

EDITORIAL: TRIUMPH OF RIGHT OVER WRONG

For this issue, we decided to yield our editorial space to the slightly abridged version of the speech of Comrade Agdon Bagtas, head of the Party delegation to the First National Conference of the NDF.

Comrades, we open today the First National Conference of the National Democratic Front.

Gathered here are representatives of fourteen (14) revolutionary organizations of the basic forces of the Philippine revolution. These organizations are the most outstanding fruits of the heroic efforts of workers, peasants, youth and students, professionals, women and national minorities in more than 25 years of waging people's war.

It is the struggles, hard work, and sacrifices of these organizations' leaders and members that have built the revolutionary movement from practically nothing into a strong and tempered nationwide force enjoying the support of millions of people in the countryside and cities, standing at the head of the people's armed and unarmed struggles, and held in high esteem by revolutionary and anti-imperialist forces worldwide.

The national democratic movement would be much stronger had it not been disrupted by serious militarist and insurrectionist deviations and major shortcomings from the late '70's and especially since 1985.

Nevertheless, the revolutionary organizations have been steeled and strengthened because we have resolutely carried out the rectification movement and steadfastly struggled against opportunism and the all-out liquidationist campaign since 1992. More than ever, our movement is solidly united in its firm reliance on the Filipino masses, on the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat and on the line of people's democratic revolution.

The red banner of revolution flies high amidst the flood of anticommunist propaganda from the international and local bourgeoisie, and against the winds of capitulationism and collaborationism being fanned by former militarists and insurrectionists turned out-and-out agents of counterrevolution and reformism.

Like all opportunists before them, Reyes, Tabara, Lagman and Kintanar are shamelessly foisting their own brand of opportunism and decadence on the masses. In chorus with the AFP, they spread the lie that the masses are tired and weary of waging people's war and revolution.

But our experience in the rectification movement, in restrengthening ourselves, and in persevering in guerrilla warfare proves that the toiling masses ardently need and desire revolution. The severe crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal system constantly drives the masses to resist, to fight, and to bear arms in order to liberate themselves from grinding poverty and oppression.

Notwithstanding the celebration of US imperialism and of the local reactionaries over the collapse of the revisionist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Malacanang's constant drumbeating of its promise of progress by the year 2000, and the pessimistic and

capitulationist blabber of the Reyeses, Tabaras, Lagmans and Kintanars, the fundamental contradiction of the semicolonial and semifeudal society continues to worsen. There is no end in sight for the socio-economic crisis and conditions are excellent for waging revolution.

It is the national democratic organizations standing firmly behind revolutionary principles, rectifying serious deviations and errors, repudiating "left" and right opportunism, and restrengthening themselves by growing deep roots among the masses--that truly understand and heed the people's profoundest desire for fundamental change. In the different areas of the archipelago, the best and most conscious elements of the exploited classes enthusiastically welcome and support the rectification movement and our efforts to restrengthen ourselves in revolutionary guerrilla warfare.

This, the US-Ramos regime knows fully well. Thus, despite its oft-repeated pronouncements of the imminent demise of the revolution, it has not stopped pouring funds and personnel for large-scale military and psywar campaigns against the national democratic movement. One clear indication is the designation of a new US ambassador who is a former agent of the Defense Intelligence Agency, a veteran of Operation Phoenix in Vietnam, the brains behind the effort to split the Sandinistas and the creation of the Contras in Nicaragua, and a known proponent of the tactic of splitting revolutionary movements from within.

National Conference

The First National Conference of the NDF is an important step in the consolidation and further expansion of the national democratic forces. It is also an important step to completely repudiate the collaborationist, capitulationist and reformist line of the opportunist renegades.

United front work and NDF building were greatly influenced and sabotaged by the serious deviations and errors of the '80's. The tendency to abandon basic principles, to sacrifice the welfare of the basic revolutionary forces, to cater to populism and bourgeois "universalism" and to tail behind unreliable allies spread and grew from bad to worse because of the erroneous belief that this would hasten the entry of the middle forces and sections of the ruling classes into the formal united front.

By 1990, having failed in their attempts to impose their insurrectionist and populist line within the structure and processes of the Party, the worst right opportunists led by Ricardo Reyes and Frank Gonzales underhandedly conspired to convene the so-called 1990 NDF "congress". Their aim was to control the NDF, formally entrench their opportunist line within the alliance, and set the NDF against the Party so as to sow confusion and to wreck the revolutionary movement.

These machinations were checked and frustrated by the Party--a move supported by the allied organizations and by the legitimate leadership of the NDF. Since 1992, in line with the rectification movement, deviations from the class line and from the principles of the revolutionary united front have been comprehensively and sharply identified, criticized and repudiated by the Party. The Party's fundamental objections to the opportunist line and decisions of the rump and illegal 1990 "congress" have been made known to the entire Party and

national democratic movement.

The other national democratic organizations had their own share of analyzing, debating and making a stand on the fundamental issues addressed by the rectification movement. Despite intense struggles within certain sections controlled or strongly influenced by the intrigues and sabotage wrought by the opportunist renagades, the national democratic organizations resolved to stand firmly united in supporting the basic principles of the revolution and in repudiating the serious right and "left" opportunist errors and deviations.

The need for a legitimate NDF national conference to undo the past deviations and distortions of the rump 1990 "congress" has long been recognized. NDF leaders in good standing worked hard to convene such a conference at the soonest possible time. The process of preparing new drafts of the NDF program and constitution started in 1992.

If the so-called 1990 "congress" took place amidst widespread disorientation and confusion on basic issues of principle, and through the connivance and usurpation of authority by its principal plotters, the present conference stands on the sharp differentiation and contention between right and wrong and between revolution and opportunism, and on the debates, serious study, and review that engaged the whole movement and that obliged entire organizations to weigh matters and take sides on issues that are of life-and-death significance to the revolutionary movement.

Comrades, we in the Party delegation are confident of the success of this First National Conference of the NDF. Great challenges and sacrifices lie ahead in the task of carrying forward the people's democratic revolution. But the past 25 years give ample proof of our ability to overcome great odds and hardships as long as we have a clear and firm grasp of revolutionary principles and persevere in developing the closest links with the broad masses of our people--especially with the workers and peasants. #-AB

= = = = =

CONFERENCE OF RECTIFICATION

The seventh of July 1892. Andres Bonifacio founded the Katipunan which embodied the Filipino people's ardent aspiration to be free from centuries of Spanish colonial rule. The Katipunan led the first democratic revolution in the Philippines.

The seventh of July 1994. On the founding anniversary of the Katipunan, another historic event took place: the First National Conference of the National Democratic Front (NDF).

The conference was deliberately timed to coincide with the Katipunan's anniversary in order to demonstrate that the present revolution is a continuation of the Filipino people's historic and unceasing struggle for national freedom and democracy. The first democratic revolution failed because it was guided by a bourgeois liberal ideology and its leadership was usurped by the vacillating ilustrados. The new struggle being waged by the NDF is firmly led by the proletariat, guided by proletarian ideology and will advance towards the socialist revolution.

The conference was attended by more than 30 delegates representing 14 member organizations of the NDF: Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP-MLKMZ); New People's Army (NPA); Artista at Manunulat ng Sambayanan (ARMAS); Christians for National Liberation (CNL); Katipunan ng mga Gurong Makabayan (KAGUMA); Cordillera People's Democratic Front (CPDF); Kabataang Makabayan (KM); Katipunan ng mga Samahang Manggagawa (KASAMA); Liga ng Agham para sa Bayan (LAB); Makabayang Kawaning Pilipino (MKP), a new mass organization of government employees; Makabayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan (MAKIBAKA); Makabayang Samahang Pangkalusugan (MASAPA); Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid (PKM); and Revolutionary Council of Trade Unions (RCTU).

Because of intense military operations in their areas, the Moro Revolutionary Organization (MRO) and Revolutionary Organization of Lumads were not able to send delegations.

The Conference, which was held deep inside a guerrilla zone, was a signal success despite continuous military operations in villages nearby. It was marked by lively discussion and spirited exchange of views, with all issues resolved through consensus.

The Conference approved the draft Program and Constitution of the NDF. Also approved were a general resolution voiding the 1990 "congress"; resolutions on the opportunist renegades and on the peace talks; and the communique announcing the Conference.

The NDF National Council was formed which in turn elected the National Executive Committee. Mariano Orosa was elected as Chairperson, and Elias Dipasupil as Secretary-General. In recognition of his valuable contributions to the NDF, the Conference named Manuel Romero Honorary Chairperson.

Based on the NDF's consensual, consultative and confidential character, all documents and decisions emanating from the Conference would be reviewed and approved by each member organization before these are deemed ratified.

Height of Opportunism

The significance of the recently held Conference is undeniable. It marked the revolutionary alliance's triumph over impostors and saboteurs who attempted to use the NDF to carry out their counterrevolutionary schemes. It was also a victory for the allied organizations in overcoming their own shortcomings and past errors. The Conference signifies a relatively high level of consolidation in revolutionary united front work.

One can better appreciate the depth and breadth of rectification achieved in the Conference with a review of the events surrounding the so-called NDF "congress" that was held in July 1990.

The Party delegation disclosed that the 1990 "congress" was part of an insurrectionary scheme hatched by Ricardo Reyes and his trusted lieutenant Frank Gonzales. At that time, both were leading cadres assigned to the Party's National United Front Commission.

Believing that a coup d'etat would be launched in April of that year,

Reyes and Gonzales conspired to turn the NDF as the command center of the insurrection that they planned to ignite once the coup took place. Based on their blueprint, the NDF was to emerge as the central organization that would lead and direct the insurrection.

Reyes' and Gonzales' insurrectionist conspiracy has a long history. Both belonged to a so-called reform bloc secretly formed within the Party as early as 1988. The reform bloc had its own agenda, its own analyses and policies which they set against the Party's principles, policies and program.

Populist and bourgeois liberal concepts were systematically propagated by the reform bloc. Before long, these had deeply influenced the NDF and the conduct of alliance work. Politically, these concepts served to buttress urban insurrectionism and military adventurism, both of which did much harm to the entire revolutionary movement.

The reform bloc concentrated its schemes and maneuvers on the NDF which it sought to control and utilize as an instrument for propagating their opportunist line. The illegal 1990 "congress" was the culmination of their grand scheme to wrest control of the leadership of the revolution from the Party and foist their opportunism over the entire revolutionary movement.

The "congress" major documents, especially the program and constitution, were full of concepts utterly contradicting the basic principles of the revolution and united front work.

Violations of Correct Process

Immediately after the 1990 "congress", heated debates erupted within the Party and the other allied organizations over the draft NDF constitution.

According to the 1990 Constitution, the NDF shall have a federative character. Under the concept of federation, no significant question may be decided upon without the knowledge of the leadership of each member organization. Issues under question should be resolved by all members and not merely by a quorum. Meanwhile, the Constitution also allowed the entry of individuals with the same voting rights as member organizations.

In the hands of the leading factionalists, however, NDF practice after the "congress" went against the federative concept. Decisions, many of which were on issues that were a matter of life and death for the revolution, were railroaded without the knowledge and consent of the central leadership of the Party, the major organization within the NDF.

One example was the "Medium Term People's Agenda" pushed by Reyes and Gonzales. This was a set of proposals that seriously compromised the revolutionary principles the NDF was supposed to espouse.

Following Reyes' and his cohorts' populist and insurrectionist design, the NDF, along with a host of formations of varied political orientations which included legal organizations and factions within the AFP, were to comprise a broad alliance that was to put forward the "people's agenda". The reactionary government's refusal to accede to this agenda would purportedly spark the insurrection.

Reyes and his co-conspirators issued the "people's agenda" in the name of the NDF without consulting the Party and the other allied organizations. Reyes and Gonzales also arbitrarily committed the NDF into joining the broad coalition.

The issuance of the "people's agenda" was timed to coincide with a welgang bayan against oil price hikes in August 1990.

Without the knowledge of the strike's organizers, Reyes ordered the bombing of strategic buildings and infrastructure and the burning of buses to create an insurrectionary situation.

When the Party sent its criticism of the "people's agenda" and of the way the strike was conducted, Gonzales retorted by invoking the supposed independence and initiative of the NDF to decide on matters over and above the Party's objections.

On another occasion, Gonzales issued a memorandum on "zones of peace" which was circulated among the Front's member organizations an act signifying a superior-subordinate relationship among member organizations who were supposedly equal. Thus, Reyes and Gonzales undermined not just the Party's independence and initiative, but also impinged on the integrity of the NDF's other allied organizations.

In practice, the NDF "federation" was run as a unitary organization. Instead of consensus, a vulgar version of democratic centralism prevailed as the Front's organizational principle. The factionalists repeatedly used such violations of organizational processes to set the NDF against the Party as a separate "political center" so as to lead the revolution astray.

Violations of Principle

The factionalists' violations of correct organizational processes had no other purpose but to facilitate the insertion of their erroneous line within the NDF. The 1990 program was a monument to their flagrant violation of the revolution's basic principles.

Foremost and most basic was the negation of the leading role of the proletariat through its Party in the Philippine revolution. Even the Party's principal role in establishing and nurturing the NDF was conspicuously omitted in the Program's section on history.

Along with the abandonment of proletarian leadership was the obliteration of the two-stage character of the revolution. Gone was the commitment to immediately proceed to the socialist revolution after the national democratic struggle and occasional references to the revolution's "socialist perspective" turned out to be mere lip-service.

This is clearly manifested in the kind of economy, society and government proposed by the 1990 program.

The 1990 draft advocates a mixed economy of indefinite duration or a so-called "national democratic economy", where different sectors such as cooperatives, small- and medium-scale businesses, state enterprises and others shall coexist and freely compete against each other.

Meanwhile, a pluralist political system will prevail. Stripped of its vanguard role, the CPP will be reduced to an ordinary party that shall compete with other groups and political parties in the electoral arena. These proposals spring from populist concepts of united front building which do not recognize the reality of class inequalities in society. Based on such a non-class viewpoint, the 1990 program promotes "free competition" among supposedly "equal" entities.

"Free competition" is of course a myth. In the economic realm, "free competition" is bound to result in the unbridled growth of the market and in the limitless power of the national bourgeoisie. There will be no relief for the masses of workers and peasants. In the political realm, the proletariat and the peasantry will have no assurance of holding the commanding position in the state, which is a requisite if the class interests of the toiling masses are to be protected and advanced.

In truth, the 1990 program offers the fruits of revolutionary victory not to the toiling masses, but to the bourgeoisie, the class that would dominate under a "national democratic order". The toiling masses would become mere peons in a united front constituted for the benefit of the national bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie.

Reyes and Gonzales so designed the 1990 program in their rush to entice individuals and organizations from the other political forces to join their insurrectionist bandwagon.

But the more deep-seated reason why Reyes and Gonzales sneaked in such bourgeois calls for a mixed economy and pluralism into the program is their erroneous belief that the future of socialism has dimmed with the collapse of the revisionist regimes in Eastern Europe.

Setting Things Right

The firm unity demonstrated by the conference delegates to repudiate and rectify serious deviations from the correct line promoted by Reyes and Gonzales within the NDF and in the conduct of united front work bodes a bright future for socialism in the country.

The Conference reaffirmed its recognition of the leading role of the proletariat through its vanguard Party. It declared its commitment to immediately begin the socialist revolution after the national democratic stage of the struggle shall have been won.

While some form of mixed economy will operate upon victory, conditions shall be laid down for the eventual abolition of the private sector and the establishment of a fullblown socialist economy. From the outset, the public sector will be assigned the leading role in the over-all economy.

A people's democratic dictatorship shall immediately be set up (in the form of a democratic coalition government) comprising all democratic classes, including the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie. But not all classes will exercise power equally within the coalition. Serving as the new government's indomitable core will be the basic alliance of workers and peasants, with leadership in the hands of the working class. This will pave the way for the smooth transition to

socialist revolution and construction.

A consolidated and dynamic united front of all positive classes and forces in society can make invaluable contributions to the realization of the revolution's objectives. The NDF stands at present as the most consolidated section of the revolutionary united front.

The NDF shall draw strength principally from the strength of its allied organizations. Allowing the full play of independence and initiative within the alliance is a key factor in building such strength.

In this regard, the Conference decided that the best organizational form for the full play of independence and initiative is the alliance. And the organizational principles that shall govern relations among members shall be those of consultation, cooperation and consensus. This will ensure the healthy operation of democracy within the alliance and pave the way for the full play of independence and initiative among the allied organizations.

The conduct of the NDF's First National Conference provided a living example of democracy. As a result, the allied organizations are now more firmly united and more determined than ever to advance their revolutionary tasks. This portends a giant leap in the revitalization and the expansion of the NDF and of the entire revolutionary movement.
-AB

= = = = =

#SEPARATING THE CHAFF FROM THE GRAIN

Liwasang Bonifacio turned red when thousands of workers streamed into the plaza on May 1 to celebrate International Workingmen's Day. The march-rally was led by the Koalisyon ng mga Progresibo at Makabayang Manggagawa (KPMW) composed of Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), Confederation for Unity, Recognition, and the Advancement of Government Employees (COURAGE), and other militant and nationalist organizations. The veritable sea of red flags was matched by equally fiery speeches of leaders blasting the anti-worker, anti-people and pro-imperialist stance and policies of the US-Ramos regime, and calling for genuine revolutionary change.

Meanwhile, the old and new yellow labor leaders, and the old and new traitors to the working class and the people converged at the Luneta Grandstand. There, the notorious labor aristocrats like Democrito Mendoza and Sen. Herrera of the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), and phony labor leaders like Romy Castillo of Bukluran ng Manggagawa para sa Pagbabago (BMP) of Popoy's gangster clique, Ernie Arellano and Bong Malonzo of National Confederation of Labor of the Philippines (NCLP), and Felicisimo Carullo of a breakaway faction of National Federation of Labor Unions (NAFLU) pompously proclaimed the formation of the so-called Caucus for Labor Unity. They signed a silly "social pact for industrial peace." On hand to give their blessings to this latest treachery to the working class were high officials of the reactionary government -- Sen. Edgardo Angara, a well-known lawyer for comprador and imperialist firms, Sen. Blas Ople, Secretary of Labor in Marcos' time, and Nieves Confesor, the current Secretary of Labor.

Phony, Yellow and Pro-Capital

This year's celebration once again laid bare the great divide between the counter-revolutionaries and traitors to the working class on the one hand, and the revolutionaries and those truly fighting for the interests of the working people on the other. The [only novel thing this year was the shameless merging of the renegades with the ranks of the old and tested traitors to the class. But as usual, the Popoy clique is quick to use distorted logic and convoluted theoretical calisthenics to cover up its slide into total ideological and political bankruptcy.

Romy Castillo, Popoy's comic mouthpiece in the BMP, had the nerve to liken the so-called CLU to the CLO (Congress of Labor Organizations)--the militant labor center that held aloft the banner of progressive and anti-imperialist unionism in the 1940's. KMU just laughed off this foolish claim. More apt, according to the KMU, is to compare the CLU to the NACTU--the labor center set up by the reactionary Quirino government after it had brutally suppressed the CLO. In 1950-51, the CLO was violently crushed by the puppet government at the instigation of US imperialism. Its leaders and organizers were arrested and some were murdered. The government then grouped together a motley of opportunist and collaborationist labor dealers and formed the NACTU in 1951 to serve as an instrument for propagating yellow unionism, economism, legalism and reformism within the working class movement.

Their model in forming the CLU, according to Castillo, is the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) which groups under its wings federations of differing political persuasions. ACTU can hardly serve as a model if one goes by a study made on ACTU's record. Since 1983, ACTU has entered into a social contract called "Prices and Incomes Accord" with the reactionary Government of Australia. After ten years, this ACCORD has proven to be a calamity for the Australian working class. While wages were held down, there was no serious attempt to prevent price increases, only monitoring of prices (much like what the Department of Trade and Industry does in our country). Unemployment after the 1990-92 recession was higher than the unemployment in the previous recession in Australia in 1982-83. Social welfare benefits have been cut back, free tertiary education won in the '70's has been rescinded, health services have become more expensive. Worse, the union movement played the role of ensuring industrial peace and holding wages down resulting in the erosion of the tradition of militant and independent unionism in Australia.

Castillo's statement turns out to be perfectly comprehensible when taken in the context that CLU fits remarkably well within the US-Ramos regime's scheme of using yellow unionism to prop up its anti-worker, anti-people and pro-imperialist "Philippines 2000" program.

The Popoy clique's public pronouncements are also very revealing.

To justify their marriage to the well-known traitors to the working class, the BMP and the bogus "ABB" even goes as far as to repeat the reactionaries' line that the root cause of the division within the working class movement and the absence of industrial peace is inter-union rivalries. The Popoy clique, which loudly proclaims its "Leninist" credentials, has forgotten or conveniently skirts what Lenin has said. According to Lenin, the cause of division is the existence of the labor aristocracy that has been created by imperialism and sustained by superprofits from imperialist plunder in order to sabotage the

workers' movement. In his turn, Juan Liwanag who is the Chairman of the Revolutionary Council of Trade Unions (RCTU), called the Popoy clique's call for unity deceitful and demagogic because according to him the strengthening of the workers' movement cannot be achieved by uniting with the proven saboteurs but by exposing and isolating them from the broad masses of workers.

Castillo also asserted that it is wrong to reject entirely the reactionary government's projects like the CALABARZON because according to him these promote industrialization and therefore favorable to the workers and their struggle for socialism! In babbling English, Castillo succeeds in clarifying the Popoy clique's "new" line, "The BMP, if possible, we want that our country to be develop (sic) to full capitalism as possible. It is in only full capitalist country (sic) or in advance capitalist countries that socialist revolution can be possible."

Genuine, Militant, Nationalist

The KMU's birth in 1980 marked a new level of consolidation of the workers' struggles in the '70's. It was the workers' strikes in the mid-'70's that broke the white terror of Martial Law among the people in the cities. Since then the KMU has served as a mighty command post for the workers' economic and political struggle. It has stood as a shining beacon leading and rallying the workers in their hundreds of thousands to fight for the interests of the class and of the people as a whole. The workers and the whole nation learned from KMU the meaning of the words "TUNAY, PALABAN, MAKABAYAN". It is only proper that KMU should continue to maintain its role as a progressive pole within the broad working class movement drawing away the hundreds of thousands of workers still under the influence and control of the reactionary, reformist, yellow, bread-and-butter bogus leaders and labor aristocrats.

In its Labor Day statement, KMU scored the US-Ramos regime's anti-worker, anti-people and pro-imperialist program, "Philippines 2000", and the out-and-out class-collaborationist support given by the "new yellows" for the regime's fraudulent program.

KMU further stated:

"The national democratic revolution remains valid, contrary to the opportunists' claim that it is now "passe."

"The Filipino workers will not be free as long as the peasants and the whole nation are not free. The broad masses of the Filipino people cannot be free unless they fight against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism."

The Revolutionary Workers' Movement

In its May Day statement, the Communist Party of the Philippines laid down the present situation, the new challenges and tasks of the revolutionary workers' movement in the Philippines.

The CPP belittled the regime's "Philippines 2000" program as a "fake formula for development that only serves the interests of the imperialists and the local ruling classes." The CPP also bared the regime's sinister ploy to crush the militant workers' movement through a

"wide-ranging psychological operation to deceive and divide the workers with the supposed existence of a 'third force' and with a reformist offensive." Being mobilized for this, according to the CPP, are the traditional yellow unions like the TUCP, FFW, AAFLI, the reformist petty-bourgeois organizations and the anti-communist renegades who peddle an out-and-out class-collaborationist and reformist line.

However, the whole situation in the country and in the workers' movement, according to the CPP, is excellent for defeating the opportunists' sabotage and wrecking, and for persistence in the revolutionary line. The profound crisis of the ruling semi-colonial and semi-feudal system incessantly generates excellent conditions for revolution.

According to the CPP, the tasks of the revolutionary workers' movement are the following: (1) unify the masses of workers along the line of people's democratic revolution; (2) propagate MLKMZ among the masses of workers; (3) expand and deepen the revolutionary underground movement among the workers; (4) push forward militant unionism and the struggles of the worker masses for better living and working conditions; (5) support directly and indirectly the armed struggle and the revolutionary mass movement in the countryside; (6) unite with the other exploited classes and sectors in fighting for genuine independence and democracy; and (7) uphold proletarian internationalism by uniting with proletarian parties and other anti-imperialist and democratic forces around the world. #-AB##

= = = = =

SOUTHERN TAGALOG: SCORING NEW GAINS"

"The Second Great Rectification Movement has become a mass undertaking."

Thus declared the Regional Party Committee in Southern Tagalog during its plenum last August.

Based on the committee's assessment, unity on the important documents of the Central Committee's (CC) Tenth Plenum has been achieved not only among the leading cadres in the region. The study of the CC plenum's documents are now being carried out down to basic units of the Party in Southern Tagalog. All regional Party organs and units enthusiastically heeded the CC's call to conduct studies, rectify the errors of the past decade and steer the national democratic revolution back on course.

Aside from studying the basic documents of the Tenth Plenum, the region made its own assessments to find out the particular manifestations of these ideological, political and organizational errors in Southern Tagalog.

The region cited a number of successes in almost a year and a half of advancing the rectification movement.

The committee found that urban insurrectionist influences infected the workers' movement in the region because of close coordination with the labor movement based in Metro Manila. The error of urban insurrectionism was also evident in the general conduct of the revolutionary mass movement in Southern Tagalog, the regional committee concluded.

Populism and reformism were likewise observed in the way the fisherfolks' movement was characterized as a distinct and multi-class sectoral movement. The region reaffirmed that the fisherfolks are only a subsector or a special group and that their struggle is integral to the peasant movement. The region has also drafted a special course to clarify to the Party cadres and members the nature and content of the reformist September Theses pushed by the defunct National Peasant Secretariat (NPS). The NPS' bankrupt line had laid undue stress on highly intensified forms of struggle (such as peasant uprisings) along very tactical and economistic lines and calls. The peasant movement is now being steered along the correct path following the basic principles of the people's democratic revolution and the Revolutionary Guide to Land Reform.

The guerrilla fronts of Southern Tagalog became a refuge of sorts to confused and disoriented Party cadres and members of the former Manila-Rizal Regional Committee. Leading cadres from Southern Tagalog held discussions with these comrades to enlighten them on the rectification movement. They were urged to reject the petty gangster clique led by Filemon Lagman and rally behind the legitimate leadership of the Party's Central Committee.

The region also fought successfully against the factionalism, splittism and liquidationism peddled by the contras. In its assessment, the committee declared that the Party organization in Southern Tagalog was now in an excellent position to face the challenging task of advancing the major lines of revolutionary work.

Already, there has been a reported increase in the number of organized masses and basic mass organizations in three guerrilla fronts in the region. The key to this breakthrough is the creative combination of various methods of organizing and mobilizing the peasant masses -- methods that are more applicable, practical and relevant to problems and particularities of the current situation. In Mindoro, for instance, the agrarian revolution is being advanced in accordance with the indigenous character of the Mangyan masses.

Another factor is the invigoration of the open peasant movement. Now bearing the correct political orientation, the open peasant movement is at the forefront of peasant mass struggles in many areas. These struggles are waged within the framework of the anti-feudal movement which assails the reactionary government's bogus land reform law and propagates a genuine agrarian reform program.

Creatively combining various methods of organizing and mobilizing the peasantry has led to significant progress in recovering areas that, for one reason or another, had been temporarily abandoned by mass work units.

To resolve major problems in the mass movement and in base building in the countryside, the committee recognized the need to deepen and expand the rectification movement. This, said the committee, "will ensure the further consolidation of the revolutionary mass movement which in turn will give rise to solid revolutionary gains in the countryside."

In conclusion, the committee stressed that "the success of the rectification movement should translate to a leap in the over-all quality of the Party's regular ideological and educational work, to

renewed strengthening and expansion of the mass base, to the broadening of the united front, to the reinvigoration of the mass movement and intensification of guerrilla warfare." #-AB

= = = = =

NEGROS: ADVANCING IN RECOVERY WORK

Slowly but surely, the move to disperse many of the New People's Army's (NPA) fighting units for mass work is now bearing fruit.

In Negros, NPA units have succeeded in recovering their mass base and have even expanded their scope as they rectified their previous practice of following a purely military orientation.

According to Ka Dandan, commander of the first NPA fighting unit in Negros to declare loyalty to the Party's legitimate central leadership, the Red fighters have been able to revive numerous mass organizations in their area of operations and have even succeeded in reaching some areas not previously covered.

Some villages that had turned against the NPA because of past excesses are once again receptive to the revolutionary movement, said Ka Dandan. He explained that in the past, punitive measures against perceived enemies were applied even without sufficient bases. "Mere membership in the Alsa Masa," he said, "was sufficient for handing down the death sentence without a closer investigation of the reasons for their joining." He also cited an NPA raid against a village in Negros Oriental where many of the residents had become members of religious fanatic cults. The guerrillas killed an entire family and confiscated more than a hundred farm animals. Instead of serving as a deterrent, the NPA action only incited fear and hatred for the red fighters and led to the further expansion of the CAFGU. The number of anti-communist fanatics also increased.

Last March 29, however, when cadres, fighters, activists and mass supporters in Negros gathered in a guerrilla front to celebrate the NPA's 25th founding anniversary, the red fighters criticized themselves for their past misdeeds. These errors, they said, could be traced to the wrong line which sought to achieve a quick victory, only to lead to the revolutionary movement's isolation from the masses.

The villagers present confirmed that because of the rectification movement, the Red fighters have succeeded in winning back their lost mass base. Said the masses, "So long as they maintain their present discipline, recovery of the movement in Negros will not be long in coming."

On the other hand, demoralization is sweeping the ranks of former guerrillas now aligned with the breakaway faction led by Arturo Tabara. Speaking before the gathering, Diego Dagohoy, head of the Provisional Executive Committee in Negros said that the spate of surrenders and arrests of several factionalist commanders was due to their demoralization over the bankrupt line of capitulationism, parliamentarism and liquidationism being peddled by the Tabara clique. Dagohoy further said that the factionalist armed groups were merely being maintained for show -- to mislead the masses into believing that they were still revolutionaries. Because of the desertions of their

commanders, said Dagohoy, they will surely end up as roving rebels, totally isolated from the masses. #-AB

= = = = =

BETRAYAL IN EL SALVADOR

"Ayer, Nicaragua. Manana, El Salvador!" (Yesterday, Nicaragua. Tomorrow, El Salvador!) After the stunning victory of the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN) in Nicaragua in 1979, the Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation (FMLN) launched their own "general insurrection" in 1981 in an apparent bid to duplicate the Sandinistas' feat this time in El Salvador. The FMLN failed.

The FSLN has since then been ousted from power by the traditional ruling classes through elections. The FMLN has since capitulated through the so-called Peace Agreement of Chapultepec, gone aboveground, and participated in the general elections last March where it lost to ARENA, the extreme-right party of the big landlords and compradors.

What went wrong?

Most of the Salvadoran Left groups, apart from the Communist Party, emerged during the social turmoil of the 70's. The mass movement was on the rise. The Church was active organizing peasants into Basic Christian Communities (BCCs). Labor centers were set up to organize the workers. Youth and students became active in organizing and mass actions. To the calls for reforms the government responded with harsh repression. Massacres and assassinations were resorted to but these failed to quell the mass movement.

Armed struggle was started in the early 70's to overthrow the military-dominated junta and transform society. Harsh repression in the cities drove more and more people to support the armed struggle.

By the late 70's, five politico-military formations had emerged which came together in October 1980 to form the FMLN: FPL (Fuerzas Populares de Liberacion)/FAPL; RN (Resistencia Nacional)/FARN; PRS (Partido de la Revolucion Salvadorena)/ERP; PCS (Partido Comunista Salvadoreno)/FAL; and PRTC (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores Centroamericanos)/FAR-LP.

Because of the severe fascist repression, two progressive legal organizations were forced to go underground: the MPSC (Movimiento Popular Social-Cristiano) --progressive Christians led by Ruben Zamora, and the MNR (Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario) led Guillermo Manuel Ungo -- Social-Democrats and member of the Social-Democratic International.

In December 1981, the FMLN launched their "Final Offensive" a Nicaraguan-style popular insurrection with the still small guerrilla army serving as spearhead. The effort failed.

The FMLN failed to see that the quick victory achieved by the FSLN was a result of very exceptional circumstances not the least of which were the extreme isolation of the Somoza dictatorship both internally and externally, and the failure of the U.S. to come to the aid of its stooge. The U.S. government had its hands tied because of the prevailing

anti-interventionist sentiment in the U.S. after the debacle in Vietnam coupled with strong international pressure against such intervention. As a result, the Somoza dictatorship crumbled.

Instead of building their strength step by step and advancing wave upon wave, the FMLN sought a quick military victory against an enemy which was still formidable. The U.S. had also learned its lesson well in Nicaragua and was determined not to allow a repeat. It pushed for elections so as to coopt some of the alienated sections of the Salvadoran ruling classes, and more importantly, it moved decisively to strengthen the Salvadoran military.

After this failure, the FMLN shifted to the building of bigger formations to engage the enemy in both conventional and unconventional warfare. At this time however, FMLN organized mass base was confined to the isolated northern and eastern regions of the country. The government with increased US support responded with air and ground offensives on the known FMLN strongholds. Again, the FMLN faced a blank wall.

From the "left" error of seeking quick military victory both through a Nicaragua-type insurrection and premature regular warfare, the FMLN began to swing to the right. In 1984, it started to shift its strategy to one in which its military effort was designed primarily to force a negotiated solution to the civil war.

RIGHT TURN: ROAD TO BETRAYAL

The FMLN held peace talks first with the Christian-Democratic Duarte regime and then with the ARENA regime of Pres. Christiani. On 16 January 1992, the Peace Agreement of Chapultepec was signed in Mexico.

The agreement provided that in return for allowing the FMLN to surface in the legal arena and compete in the 1994 general elections, the guerrillas would lay down their arms and be demobilized. Simultaneous with the demobilization of guerrilla forces would be the reduction of the size of the reactionary Armed Forces specifically the dismantling of five notorious battalions specially trained by the US. Also, the brutal Policia Nacional and Policia de Hacienda would be replaced by an "independent" Policia Nacional Civil (PCN) to be composed of 20% ex-guerrillas.

A Truth Commission under U.N. supervision would be set up to investigate past human rights violations.

A very limited land distribution program was provided for in the agreement. The scheme was mainly designed to help in the absorption into civilian life of the guerrillas and government soldiers who were going to be demobilized.

No concrete provisions were agreed upon on socio-economic reforms, only that a Forum for Economic and Social Cooperation was to be created. Proposals from this forum would then be recommended for action in the Legislative Assembly.

In essence, the agreement only paved the way for the surrender and legalization of the FMLN while leaving hanging and unresolved the crucial socio-economic issues which are at the root of the armed

conflict.

The Peace Agreement was repeatedly sabotaged and its implementation delayed by the ARENA regime.

While the demobilization of the more than 8,000 guerrillas was concluded on schedule in December 1992, it was only two months later that the reduction of the Armed Forces and the dissolution of the elite battalions was carried out.

The UN-appointed Truth Commission found the reactionary Armed Forces guilty of 95 % of what were adjudged as human rights violations. The Minister and Vice-Minister of Defense were found accountable but five days later, Parliament approved an amnesty law that in effect exonerated the human rights violators.

Since the conclusion of the agreement, a mere 10% of the already limited land earmarked for distribution had been processed. This solves not even 1 % of the over-all land problem.

Since the accord, 25 FMLN members and leaders, including a candidate for the Legislative Assembly, have been murdered by the revived right-wing death squads.

The country remains a semicolony of US imperialism thanks to the cheerful acquiescence of the FMLN. US, Spanish and Chilean police officers are in charge of training the new police force. USAID once active in the counter-insurgency gives medical training to former guerrilla medics.

Whatever gains the revolution and the masses had achieved with their blood the FMLN has squandered away. The exploitative and oppressive socio-economic structures have remained untouched. With the dissolution of the revolutionary army, the Salvadoran masses are defenseless in the face of the unchallenged power of the local reactionaries and US imperialism.

180-DEGREE TURN

Meanwhile, the FMLN continues its slide into total political and ideological bankruptcy. They now try to justify their betrayal of the revolution and their collaboration with the ruling classes by repeating the worn-out phrases of past revisionists which they pass off as new theories supposedly "more appropriate for the modern world."

"We should not view private enterprise as an element of Satan, the devil, or the ideological enemy. (...) The state, the government is and must be a regulator of interests."

"This is the era of pacts between sectors that were previously antagonistic but are now working towards intersectoral cooperation."

"The FMLN and the Left in general should respect the legitimate interests of the business sector and facilitate cooperation in order to overcome, or at least manage, the contradictions between sectors, for the benefit of democracy, stability and social peace."

"The FMLN of 1993 is no longer the FMLN of the war. We are a#political

party (...) which, from the perspective of the popular interests, knows how to dialogue and construe agreements and consensus with other centers of power: capital, the Armed Forces, the political parties, the US and the international community."

US imperialism which only a few years ago was considered the enemy of the people of El Salvador has suddenly become an ally and "guarantor of the peace". Why indeed should US imperialism not guarantee this "peace" which is so onesidedly advantageous to the exploiters and oppressors?

Together with the imperialists and all reactionaries the world ðover, they have pronounced the death of Marxism-Leninism as as an ideology of a bygone era.

"The ideology of Marxism or communism, which outlined a strategy in Europe, has collapsed. Please, let us, latinos, not measure ourselves with such ideology and practice. (...) The closed economic systems of socialism have fallen like card houses."

And what do they prescribe in place of Marxism-Leninism?

"The pluralist ideology is the best ideology of a people, for it doesn't exclude any social sector or interests. The modern world rejects all sectarianism and ideological fanaticism."

The FMLN has indeed gone a long way. Only, BACKWARDS. #-AB##_

##□

##□ ##▷