi programs, and Aquino stated that he was met with great popular reaction everywhere he went, which made him rejoice and provided him with inspiration. Noted Filipino historian Teodoro A. Agoncillo wrote that Aquino, "more than any other Filipino, was responsible for the success" of the Kalibapi. "A fiery orator and a seasoned politician, he swayed, or seemingly swayed the masses to the Kalibapi way."<sup>26)</sup>

To further spread the Kalibapi way, Aquino sent Kalibapi officers to other areas of Luzon and to the Visayas. Camilo Osias spoke at Santiago, Isabela on 13 March; and Dominador M.

Tan was sent to Cebu later in 1943.

On a less grand scale, Vargas also spoke on the goals of the Kalibapi and campaigned for members. On the eve of the first anniversary of the establishment of the Executive Commission, Vargas, in an interview with a *Manila Shimbun* correspondent, stated: "The Kalibapi movement is the foundation of the spiritual awakening of the people. They should bear in mind that by participating whole-heartedly in it, they can contribute to the creation of the New Philippines."<sup>27)</sup>

In late January, the Kalibapi Executive Staff issued orders to form provincial, city and municipal chapters; and a month later, similar orders were issued to form the respective local committees.<sup>28)</sup>

To further stimulate the development of the local chapters, a convention of provincial governors, city mayors and senior inspectors of the Constabulary was held in Manila in late February. While the convention discussed other matters of local government under the JMA, particularly with the reiterated promise by Prime Minister Tojo Hideki granting the Philippines "the honor of independence", one whole day, 25 February, was devoted to discussions of how to achieve the Kalibapi's aims throughout the country. Laurel, Vargas and Aquino spoke; Vargas was emphatic about the Kalibapi as "the symbol and synthesis of the entire nation. The Kalibapi stands for the unbreakable unity of the Filipino people and for the genuine spirit of Filipinism and Orientalism emancipated from any and all dependence on Occidental civilization."

In the convention, Aquino gave a long speech on the need to remodel the Filipino character as Orientals. He stressed that the Kalibapi gave every Filipino the chance to participate in developing the country, unlike before the war, when only a fraction could vote. After the speeches, there was time for open discussions on how to make the Kalibapi effective, and how to further strengthen it.<sup>29)</sup>

Although the speeches and news reports stressed the voluntary nature of membership, Executive Order 109 clearly stated that no one was to be hired by the government unless he or she was a member of the Kalibapi. To give this provision teeth, the Budget and Auditing Office on 3 February 1943 announced that no government employee would be paid unless he or she could show proof of Kalibapi membership.<sup>30)</sup>

Government officials and employees were thus forced to become members of the Kalibapi. Even before the Kalibapi had been formally inaugurated, all civic bodies were made a part of the Kalibapi. This meant that the National Federation of Women's Clubs, the Young Men's Christian Association, the Young Women's Christian Association, the Philippine Association of Women Writers, and the Filipino Nurses Association, among others, were drafted into the Kalibapi by order. Newspapermen were likewise sworn into the Kalibapi in February 1943.<sup>31)</sup>

The results of these membership campaign drives and forced joinings are difficult to ascertain, and figures are inconsistent. One source states that by the third week of January 1943, there were 23,000 members nationwide; another source alleges that in Manila alone, 25,000 applications for membership had been received. In April, the Japanese-controlled newspapers

reported that the Kalibapi had 550,000 members, with 89,000 from Aquino's home province of Tarlac, and 87,000 in Manila. But in June, there were reportedly only 353,647 members - one out of every forty-nine Filipinos. These were partial figures, owing to the late arrivals of reports from provinces, claimed the controlled press, optimistically estimating the actual membership to be around one million. In October, acting Director General Camilo Osias claimed the Kalibapi had a strength of 604,7000.<sup>32)</sup>

Despite - or because - of these figures, in August, the Kalibapi was still trying to spread its ideals and aims in an effort to convince skeptical Filipinos to participate more actively. It published a pamphlet explaining in more detail what the Kalibapi hoped to do. It mentioned many things, but was still not clear on how they were to be accomplished. This same month, the Kalibapi Manila office urged local officials to campaign for membership, which, it stressed, was purely voluntary.<sup>33)</sup>

On 15 May 1943, Prime Minister Tojo visited Manila to see first hand conditions in the Philippines. Tojo asked Aquino whether the Kalibapi had many members. Aquino answered affirmatively. Tojo asked if any coercion had been used. Aquino, probably tongue in cheek, replied that no coercion had been used. Tojo seemed satisfied.<sup>34)</sup>

As the Kalibapi expanded throughout the country, it developed cultural programs which were in accord with Japan's aims: fostering a greater sense of Orientalism, emphasizing and developing Filipino native culture and rejecting the culture and practices of the West. On 2 June 1943, Vargas reported to the newly-arrived Commander-in-Chief, Lt. Gen. Kuroda

Shigenori:

The Kalibapi, or Association for Service to the New Philippines, has rapidly spread throughout the Philippines. Its members are pledged to take a leading part in the revival of the ancient Filipino virtues and the return of the Filipino people to their proper place in the scheme of Oriental civilization.

Hardly had the propaganda and membership drive started when the Kalibapi in Manila organized its first formal activity, a Concert-Meeting sponsored by the Kalibapi at the Metropolitan Theater in the morning of 7 February 1943. Compositions by Filipino and Japanese composers were played, but also pieces by Chopin and other Western composers. The program ended with the singing of the Grand March of the Kalibapi, which had just been composed.<sup>35)</sup>

Vargas and Aquino spoke in between musical renditions. Vargas congratulated the artists, stating that they demonstrated the wealth of native culture; part of the Kalibapi's aims was to revive and encourage Filipino culture. Aquino, with long literary embellishments, lambasted Anglo-Saxon culture, and urged developing internal and external factors which would contribute to Filipino development.<sup>36)</sup>

On the evening of 20 February 1943, the Kalibapi commemorated the eighty-first death anniversary of the Tagalog poet Francisco Baltazar at the Philippine Club. Vargas spoke, urging unity and emphasizing the importance of the national language in achieving it. Baltazar,

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he said, led the way in using the national language; the Kalibapi and writers of the present would follow him.<sup>37)</sup>

Another Conference-Concert was sponsored by Kalibapi on 16 May 1943 at the Metropolitan Theater. A new epic poem on Japan (ironically in Spanish) was read, and in between stanzas were musical pieces by Filipino, Japanese, and European composers. The whole program was in Spanish.<sup>38)</sup>

To further broaden its reach, the Kalibapi began a series of radio programs over the Manila radio station KZRH; it was inaugurated, by Vargas, as the Kalibapi hour on 13 April 1943.<sup>39)</sup>

In order to give the Kalibapi a more Filipino character, a code of ten points was framed, becoming the Kalibapi Decalogue. This was patterned after the Decalogue tradition of the anti-Spanish revolutionary group Katipunan, and was intended to instill greater loyalty to the association. It was given wide publicity in all the Kalibapi publications, and read as follows:<sup>40)</sup>

1. The Kalibapi is an association for service to the New Philippines. It is my duty to help it.
2. The Kalibapi is an organization of, by, and for Filipinos. I believe in its high and noble ideals, aims, and purposes. I am a member of the Kalibapi and proud of it.
3. The Kalibapi is formed to bring about rapid reconstruction of the Philippines and the rehabilitation of the people. I will cooperate.
4. The Kalibapi is to secure the unification of the Filipino people of all classes. I must have the spirit of unity for in union there is strength.

5. The Kalibapi is to coordinate all activities and services of organizations or individuals concerned with promoting the welfare of the people physically, socially, culturally, spiritually, and otherwise. I shall do my full part.
6. The Kalibapi is to insure a stable basis for the New Philippines. I must aid to make the foundation of an independent Philippines strong and enduring.
7. The Kalibapi fosters the cultural, moral, spiritual, and economic advancement of the Filipino people by strengthening such virtues as hard work, faith, self reliance, loyalty, bravery, discipline, and self-sacrifice. I shall strive to be a good Oriental and a true Filipino.
8. The Kalibapi stands for the development of a more sturdy and vigorous race of Filipinos. I must be healthy and strong.
9. The Kalibapi aids the Filipinos to understand the significance of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere and the role that the Philippines should play in the community of cooperating nations in the Orient. I must know the principles of neighborliness and cooperation and render service to make the Philippines a worthy member of the Sphere.
10. The Kalibapi is to do any and all acts that will advance the ideals and causes of independence and interdependence. I must be efficient and self-directing in sacrificial service to ideals and causes which are more precious than property and life.

In addition to the Kalibapi March, a Kalibapi salute was devised, apparently being based on

the Nazi salute.<sup>41)</sup>

As the Kalibapi expanded and carried out more programs, its basic structure was modified on 18 May 1943, with the creation of the position of Assistant Director General; the number of directors-at-large was increased to four. Camilo Osias, pre-war educator, was appointed Assistant Director General and the new director was Benigno Ramos, who was concurrently Director of Publicity.<sup>42)</sup>

To allow Filipinos younger than eighteen years to join, the executive order which amended the Kalibapi's basic charter created the Junior Kalibapi. The Junior Kalibapi sought to train boys and girls under eighteen in the ideals of the Kalibapi, and a six week training course focusing on athletic leadership training was planned. The Junior Kalibapi was formally inaugurated on another symbolic day, 19 June 1943, the anniversary of Rizal's birth. Members of the Veterans of the Revolution (an association of veterans who had fought the Spaniards and the Americans during the Revolution, and which had been dissolved along with the other political parties) joined Kalibapi, making the Kalibapi a link between the old generation and the coming one.<sup>43)</sup>

Around September 1943, a Kalibapi Women's Auxiliary Service of Manila was organized by women leaders of the community, to coordinate the work of all women's organizations. It was headed by Osias wife.<sup>44)</sup>

To spread the ideals espoused by the Kalibapi - love of labor, unity, understanding of Japan's war aims and so on - the Kalibapi opened two institutes for adults. The first was the Kalibapi



Workers' Institute (later the Kalibapi Labor Institute), opened on 3 May 1943. The Workers' Institute sought to orient laborers with the "traditional" Oriental values; they had to take up classes on Nippongo, Filipino, Oriental and Filipino culture and other subjects which could help them become more loyal and efficient workers. Actual field and vocational work was taught for hands on training. The course lasted one month, and by October 1943 the institute was reported to have graduated 1533 laborers.<sup>45)</sup>

The second institute was the Kalibapi Leaders Institute, which had been personally conceived by Osias. This institute planned to train men and women in the Kalibapi way; graduates would go back to their towns and provinces and disseminate what they had learned to become Kalibapi leaders in their own localities. The institute opened on 30 August 1943, the birthday of Marcelo H. del Pilar, a leading anti-Spanish propagandist in the late nineteenth century. Vargas and Aquino spoke at the opening ceremony, highlighting the importance of the institute to the Kalibapi. The first class consisted of 140 men and women from each province, town and city in the Philippines, who participated in mental, physical (including Radio Taiso) and moral activities. They were urged to follow the Rizal way, and took their oath in front of the Rizal monument before classes started. They attended classes on the national language and Nippongo, and listened to lectures on various topics by Japanese and Filipino experts. Osias himself lectured on the Kalibapi philosophy, Filipino culture and language daily. The delegates were exposed to different trades and vocations, and did field work to expose them to hard work. They worked and studied for three months, during which time

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they were paid an allowance of fifty pesos a month. Many of those who were chosen for the institute were established professionals or local officials; some were teachers while others were former Philippine Army officers.<sup>46)</sup>

The Kalibapi also served as a venue for spreading Japanese culture and ideas, as part of its aims. On 31 July, it sponsored a lecture by Gen. Matsui Iwane, then visiting the Philippines, at the Session Hall of the Legislative Building. This was followed by a banquet also sponsored by the association.<sup>47)</sup>

Pio Duran, Director of General Affairs, along with other Kalibapi officials went to Japan in June 1943 as part of the first Filipino observation mission to see Japan at war first hand; they reported on what they saw when they returned.<sup>48)</sup>

But the JMA had not created the Kalibapi merely for Filipino ends nor for passive reporting on Japan; it had been intended, like the IRAA, as a means to mobilize Filipino support for the Japanese war effort, and for Japanese programs in the Philippines. The first time the Kalibapi was used to mobilize support for Japan's programs was immediately after Prime Minister Tojo repeated his promise, in front of the Japanese Diet on 28 January 1943, of granting the "honor of independence" to the Philippines, should Filipinos show greater signs of collaboration with Japan and understand Japan's war aims.

The next day, Aquino quickly addressed the country through radio, stating that Tojo's declaration deserved the sincerest gratitude of the Filipino people. Tojo's promise inspired him: "As Director General of the Kalibapi, I feel, now more than ever highly resolved and determined to

commune with the masses and to reach, if possible, even the remotest regions of the country, in order that I might carry out the mission entrusted to the KALIBAPI of informing and convincing the people of the real purposes of the government of His Imperial Majesty, and of the great responsibility which falls upon every Filipino in these decisive moments for the realization of the National Ideal." He thus went on another round of provincial tours to whip up support for the Kalibapi.<sup>49)</sup>

Vargas stated that the Filipino people responded with promptness and enthusiasm to the Kalibapi, which "immediately devoted its efforts to the task of reorientation and rejuvenation, utilizing every available means to ward off all harmful Anglo-American influences and to revive Oriental culture and civilization." With Tojo's pronouncement, the Kalibapi had more meaning: "In no way... can the Filipino serve his country better at this period of national existence than by joining this national service association."<sup>50)</sup>

A gratitude rally was ordered by the JMA, one in which the Kalibapi was prominent in. The Kalibapi was also prominent in mustering crowds for other public gatherings on JMA-designated days, such as to commemorate the anniversaries of the Japanese conquests of Bataan and Corregidor. The Kalibapi was also mobilized, along with other agencies, when Prime Minister Tojo visited Manila in May 1943. Tojo was so impressed with the size of the crowds which welcomed him (attendance was mandatory) that after his return to Japan he announced that Japan would be ready to grant the Philippines the honor of independence within the year.

Most Filipinos doubted the sincerity of Japan and wondered about the type of independence

under Japan, knowing what had happened in occupied Manchuria and China. Some felt that the war was turning against Japan, hence the haste in which it wanted to give the "honor of independence." A man in Manila brusquely pushed aside a newspaper boy trying to sell his newspapers announcing independence in 1943: "You can keep that kind of independence."<sup>51)</sup> Since general support of Japan's plan was not forthcoming from the grassroots, and since anti-Japanese resistance continued to fester in the provinces, the JMA sought to legitimize its plan through the Kalibapi.

Quickly, Aquino went on the air to express his thanks to Japan: Tojo's pronouncement "overwhelms us with deep emotion," he said, and it "should strengthen the Filipinos' determination to collaborate more actively with Japan in the successful prosecution of the war waged avowedly for the liberation of Oriental peoples from Western domination." He continued, "The Kalibapi shall show in concrete form its real appreciation by strengthening the unification of the people, by restoring and maintaining peace and order, by laboring toward economic self sufficiency, and by hastening our spiritual regeneration and thus make the independent Philippines a worthy member of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere."<sup>52)</sup>

A step towards preparing for independence would be the creation of a preparatory body for Philippine independence. To give the body legitimacy, the Kalibapi was used to nominate its members. The Kalibapi was ordered to hold a Special National Convention - its first - which was scheduled on 18 June at the Metropolitan Theater. Provincial governors were quickly taken to Manila by air, while others were hastily designated to act as representatives for those

provinces which could not be reached.<sup>53)</sup>

Vargas addressed the hastily-called first Kalibapi national convention. With Tojo's pronouncement, he said, the Kalibapi must work to rally the people "into one vast and active union to serve the Motherland," and reawaken Oriental virtues in the Filipino. He continued: "We are pledged to instill in our compatriots a thorough understanding of the true intentions of Japan and a sincere appreciation of her lofty ideals in prosecuting this holy war..." To the Kalibapi delegates (whom he said were representatives of the people chosen not by party but by service and devotion to country), he declared: "It is your privilege and duty in this glorious hour to bring the glad, inspiring tidings of liberation to the people in your respective communities and lead, in order that all eighteen million Filipinos shall henceforth bend their united energies to the establishment of a greater and independent Philippines." Vargas also expressed gratitude to Japan, and urged all to collaborate with Japan "actively, unreservedly and spontaneously" in the successful prosecution of the war.<sup>54)</sup>

That day, Aquino again went on the air, summarizing the Philippine quest for freedom - and the role of the Kalibapi. Emphasizing that the much-sought-for independence was now at hand from Japan, he stated: "The Kalibapi will prosecute with determination to help secure complete peace and order"; it would convince the "misguided elements" on Japan's real intentions. "We must do away with all elements that seek to weaken the foundations of an independent Philippines", he declared, and then repeated the various purposes of the Kalibapi, urging unity. He then profusely thanked Japan.<sup>55)</sup>

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The convention was basically for show. A participant remembered that there were many empty seats in the hall; these were filled with students who had been stranded in Manila since the war broke out, as well as Manila residents to represent far-away provinces. Government offices were asked to send representatives to fill up the remaining vacant seats. The convention "utterly lacked spontaneity." The people in the hall felt they were there under duress or moral pressure; "everyone was skeptical." Even Vargas' speech was delivered without feeling.<sup>56)</sup>

As Vargas ended his speech, he ordered a "gratitude rally" to be held at the Luneta the next afternoon. Immediately memoranda were prepared to pull together a substantial crowd; Kalibapi members were ordered to be at their assembly points thirty minutes before the program. "Rain or shine this program will have to be carried out," ended one memo, while another stressed: "100% attendance is ordered." A roll call would be made to check on attendance.<sup>57)</sup>

The Kalibapi had been ordered by none other than Gen. Kuroda to create a preparatory commission for Philippine independence, and the assembled body chose a committee of five to nominate members to the commission. By the morning of the second day, the required twenty names were thought up and prepared for presentation to the Japanese. The JMA, however, already had its own choices and disregarded several of the names presented by the Kalibapi.<sup>58)</sup>

The second day of the convention "became riotous" because Vargas and the Japanese officials were initially no longer present. Many "representatives" did not bother to attend, and even those on stage, fewer now, kept on coming and going. When the roll was called, half of the official delegation was absent. Aquino was angry about the absences; governors and others

had either not come in or kept on going in and out. A second roll call was ordered, but the number was still short of a quorum. A quorum was declared anyway, and four resolutions were pulled out within minutes; they were so well written that they must have been prepared beforehand. Various representatives spoke in support of the resolutions, in Tagalog, Cebuano, Kapampangan and other languages. As the convention neared its end, later in the morning, Vargas and members of the JMA arrived to witness the reading and approval of the resolutions. The resolutions expressed gratitude to Japan; pledged the full cooperation of the Kalibapi to Gen. Kuroda; expressed appreciation to the Gen. Wachi, the Director General of the JMA; and pledged full cooperation with the Executive Commission. Another resolution was to thank Aquino for his "impartial and able manner in directing the convention".<sup>59)</sup>

The names of the nominated members of the Preparatory Commission for Philippine Independence (PCPI) were then read, and met with largely spiritless applause. Among those named were Vargas, Aquino and Osias. A delegation then went to Gen. Kuroda to formally present the names.<sup>60)</sup>

Following the formal presentation of names, the gratitude rally took place. It was typical of mass activities called by the JMA, starting with a deep bow in the direction of the Imperial Palace; followed by one minute of silence to pray for the victory Japan and the Japanese war dead. Next was the playing of the *Kimigayo*, Japan's national anthem. Aquino then reported on the proceedings of the Special National Convention. Aquino waxed romantic and sentimental, now that the much coveted independence was supposedly within reach. "God, who is infi-

nately Good, infinitely Wise, and infinitely Just, shall protect and guide Japan until final victory is attained.... Let us acknowledge the fact that with this act Japan has given the greatest encouragement and impetus to the movement toward real universal brotherhood and has shown all the nations of the world the road that leads to universal peace and the eternal happiness of humanity."

Aquino was followed by Vargas, who announced that Rizal's dreams had now come true, and that "We, the Filipinos, will repay Japan with the loyalty of comrades and brothers. I am sure that Japan will never regret her generosity to the Filipinos. A free and independent Philippines will forever stand united in fate with Japan, in joy and suffering, in peace and in war." The massed audience then officially approved (by cheering and clapping) the actions of the convention - the choice of names and support the resolutions - and then rendered the Kalibapi salute. The program ended with the playing of the Kalibapi March and a parade.<sup>61)</sup>

All these activities were timed not only in immediate response to Tojo's announcement that Philippine independence would be granted within the year, but also coincided with Rizal's birth anniversary. The rally was held near the Rizal Monument and thus was supposed to have great symbolic meaning for Filipinos. Although the sky was cloudy, the controlled *Tribune* reported that the proceedings were seen by Rizal's statue, which seemed to be "watching and hearing the historic events and utterances".<sup>62)</sup>

The Preparatory Commission for Philippine Independence (PCPI) was formally installed in a ceremony held by the Japanese Military Administration on Sunday morning, 20 June 1943.

Their task was to prepare the country for independence, specifically by framing a new constitution and making plans for the new government. With the creation of the PCPI, the Kalibapi resumed its other activities.<sup>63)</sup>

The Kalibapi was next used by the JMA to legitimize the constitution framed by the PCPI. On 4 September, Vargas issued an executive order providing for the ratification of the new constitution by the people, through a general assembly of the Kalibapi. Again things were rushed - Kalibapi delegates from throughout the Philippines would register in the Kalibapi office the next day, and the general assembly would be held on 6 September. Somehow the required number of delegates (108) was procured, and the assembly opened as scheduled in the Session Hall of the Legislative Building. Aquino, as director general of the Kalibapi, presided over the proceedings, and the general assembly was told that it would not adjourn until the necessary two-thirds vote for or against the constitution was cast.

The assembly turned out to be a two-day affair. On the first day, Aquino and Vargas, as members of the PCPI, spoke about the characteristics of the new draft charter, and urged the delegates to approve it. On the second day, Laurel, in a speech fraught with emotion, explained the salient features of the Constitution. The document was approved unanimously, and a resolution - signed by all delegates - formally ratified it. A second resolution was produced, giving thanks to the Japanese government.<sup>64)</sup>

Outside the Legislative building, people - a captive audience composed of students, government employees, neighborhood association members and factory workers, who had been

assembled on purpose - waited for news of the ratification. The original plan was to have the Kalibapi delegates appear at the balcony of the building while the people would shout "Mabuhay!" But the crowd had been assembled at 8:00 AM, and formal ratification was not finished until about noon, so many people had dispersed when the delegates came out. Hardly any one had any interest in the constitution or the plebiscite, and thus the original plan was cancelled, for want of a sizable audience.<sup>65)</sup>

As soon as the constitution was ratified, the Kalibapi was next called on to elect members of the National Assembly for the future republic. Elections in the pre-war manner would not be held for the people's representatives; instead, the Kalibapi was made to act as the genuine representative of the people. Vargas issued the rules and regulations by which the Kalibapi would elect the assemblymen. The procedure seemed above board and legal - candidates had to file their candidacy; formal registers of electors had to be drawn up and elections were to be by secret ballot. All the provisions were apparently there, including method of counting, poll watchers and so forth. The elections were scheduled for 20 September, in provincial and city government buildings nationwide.<sup>66)</sup>

While the procedure seemed fine on paper, the actual elections were not. Candidates were limited; in Cavite, some Kalibapi members planned to elect their own choice, but the Kalibapi already had its candidate. Aquino, accompanied by Vargas, made a special trip to the province to set things straight. In Manila, an unwilling labor leader, Faustino Aguilar, was told by Mayor Leon Guinto that he had a good chance of being elected to the assembly to represent

the labor sector. On consulting with the top Kalibapi officials, however, Guinto was told they had already made their choice, and a united front had to be presented by having only one candidate.

The Kalibapi elections were held on schedule on 20 September. A few days before, Aguilar, who was a neighborhood association chief, was told to report to the Manila City Hall, where he was made District Association chief. He was also made a member of the Kalibapi without his knowing it and received a certificate of membership. As an instant member of the Kalibapi, he was made an elector for his district and reported to the city hall for the elections. Although the place was guarded by policemen, they did not check whether electors were Kalibapi members or not. Aguilar and other electors - some of whom were literally dragged off the streets just to vote; those who were not Kalibapi members were made members immediately, complete with certificate - were given ballots. Aguilar did not write anything in his, and dropped it in the ballot box; he knew of at least one other elector who submitted a blank ballot. And yet when the newspapers reported the results of the election, they declared a winning candidate in Manila who won one hundred percent of the ballots cast.<sup>67)</sup>

And thus the Kalibapi was used to give "people's participation" in the elections for the national assembly. Among the winners was Aquino. The national assembly then met, and elected Aquino as its Speaker; Aquino accepted and was formally proclaimed on 25 September. In his acceptance speech, he thanked the assemblymen, the Emperor of Japan, and the Kalibapi, "that dynamic and vigorous organization, which as an instrument of popular action,

in the short period of eight months, unified the people [and] set in motion the vital forces of the nation."<sup>68)</sup>

Aquino having taken on a more important position, he gave up his post as Director General of the Kalibapi. Osias, who was Assistant Director General, took over as Acting Vice President and Director General. Jose B. Laurel, Jr., son of Jose P. Laurel, and director of the Kalibapi's Bureau of Provincial and Municipal Branches, had also been elected to the National Assembly and had to give up his post in the Kalibapi leadership; he was replaced by Teodoro P. de Vera.<sup>69)</sup>

Aquino, now Speaker of the National Assembly, together with Jose P. Laurel, president-elect of the soon-to-be launched Philippine Republic, went to Tokyo in late September with Vargas to discuss the mechanics of independence. The formal inauguration of the Philippine Republic under Japan was held in lavish ceremonies on 14 October 1943, with the Kalibapi visibly participating in the parades.

As preparations for the Philippine Republic were undertaken, the Kalibapi moved to solve a more urgent problem: the shortage of food which now hung as a specter over the country. On 15 September, the Kalibapi launched a Food Production Campaign as part of the nationwide government campaign. It urged its members to plant food crops in all vacant lots, and gave specifics on what type of plants could best be cultivated.<sup>70)</sup>

On the eve of the inauguration of the Philippine Republic under Japan, the Kalibapi summed up the work it had done thus far and made plans for itself under the republic. The Kalibapi had served as the "vanguard for spiritual vivication", read one report, and had

enlightened people in food production and on the intentions of Japan. It had worked to restore peace and order and had gotten guerrillas to surrender directly to the Kalibapi, bringing ammunition with them. Their programs had spread the spirit and culture of co-prosperity and co-existence with other Oriental races, and were responsible for changing the Filipinos' view of the Orient.<sup>71)</sup>

As for plans, a program for public enlightenment had to be developed and carried out, with immediate focus on pacification and getting guerrillas to give up their arms; training workers and leaders; working out an economic program for food production; orienting people towards the meaning of independence and stressing their obligations to the republic; highlighting the Philippines' membership in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. These would be carried out through exhibitions, radio programs, conferences, mottoes, slogans, posters, lectures and providing outlines of courses for educational institutions. Long range plans would aim at national unification and the integration of national efforts; implementing the ideal of independence; fostering a greater knowledge of the Orient; developing racial pride and Oriental consciousness; the development of Philippine culture; spiritual regeneration; and the preparation of pamphlets, monographs and books on the Kalibapi, Oriental and Philippine culture.<sup>72)</sup> There was much to do, as there was at the Kalibapi's inception, but with the inauguration of the Philippine republic and the dissolution of the JMA, the Kalibapi would change in character and orientation.

With the dissolution of the JMA, Japanese support would no longer be as direct as before.

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The support of the JMA had been important in getting the Kalibapi moving; Laurel wrote that "the military authorities offered all facilities, including financial, and a separate central office established in Manila with ramifications in the provinces and municipalities which were under Japanese control." The Kalibapi's activities under the JMA had been closely supervised by the Japanese, and everything had to be approved, from plans to press releases. Without the JMA, the Kalibapi would ostensibly be freer to go its own way, no longer directly tied to Japanese aims and ambitions.<sup>73)</sup>

#### **IV. Activities of the Kalibapi, Phase II**

When the Philippine Republic under Japan was inaugurated, Laurel stated in his inaugural address that he stood for a system wherein there would be only one political party. "We must have only one party," he said, "the people's party, a party that would stand for peace, for reconstruction, for sound national economy, for social reform, for the elevation of the masses, for the creation of a new world order." That party would obviously be the Kalibapi.<sup>74)</sup>

Aquino, although no longer connected with the Kalibapi, continued to bat for the association in the early days of the republic. He wrote an article in a commemorative magazine repeating his main ideas on the association - service, loyalty, unity, pride, self-sufficiency and so on, but stressed that this was now directed entirely to the republic.<sup>75)</sup>

The Kalibapi was important enough to rank its officials among the other officials of government: the director general was eighth in official precedence; while the assistant director general

was fifteenth and the bureau directors ranked twentieth. Laurel, as president of the republic, ranked as number one, of course, serving as *ex officio* president of the association. Osias, as director general, had cabinet member status and attended most of the meetings of Laurel's cabinet.<sup>76)</sup>

The Kalibapi under the republic continued many of the activities it had started under the JMA, focusing its attention on immediate Filipino needs and developing nationalism and awareness of Asia. It also tried to win the support of the people to the new government, emphasizing the relative freedom enjoyed by the people as compared with the harshness of military law. Its first official activity under Laurel was the celebration of National Heroes' Day on 30 November; Laurel charged the Kalibapi with organizing and carrying out appropriate ceremonies to mark the day.<sup>77)</sup>

In line with promoting nationalism and unity was the propagation of the Filipino language. This, based on Tagalog, was the subject of many lectures given by the acting Director General, Osias. A classic speech of his, which was reprinted a number of times, was one which he gave to the Kalibapi Leaders Institute on 10 November, where he emphasized the importance of one language. Although he himself was not a Tagalog, he learned the language with pride, and urged the students to study Filipino, follow Rizal, and spread the language. If each member of the Kalibapi could learn the language and disseminate it to their neighbors, the language would truly be a national one and would unite the people. In 1944, the Kalibapi published a pamphlet which included Osias' speech, suggestions for teaching methods and the one thou-

sand basic words in the Filipino language which every Filipino had to know.<sup>78)</sup>

The Kalibapi continued its two training institutes, the Leaders Institute and the Labor Institute, basically along the lines established in 1943. Also continued was the Kalibapi Radio Hour, which was scheduled every Tuesday evening. So more people could hear it, it was moved to the Saturday lunch hour.<sup>79)</sup>

The Kalibapi still sought to increase its membership: in November, Osias declared that he aimed to win the membership of twenty percent of the Filipino population (3.6 million, he estimated) in 1944.<sup>80)</sup>

Laurel declared 22 December of every year as Kalibapi Day; for the first anniversary of the Kalibapi, Laurel spoke at the commemorative program at the Metropolitan Theater. He cited the example of Rizal and other Filipino heroes, and urged unity through the Kalibapi. He told the story of how a nipa hut, simple as it was, could last for decades and more, simply because it was built because of one strong kind of wood - *banaba*. The nation, through the Kalibapi, was the same - one party, one people, one president and one government. Aquino and Osias had their own turn to speak in separate radio programs.<sup>81)</sup>

In order to emphasize the Philippine character of the Kalibapi, a new seal was adopted to supplement the red diamond and white circle. It showed men carrying a nipa hut together, with the eight-ray sun of the Philippine flag shining above. The whole scene was surrounded by a circle on which the name of the association was emblazoned; and below the picture was the word Kalibapi in the ancient Tagalog script.<sup>82)</sup>



The Kalibapi under the Republic sponsored cultural and socio-economic exhibits, demonstrations and fairs. In April 1944, in Iloilo, Iloilo, the provincial and city chapters of the Kalibapi organized the First Iloilo Cultural and Industrial Fair. It mobilized wide participation in the city, including the Japanese consulate, the Chinese and Spanish associations, the Hindu community and more. The fair featured literary and art contests; contests for best weaving, manufacture of substitutes for imported items, inventions, cooking, native transport, medicine, and others. A large exhibition was organized in the provincial capitol to showcase Iloilo art and industry, as well as the culture of Japan, China, India, Spain and Switzerland. Physical demonstrations and sports competitions were also held, including Radio Taiso, wrestling, arnis (Filipino martial arts), baseball and boxing. There also was a singing contest for best rendition of the Kalibapi march. To cap it off were three nights of ballroom dancing. It seemed as if the war was far off.<sup>83)</sup>

On Rizal's birth anniversary, 19 June 1944, the Kalibapi sponsored an Art and Architectural Exhibition and Competition, which was then followed by a musical program. Held in the Nippon Bunka Kaikan (new name for the Heacock's Building at the Escolta), the program was interesting in that there were no traces of Japanese domination - no bowing to the Imperial Palace, no Japanese flag, and no Japanese compositions. It was an attempt to present an all-Filipino front.<sup>84)</sup>

Osiás joined an official government mission with Aquino to Japan and Manchuria in April 1944, ostensibly a Gratitude Mission but apparently a mission to reassure the Japanese of the

Philippines' support to Japan. Osiás spoke of his observations - positive traits of the Japanese and good conditions in Manchukuo - on the Kalibapi Hour, and also shared his impressions with the Kalibapi Leaders Institute.<sup>85)</sup>

Under the republic, however, the Kalibapi charter had to be amended, because as originally planned, the Kalibapi owed its allegiance to the JMA. A bill was drafted, but was not passed owing to shortage of time and the onset of more serious challenges.<sup>86)</sup>

Since the National Assembly ran out of time to amend the Kalibapi charter, Laurel issued an ordinance which served the same ends. Under the ordinance, the Kalibapi was changed from a non-political service organization into a nonpartisan political organization. Its main purposes were: first, and most importantly, to uphold, maintain, defend and protect the republic at all times. Corollary to this, the Kalibapi was to support the republic's policies, namely to strive for the unification of all Filipinos, to stress the importance of independence and the preservation of territorial integrity; and to effect the return of normalcy and restore peace and order. The Kalibapi was also to assist the Filipino people in "fully comprehending the basic principles of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere," in order that the Philippines could "fulfill its obligations and enjoy its rights" as a worthy member, and thus contribute to "the creation of a world order based on peace, liberty, and moral justice." The age of members was raised to twenty one years, and the women would be accommodated in an auxiliary chapter known as the Melchora Aquino Sisterhood.<sup>87)</sup>

To align the structure of the Kalibapi with the republic, the officers were redefined. The

president of the Kalibapi was the president of the republic, serving *ex officio*; he would, as before, set the policies of the association and appoint its officials. But the president did not have to submit a report to anyone, unlike before, where he reported to the JMA. The Vice President and Director General had duties and powers as before, although he now had to submit a report to the president. The Advisory Board was now comprised of the cabinet. The Executive Staff remained basically the same, with the directors-at-large now included. Dispersed with was the Bureau of Research and Planning and the Bureau of Publicity, while the Bureau of Provincial and Municipal branches was renamed the Bureau of Local Branches.<sup>88)</sup>

Under the Ordinance, membership was no longer mandatory for government officials and employees. Funding would be provided by allotments by the government, contributions and any income which the Kalibapi raised.

The Junior Kalibapi was transferred to the Ministry of Education, where it was renamed the Kabataang Pangarap ni Rizal (The Dream Youth of Rizal; Kapariz for short). The girls would be separated from the boys and would form their own Maria Clara Sisterhood.<sup>89)</sup> The Kalibapi thus lost its youth component.

With the revision of the Kalibapi charter, Aquino returned to the Kalibapi as Director General. The National Assembly was not in session, and as the war drew closer to the Philippines, prospects for a second session were dim, leaving Aquino with little work. Osias was made Minister of Education, a post which Laurel had up to then concurrently held, and thus left the Kalibapi. Dominador M. Tan was named Assistant Director General, while Director of Local

Branches was Teodoro P. de Vera. Director of the Bureau of General Affairs was Vicente Lontok.<sup>90)</sup>

With the reshuffle of personnel, the outrightly pro-Japanese elements in the Kalibapi - Pio Duran and Benigno Ramos - were removed quietly. But even the Kalibapi's usefulness as an instrument to mobilize popular support was weakening, as the war turned the worse for Japan. Laurel created commissioners for the Visayas and Mindanao who reported directly to him, allowing for quicker and more direct action than through the Kalibapi, and as living conditions deteriorated, Orientalism and its lures became less relevant or practicable.

Indeed, as living conditions grew more difficult - food shortages and inflation, worsening peace and order conditions and increasing Japanese demands on Filipinos - the Kalibapi gradually turned to addressing immediate needs. Survival became the prime necessity, and the speeches of Kalibapi officials gradually took on a different tenor. Osias, when he was still Director General, inaugurated the new Saturday Kalibapi Hour by urging the people to endure; to suffer long but quietly considering the national situation and the shortage of food. He urged the people to raise their own food, and cited a word which he had coined - longanimity, a combination of the Latin words *long* and *animus* - which translated into long spirit, which would allow Filipinos to survive.<sup>91)</sup>

On the eve of the anniversary of the outbreak of the war in the Pacific in 1943, Laurel spoke on a Special Kalibapi Radio program, tracing the roots of the war, the ills of Western imperialism, and Japan's role in creating a new order. As before, he stressed that the need of the times

was unity. Osias spoke a few days later, on the anniversary of the creation of the Kalibapi, and he spoke of increasing the Kalibapi's membership, the spread of the national language, and a plan to plant one million trees nationwide on the anniversary of Rizal's death. However, he also spoke of the need to raise food crops. In March 1944, he spoke on the need to go back to the soil; and around the same time the Kalibapi issued a leaflet in English and in Tagalog urging people to produce in order to survive.<sup>92)</sup>

The Kalibapi had launched a food production drive on the eve of the birth of the Philippine Republic under Japan. This drive continued under the Republic, and gradually gained more importance as the food shortage grew worse, particularly after a massive flood hit Manila in November 1943. Orders for each chapter to plant appropriate crops, carry out an information campaign and distribute seeds and tools, were issued shortly before the flood, requiring compliance and reports of progress. In early 1944, the Kalibapi set up a Producers Camp in Dili-man which would not only produce food, but also train "scientific soldiers." It was a pilot farm in cooperation with the newly-established Food Administration, and was meant to be the first of many, in which out-of-school youth would be trained to raise food crops.<sup>93)</sup>

Hand in hand with food production came relief services. In November 1943, the Kalibapi Women's Auxiliary conducted fund raising drives for the victims of the Manila flood, and also for the poor and indigent in Manila. The funds and gifts were distributed in December, in various Christmas gatherings.<sup>94)</sup>

As conditions worsened, the Kalibapi appeared less frequently in the news. From around

August 1944, the Kalibapi focused on relief and charity, its political character notwithstanding. Politics and Orientalism had become irrelevant to people whose first priority was survival.<sup>95)</sup>

In the face of the worsening situation, the Kalibapi started a National Unification Fund Drive, beginning on the anniversary of Rizal's birth (19 June 1944) to end on the anniversary of Rizal's death (30 December 1944). Pinning its hopes in a final drive for national unity, the Kalibapi hoped to raise funds through voluntary contributions to finance a nationwide program for national unification. Laurel called on everyone to support the drive. Before the deadline, however, the Kalibapi would have ceased to exist as a body.<sup>96)</sup>

Apart from the realities of the economy and loss of peace and order, another reality which the Kalibapi could not escape was the continued presence of the Japanese. Although the Kalibapi tried to bring home the meaning of independence, this was rendered empty by the presence of Japanese sentries, Japanese raids on people's homes, summary arrests, torture and killings. In some areas, the Philippine government had virtually no control; in Jolo, Sulu, the Japanese Navy forcibly took over control of the Kalibapi chapter there. Although Laurel and his secretary of foreign Affairs, Claro M. Recto, complained to their Japanese counterparts, little could be done by the republic. As the war returned to Philippine shores in September 1944, the Kalibapi lost most of its meaning.<sup>97)</sup>

American aircraft began bombing Philippine soil in August 1944. A month later, Luzon was being bombed, and on 21 September, Manila was struck for the first time since 1942. The Japanese pressured Laurel to declare Martial Law and declare war against the Americans. He

did so, after a play of words. After Laurel declared the existence of a state of war, Japanese correspondents called on the Kalibapi offices to find out if the Kalibapi would make a similar proclamation. Aquino, who was still director general of the Kalibapi, wanted the Kalibapi to issue a statement supporting the war declaration. An emergency meeting was called, but the other officials distracted Aquino by raising other problems - Japanese depredations here and there; the difficulty of obtaining food and transportation and others. The Kalibapi issued no statement.<sup>98)</sup>

## V. Reactions of people

The JMA and certain Filipino officials had high hopes for the Kalibapi as an instrument of mass mobilization. As a creation of the Japanese, however, it received little popular support considering that the majority of the Filipinos remained suspicious and distrustful towards the Japanese throughout the occupation.

The Filipino historian, Agoncillo, wrote that the much publicized crowds that attended the Kalibapi rallies under Aquino was “no indication that the people believed in him or in the Kalibapi’s avowed aims. Actually, the people were merely curious what the Association was all about. Aquino himself must have divined the people’s thoughts, but the play must continue and he as director must make it appear to the Japanese that the Filipinos were behind him and applauding his stage act.”<sup>99)</sup>

Apart from the lackluster support given in the general conventions of the Kalibapi as

detailed above, the Kalibapi was ridiculed by Filipinos, who made jokes about the association. A song reportedly became popular during the occupation whose first lines were: “I’m a slap-happy Jappy, since I joined the Kalibapi.” A word, “Kalibapear” was coined which was synonymous with “racket.” Others joked that Kalibapi actually meant *Kapisanan sa Paglikom ng mga Baboy* (Association to Gather Pigs). In Pampanga, some locals changed Kalibapi to Kalibabi, “babi” meaning “pig.” Still another joke had a person asking, “Are you a member of the Kalibapi?” The answer, in Tagalog, was “*Hindi, sa kabila pa*” - a play on words, meaning, “No, I’m still on the other side.” Leaders of local chapters reported to Laurel that there was nothing he could do to gain people’s support for the Kalibapi.<sup>100)</sup>

Many of the Kalibapi officials, in fact, except Aquino and Osias and a few others, were skeptical of the association: some had joined against their will, others to find some kind of employment. Dominador Tan was a reserve officer of the Philippine Army and made sure he did not make any anti-American utterances; when he could, he sneaked in anti-Japanese expressions in Cebuano. A number of officials and employees in the Kalibapi Manila office were themselves guerrillas or at least listened to Radio San Francisco, distributing the news within the office. One researcher bought a map of Europe to hang in the office, ostensibly for research purposes, but actually so the staff could follow the development of the war. The Kalibapi Leaders’ Institute had, among its students, a number of active guerrillas.<sup>101)</sup>

By mid-1944, some of the staff in the Manila office were simply biding their time, waiting for the Americans to come; the Bureau of Research and Planning, while it still existed, did

studies on Asia, but not specifically on Japan. It later began planning for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the post-war Philippines, and one researcher studied not Asian culture but the Civilian Conservation Corps movement in the U.S., which had been launched to bring the U.S. out of the Great Depression.

Eventually the Japanese themselves became suspicious of the Kalibapi and did not trust it. The *Kempeitai* (Japanese military police) even sent spies to Kalibapi offices and placed some of its officials under surveillance. Aquino, learning of the pro-American stance of many of those in the Bureau of Research and Planning, had to call them in and urged them to be more discrete.<sup>102)</sup>

The Kalibapi thus lacked popular support from outside and even within, and was bound to collapse when the war ended.

## VI. The Demise of the Kalibapi

With the declaration of Martial Law and the onset of American air raids on the Philippines, the Kalibapi began to weaken and deteriorate in late 1944. The Japanese lost trust in the organization and eventually organized their own pro-Japanese group, the *Kalipunan ng mga Makabayang Pilipino* (Patriotic League of Filipinos, or Makapili), led by Pio Duran and Benigno Ramos who had earlier been removed from the Kalibapi.

The Kalibapi itself shrunk in size as its employees failed to report for work; from the Oriente Building it moved to the Legislative Building where a skeleton staff held office. Neither its

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name nor the causes it championed appeared in the papers, as the war returned to Philippine soil. In December 1944, members of the Laurel government - including Aquino and Osias - were taken to Baguio by the Japanese forces, and in March 1945, were flown to Japan. The Kalibapi effectively ceased to exist by then.<sup>103)</sup>

With the end of the war, the top leaders of the Executive Commission and the Republic under Japan were charged with treason against the Philippines. Aquino, Osias and Tan were charged as ranking officials of the Kalibapi. One member of the government, Teofilo Sison, was convicted; one of the counts was his taking the Kalibapi oath and participating actively in the Kalibapi. The judges concluded: "It is undeniable that the Kalibapi was patterned after the lone Japanese political party and had for its sole purpose the absorption of the representation of the people of the Philippines, constituting itself as its mouthpiece. Because the organization of the Kalibapi was primarily based on strict adherence to the policies of Japan...the oath taken by the accused [Sison] was a pledge to loyalty to the enemy, a pledge to aid and to comfort. It was a pledge to preach and to practice his creed so that his aim could be attained, his position as leader of the Asians be made secure. By joining the Kalibapi and taking the Kalibapi oath, Teofilo Sison committed a treasonous act."<sup>104)</sup>

One justice, in a concurring opinion, added: "The Kalibapi served and remained to be the instrument of deceit of the puppet republic... Like its counterpart in the totalitarian countries, it performed its job of deceit and misrepresentation in furtherance of the will and designs of the puppet government through which the enemy governed and obtained what it wanted..."

True it was that many, including lesser officials thereof, merely laughed it off - but might not the Japanese during their period of occupation have laughed last and loudest?"<sup>105)</sup>

After Sison's conviction, no other raking member of the government was convicted, as the intricacies of the legal system and the sides of the defendants became known. Eventually, because of the controversies and the schism the collaboration question created in the immediate post-war Philippines, a general amnesty was proclaimed for the political collaborators. Aquino, who had actively built the Kalibapi, had suffered a heart attack and died almost a year before the proclamation. The other Kalibapi officials were either pardoned or acquitted.<sup>106)</sup>

## VI. Conclusion

Agoncillo stated that "politically, the most significant step taken by the Japanese military to eradicate all vestiges of democracy was the abolition of all political parties and their substitution by the...KALIBAPI"<sup>107)</sup>. Indeed, like the IRAA and related organizations, the Kalibapi initially showed much promise, in the eyes of its creators, of becoming a powerful medium for mass mobilization. Like the IRAA, however, the Kalibapi had too many aims, some of which coincided with Filipino interests. However, the mere fact that it was created and sponsored by the JMA led the Filipino majority to be distrustful of it. Like the IRAA, it never had popular support. Because of its Japanese sponsorship, the broadness of its aims, as well as the lack of a concrete agenda at its inception, the Kalibapi failed to garner the support it was originally hoped to muster.

While many people laughed it off, the JMA used the Kalibapi to show seeming popular support to create the PCPI, ratify the constitution and "elect" members of the national assembly. While the crowds and some semblance of legal process tried to give legitimacy to the process of independence under Japan, few failed to see through the sham. Under the Laurel republic, the Kalibapi was changed into a political organization, but its youth complement was taken away from it, reducing its potential effectiveness. Despite its being used to rally the people to the republic, few noted any difference between the old Kalibapi and the new, and to many the Laurel government was not effective and made no great difference from the period of the JMA. The Kalibapi faded away and shifted from grandiose purposes to more practical functions of food production and relief.

The Kalibapi was thus banished and laughed off; many remember it only as an ineffective tool of the Japanese. One person may have seen the potential of a strong service organization, however: Ferdinand Marcos in the 1970s, during the period of Martial Law in the Philippines, created a large party which would have assimilated some of the traditional political parties and which would give some sense of popular support to his government. It was called the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL). A youth movement, the Kabataang Barangay (KB) was also formed. A Bagong Lipunan march was composed, by Felipe Padilla de Leon, who had composed the Grand March of the Kalibapi. Similarities in the letters and acronyms caused not a few to wonder whether there was any connection between the KBL and the KB on the one hand, and the Kalibapi and the Junior Kalibapi on the other. It is difficult to prove, at this point, if any con-

nection exists; but if one does, it would point to one legacy of the Kalibapi, a legacy which was just as temporary and managed.

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## Notes

- 1) Louise Young, *Japan's Total War*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998, p. 126; Claro M. Recto, *Three Years of Enemy Occupation*, Manila, People's Publishers, 1946, p. 14; Ota Koki, "Nihon Gunseika no Firipin to Shin Hito Hôshidan (Karibapi)", *Seiji*



*Keizai Shigaku*, No. 145, June 1978, p. 20. The Concordia Society in Japanese was Kyōwa Kai.

- 2) The following description of the IRAA is based on Gordon Mark Berger, *Parties Out of Power in Japan, 1931-1941*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1977, pp. 296-342; Robert A. Scalapino, *Democracy and the Party Movement in Prewar Japan: The Failure of the First Attempt*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1953, pp. 388-389; and Ben-Ami Shillony, *Politics and Culture in Wartime Japan*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1981, pp. 2-3, 32, 72.
- 3) Vocational groups would include agricultural and industrial sectors, and would be placed under a Supreme Economic Council; the cultural sector included educators, neighborhood organizations, physical fitness groups, newspapers, the arts, youth, women, social workers and religious groups, and would be placed under a Supreme Cultural Council. Berger, pp. 303-305.
- 4) Frank N. Trager, *Burma: Japanese Military Administration, Selected Documents, 1941-1945*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971, pp. 129-138, 143-144, 182; Bōeichō, Bōei Kenkyūjo, Senshi bu, *Shiryōshū: Nampō no Gunsei*, Tokyo, Asagumō Shimbunsha, 1985, pp. 484-458.
- 5) This discussion of the Putera and the Hōkōkai is based on Willard E. Elsbree, *Japan's Role in Southeast Asian Nationalistic Movements 1940-1945*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1953, pp. 82, 87-88, 127; Theodore Friend, *The Blue Eyed Enemy*,

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Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1988, pp. 95-97, 101. The Putera was not popular among the aristocrats, however.

- 6) Bōeichō, *Nampō no Gunsei*, pp. 3-4.
- 7) Department of Information, Imperial Japanese Forces in the Philippines, *Ideals of the New Philippines*, Manila: publisher not named, 1942, p. 20; Commander-in-Chief, Japanese Expeditionary Forces to the Philippines, *Address to the Filipino People*, Manila, Propaganda Corps, 1942.
- 8) Yomiuri Shimbun (eds.), *Showa Shi no Tenno*, Vol. 10, Tokyo, Yomiuri Shimbunsha, 1970, p. 353; Recto, p. 14; Jose P. Laurel, *War Memoirs*, Manila, Jose P. Laurel Memorial Foundation, 1962, p. 12; Utsunomiya Naotaka, *Minami Jūjūsei o Nozomitsutsu*, N.p., Privately printed, 1981, p. 57. The author has not been able to find out whether there was a direct order from Tokyo to establish the Kalibapi.
- 9) Utsunomiya, p. 57; Ota, p. 20; Laurel, pp. 11-12. Utsunomiya and other Japanese state that pre-war Philippine party rivalry was extremely serious and counterproductive, but cite the Liberal Party among them, which was formed only in 1945; also, immediate pre-war party politics was not as serious as the Japanese claimed because of Nacionalista Party dominance. The parties and their leaders at that time were: Partido Nacionalista - Jose Yulo; Partido Democrata - Alfonso Mendoza; Young Philippines - Arturo Tolentino; Popular Front - Emilio Javier; Ganap - Benigno Ramos; Association of Veterans of the Revolution - Aguinaldo. *Tribune*, 5 December 1942.

- 10) Philippine Executive Commission *Official Gazette* (henceforth *OG*), Vol. I, 1942, p. 927.
- 11) *OG*, Vol. I, 1942, p. 849.
- 12) Armando J. Malay, *Occupied Philippines*. Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1967, p. 107; Teodoro A. Agoncillo, *The Fateful Years*, Quezon City, R.P. Garcia, 1965, p. 357.
- 13) *OG*, Vol. I, p. 858 ff.; it was also published in the *Official Journal of the Japanese Military Administration* (hereafter *OJJMA*). To give maximum publicity, the executive order was published in all the controlled newspapers, and was also issued as a separate pamphlet in English and Tagalog. Note that there was no specific mention of anti-American orientation and nothing on politics and military defense. The Japanese translation was at first *Hito Kensetsu Hôshidan* (also *Hito Saiken Hôshidan*) and later formally *Shin Hito Hôshidan*. Utsunomiya, p. 57; Ota, pp. 21, 23.
- 14) Juan de la Cruz, "The Kalibapi," Department of Information, Imperial Japanese Forces in the Philippines. *Voice of the New Philippines, Vol. 3*, Manila, publisher not named, 1943, p. 71. Some Japanese questioned the symbol, seeing it as the opposite of the Japanese flag and possibly a sign of resistance. One Filipino explained that it was similar to the case of the Swiss flag and Red Cross flag.
- 15) *OG*, Vol. I, 1942, p. 917. All were appointed on 4 December except Tan, who was appointed on 10 December. He had not wanted the post, but Vargas explained that Tan had the stature and was being placed to balance the pro-Japanese elements. Dominador M. Tan to Hendrycke, 7 June 1945, Tan People's Court file, University of the Philippines.

For backgrounds of the officers, see *Kalibapi Worker's Handbook*, Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1943, pp. 61-64.

- 16) Friend, pp. 101-102.
- 17) *OG*, Vol. I, December 1942, pp. 940-943.
- 18) *OG*, Vol. I, 1942, p. 937.
- 19) Speeches and announcements tended to conflict on how the Kalibapi was formed. Gen. Tanaka stated that the Kalibapi was "inaugurated spontaneously by the Filipinos themselves", while other speeches credited the JMA. *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, p. 72; Vol. I, 1942, pp. 962-962; Jorge B. Vargas, "Rizal and the Kalibapi", *Voice of the New Philippines, Vol. 3*, pp. 38-40, among other speeches.
- 20) *OG*, Vol. I, 1942, pp. 963-965.
- 21) Department of Information, Imperial Japanese Forces in the Philippines, *Ano ang Kalibapi? (What is the Kalibapi?)*, Manila, publisher not named, 1943, pp. 15-16, 19.
- 22) Friend, p. 101.
- 23) The oath was printed in most of the Kalibapi publications, such as *The Kalibapi Worker's Handbook*, Manila, Bureau of Printing, 1943.
- 24) *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, pp. 75-77.
- 25) Friend, p. 102; "The Kalibapi Rolls Northward," *Shin Seiki*, Vol. I, 1943, p. 7; Benigno S. Aquino, "The Kalibapi: Its Ideals and Objectives," *Shin Seiki*, Vol. I, 1943, pp. 1, 3, 32. Aquino's reading of Japanese history was not always correct.

- 26) *OG*, Vol. II, p 211; Agoncillo, p. 367. Nick Joaquin, in his biography of Aquino, states that Aquino staged cooperation with the Japanese to attain independence. Nick Joaquin, *The Aquinos of Tarlac*, Manila, Cacho Hermanos, 1983, p. 169. However, some of his pro-Japanese statements were extreme.
- 27) *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, p. 91.
- 28) Kalibapi circulars in Republic of the Philippines (1943-1945) *Official Gazette* (hereafter RPOG), Vol. I, 1943, pp. 22-25.
- 29) Although Aquino's speech was anti-Anglo-Saxon and pro-Oriental, Aquino used several Spanish quotes in his speech, and no Tagalog. Vargas, Laurel and Aquino speeches in *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, pp. 231, 252-257. Aquino's speech was reprinted in the *Voice of the New Philippines*, Vol. 3. The program of this conference is in the Japanese Occupation Papers Collection of the University of the Philippines. This was the second such conference, the first being held in May 1942.
- 30) Budget and Auditing Office General Circular No. 25, 3 February 1943, *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, p. 288. Although the circular was dated February, it was published a month later.
- 31) *Tribune*, 22 December 1942; 11 February 1943.
- 32) *Shin Seiki*, Vol. I, 1943, p. 3; *Tribune*, 13 April, 3 August and 22 November 1943; Camilo Osias, 7 October 1943 Answers to Questions by the Domei News Agency, Osias People's Court file, University of the Philippines; Ota, pp. 27-28, citing *Manira Shimbun*, 1 August 1943. Figures given by Ota, however, do not add up.

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- 33) *The Kalibapi and the Filipino*, Manila, Bureau of Printing, 1943; Kalibapi Circulars, RPOG, Vol. I, 1943, pp. 23-24. Government employees and others who were forced to join knew better.
- 34) Mauro P. Garcia, *Documents on the Japanese Occupation of the Philippines*, Manila, Philippine Historical Association, 1965, p. 235.
- 35) Program in University of the Philippines Japanese Occupation Papers. The *Day-Atiw ng Kalibapi* (Grand March of the Kalibapi) was composed by Felipe Padilla de Leon, who had also composed the *Awit sa Paglikha ng Bagong Pilipinas* a few months before.
- 36) *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, pp. 206-212.
- 37) *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, p. 221.
- 38) Program in University of the Philippines Japanese Occupation Papers; *Manira Shimbun*, 18 May 1943 cited in Ota, p. 25.
- 39) *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, pp. 412-413.
- 40) This was first read by Osias on 8 June 1943. Memorandum for the Officer in Charge, 20 September 1945, Osias People's Court File. It was formally printed as a leaflet and was in all Kalibapi publications.
- 41) Garcia, p. 235. People ridiculed the salute.
- 42) Executive Order No. 156, *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, pp. 464-465, 501.
- 43) "Kalibapi Training Institute", *Shin Seiki*, Vol. II, 1943, p. 15; *Kalibapi Workers Handbook*, p. 14.

- 44) "Kalibapi Training Institute", p. 15.
- 45) "Kalibapi Training Institute", p. 15; *Kalibapi Workers Handbook*, p. 15.
- 46) "Kalibapi Training Institute", p. 15. *OG*, Vol. II, pp. 777-779; *Kalibapi Leaders Institute*, Manila, Bureau of Printing, 1943, pp. 6-7. Those who failed to live up to expectations had to reimburse expenses.
- 47) Invitation in University of the Philippines Japanese Occupation Papers.
- 48) *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, pp. 551-552.
- 49) *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, p. 107.
- 50) *Tribune*, 8 February 1943; *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, p. 215.
- 51) Marcial P. Lichauco, "*Dear Mother Putnam*," Manila, Privately published, 1949, p. 102.
- 52) *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, pp. 592-593.
- 53) Garcia, p. 223; Manuel E. Buenafe, *Wartime Philippines*, Manila, Philippine Education Foundation, 1950, Buenafe, pp. 198-199. It was Wachi who gave the orders.
- 54) *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, pp. 592-593.
- 55) *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, pp. 595-596; Buenafe, pp. 198-199.
- 56) *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, p. 593.
- 57) Memorandum in University of the Philippines Japanese Occupation Papers, with attached guide to participants; Osias Memorandum, 18 June 1943, Osias People's Court Papers.
- 58) *Tribune* 19, 20 June 1943; Utsunomiya, p. 130; Malay, p. 121; *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, p. 782.

- 59) *Tribune*, 20 June 1943; full text in *OG*. Aquino and Osias spoke in favor of the resolutions. *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, pp. 599-603; Buenafe, p. 199.
- 60) *Tribune*, 20 June 1943; *OJJMA*, Vol. XIII, 1943, p. xxxii; *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, p. 547. Some of those nominated had not attended the convention and two were not even in Luzon when the announcement was made.
- 61) Program in University of the Philippines Japanese Occupation Papers; *Tribune*, 20 June 1943; Aquino and Vargas speeches in *OG*, Vol. II, pp. 596-599.
- 62) Proclamation No. 19 in *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, pp. 554, 596-598; *Tribune* 20 June 1943.
- 63) *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, p. 547. Approval was actually dated June 19 in *OJJMA*, Vol. XIII, 1943, p. xxii. *Tribune*, 21 June 1943.
- 64) *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, pp. 826, 866-878. Vargas had wanted secret balloting, but the JMA ordered that it be by voice, so votes would be seen by all. Each province and city had two representatives each.
- 65) Juan Labrador, *A Diary of the Japanese Occupation*, Manila, University of Santo Tomas Press, 1989, p. 169.
- 66) *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, pp. 828-830.
- 67) Faustino Aguilar, *Nang Magdaan ang Daluyong*, Manila, PSP Press, 1945, pp. 252-253.
- 68) *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, pp. 879-881.
- 69) *OG*, Vol. II, 1943, p. 865.
- 70) *RPOG*, Vol. I, pp. 25-26.

- 71) Undated typescript, c. October of November 1943, in Osias papers, H. Otley Beyer Collection, National Library of Australia.
- 72) Osias People's Court papers.
- 73) Laurel, pp. 11-12; Malay, p. 79.
- 74) Jose P. Laurel, *Inaugural Address*, p. 15. This was also published in OG and *Tribune*.
- 75) Benigno S. Aquino, "The Role of the Kalibapi," *Free Philippines*, Vol. I, October-November 1943, pp. 38-40, 127.
- 76) The Director General of the Kalibapi followed the President, Speaker of the National Assembly, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, cabinet members and Executive Secretary, Ambassadors of the republic, and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court. RPOG, Vol. I, 1943, pp. 108-109. Kalibapi officers as of January 1944 were: President - Laurel; Vice President and Director General - Osias (acting); Assistant Director General - Arsenio Luz (acting); Director of General Affairs - Osias; Director of Research and Planning - Dominador M. Tan; Director of Provincial and Municipal Branches - Teodoro P. Vera (acting); Director of Publicity - Osias; Secretary-Treasurer - Jose A. De Jesus; Directors at large - Benigno Ramos, and Esteban Abada (acting). *The Kalibapi: The People's Party*, Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1944, p. iii. Osias was in an acting capacity until April 1944. RPOG, Vol. I, 1944, p. 758.
- 77) *RPOG*, Vol. I, 1943, pp. 110-111; Minutes of Cabinet Meeting, 29 November 1943, University of the Philippines Japanese Occupation Papers.

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- 78) *RPOG*, Vol. I, 1943, pp. 157-161.
- 79) *RPOG*, Vol. I, 1943-1944, pp. 171, 275-276, 279, 805.
- 80) *RPOG*, Vol. I, 1943, pp. 157-q161
- 81) *RPOG*, Vol. I, 1943, pp. 190,191, 296-300. Program and speeches in *The Kalibapi: The People's Party*
- 82) *The Kalibapi: The People's Party, passim*.
- 83) *Iloilo First Cultural and Industrial Fair, 1944 Souvenir Program*. Iloilo City: privately published, 1944.
- 84) Program in University of the Philippines Japanese Occupation Papers.
- 85) Speech in Osias papers, Beyer collection, National Library of Australia.
- 86) Minutes of cabinet meetings 16 December 1943, 6 January 1944, University of the Philippines Japanese Occupation Papers.
- 87) Ordinance 17, in *RPOG*, Vol. I, 1944, p. 858.
- 88) Laurel had created a separate government office for publicity, and hence did not need the Kalibapi.
- 89) Osias remarks, meeting with Mr. Esteban R. Abada, 2 June 1944, Osias papers, in Beyer collection. It is not known whether the women's components - Melchora Aquino Sisterhood and Maria Clara Sisterhood were actually formed.
- 90) *RPOG*, Vol. I, 1944, .. 864, 921, 970. Mrs. Francisca Benitez was later named the Director of the Women's Bureau of the Kalibapi.

- 91) *RPOG*, Vol. I, 1944, pp. 275-276.
- 92) *RPOG*, Vol. I, 1944, pp. 279 696-697; Produce to Survive/Gumawa Upang Manatili.
- 93) *Shin Seiki*, Vol. II, 1944, p. 6; *RPOG*, Vol. I, 1943, pp. 126, 222-223.
- 94) *RPOG*, Vol. I, 1943, pp. 165, 294, 296; 27 November 1943 open letter of Avelina L Osias, University of the Philippines Japanese Occupation Papers
- 95) Tan to Hendrycke, 7 June 1945, Tan Peoples' Court papers.
- 96) *RPOG*, Vol. I, 1944, pp. 961-962.
- 97) Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting, 3 February 1944, University of the Philippine Japanese occupation Papers.
- 98) Tan to Hendrycke, 7 June 1945, Tan Peoples' Court papers.
- 99) Agoncillo, p. 367.
- 100) A.V.H. Hartendorp, *The Japanese Occupation of the Philippines*, Manila, Bookmark, 1967, Vol. I, p. 451; Garcia, p. 235; interviews with Isagani Medina; Friend, p. 102.
- 101) Tan to Hendrycke, 7 June 1945, Tan Peoples' Court papers. Testimonies of Nicolas V. Villaruz, Jose M. Hernandez and others in Tan People's Court Papers.
- 102) Testimonies of Jose Dacanay and Antonio Zacarias, Tan People's Court papers.
- 103) Testimonies of Villaruz, Hernandez, Dacanay and Zacarias in Tan People's Court papers; Laurel, *passim*.
- 104) Decisions of the Peoples Court, Criminal Case No. 1, People of the Philippines vs. Teofilo Sison, decision by Pompeyo Diaz, Associate Judge and Jose P. Velez, Associate Judge.

Republic of the Philippines (1946- ), *Official Gazette* (henceforth *RP (1946) OG*) Vol. 42, 1946, pp. 754-755.

- 105) Cocurring opinion by Associate Judge Antonio Quirino, *RP (1946) OG*, pp. 788-789.
- 106) See published decisions of the People's Court in *RP (1946) OG*, Vols. 42-49, 1946-1947.
- 107) Agoncillo, p. 357.