

Critique of Philippine Economy and Politics

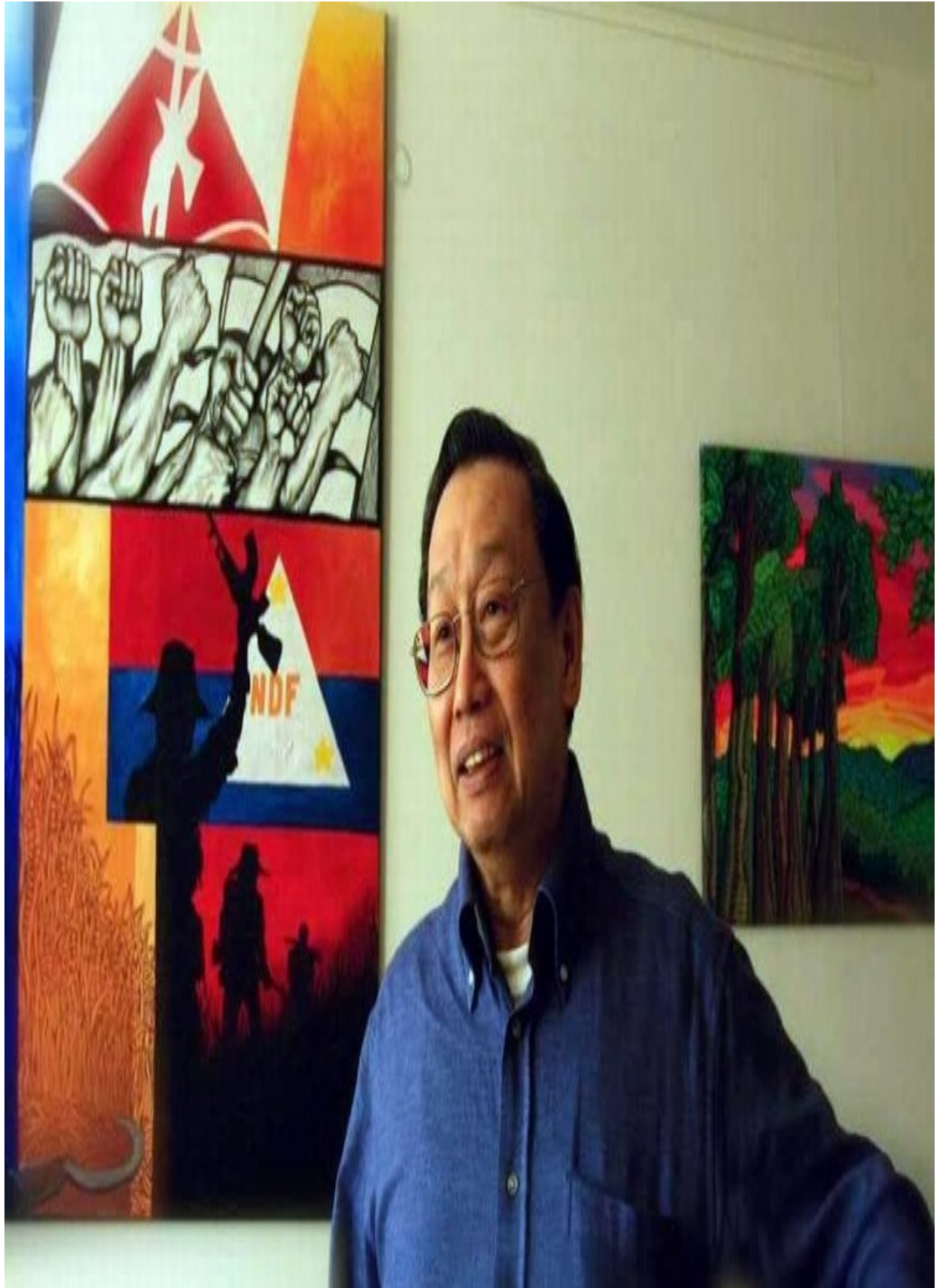


jose maria sison

sison
reader
series

3

julieta de lima
editor



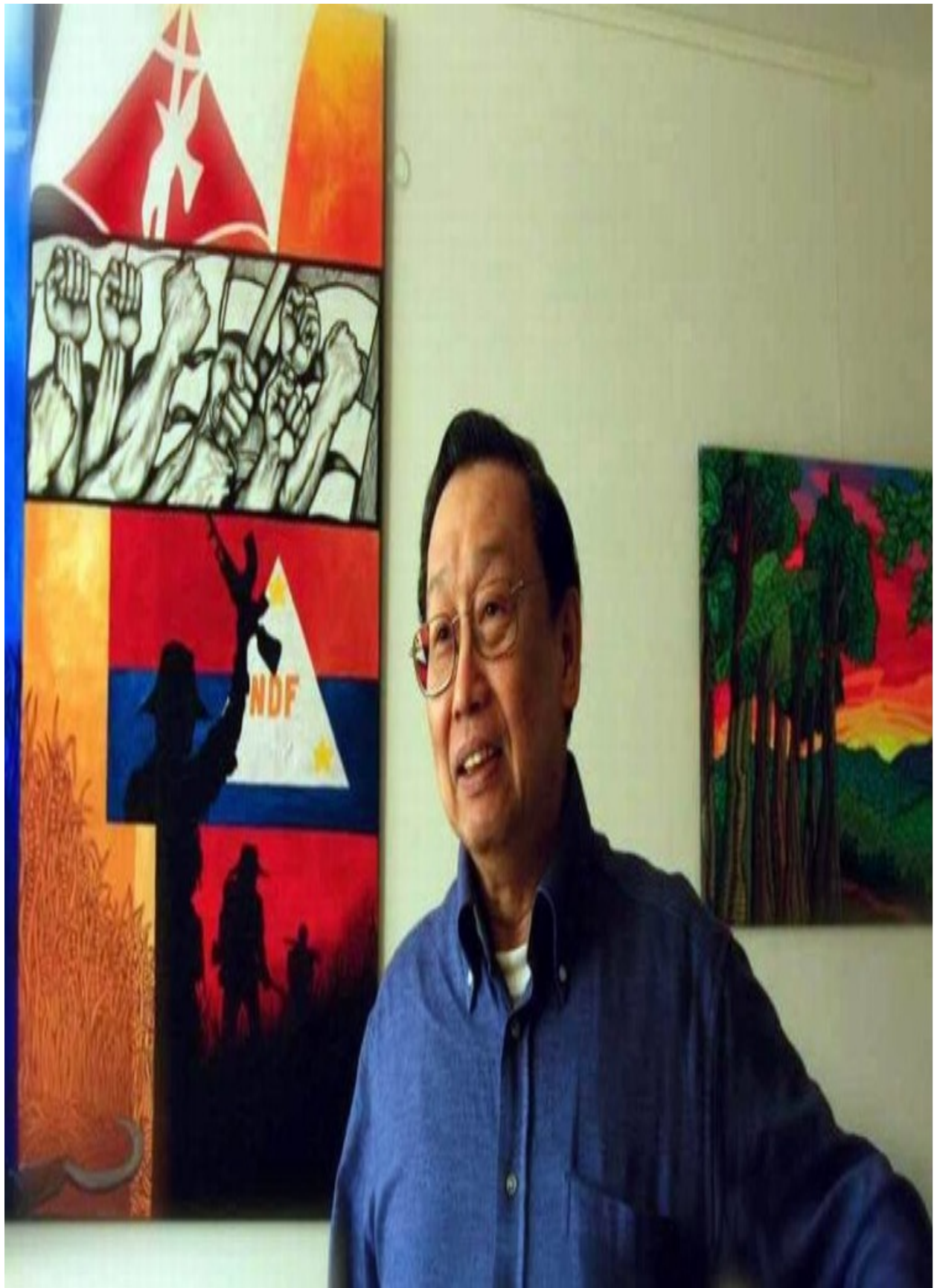


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Jose Maria Sison

Critique of Philippine Economy and Politics

Sison Reader Series

Book 3

Julieta de Lima, Editor

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Author's Preface

Critique of Philippine Economy and Politics is addressed to the Filipino toiling masses, the intelligentsia, the social activists, the advocates of a just peace and the revolutionaries who are committed to the people's democratic revolution. It seeks to explain comprehensively the basic character of Philippine society and the basic problems that afflict the Filipino people, especially the toiling masses of workers and peasants.

Since July 1946, the US has granted nominal independence to the Filipino people and turned over administrative responsibility to the local exploiting classes of big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists. But US monopoly capitalism has ensured its continued dominance over the economic, political, cultural and social life of the Philippines through treaties, agreements and arrangements. The shift has merely been from direct colonial to semicolonial or neocolonial rule.

The semifeudal economy has persisted despite claims that the Philippines has undergone development through stages of import-substitution manufacturing, tokens of industrialization, export processing zones and the neoliberal kind of free trade under foreign monopoly capitalism. In fact, there has been no genuine land reform and national industrialization to undo the economic dominance of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism and the general condition of underdevelopment, extreme exploitation, mass unemployment and widespread poverty.

Land reform laws have been consistently riddled with loopholes to prevent genuine land reform, allow land monopoly by a few, overprice expropriation of land, make the redistribution price prohibitive to the landless peasants and give free rein to land reclassification for the purpose of avoiding land reform and allow the reconsolidation of land previously distributed.

In the 1960s the Iligan Integrated Steel Mills project was undertaken supposedly to spearhead national industrialization. But from the beginning it was limited to only reshaping metal plates imported from Japan. It was ultimately sold off for dismantling by a Malaysian company in the 1990s even as there was a bubble in

private construction puffed up by neoliberal financing until the Asian financial crisis of 1997.

The Philippine economy remains incapable of producing basic metals, chemicals and machine tools, all of which are still being imported. Metal fabrication consists of slicing and reshaping imported metal, plates, tubes and rods. Agriculture, mining and quarrying, and manufacturing use imported equipment and major inputs.

The Philippines has been reduced to being a source of raw materials and some fruits for the imperialist countries and neighboring economies like those of Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and China. Mining, logging and plantations keep on expanding and ruining food sovereignty and the environment all over the Philippines.

The export of men and women ranging in number from 10 to 12 million (more than 20 percent of the labor force who take the lowest paid jobs abroad) has been one of the most outstanding developments in the last four decades of the neoliberal policy regime. The millions of overseas Filipino workers on top of another 10 million unemployed and underemployed who stay in the Philippines expose the dismal state of underdevelopment, gross scarcity of employment and mass poverty.

The income from the export of raw materials, some semimanufactures and cheap labor has not sufficed to cover the ever widening trade deficits due to the rising costs of manufactured imports for consumption and upscale private construction. The Philippine economy is obliged to bear an ever mounting foreign debt burden and ever rising debt service payments. The reactionary state aggravates the bankruptcy of the economy with ever rising budgetary deficits and public debt through unbridled bureaucratic corruption and military overspending.

The semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system is in chronic crisis and the broad masses of the people are constantly discontented and make just demands in accordance with their national and democratic rights and interests against foreign monopoly capitalism and the local exploiting classes.

But the big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists find it more convenient to ignore, obscure or silence the people's just demands. They use outright military force to suppress the revolutionary movement of the people and

escalate the conditions of oppression and exploitation. Thus, the national struggle against imperialism and struggle between the exploited and exploiting classes continue to rage.

Since the time of the Marcos regime, the US and the local exploiting classes have used the ruling clique of politicians to escalate anticommunist propaganda in order to attack the resurgent resistance of the people against the ruling system, instead of allowing or promoting the adoption of basic social, economic and political reforms.

The Marcos fascist regime promised national greatness and development for the Philippines. But it was servile to US imperialism and engaged in the most despicable forms of state terrorism, plunder and military overspending; and thus unwittingly promoted the growth and advance of the armed revolutionary movement of the people. The US supported the Marcos fascist dictatorship and junked it only after it inflicted so much death, destruction and suffering to the Filipino people; and proved to be more of a liability than an asset to the US, especially because of the advances made by the revolutionary movement.

The post-Marcos regimes were expected by the US and the local exploiting classes to be better at governing behind the facade of being more democratic than the barefaced fascist dictatorship of Marcos. But all such regimes have proven to be basically the same as the Marcos regime in terms of puppetry to US imperialism, intensified oppression and exploitation of the people and wanton bureaucratic corruption and military overspending. All of them have engaged in brutal strategic campaigns of suppression against the revolutionary movement of the people.

The regime of Corazon Aquino rose to power as result of the sustained armed revolutionary movement of the people from 1969 onward and the nonviolent mass uprisings of 1986 against the Marcos dictatorship. But within the term of Aquino, the Marcos family and the biggest Marcos cronies were able to return from exile and participate in the 1992 elections. The rival factions of the same exploiting classes can easily compromise to continue exploiting and oppressing the people. But they are unable to negotiate peace seriously and sincerely with the revolutionary movement.

The first Aquino regime was interested only in a short-term ceasefire agreement, which it violated as soon as it calculated that it had consolidated its ruling

position. All succeeding regimes would give no serious respect to the 1992 The Hague Joint Declaration of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. This agreement requires the peace negotiations to address the roots of the armed conflict or civil war through basic reforms. They have used the short periods of peace negotiations only to try in vain to outwit and counter the revolutionary movement rather than heed the demands of the people for social, economic and political reforms.

In recent years, we have been confronted by the recrudescence of Marcos-type state terrorism under the tyrannical, treasonous, mass murdering, plundering and swindling Duterte regime. After pretending to be Left and socialist and to engage in peace negotiations for six months in 2016-2017, the Duterte regime started to blatantly sabotage the peace negotiations in order to terminate these and expose his drive for fascist dictatorship. It has systematically corrupted and criminalized the reactionary military and police to make them private armies of the commander-in-chief Duterte in his scheme to become a fascist dictator.

In the bogus war on illegal drugs, he ordered the police officers to kill more than 33,000 drug suspects. He paid police officers for the arbitrary listing of so many drug suspects and then paid them a still bigger amount for mass murder of a percentage of the drug suspects. The objective was not to solve the problem of illegal drugs but to make supreme the Duterte crime family in collaboration with Chinese criminal triads.

In the current strategic campaign plan to destroy the revolutionary movement, military officers are paid huge amounts of money for faking localized peace negotiations, red-tagging campaigns, mass surrenders, fake encounters and extrajudicial killings and fake development projects. But these fakeries are futile and costly. They merely goad the people to intensify their resistance to the reactionary state and to the evil forces of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

The Duterte regime seeks to amend the economic provisions of the 1987 Constitution to satisfy all imperialist powers by offering to their corporations the right to own 100 per cent of land and other natural resources and all types of enterprises on the Philippines. This is obviously a maneuver to make way for political provisions to allow the autocratic rule of Duterte.

The regime is unprecedentedly trying to serve and satisfy two conflicting

imperialist powers, the US and China, which used to be the two main partners in neoliberal globalization until the financial crash of 2008. Duterte has avoided disturbing directly the comprehensive US dominance over the Philippines as it depends on the US for military advice, planning and weapons supply for attacking the revolutionary movement of the people.

On the other hand, it has undermined the sovereign and maritime rights of the Philippines over the West Philippine Sea and its rich marine and mineral resources. It has practically sold out such rights to China in violation of the UNCLOS and the 2016 judgment of the Permanent Arbitration Commission in favor of the Philippines against China.

The Duterte regime has allowed Chinese mining companies and their dummies to extract all kinds of mineral ores from the Philippines and ship these without recording and paying taxes. Chinese companies now control the national power grid and the cell towers erected inside the camps of the reactionary armed forces.

The Duterte regime benefits not only from the shady transactions with Chinese banks, state corporations and private corporations but also from the shady transactions with Chinese criminal triads. The Davao-based Chinese group handling Duterte is also in charge of relations with these criminal triads engaged in the smuggling in of drugs and other goods.

The worst that the Duterte regime has done to bring out the worst of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system is the use of mass intimidation and extrajudicial killings with impunity which is publicly guaranteed by the president himself to the police in the bogus war on drugs and likewise to the military in the increasingly brutal strategic campaign to destroy the revolutionary movement.

The regime incites its armed minions with anticommunism in order to rouse them to a frenzy of red-tagging, abducting, torturing and killing social activists, critics, human rights defenders and peace advocates. It has systematically corrupted and used the military and police officers for criminal purposes in order to get their loyalty.

Duterte has deliberately militarized civilian departments and functions in the reactionary government and publicly emboldened his own faction in the military and police to take power in case he is ousted. But he is provoking the growth of

anti-Duterte groups within the armed services because of the favoritism and extreme privileges for the Duterte faction and because of the traitorous sellout of the West Philippine Sea to China and the rampant criminality of the Duterte loyalists.

More bitter and darker times are ahead for the Filipino people because of the terrible crimes the tyrannical and terrorist regime is hell-bent on committing to impose fascist dictatorship and dynastic rule on the people while the crisis of the Philippine ruling system and that of the world capitalist system are rapidly worsening.

But the rising strength of the revolutionary movement of the people will eventually prevail. At the same time, the anti-imperialist and democratic struggles of the peoples of the world are intensifying and spreading and are ushering the resurgence of the world proletarian-socialist revolution.

In acting like the Marcos fascist regime, the Duterte regime is exposing once again the total rottenness of the ruling system and unwittingly driving the people to join and support the revolutionary movement. The next book in the Sison Reader Series, *On The New Democratic Revolution*, is a logical and necessary follow-up to the *Critique of the Philippine Economy and Politics*.

Jose Maria Sison

Utrecht, The Netherlands

June 1, 2021

National Freedom and Class Freedom

Speech delivered before the Kabataang Makabayan Institute of National Affairs on September 25, 1965

National democracy and civil liberties

Every activist of the national-democratic movement knows the important relationship between his struggle for national sovereignty and civil liberties. When he is deprived of civil liberties, his basic rights of expression and assembly, or is hampered in his pursuit of national democracy, there is a political power in the status quo which refuses to afford him those civil liberties. Necessarily this political power becomes the object of criticism of the movement to which he belongs. The political situation where activists unflinchingly discover that they do not have as much freedom as they thought they had, exists in the Philippines today.

For us to understand the relationship between the struggle for national sovereignty and civil liberties, we must understand the structure of political relations and of political power in a given society. We need to consider the fact of classes and organized groups within our national society and within which conscious individuals exist and operate. These classes and organized groups mediate or bridge without exception the individual with the nation. The freedom of these classes and organizations within Philippine society and within which Filipinos necessarily find themselves must be fully taken into account if a fruitful study is to be made of the two distinct levels of national freedom and individual freedom.

The struggle for national sovereignty and civil liberties made a compound in modern bourgeois democracy, particularly in its early pre-monopoly stage. We

would say that modern democracy as it evolved in Europe implied essentially the principle of popular sovereignty and the actual force of a national state dominated by the national bourgeoisie. In the bourgeois-democratic attack against the feudal order in Europe, it was necessary to define and build the national state before the Bill of Rights could be enjoyed even if only by the bourgeoisie at the expense later of the spontaneous masses inveigled by the populist and libertarian slogans of the bourgeois revolution against the theocracies of feudalism.

In the Philippines, it is particularly important to assert that only after national sovereignty has been fully secured and incorporated into a genuinely free national state will civil liberties be truly enjoyed by the people. It was precisely the function of the Philippine Revolution at the outset to attack a feudal system developed in the archipelago and establish a republican government and a national state. It is historically clear that the main objective of the Philippine Revolution has been to establish a national sovereignty which is not only antifeudal, as in the West but which is also anti-colonial and anti-imperialist. By being anti-colonial in acting against Spanish colonialism and being anti-imperialist in acting against US imperialism, the Philippine Revolution carried heavier burdens than the national antifeudal revolutions of Europe and made it starkly clear that alien sovereignty in the Philippines must first be eliminated before national freedom and individual freedom successively can be possible.

The tasks of the Philippine Revolution have been the national integration of its internal elements and national liberation from Spanish colonialism and subsequently US imperialism. What follows, after national liberation, is the consolidation of revolutionary gains by the very same instruments and forces which have made national liberation possible and which enforce the national state. The Philippine Revolution of 1896 would have resulted in a Philippine state, self-determined and with free-willed international relations, had it been successful in successively overthrowing Spanish colonial power and in preventing the brutal victory of US imperialism.

US imperialism frustrated the establishment of a Philippine state and government that could have truly granted civil liberties to its citizens subject only to the balance of power among internal patriotic classes and organizations within the state and in accordance with the terms of the Malolos Constitution. US imperialism employed the essential force of a well-established state, that is, military and coercive means, against the Filipino people who desired the

establishment of their own sovereign power and national state. It was US aggression, dictated by monopoly-capitalist expansionism, which set back the Filipino struggle for sovereignty and national statehood in the Filipino-US War of 1899-1902.

After the frontal clashes between the Philippine revolutionary army and the imperialist army of the US government, when the so-called pacification campaign was supposed to have been finished, in the field of combat in favor of imperialism, the latter engaged in the most thorough military police work to curtail the civil liberties of the Filipino people. The suppression of what could have been a full-fledged Filipino democracy with its own national sovereignty, resulted likewise in the suppression of its particular components, individual freedom or civil liberties, as the most ignominious censorship laws, sedition laws and so-called brigandage laws were promulgated to prevent any opposition to the imperialist imposition of US sovereignty over our people. Within the first decade of this century, our people were prohibited from displaying their own flag, were prohibited from reading literature with patriotic undertones or overtones, were prohibited from holding or attending meetings and public functions that did not fly the US flag, were prohibited from organizing themselves into groups that suggested in any degree the desire for national independence. Instead of bringing democracy, as pro-US slogans insist, US imperialism came to kill national democracy in the Philippines.

The violent impositions of US imperialism on our people, who were already asserting their right to self-determination, confirms the definition of the bourgeois state as essentially the institutionalization of violence or coercive force for the purpose of exploitation. The rule of law that followed our conquest by imperialism cannot be correctly viewed without paying due attention to the coercive means that the United States employed to extract from our people its imperialist privileges and to establish in our country its system of making superprofits. The enjoyment of individual freedom and class freedom of a certain kind and extent became possible only with the consent and tolerance of the ruling power.

This was the essence of such euphemistic imperialist slogans as “benevolent assimilation” and “tutelage for self-government,” which were raised to whitewash the brutal truth, in McKinley’s Instructions and in the Jones Law.

Even before the completion of the pacification drive against the revolutionary

forces and the defeat of Filipino democracy, US imperialism set out to take advantage of the class divisions in Philippine society. In waging national suppression, class suppression and class collaboration, US imperialism used the technique of divide-and-rule. Even as the US could militarily maintain strategic control of the Philippines, it needed internal collaborators in the administration of the colonial system and to restrain the revolutionary temper of the masses. These collaborators could be persons but at best they were political groups and social classes which are objectively more stable than individuals. Thus, US imperialism thought it wise to accommodate the liberal bourgeoisie, the ilustrado class, as its class collaborator. The ilustrado class was immediately granted its freedom, its right of colonial expression and assembly. Its members were allowed to organize the Federalista Party, whose main plank was the annexation of the Philippine islands to the United States of America. Affiliation to this party was a sure ticket for a comfortable office in the imperialist regime. The ilustrado class selfishly alienated itself from the peasant masses and the germinal proletariat. From the narrow liberal point of view, which could easily accept the system of individual rewards and punishments in an imperialist-dominated society, the cream of Filipino ilustrados distinguished themselves by turning their family landholdings to their personal advantage, by participating in the colonial exchange of agricultural raw material exports and manufactured imports and by deriving the most spoils from their choice government positions.

The only concession that the Filipino masses got from US imperialism, more as a consequence of the impact of the Philippine Revolution than of imperialist benevolence, was the establishment of a public school system which the Filipino reformists of the Propaganda Movement had already demanded from the old type of colonialism without much success. US imperialism, with its capitalist-industrial base, was in a better position to afford these reforms or concessions for propaganda, for controlling the minds of Filipino children and youth, for creating local appetite for US commodities and for developing a more extensive system of neocolonial clerks capable of filling up the administrative and technical requirements of imperialist domination.

The working class and its freedom

With the suppression of the Philippine Revolution and its betrayal, the Filipino masses found themselves prevented at every turn by US power from pursuing their collective interest. The Filipino peasantry realized that they had not only been frustrated by US imperialism in their struggle for national liberation but

also in their struggle for land reform and social justice. The Filipino working class, still at its rudimentary stage, was also frustrated. The true leaders of the revolutionary government met one fatal setback after another as opportunists took the upper hand in the struggle for national liberation. Because the peasantry was the backbone of the revolution, US imperialism delivered to it the most paralyzing blows and whatever political organization was achieved among the masses by cadres of the revolution was scuttled by the marching hordes of US imperialism.

Immediately after the suppression of the peasants in the countryside in the Filipino-US War, the workers in the city started to transform the gremios into modern trade unions and directly founded in 1901 the first trade union, the Union de Impresores de Filipinas — significantly, the union of printers, which became the base of such labor leaders as Isabelo de los Reyes and Crisanto Evangelista. When the trade unions federated themselves into the Union Obrera Democratica in early 1902 and held the first labor congress in the Philippines, guided by the Marxist principle that “the emancipation of the workers must be achieved by the workers themselves”—the proletarian battlecry throughout the world—all the military and intelligence personnel and facilities of US imperialism became focused upon the leaders. The Union Obrera Democratica suffered an early death a few months after the conviction and incarceration of Isabelo de los Reyes on trumped-up charges and on false witness by a paid agent. The attempt of Dr. Dominador Gomez to resurrect the same federation failed, with him suffering the same fate of incarceration. De los Reyes and Gomez suffered incarceration for their leadership in mass demonstrations of workers in the interest of the working class and for their militant anti-imperialist stand. Subsequently, De los Reyes and Gomez themselves became absorbed by reactionary politics.

Seeing that the Filipino workers could not be restrained from organizing themselves, Governor Taft imported the US Federation of Labor in 1903 to see to it that a federation, the Union del Trabajo de Filipinas of Lope K. Santos, be organized along the traditional lines of US yellow trade unionism and be disciplined under the anti-labor principle that “labor should not go into politics.” Thus, not only frontal but fifth column attacks against the Filipino working class were employed by the US imperialist regime to curtail the class freedom of the workers and their civil liberties. It was essential, as it is still essential, to the forces of imperialist reaction, that the working class should never become a political force in the land. The US Federation of Labor doctrine of non-politics

for labor and subservience to imperialist politics, however, did not gain ground among the workers as much as it was expected despite the fat imperialist subsidies given to labor crooks.

A labor congress on May 1, 1913 was held under the leadership of Hermenegildo Cruz and founded the Congreso Obrero de Filipinas. In the meantime, Crisanto Evangelista rose as leader of the premier trade union of the time, the Union de Impresores de Filipinas, and in 1918 became its president. In 1922, he established the Workers' Party — the first of its kind in the Philippines. In the 1929 convention of the Congreso Obrero de Filipinas, the federation polarized into a group of “reds” and a group of “yellows.” The group of reds, led by Crisanto Evangelista, bolted out with the overwhelming majority of the trade unions and formed the Katipunan ng mga Anak Pawis. The group of yellows and Yankee agents became isolated from the working-class movement. In 1930, as the dominant number of organized workers struggled to have a bigger role in our political life, they founded the Communist Party in concert with the peasantry organized under the Katipunang Pambansang Magbubukid sa Pilipinas. A few months later in 1931, even as the left movement in the United States and throughout the West was becoming stronger with the Depression and the need to counteract fascism, the US imperialist regime, consistently fearing the political potential of the Filipino working class and the peasantry together, moved to illegalize the Communist Party and imprison and banish its leaders from the masses.

Nevertheless, while the Communist Party was in hibernation, so to speak, Pedro Abad Santos organized the peasantry in Central Luzon under the Aguman Ding Maldang Talapagobra and soon after launched the Socialist Party. Under the regime of Franklin D. Roosevelt when the Popular Front was needed to counteract the fascism of Japan, Germany and Italy, the Commonwealth government released its communist prisoners and allowed them to work again as a legal political party. In 1938, the Communist Party and the Socialist Party merged to form one political party. In struggling against Japanese fascism throughout World War II, this political party proved its worth to the Filipino people and became very strong.

After World War II, the attitude of US imperialism to the Communist Party changed and the merest suspicion of attachment to it proved to be dangerous and fatal to anybody. The period of 1945 and 1952 proved fatal to communist lives and civil liberties. The imperialist attempt to isolate and provoke suspected

communist leaders was only part of a campaign to reinstitute US power in the Philippines. The US authorities feared the Communists as the most uncompromising anti-imperialists.

As has been proven in the Philippines and elsewhere throughout the world where US imperialism has succeeded in perpetuating its vested interest, the suppression of Communists easily results in suppression of nationalists and of democrats of whatever shade and class. The logic of this statement can easily be found in the dialectics of the imperialist suppression of the Democratic Alliance, the Pambansang Kaisahan ng Magsasaka, the Congress of Labor Organizations and the Civil Liberties Union, advocates of nationalism and civil liberties. After the war, it became the policy of the US government to destroy any individual or organization which stood in the path of its campaign to reestablish US power in the Philippines through the Bell Trade Act and the Parity Amendment, the Military Bases Agreement, the Military Assistance Pact and the Quirino-Foster Agreement. Through its local agents in all branches of the government, US imperialism had no compunction in ordering the massacre of an entire squadron of guerrilla fighters which escorted US troops from Central Luzon to Manila, the murder of the national chairman of the Pambansang Kaisahan ng Magsasaka and the general secretary of the Congress of Labor Organizations, and the ouster of the Democratic Alliance members from the Philippine Congress, whose number would have been sufficient to prevent the treasonous ratification of the Parity Amendment and the passage of the Bell Bill. Under these conditions, after defeating the democratic will of the sovereign people and the suppression of the freedom of expression and assembly, the organized peasantry and the workers together with the progressive intelligentsia and those businessmen who stood to suffer from free trade, were provoked into civil strife.

Those organizations which were suppressed in the second half of the 1940s to the 1950s were the victims of an anti-national and anti-democratic foreign aggressor and its domestic tools. On May 10, 1964, after more than a decade of waiting for the courts to decide, the leaders of the Congress of Labor Organizations were read the decision of the Supreme Court acquitting them of the charge of rebellion and conspiracy against the Philippine state. This “vindication” has in a way exposed the extreme character of the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, the massive attacks against the life and civil liberties through the sona, the assassinations and bombardments which were conducted against our poor masses. Amado V. Hernandez and other labor leaders languished for years in prison only to be acquitted later. Can the Congress of

Labor Organizations be easily resuscitated now to enjoy once more the Bill of Rights of the Constitution? Can the progressive workers and peasants recover from their losses and use the Bill of Rights to their advantage now after more than a decade of terror and chicanery by the CIA agents, clerics and crooks who tried to run down and own all the labor unions and peasant unions in the country and who also tried to thwart all possibility of the progressive recovery of our masses by means of the Anti-Subversion Law which is meant to perpetuate the suppression of our civil liberties?

In this country and at this stage of our development, we should never think that one class or one leader alone can achieve our national liberation. Let us think of and work for the solidarity of anti-imperialist and antifeudal classes, groups, and individuals for the common objective of winning national freedom and democracy from that single power which dictates upon us, which exploits us and which acts as the master of the compradors, landlords and corrupt officials in our exploited society. Let us endeavor to work for a broad united front in the national-democratic movement. Let the patriotic businessmen, the students, the workers, the professionals and the peasants unite into an invincible force against US imperialism and feudalism. Let the vast majority of our people — the peasantry and the working class — be the massive base of our democracy. Let a new type of leadership, that of the proletariat, emerge to show us the correct path.

We have been provided with the illusion that there is freedom of expression and assembly in this country, which is supposedly sufficient to voice out and work for the interests of the masses of our people. But if we look closely at the platforms of all those political parties which present political candidates in the false drama of neocolonial politics, we find that patronage and bribery are the real concerns of their decrepit and narrow type of leadership. We find the common devotion to a “free enterprise” monopolized by US imperialism.

Neocolonial parties

Let us investigate the political parties which have profited most from the status quo. Let us call them the licensed or the permitted political parties in our neocolonial society. The time for criticizing them has come and criticism must be made in order to raise the political consciousness of the people who are once more as agitated as during the days of the Katipunan, who are as ever prepared to receive progressive and revolutionary ideas, who know how well they can use

their democratic rights to build their own political party and movement basically different from the NP, the LP and the PPP which are now prancing in the political hippodrome of the neocolonial circus.

1. The Nacionalista Party

Let us take the Nacionalista Party. It is the oldest conservative party in existence. It came into focus in 1907 by ostentatiously advocating “immediate, complete and absolute independence” in opposition to the outrightly pro-imperialist Federalist Party which advocated the annexation of the Philippines to the United States. Nevertheless, the Nacionalista Party was never able to regain the spirit and determination of the Katipunan and the Philippine Revolution because it had the basic fault of accepting the political framework established by foreign domination, of becoming in effect the beneficiary of a perpetuated state of aggression, of being dictated by the US slogan of “tutelage for self-government” which was a direct mockery of our revolutionary masses and their patriotic heritage, and of agreeing to the basic proposition that the Filipino leaders should beg for Philippine independence from the US government instead of struggling for it as an assertion of self-determination. The Nacionalista Party was the first imperialist-tolerated party to mislead our people into believing that sovereignty, instead of being fought for by our own people, can be granted by the very alien forces which suppressed it.

In the most objective sense, the Nacionalista Party helped US imperialism strengthen its economic, political, administrative, educational and military control of the Philippines for more than three crucial and continuous decades before the outbreak of the Japanese-US imperialist war in the Pacific. The compromising character of the Nacionalista Party can be seen in its 1935 platform which, despite the independence oratory of Quezon, advocated the revision of the Tydings-McDuffie Act, “so that preferential trade with America may be allowed to continue after independence and shall not be terminated until the expiration of such period as may be considered reasonably necessary to permit the Philippines to make proper readjustment of her economy.” This would be the same imperialist and comprador-landlord rationale in favor of the Bell Trade Act and the Parity Amendment after the war.

When World War II was going on, US control of the Commonwealth government in exile only became stronger. The imperialist terms of the Tydings-McDuffie Law pertaining to US military bases and property rights were

aggravated by executive arrangements in Washington.

In 1946, the Nacionalista Party splintered into three wings, left, middle and right. The left wing tried to carry the middle wing towards the Democratic Alliance, a party deriving its strength mainly from the organized peasantry and workers. The right wing became the Liberal Party. The Nacionalista Party opposed the threat of McNutt and the US business community, led by the infamous US Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, to postpone “independence” and likewise opposed the Bell Trade Act and the Parity Amendment. After the electoral victory of the Liberal Party, however, the Nacionalista Party’s opposition to imperialism weakened and became half-hearted.

Even as the Liberal Party cheated in the elections of 1949, the vehement opposition of the Nacionalista Party to electoral fraud and terrorism was not directed at the foreign power which controlled the armed forces and made possible the use of official fraud and terrorism. Ironically, it soon occurred that the Nacionalista Party adopted Ramon Magsaysay as its presidential standard-bearer in 1952 despite the fact that he was the principal agent of US imperialism in effecting the suppression of the writ of habeas corpus, in the massive attacks against civil liberties and in the preparation of conditions which threatened the incarceration of such Nacionalista leaders as Recto, Laurel and Rodriguez and others for alleged involvement in alleged “subversive” activities.

The transposition of Magsaysay proved the basic reactionary character of the Nacionalista Party, its susceptibility to the maneuvers of US imperialism. In the short time that Magsaysay was president, US imperialism succeeded in imposing upon the Filipino people the US-RP Mutual Defense Pact and the Manila Pact (SEATO) which multiplied its privileges of intervening in Philippine affairs militarily and of involving the Philippine government in US wars of intervention and aggression throughout Southeast Asia. It also succeeded in making a readjustment and revision of the Bell Trade Act which made possible some minor concessions to the Philippine government but which extended parity rights of US citizens to all fields of business endeavor in the Philippines.

During the term of Garcia, when the stalwarts of what is now the Party for Philippine Progress suddenly found themselves out of place in the administration, the “Filipino First” policy was raised as a reflection of and response to the growth of national entrepreneurship under conditions of controls during the 1950s. But, under the charges of graft and corruption and the threat of

a coup d'état emanating from the Central Intelligence Agency and its Filipino agents who were exposed by General Pelagio Cruz, Garcia made several steps backward and gave in to US pressures for decontrol as early as 1960.

The imposition of full and immediate decontrol and US-controlled “free enterprise,” executed through the puppetry of the United Opposition in 1962, has wrought havoc upon our national life. Our working class and peasantry have been suffering from the automatic decrease of their real income, and from the increase of unemployment, the skyrocketing of prices of all commodities and the subsidy for imported consumer goods which has undermined the financial stability of the government. Filipino entrepreneurships have been depressed by decontrol and by its concomitant of tight credit control, forced into bankruptcy and takeover by US monopolies. As a result of decontrol the Philippine economy is being surrendered totally to big US monopolies with their unlimited financial standing. Abusing the alienation of government from the national entrepreneurs, US monopolies have subordinated government finances to their investment plans.

2. The Liberal Party

Let us take the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party started as the right wing of the Nacionalista Party in 1946. It was the reactionary wing and it did become the reactionary party given by US imperialism the task of perpetuating the colonial privileges of US monopoly interests even after July 4, 1946. It was the party which frustrated the Democratic Alliance with the coercive means made available to it by the US military and money. It is the party responsible for the Parity Amendment, the Bell Trade Act, the Military Bases Agreement, the Military Assistance Pact and the Quirino-Foster Agreement.

Consistent with its tradition of unmitigated pro-imperialism, the Liberal Party — together with the Grand Alliance (whose leaders are now leading the PPP) fought against the “Filipino First” policy and advocated decontrol which has intensified the misery of the masses.

The aggravated condition of the nation is the joint responsibility of the Liberal Party and the Grand Alliance. Obscuring the fact that it was US monopoly capitalism which manipulates them to oppose the aspirations of nationalist businessmen, these political parties endlessly harp on the issue of graft and corruption against the Nacionalista Party in the allocation of foreign exchange.

After full decontrol in 1962, bureaucratic corruption merely changed places. Pure and technical smuggling and bribery in the disposition of government funds, approval of contracts and sale of government firms have become rampant.

What is supposed to be the chief achievement of the Liberal Party administration since 1962 is the adoption of decontrol and the reinforcement of a US-controlled economy. As this party persists in this presumption, it must be rejected by the national-democratic movement. In conformity with the dictates of the US State Department, the Macapagal administration has faithfully publicized a sham socioeconomic program, recommended by US agents in the World Bank, which merely outlines what public works projects can be done by the government. Based on new tax measures and on stabilization funds and foreign investments from the United States, this program is meant to destroy the initiative and potency of the Filipino people in their economic life. This program has been nothing but a cover for further Americanization of the economy.

The original and actual intent of the Macapagal Land Reform Program was to deepen US control of Philippine agriculture and agricultural credit. The amended Minimum Wage Law is also nothing but an insufficient readjustment to the harsh results of decontrol which has forced Filipino firms into bankruptcy and caused the layoffs of Filipino workers. The Filipino working class has lost more than it has gained during the Macapagal administration.

In foreign policy, the Macapagal administration has assiduously tied itself to the tactics of US imperialism which are directed towards splitting the Afro-Asian anti-imperialist movement and preserving imperialism and neocolonialism. At the present stage, the Philippine government is allowing itself to be used as an instrument in the development of a so-called “moderate group” — composed of pro-US governments—which is meant to counteract the will of the Afro-Asian peoples to force the retreat of colonialism, imperialism and neocolonialism.

3. The Party for Philippine Progress

Let us take the PPP. The Party for Philippine Progress is the most reactionary, anti-national and anti-democratic of the three parties running district and national candidates. Analysis of the vested class interests behind it, its development and its present platform and activities reveals to us its reactionary clerico-fascist and pro-imperialist nature. This must be stated clearly because this party intends to create semantical confusion and mystification as the basis of

its political program.

The PPP calls itself a “left of center” party only to be anti-left, anti-national and anti-democratic. It calls itself a “rebel against tradition” and a “revolutionary” party only to be guided by the most traditional and reactionary forces in the country such as clericalism, militarism, imperialism and feudalism. It calls itself a “nationalist” party (with such glittering generalities as “faith in the Filipino,” “love for the Philippines,” and “hope in the Filipino”) only to obscure and evade the basic and concrete iniquities in Philippine-US neocolonial relations. It calls the Philippine government “neocolonialist” because it is supposedly “overcentralized” and “too strong,” deliberately not referring to the fact that it is actually weak as a national instrument because it is subordinated to the central powers and interests of US imperialism, and it is in this sense that it is neocolonialist. The PPP would like to make it appear that Filipino bureaucrats on their own account are the neocolonialists, not the imperialist and feudal interests which control and organize them.

The PPP calls for a supposed “decentralization” in order to distribute the graces of democracy but only to strengthen the provincial powers of landlords and their politicians and to negate all possibilities for any national industrial planning from a republican center. It calls for “people’s capitalism” only to rob the workers of their meager savings and to have the mass of small shareholders manipulated by a few high financiers, chiefly foreign.

The PPP can trace its beginnings from the frailes and guardia civil. Its spiritual origins and historical antecedents are manifested by its obvious schemes of disciplining voters and organizations to vote along anti-republican, colonial and sectarian lines and of developing fascist connections with the military establishment. While the PPP has the presumption of achieving these schemes, imperialist and comprador-landlord interests consider it a safety check on the two other conservative parties and a weapon of last resort in anticipation of the revolutionary advance of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

As a distinct political group, the PPP started to train itself in the Chesterton Evidence Guild before World War II. With their dramatics, the members of this guild — mostly the children of the elite — praised Franco and Mussolini and advocated their ideas. The guild was obviously inspired by Father Coughlin who, in New York, was agitating for fascism.

After the war, the members of this guild assisted in the return of US imperialism and many of them were used to penetrate political and civic organizations, especially those with national-democratic tendencies. After the army raids against progressive workers' and peasants' organizations in 1950-52, they started their maneuvers to inveigle the peasantry and working class with their own kinds of organization and with their imperialist-inspired concept of rural community development. In 1952, as the Magsaysay-for-President-Movement boys, their political identity with those intelligence and psywar officers responsible for the widescale suppression of democracy became more evident. It was during the time of Magsaysay that they brewed the anti-libertarian Anti-Subversion Law in order to curtail the freedom of patriotic dissent. It is the opinion of the most competent lawyers today that this is a bill of attainder and a clear attack against the right of expression and assembly.

In 1957, after the sudden death of Magsaysay, the Progressive Party of the Philippines was established. In 1959, it called itself the Grand Alliance to embrace disgruntled elements from the LP who were also close to the US Jesuits. In the elections of 1957 and 1959, the PPP failed but succeeded in holding back to some extent the faster development of the anti-imperialist movement. They were always around to make red-baiting attacks against anti-imperialists. In 1961, it coalesced with the Liberal Party into the United Opposition. The United Opposition was united by the pro-imperialist objective of eliminating the "Filipino First" policy, and of returning a policy of "free enterprise" totally controlled by the US business monopolies and united by the fantastic amounts of US dollars contributed by large US business firms to the electoral campaign fund.

In 1962, the PPP was able to infiltrate most successfully all important branches and agencies of the government. In Congress, the PPP stalwarts, Manglapus and Manahan, and their associates stood out in proposing those bills, like the Macapagal Foreign Investments Bill, which would serve the interest of US imperialism in the Philippines.

Disgusted with the inability of Macapagal to get the majority of the Philippine Senate in the 1963 elections and afraid of being implicated in the Stonehill and smuggling syndicates, to which many of their PPP colleagues could be implicated, as Macapagal did implicate Pelaez, Senators Manglapus and Manahan left the Liberal Party in 1964 and prepared the resuscitation of the PPP. So long as the three political parties, the NP, the LP and the PPP, are controlled

and financed from above by the comprador-landlord class and its imperialist master, none of them can ever be expected to be truly for the development of national democracy in the Philippines. But, again, let us say that we should strive for a national united front of all patriotic and progressive forces and elements in our society, and let us open the door of national unity to those groups and elements that are truly for national freedom and democracy at any time. Let us develop a new type of political party and, at the same time, a broad alliance of political forces against US imperialism and feudalism. The US imperialists are once more trying to consolidate their forces and agents in this country in preparation against democratic mass actions that are now developing in defense of our national patrimony, our dignity and independence. US imperialism is more worried than ever as it is now fast losing its power and influence in areas surrounding the Philippines. We are now in a period as historically momentous as the decade of the 1940s or the years when Spanish colonialism overconcentrated itself in the Philippines only to find itself overexposed to our people who were quick to realize that they must win collective freedom. In conclusion, let us cry: let us have national freedom; let us have class freedom; let us have individual freedom in the service of the class freedom of the workers and peasants!

Land Reform and National Democracy

Speech delivered at the College of Agriculture, University of the Philippines, Los Baños, Laguna, on March 23, 1966

The colonial question and the agrarian question

At the present stage of our national history, the single immediate purpose to which our people are committed is the achievement of national democracy. On this single purpose, all are agreed, irrespective of social classes, unless one belongs to a class aggrandized by the perpetuation of semicolonial and semifeudal conditions in our society. Unless one is a landlord or a comprador, one aspires to have his nation free from colonial and imperialist exploitation. Every patriotic Filipino wishes to liquidate imperialism and feudalism simultaneously in order to achieve national democracy.

The relation between national democracy and land reform is very clear. We can achieve genuine land reform only if we, as a nation, are free from colonial and imperialist domination. In fighting for national democracy against US imperialism and feudalism today, we need to unite the peasantry — the most numerous class in our society — on the side of all other patriotic classes and we need to unite with the peasantry, as the main force or backbone of our national unity and anti-imperialist struggle.

The peasantry will join the anti-imperialist movement only if it is convinced that the movement can bring about a state capable of carrying out land reform. In his long struggle for social justice, the Filipino peasant has learned that there must first be a decisive change in the character of the state, brought about largely and fundamentally by the worker-peasant alliance. He has learned the lesson a long time ago that before democratic reforms can be completely effected the national

state must be secured from imperialist control and must be firmed up by the overwhelming support of the peasantry and the working class, whose alliance is far more reliable and more qualitatively powerful than the peasant-ilustrado combination which became frustrated by US imperialism at the start of this century.

If we study closely the early development of the national democratic movement, we can see its profound basis in the agrarian situation in the Philippines during the Spanish colonial era. The demand for political freedom became a valid demand to the masses only when they realized that a national state, their own popular sovereignty, could protect them against the exploitative colonial power which could only benefit the colonizers and their local agents. The Philippine revolution of 1896 took full form only after the peasantry became mobilized into a powerful national liberation movement against colonialism and serfdom. The peasantry provided the mass support for the Philippine revolutionary government and fought the most intense patriotic war against colonial authority, especially in those areas where the contradiction between the peasant and the landlord was most intense. Colonial domination meant feudalism. It had to be overthrown by the armed might of the peasantry.

If we study assiduously the writings and experience of the old national democratic heroes, we cannot help but find the insistent line that the lack of political freedom of a nation is based upon economic exploitation and control by an alien power. In the case of the Filipino people, during the Spanish era, the theocratic unity of church and state and the lack of national and individual freedom were based upon the feudal economic order and upon the mutual landlordism of lay and ecclesiastical authorities.

In Dr. Jose Rizal's *El Filibusterismo*, you will note how the story of Cablesang Tales cries out for a nation-state capable of protecting its own citizens against foreign exploiters. The story of Cablesang Tales is no different from the lives of our peasant brothers today. He is a victim of excessive land rent, usury, servitude, extortion, insecurity from both lawless elements and legal authorities, ignorance of laws made by landlords for their own benefit, and even of his own industry which only attracts more exploitation from the exploiters. His daughter, Huli, is sacrificed to the unjust circumstances that afflict her father's goodwill as she falls prey to the pious hypocrisies of usurious do-gooders and the local curate who would even violate her virginal virtues as she seeks his fatherly assistance. On the other hand, while her family suffers all these difficulties, her

brother is conscripted into the colonial army — in the same way that our youth today are conscripted into the US controlled military machinery — to fight peasants that are in revolt in other islands and in neighboring countries. As the unkindest cut of all to her family, Tano her brother — now called Carolino after his share of fighting for Spanish colonialism against the rebellious natives in the Carolines — finds himself in his own country to hunt down a so-called bandit called Matanglawin, his own father who has turned into a peasant rebel leading multitudes of those who had been dispossessed of their own land.

In an ironic situation where the peasant conscripts must fight their own peasant brothers upon the orders of a foreign power, when the mercenaries must face mountains and mountains of guerrillas, Carolino shoots down his own grandfather, the docile and overpatient old peasant who has always advised Cablesang Tales, his aggrieved son, never to respond to the provocations of the powerful. Old as he is, representing several generations of peasant oppression and patience, he has finally become a peasant fighter after the brutal death of his dear granddaughter only to be shot down in an objective act of colonial reaction by his own unwitting grandson. It is too late when Tano or Carolino realizes it is his own grandfather he has shot, unwittingly betraying his own family and his own class. Such is the ironic situation into which many of our peasant brothers are drawn when they enlist in the military, follow the orders of US-trained officers, use US arms, be guided by US intelligence, ideology and advice, and allow themselves to be used against their own peasant brothers in other towns or provinces in our own country, or in foreign countries where they are used by US imperialism to fight peasants who are fighting for their national freedom, as in many countries of Southeast Asia today.

The story of the peasant rebel, Matanglawin, has its basis in the life of Dr. Jose Rizal. As a young man and as a leader of his people, he showed courage in exposing the exploitative practices of the friar landlords and drew up a petition seeking redress which was signed by the tenants, leaseholders and leading citizens of Calamba. What followed the petition came to be known as the Calamba Affair. Governor General Weyler surrounded the town of Calamba, burned the homes of the people, confiscated their animals and exiled the Filipino town leaders. The colonial logic of the Calamba Affair was pursued to the end, to the death and martyrdom of Rizal and to the outbreak of the Philippine revolution. The dialectics of history led to the polarization between the Filipino peasantry and the Spanish colonial authorities. What made Rizal unforgivable to the Spanish colonial authorities was his having exposed feudal exploitation to its

very foundation.

Andres Bonifacio, the city worker feeling spontaneously the fraternal links between his nascent class and the longstanding class of the peasantry, expressed in fiery revolutionary language the peasant protest against feudalism in his poem “Katapusang Hibik ng Pilipinas” [The Last Appeal of the Philippines]:

Ang lupa at bahay na tinatahanan,

Bukid at tubigang kalawak-lawakan,

Sa paring kastila’y binubuwisan...

Ikaw nga, Inang pabaya’t sukaban

Kami’y di na iyo saan man humanggan.

Ihanda mo, Ina, ang paglilibingan

Sa mawawakwak na maraming bangkay.

[The land and the house we live in,

the field and farm so wide,

and so also the trees and plants—

to the Spanish priest we pay taxes...

You, O negligent and malevolent Mother (Spain),

we are no longer yours whatever happens,

prepare, then, Mother, the grave

where many dead bodies will find rest.]

Bonifacio's call for revolt against feudal exploitation had been prepared by a long series of peasant struggles covering hundreds of years before him. Only after having waged a long series of sporadic and uncoordinated rebellions did the Filipino peasant realize that it took a well-organized and a conscious nation of peasants working as a single massive force to successfully attack feudal power and achieve the formation of a nation-state. Note clearly in the revolutionary poem of Bonifacio that the denunciation of feudal exploitation goes with his call for armed struggle against the colonial power. Apolinario Mabini, in the Ordenanzas de la Revolucion, a collection of directives for the successful conduct of the revolution, expressed in clear terms the abolition of feudalism as a national objective:

“Rule 21. All usurpation of properties made by the Spanish government and the religious corporations will not be recognized by the revolution, this being a movement representing the aspirations of the Filipino people, true owners of the above properties.”

The Philippine revolution of 1896 could have been the instrument of the peasant masses for redeeming the lands taken away from them by their feudal exploiters through more than 300 years of colonial rule.

US imperialism: enemy of the Filipino peasantry

When US military intervention and aggression came in 1898 to mislead and subsequently crush the Philippine revolution in the Filipino-US war of 1899-1902, the main revolutionary objectives of establishing a free nation-state and of achieving land reform was crushed. In order to succeed in its reactionary venture, US imperialism snuffed out the lives of more than 250 thousand combatant and noncombatant peasants. They did to our people, largely to our peasant masses, what they are now directly doing again to the people of Vietnam with the same purpose of frustrating a revolutionary nation and its collective desire for democratic reforms, particularly land reform.

In order to stabilize its imperialist rule in the Philippines, the US government sought the collaboration of the old ruling class in the previous colonial regime. It returned to the friars and their lay collaborators their landed estates which had been confiscated from them, and offered to the landlord class as a whole the privilege of sharing the spoils of a new colonial administration and of participating in a new pattern of commercial relations, that is, one between a

capitalist metropolis and a colony. The new dispensation of US imperialism required the Philippines to be a producer of raw materials for US capitalist industries and a purchaser of surplus US manufactures.

As a result of the continuous struggle of the peasant masses against US imperialism even after 1902, when all the Filipino landlords and ilustrado elements had already accepted US sovereignty and were already collaborating with the new colonial masters, the US colonial administration went through the motion of buying friar estates for the purpose of dividing and redistributing them to tenants. However, no change in the agrarian situation could really be effected. The tenants were in no position to pay the high land prices, the high interest rates and the onerous taxes. The complicated land title system confounded them and allowed smart government officials and private individuals to grab lands. The lack of governmental measures of assistance brought about the wholesale loss of holdings of tenants who did acquire them. Huge tracts of land became alienated into the hands of US corporations and individual carpetbaggers in contravention of laws introduced by the US regime itself. Filipino landlords and renegades of the Philippine revolution were given more lands as a reward for their collaboration and were allowed to gobble up small landholdings both legally and illegally.

US imperialism had planned that large haciendas would still remain in the hands of the landlords in order that sugar, copra, hemp, tobacco and other raw agricultural products would be immediately exchanged in bulk with US manufactures through the agency of what we now call the compradors. Today, if you wish to have a clear idea of compradors, observe the comprador-landlords, under the leadership of Alfredo Montelibano in the Chamber of Agriculture and Natural Resources, who are benefited by the neocolonial trade between the Philippines and the United States and who are now maneuvering the perpetuation of parity rights and preferential trade.

According to the MacMillan-Rivera report, 19 percent of the farms in the Philippines were operated by tenants or share-croppers at the beginning of the US colonial regime. By 1918, after the supposed division and redistribution of the friar estates and after a large increase in total farms through the opening of public lands, tenancy had risen to 22 percent. In the 1930s, as the peasantry became more dispossessed and poorer, tenancy further rose to 36 percent. The pretended grant of independence by the United States, far from reversing the trend of peasant pauperization, increased it and exposed the emptiness of such a

bogus grant. By the late 1950s the tenancy rate rose to 40 percent.

According to figures issued by the reactionary government, tenancy in the Philippines embraced eight million out of 27 million Filipinos in 1963. In Central Luzon, 65.87 percent of all farms were tenant operated, and in the province of Pampanga it was 88 percent — the highest rate for all provinces in the country. This did not yet include an equal number of the wholly landless agricultural workers who subsisted under onerous contract labor conditions on sugar haciendas, coconut plantations and elsewhere. The displaced tenants and the irregular, seasonal agricultural workers — the *sacadas* — are also a part of the hapless poor peasantry.

Political unity of the peasantry and the working class

Within a decade after the ruthless suppression of the last guerrilla remnants of the First Philippine Republic, the worsened conditions of the peasantry in our barrios gave rise to spontaneous revolts and also produced peasant mass protest organizations. These unified in 1922 in the Confederacion de Aparceros y Obreros Agricolas de Filipinas, which was broadened and renamed two years later as Katipunang Pambansa ng mga Magbubukid sa Pilipinas (KPMP). The KPMP not only demanded agrarian reforms but also called for national independence in the same way the Katipunan of Bonifacio did. In 1930, the leaders of this peasant organization consequently united with the Katipunan ng mga Anak Pawis ng Pilipinas for the purpose of creating a worker-peasant political alliance under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

The establishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines marked a qualitative change in the status and thinking of the working class and a strategic portion of the peasantry. It made these two classes more capable of conducting their own class struggle and the national struggle. They challenged the liberal democratic pretensions of US imperialism and its local agents.

So long as US imperialism held the reins of power in the Philippines, however, the Filipino peasantry could not raise themselves from their exploited condition. The more they manifested strength and progressive consciousness, the more they became subjected to military and police suppression unleashed by the US imperialist regime. And yet, in that period, the peasant mass organizations were led into reformist activities exclusively and seemingly directed at the landlords and the trade union movement directed its main blow at the bourgeoisie “in

general.” It is true that the working-class party was aware of the popular outcry for national independence, but it failed to develop the corresponding national democratic strategy. It failed to deliver powerful blows at US imperialism to expose it thoroughly and mass the forces of the nation against it. Instead, it was the puppet politicians and even the Sakdalistas who seemed to have perceived more clearly the main contradiction and the main demand and they tried to pursue the same objective of sabotaging the national democratic movement into two disparate ways. The puppet politicians took the way of begging for independence from US imperialism. The Sakdalistas took the way of anarchism.

US imperialism, together with its landlord-comprador cohorts, was certain of its main enemy. A few months after the formal alliance of the KPMP and the KAP, the Communist Party of the Philippines was immediately outlawed; thus, it was deprived of its democratic rights.

The outlawing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, nevertheless, could not conceal the reality of peasant oppression during the direct colonial rule of the United States. In 1931, a local peasant revolt occurred in Tayug, Pangasinan. A bigger armed uprising of armed peasants occurred in 1936 in the towns of Cabuyao and Santa Rosa, Laguna led by the Sakdal. These peasant revolts were continuing manifestations of the unbearable exploitation of the peasantry and were at the same time the critical effects of the US capitalist depression in the 1930s.

The bitterest agrarian unrest in the 1930s occurred in Pampanga where the Socialist Party and its peasant union, Aguman din Maldang Talapagobra, militantly fought the landlord and stood their ground against the civilian guards and the Philippine Constabulary. The Socialist Party led the peasants and agricultural workers in the open until anticommunist repression was eased as a result of the Popular Front tactics and the Communist party of the Philippines was allowed to surface to add its force to the worldwide antifascist struggle. The “social justice” program of President Quezon was articulated only as a concession to the vigorous demand of the peasantry for agrarian reform.

When World War II broke out, the dislodgement of US imperialism from the Philippines and the emergence of anti-Japanese resistance became the condition for the success of the peasant movement in Central Luzon and Southern Luzon to effect land reform among themselves on the land abandoned by the landlords. Throughout the country, landlord power was generally weakened as its normal

lines of control were broken by the conditions of war.

The Japanese imperialists were resisted by armed peasant masses. Where resistance was most successful, the peasant masses were able to use the land abandoned by the landlords to their social advantage. The resistance against Japanese imperialism served as a means for the peasants to assert their power over the land. The armed struggle gave them the power to eliminate the control and influence of the landlords over their land. Many landlords decided to collaborate with the Japanese imperialists. This occasion should have been an opportunity for the entire peasantry to learn that landlordism seeks protection in the bigger power of imperialism, whether US or Japanese. It was indeed, unfortunate that while they were warding off the excesses and brutality of the newly-come imperialists, they became distracted from the similar nature of US imperialism whose radio broadcasts were blatantly announcing its desire to retake the Philippines and whose motley agents were already scattered throughout the archipelago to keep USAFFE guerrillas waiting for MacArthur. The antifascist struggle could have been converted into a struggle against imperialism, both Japanese and US. The cadres of the peasant movement could have exposed the interimperialist aspect of the US-Japanese war and alerted the peasantry to the return of US imperialism. They could have spread out throughout the country and developed a reliable anti-imperialist guerrilla movement independent of the US-directed and US-controlled USAFFE. At any rate, through constant struggles against Japanese fascism and its landlord collaborators, the peasantry built up and supported a powerful national liberation army which delivered the most effective blows against the Japanese imperial army in the strategic areas of Central Luzon and Southern Luzon. These areas are strategic because they envelop Manila.

The return of US imperialism and landlordism

When the US imperialists returned in 1945, they immediately attempted to reinstall the landlords in all parts of the archipelago, particularly in Central Luzon and Southern Luzon, where they went to the extent of arresting, imprisoning, coercing and liquidating the peasant leaders and their comrades. They trusted the landlords, including those who had collaborated with the fascist invaders, as their true allies and they were extremely distrustful of peasant guerrillas who were independent of the US-controlled USAFFE. Not only the Hukbalahap became the object of US discrimination and abuse after the war but also the independent guerrilla units, of which the exemplary unit of Tomas

Confesor in the Visayas was typical. Post-war benefits and backpay went in bulk to prop up the recognized hero-puppets of US imperialism.

Depending on the intelligence provided by the USAFFE, the Counter-Intelligence Corps and the landlords, the US imperialists gave instructions to the Military Police and the Civilian Guards to attack the peasant masses and apprehend their leaders who had valiantly resisted the Japanese imperialists.

An entire squadron of anti-Japanese peasant fighters which accompanied the so-called US liberators from Central Luzon to Manila was disarmed in Manila, driven off on their bare feet and massacred in Bulacan by the Military Police under secret imperialist orders. Peasant leaders were thrown into the same prisons where pro-Japanese puppets were kept. No less than the national chairman of the Pambansang Kaisahan ng Magbubukid was murdered while he was under the protective custody of the Military Police and while he was campaigning for “democratic peace” in the countryside. Eight members of Congress who ran under the Democratic Alliance and who were elected by the overwhelming votes of the organized and class-conscious peasantry were forcibly removed from Congress. All these provocations, which preceded the outbreak of full-scale guerrilla warfare were conducted by US imperialism to clear the way for the complete return of imperialist-landlord control of the Philippines. All these provocations led ultimately to the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus and the unwarranted murder and imprisonment of peasants and their leaders and the antidemocratic crackdown on the Communist Party of the Philippines and such mass organizations as the Pambansang Kaisahan ng mga Magbubukid.

After the expulsion of the peasant-supported Democratic Alliance members of Congress in an all-out abuse of democracy, the Bell Trade Act and the Parity Amendment were ratified, thus formalizing the reestablishment of the imperialist-landlord pattern of trade, free-trade so-called, and the parity rights for US citizens and corporations in the exploitation of our natural resources and the operation of public utilities.

US imperialism, by unilateral choice, retained its military bases at twenty-three strategic points all over the archipelago, maintained the privilege of expanding them and of moving its troops from there, and employed them to exercise coercive influence on the peasantry and the entire Filipino people. Subsequently, the US-RP Military Assistance Pact formally sanctioned the subordination of our

military to US military officers in the JUSMAG and to the entire system of US military bases, supplies, planning and advice. In our civil service, US advisers continued to control and direct the most strategic offices. In short, US imperialism retained strategic control over the coercive paraphernalia of the Philippine puppet state and over the economic foundation and civil appurtenances of daily political life.

As the landlords and the imperialists cooperated to their mutual advantage in attacking the peasant masses, the latter were compelled to fight back in order to defend their national and democratic rights. The result of the peasant struggle between the years 1946 to 1952 you already know; it is recent history and there are no better sources of information on this struggle than the veteran peasant guerrilla fighters themselves.

At the height of its world power, US imperialism based its forces against the organized peasantry in order to paralyze the backbone of the Filipino nation and make its antinational and antidemocratic impositions. In order to suppress the organized and class-conscious peasantry, the puppet agencies of US imperialism recruited its troops from the peasantry only to use them against their own brothers in other barrios and towns. Thus, the story of Cabesang Tales and his son Tano or Carolino was again repeated in the ceaseless struggle of the peasantry.

The leadership of the revolutionary mass movement had emerged from the war politically unprepared to expose and fight the return of US imperialism, which was the only power which could under the circumstances effectively help the landlords to retrieve their lands from the patriotic peasantry of Central Luzon and southern Luzon. Instead of exposing and fighting the revolutionary alliances between the landlords and the newly-returned US imperialists who masterminded and gave full arms support to the Military Police and the Civilian Guards, the peasant movement accused the landlords only as pro-Japanese collaborators and failed to direct immediately the main blow against US imperialism. The leadership of the revolutionary mass movement did not expose promptly the fact that the landlords who had been pro-Japanese collaborators became pro-US collaborators. The delay in the exposure of US imperialists gave the landlords the time to consolidate their positions.

The reactionary triumph of US imperialism and feudalism has prolonged the suffering and exploitation of the peasant masses. Our peasant masses continue to

suffer from the unfair distribution of land and the exploitative relations between tenant and landlord, unfair sharing of the crop, usury, landlord-controlled rural banks and cooperatives, profiteering middlemen, lack of price support, lack or high cost of fertilizers, irrigation and agricultural machines, inadequacy of extension work and scientific information and the deplorable conditions of the peasant in health, housing, nourishment and education. All of these difficulties and misfortunes are those of the entire nation, our agrarian nation whose numerically dominant class is the peasantry embracing more than 70 percent of our population. The specter of feudalism haunts us to this day and substantially determines the colonial character of our economy.

With the collaboration of US imperialists and Filipino landlords in full swing, we observe that the supremacy of a ruling elite in this country combines the character of imperialism and feudalism. We observe the local supremacy of the comprador-landlord class which is the most benefited by the strategic US control of our national economy and foreign trade. The owners of the sugar, coconut, abaca and other export-crop plantations have benefited the most from that colonial pattern of trade between our raw material exports and manufacture imports from the United States and other capitalist countries. It was the military power of US imperialism which prevailed over the peasantry in the absence of a prompt anti-imperialist and antifeudal strategy developed by a peasant-mobilizing party. However, the myth that Ramon Magsaysay “saved democracy” has been created by US imperialist propaganda. While Magsaysay was a successful propaganda weapon of US imperialism and while he was able to confuse even some peasant leaders, it is clear beyond doubt now that he was responsible for the all-out abuse of democracy directed mainly against the peasantry, for thwarting the solution of the land problem by the peasant masses themselves, for the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus and for the brutalities of the sona, village bombardments, mass detentions and murders.

The imperialist version of land reform for which Magsaysay was glorified during his time has gone completely bankrupt. The land resettlement program intended supposedly for the benefit of the landless has only prolonged the life of feudalism in the Philippines. Landlords have taken over far vaster tracts of land in those areas of resettlement and in too many cases, they have even put into question the titles of small settlers. The program of expropriating big landholdings for redistribution to the landless has only been used by the landlords to dispose of their barren and useless lands at an inflated price to the government. The Magsaysay land reform, conducted by the Land Tenure

Administration and the NARRA, have failed to improve the condition of the peasantry as the rate of tenancy has risen far beyond 40 percent. The credit system of the ACCFA and the system of FACOMAs have failed to help the tenants and the small farmers and have only been manipulated by the landlords and corrupt bureaucrats for their selfish interests. Agricultural extension workers from the Bureau of Agricultural Extension have always been inadequate. As the imperialist-landlord combination ruled over the country in the 1950s by force of its state power, the reform measures and palliatives proved ineffective in alleviating the condition of the peasantry or in whipping up false illusions. Imperialist and clerical organizations like the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM) and the Federation of Free Farmers also proved ineffective even as propaganda instruments among the peasantry, especially among those who had experienced genuine peasant power.

If the old palliatives become totally useless, an exploiting ruling class looks for new and seemingly better ones. The exposure of the true nature of palliatives is too risky for the ruling class. It must adopt new palliatives designed to meet a possible resurgence of its suppressed adversary. Even as the class-conscious and progressive peasant movement has been quite suppressed since the middle of the 1950s, the ruling classes never discount the possibility of an antagonistic resurgence of a peasantry left with no quarter. So, it must make certain concessions even only on paper. Thus, the Agricultural Land Reform Code has been proposed and passed. At the same time a new scheme of “civic action” in the countryside, directed by the JUSMAG and the “counterinsurgency” adviser, has been laid out. This “civic action” in the rural areas is to be coupled with the rural development campaign of the most numerous church.

New conditions and the danger of Yankee monopolization

New conditions have developed making it necessary for US imperialism to exercise direct control of Philippine agriculture. US imperialism is now trying to plant its roots in Philippine agriculture and complete its control of our agrarian economy in the face of the impending termination and renegotiation of the Laurel-Langley Agreement and Parity Amendment. The policy planners of US imperialism are applying the same tricks they applied on Cuba before and after the dissolution of the Platt Amendment — the Cuban version of our parity amendment. In other words, the US imperialists want to preempt the negotiation table by deepening their control of our agrarian economy now. They want to continue parity rights even after the formal termination of the Laurel-Langley

Agreement.

The present world condition, especially in Southeast Asia, is forcing US imperialism to prepare the Philippines as a growing ground for agricultural products that it uses directly or are used by Japan, its co-imperialist in the Far East. The Philippines is now being prepared as a reagent in a US-controlled US-Japan axis antagonistic to the anti-imperialist peoples of Asia. If you investigate now the US agricorporations or the Japanese agricorporations wanting to develop Philippine agriculture, you will notice how all are commanded by the US cartels and finance institutions, especially the Rockefeller monopoly group. It is certain that the Agricultural Land Reform Code is directed, in its original form as well as in its present form, against old-style landlordism. Had this code in its original version been passed, the statutory retention limit of 25 hectares for landowners who refuse to mechanize and the provisions imposing heavy taxes on undeveloped lands would have severely weakened old-style landlordism. Landlords would have come under greater legal compulsion to mechanize or sell out to those who have capital to mechanize or just cheat the law by delaying it and sabotaging it through a corrupt bureaucracy. The sham liquidation of old-style landlordism is progressive on first impression. But if the vast lands will only be retained or expanded in the hands of those individuals and agricorporations which have the necessary capital to mechanize, then we will only be developing a new type of feudalism, only in certain parts of the country, and the peasant masses, particularly the landless tenants, would not be benefited at all. The condition of the peasant masses would only be aggravated by land monopolization conducted by private agricorporations and individual capitalists. Some tenants would be converted into agricultural workers, others would be displaced and thrown out of the farm by the process of mechanization and modern business organization. The small landowners, in due time, would be forced into bankruptcy because of higher production costs per hectare and would not be able to compete with the large plantations which maintain more economic operations. Even the rich peasants who produce more than enough for their households to be able to sell in the market would be eventually eased out by lower prices of crops produced by the modern plantations. A modern plantation economy in the Philippines will convert a relatively few Filipino peasants into wage-earners but will displace many more tenants whom it will not be able to employ promptly and in sufficient number in industrial centers made even more efficient by automation. An efficient plantation economy in the Philippines will become more of an appendage to foreign monopoly capitalism. The Philippines will be farther from an even and well-proportioned industrial development.

Since only US firms are now in a financial position in the Philippines to invest in Philippine agriculture, as our own Filipino industrialists are themselves credit-starved (now much more in the case of old-style landlord!) because of decontrol and other restrictive conditions, the process of land monopolization would become more detrimental to the entire Filipino people. The superprofits to be derived from these enterprises would be continuously repatriated and unemployment would increase faster. US firms and subsidiaries are even under instruction now by the US government to prevent the outflow of dollars from the United States by getting credit from local sources in the Philippines. It is a widely perceived fact that US projects and so-called joint ventures are utilizing the resources of such institutions as Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), Social Security System (SSS), Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) and others, thus depriving the Filipino investors themselves of much-needed credit. Modern landlordism under the control of Esso, Dole, United Fruit, Philippine Packing Corporation, Goodyear, Firestone and other US monopoly firms which have had the experience of ravaging Latin America is no better than the old type of landlordism.

At the present moment, we can already see how vast tracts of land have been alienated from our national patrimony by giant US firms under so-called “grower” or “planting” agreements with government corporations like the National Development Company and the Mindanao Development Authority. Despite the constitutional limitation that no private corporations shall hold more than 1,024 hectares, the Philippine Packing Corporation and the Dole Corporation have separately taken hold of 8,195 hectares and 5,569 hectares, respectively, through a “grower” agreement with the National Development Company and they are supposed to hold on to these lands, with option to expand at any time, for long stretches of periods well beyond this generation and beyond 1974 when parity rights will have terminated. The United Fruit deal involving the alienation of 10,000 hectares of highly developed public lands and the project to segregate 50,000 hectares at the Mt. Apo National Park Reservation for delivery to US firms through the NDC during the Macapagal administration are convincing manifestations of a new plan US imperialism has for the Philippines.

The Dole takeover of 5,569 hectares of homestead lands in Cotabato is a clear negation of the owner-cultivatorship objective of the Agricultural Land Reform Code. This particular takeover for pineapple plantation and other commercial crops has adversely affected rice production in Cotabato by reducing severely

the area devoted to rice.

That US imperialism is literally planting itself in Philippine soil is very evident in several other moves, which were definitely made after decontrol and the approval of the five-year socioeconomic program of Macapagal. Means for higher productivity in agriculture have been set up confidently by US firms. Esso has put up a \$30 million fertilizer plant which maintains a strategic role. International Harvester, including Japanese farm machinery firms, are also optimistic that they will provide the implements and machines for largescale farms. In the long run, these modern means for higher productivity can rise in price in such a way that the big plantations, because they buy them in bulk and use them more economically and profitably, will squeeze out the owner-cultivators from the field of production and marketing. Control and ownership of fertilizer production alone provides US imperialism a powerful leverage with which to squeeze out the leaseholders, the owner-cultivators and even the rich peasants.

The US government has conveniently made use of the World Bank to encourage agricultural education in order to provide the necessary technical support for US plantations. The tested US marionette, Carlos P. Romulo, was reassigned to the University of the Philippines in order to pay special attention to the receipt of a \$6.0 million loan from the World Bank for Los Baños and the procurement of P21 million from the Philippine Congress as counterpart fund. Romulo's field of operation has been expanded by the Marcos administration in apparent concession to US imperialism, by making him Secretary of Education. Twenty-eight million dollars of the belated \$73 million in war damage payments is about to be rolled out to sustain a land reform education program to be controlled directly by the US government in accordance with the Johnson-Macapagal communique of 1964. This amount is expected by the reactionaries to subvert the revolutionary peasant movement. At the moment, there is a splurge of US activity in the countryside through a multifarious array of agencies such as US Agency for International Development (AID), Philippine Agency for Community Development (PACD), Freedom Fighters, Peace Corps, World Neighbors, Esso, Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM), CDRC, CAP, AGR, COAR, ACCI, FHD, IRRI, Operation Brotherhood, CARE, DND and Special Forces, which are directly controlled by the US embassy through JUSMAG and the "counterinsurgency" adviser.

Also, improvement of US military bases in the South cannot but mean securing

Mindanao for US agricorporations. Within the Dole plantation area, underground missile launchers are supposed to have been set up. These are bases apparently prepared to strengthen US aggression in Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, they can very well serve to protect US agricorporations producing crops that the United States may in the near future never be able to get from neighboring countries because of the rise of anti-imperialist movements in the region. It is highly significant that large rubber plantations are being prepared in Mindanao today. Aside from serving the needs of US imperialism, technical crops are also intended to serve the needs of Japan.

The narrow foreign policy of the Philippines, which has been chiefly geared to the so-called special relations with the United States, is expected to trap land reform in the vise of US agricorporations and of US global economic policy in general. The obvious lack of funds in the National Treasury has been used as an occasion to call for “land reform” loans from US-controlled financing institutions like the World Bank, AID, IMF, and others. The Land Bank and the Agricultural Credit Association are bound to be controlled by the US finance system.

The Agricultural Land Reform Code

The Agricultural Land Reform Code claims to seek the abolition of tenancy and the establishment of owner-cultivatorship as the basis of Philippine agriculture. It is supposed to help the small farmers, especially those with economic family-size farms, to be free from pernicious institutional restraints and practices to build a viable social productivity and higher farm income. Aside from expropriation and land redistribution, land resettlement and public land distribution are also proposed by the code. A whole chapter of the code is devoted to provisions guaranteeing the application of all labor laws equally to both industrial and agricultural wage-earners.

For the purpose of giving lands to the landless and to those who have less than enough for their respective families, a leasehold system is to be set up as the first step towards self-reliance. The national Land Reform Council, composed of the representatives of all land reform agencies and of the political party in the minority, is supposed to proclaim an area as a land reform area before its inhabitants can enjoy the leasehold system wherein the tenant becomes a leaseholder paying only 25 percent of the average of three previous annual harvests as rent to the landowner. That only some Filipino tenants can enjoy the

rent of 25 percent upon the proclamation made by the National Land Reform Council is quite puzzling to those who are convinced that such rent may as well be paid in common by all tenants to landowners all over the country by general proclamation. This general proclamation should not even carry the pretentious claim that it abolishes tenancy and replaces it with the leasehold system. For after all, both terms “tenancy” and “leasehold system,” although the former sounds more pejorative, means essentially the burden of paying rent.

The Code says that the National Land Reform Council can proclaim a land reform area only after it has considered the nature and possibilities of the proposed land reform area in accordance with priorities set by the code. It is in the consideration of these priorities and other factors that land reform in favor of the peasant masses can be delayed indefinitely, derailed and sabotaged. It is in the consideration of these priorities that the bureaucrats in the land reform agencies will find more affinity with the landlord and imperialist interests which have plans opposed to those of the poor peasants on the same tract of land.

The very idea that the NLRC may proclaim a land reform area only where the leaseholders have a good chance of developing into owner-cultivators is obviously self-defeating and deceptive. Among the several factors that must be considered in the choice of a land reform area are its “suitability for economic family-size farms,” which is unfortunately defined by the code as a “situation where a parcel of land whose characteristics such as climate, soil, topography, availability of water and location, will support a farm family if operated in economic family-size farm units and does not include those where large-scale operations will result in greater production and more efficient use of the land.” This matter of “suitability” is taken into consideration even as the leaseholders can always petition the Land Authority to acquire the leaseholdings for redistribution to them.

On the question of suitability, before any proclamation is made by the NLRC in favor of prospective leaseholders and owner-cultivators, the landlord can easily preempt altogether the leasehold system and expropriation proceedings by asserting that large-scale operations by himself on his land will result in greater production and more efficient use. The question can be reduced to a question of legal definition pure and simple by the landlord, or he can actually start what may be termed as “large scale operations” on his land in order to prevent either the question of rent reduction or expropriation from being raised. What is absurd is that the prospect of largescale operations by cooperatives of owner-cultivators

on the same tract of land is preempted among other things by the landlord.

To evade the leasehold system and possible expropriation proceedings, the landlord has simply to mechanize, to engage in “large scale” operations such as sugar planting, or to plant permanent trees like citrus, coconuts, cacao, coffee, durian, rubber and others. In Central Luzon and other parts of the country, the landlords are converting their rice lands into sugar lands. In the years to come, this will continue to deal a telling blow on our rice production. In Southern Luzon, those working in coconut, citrus, abaca and coffee lands as tenants are complaining and asking why they are not benefited by land reform. Those who work on fishponds and salt beds have the same complaint of not being within the purview of land reform.

To pursue the discussion as to how the landlord can evade expropriation, let us assume that the NLRC does unilaterally and successfully proclaim land reform over a certain area. The Land Authority — the implementing arm of the council — will still have to subject its acquisitions to the following order of priorities: idle or abandoned lands; those whose area exceeds 1,024 hectares, those whose area ranges between 500 and 1,024 hectares; those whose area ranges between 144 and 500 hectares; those whose area ranges between 75 and 144 hectares. The Philippine government is obviously making a big joke by saying that it wishes to exhaust its financial resources on idle or abandoned lands which are in most cases too expensive to develop. The poor peasant cannot afford to develop such kind of land and it is simply futile for the government to purchase this.

The statutory limit of 75 hectares that a landowner can retain is big enough to perpetuate landlordism in the Philippines. Besides, a landlord can easily retain many times more than this size so long as he has enough members of his family to distribute it to. Another course of action for the landlord is to own land in many different places and keeping to the statutory limit of 75 hectares in each place. In the Agricultural Land Reform Code, there are no plugs to these loopholes.

The landlord has so many defenses to preempt the expropriation of his property. But, little is it realized that a landlord might actually offer to sell his land to the Land Authority. Because, according to the order of priorities, in the acquisition of lands by the Land Authority, idle or abandoned lands are to be purchased first. So long as the landlord can demand “just compensation” or even an overprice, he can always strike at a private bargain with the government appraiser. After

getting the payment for his expropriated property, he can always acquire private lands elsewhere or public lands to perpetuate his class status. It can be said conclusively at this juncture that the Agricultural Land Reform Code allows the perpetuation of landlordism in the country. The landlords are not hindered but even encouraged to seize public lands already tilled by the national minorities and small settlers in frontier areas.

The ability of the Land Authority to relieve deep agrarian unrest and provide the landlords with “just compensation” would depend on the adequacy of funds in the Land Bank. It is already clear that the government is reluctant to make an actual release of funds to the Land Bank. The financial crisis of US imperialism and all its running dogs is something to be seriously reckoned with. Even if funds of whatever enormity are to be released, these could be gobbled up by only a few landlords and bureaucrats. Past experience clearly shows that the bureaucrats and landlords collude in fixing a high price for lands that the latter are willing to part with. The result is that the landlords have more funds to acquire more lands and the poor peasants can never afford the redistribution price exacted by the government.

Except in the change in name, the Agricultural Credit Administration, is no different from its corrupt and inadequate predecessor, the ACCFA. The Commission on Agricultural Productivity is also nothing but a new name for the old Bureau of Agricultural Extension; it is nothing but an ill-manned and indolent bureaucratic agency of the Esfac. The landlords have always used these agencies more to their advantage than the poor peasants.

There will be more severe contradictions between the peasant masses and the landlord class. The contradictions will arise from the given conditions of these classes as well as from the interpretation of the Agricultural Land Reform Code. These contradictions are supposed to be resolved by the Court of Agrarian Relations if ever they become formal legal disputes. The Office of Agrarian Counsel is supposed to provide free legal assistance to individual peasants and peasant organizations. But judges and government lawyers are themselves landlords, landgrabbers and land speculators. Behind the facade of populist expressions, they support the landlord system.

It is relevant to cite the fact that when the Agricultural Land Reform Bill was being drafted in Malacanang and discussed in Congress, there was no representative of the peasantry there — particularly the poor peasantry — who

was conscious of the class interests of the peasantry and who would have fought for those class interests. What happened, therefore, in the absence of direct political representatives of the peasant masses, was that the political representatives of the landlords and the imperialists had all the chance to finalize the bill according to their class interest and provided themselves all the escape clauses.

The Agricultural Land Reform Code will not solve the land problem. As a matter of fact, it will only aggravate the dispossession of the peasantry and intensify unjust relations between the landlord class and the peasantry. The beautiful phrases in the code in favor of the landless are immediately nullified by provisions which in the realm of reality will be taken advantage of by the landlord class.

What is to be done?

For the activists of national democracy there is no substitute to going to the countryside and making concrete social investigation in order to determine the oppression and exploitation imposed on the peasantry by the landlord class.

There is no point in making a rural investigation if the facts learned from the masses are not analyzed and processed into terms for basic comprehension of problems as well as solutions. The activists of national democracy should show to the peasants, especially those who have no land at all and those who do not have enough land, the essence of their suffering and arouse them to solve their own problem.

In the present era only the peasant masses can liberate themselves provided they follow the correct leadership of the working class and its party. It is senseless to put trust in laws made by the landlords themselves no matter how gaudily they may wear the garments of bourgeois reformism.

The concrete step that can be immediately taken by the activists of national democracy is to organize peasant associations dedicated to fighting for the democratic rights of the peasantry. The present laws may be used to some extent but if they are not enough, as practice has borne out, then the peasant masses themselves will decide to take more effective measures, including armed revolution.

The activists of national democracy who go to the countryside should exert all

efforts to arouse and mobilize the peasant masses into breaking the chains that have bound them for centuries. Agrarian revolution provides the powerful base for the national democratic revolution.

Mercenary Tradition

of the Armed Forces of the Philippines

Speech delivered before the Junior and Senior Classes of the Philippine Military Academy, Baguio City on October 12, 1966

I understand that an increasing number of officers and rank-and-filers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines are reconsidering their traditions and the basic postulates by which commands have been sent down from the top with the most rigid discipline characteristic of the military establishment.

In the Philippine Military Academy, I would presume that the fresher minds of young men are striving to clarify that the true military tradition, which every Filipino must be proud of and whose spirit he must be imbued with should hark back to the Katipunan and the Philippine Revolution.

On the surface, every soldier of the government carries with him the initial of the Katipunan on his uniform. The Philippine Military Academy carries the name of the great anti-imperialist general, Gregorio del Pilar, who fought both against Spanish colonialism and US imperialism. He died fighting US imperialism, faithful to the sovereignty of the Filipino people but betrayed by a fellow Filipino who showed the imperialist soldiers how, in familiar Yankee slang, to rub him out at Tirad Pass.

We are once again at a point in our national history where the body politic is pervaded by the collective desire to assert our people's sovereignty and to give substance to those forms of seeming independence that a foreign power has

conceded as a measure of compromise and chicanery in its favor. There is now an evident political flow involving all patriotic classes, groups and individuals. Our people as a whole, including those who have been conservative, are beginning to reexamine the status of our national life and the strategic relations that have bound us from the beginning of this century.

An intensive inquiry is now being made as to how our society has remained semicolonial and semifeudal; as to how our political system has not actually permitted the masses of our people to enjoy the bounty of genuine democracy; as to how an imperialist culture wedded to a colonial culture has persisted; as to how some of us have persisted in considering themselves under the protection of a foreign power, which extracts superprofits from our country and which constantly involves it in selfish imperialist enmities throughout Asia and throughout the world in the guise of a religious crusade called anticommunism.

We fear aggression and supposedly we prepare for it. But many of us forget the aggression that has succeeded in perpetuating itself within our shores. Many of us lose sight of the fact that actually a foreign aggressor persists within our territory, always trying to cause petty confusion among our people and trying to retain the present local officialdom as a mere bunch of overseers for its selfish imperialist interests.

A conservative man like Speaker Cornelio Villareal has exposed, in a series of articles in the Manila Times, the fact that the Joint United States Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG) has developed a built-in control of our armed forces through its firm control of logistics, intelligence, planning and personnel training on a strategic level. Guided no less by his experience, Representative Carmelo Barbero, an ex-army officer, has also made statements in support of the contention that an undue amount of foreign control exists within the very machinery upon which the people are supposed to depend for their national security.

It should be pertinent to ask whether we should allow the Armed Forces of the Philippines to continue in the mercenary tradition of the Civil Guards of Spanish times, the Macabebes, the Philippine Scouts and the USAFFE under direct US command and the Ganaps and puppet constabulary of the Japanese imperialists. Is the military willing to reject this mercenary tradition and replace it with the revolutionary spirit of the Katipunan?

After the successful US imperialist aggression which started in 1898, the aggressor has made use of so many devices in the exercise of its superior military and financial power, converting so many of our countrymen into their mercenaries and puppets. We have indeed come a long way from the martyrdom of General Gregorio del Pilar and the uncompromising stand against US imperialism of General Antonio Luna. Only the slogan of “benevolent assimilation” seems to be able to ring a bell and make some of us the running dogs in a successful Pavlovian experiment of US imperialism. These running dogs in every field of our national life can only respond to the imperialist bell; they forget the principle of redeeming themselves as true patriots in the present situation and of redeeming the hundreds of thousands of patriotic Filipinos who died in fighting the US aggressors only a few decades ago.

From the point of view of our revolutionary patriots who would rather die than surrender and compromise with the US imperialists, our fellow countrymen who went over to the side of the enemy and became the core of the US-trained Philippine military were no different from the Civil Guards who were indios but who served the interests of the Spanish colonizers.

No foreign aggressor can successfully stay in the Philippines without adopting a divide-and-rule policy; without being able to direct a significant number of our countrymen to fight their fellow countrymen. If we trace the military history of the Philippines, we would realize that a foreign power succeeds in imposing its rule by making use of a part of our countrymen against fellow countrymen. The Spaniard Magellan thought it wise to side with King Humabon against Lapu-Lapu. This was the pattern of military activity that the colonialists employed to retain control of the Philippines for more than three centuries. One barangay cooperative to the colonizers was used against another uncooperative barangay. Visayan recruits impressed into the Civil Guards were used to pacify Tagalog areas and keep colonial peace and order while fostering regional antagonism. The recruits in one island were used to quell resistance in another island. In trying to expand the area of its colonial domination, the Spaniards made use of their recruits in Luzon and Visayas to fight the great people of Mindanao. Peasant recruits whose own class was being oppressed in the Philippines were sent on expeditions to fight Spanish wars in the Moluccas, Borneo, Carolines, and Indochina.

Dr. Jose Rizal depicted this colonial irony in the story of Cablesang Tales and son Tano in *El Filibusterismo*. The former was being oppressed by the colonial

masters, the friar landlords, but his son was impressed into the colonial military service to fight the inhabitants of the Carolines. Subsequently, when he was reassigned to his own country, Tano was perplexed why he had become the instrument for the suppression of his own people. In one engagement he had to fight his own father, with the nom de guerre Matanglawin, and in the process killed his own grandfather, Tandang Selo. That is a sad story of a peasant enlisted to fight his own peasant brothers.

Under US imperialism, many Filipinos have been converted into mercenaries and with their military service set back the Philippine Revolution. It was with the help of such traitors that General del Pilar was killed in battle, Aguinaldo captured and the Philippine Revolution subsequently broken. After the pacification of Luzon and Visayas, the mercenaries from these islands were employed as the first units of the Philippine Constabulary that helped General Pershing pursue his bestial mission of subjugating the people of Mindanao by military force. Under Japanese imperialism, many Filipinos also became the armed agents used to kill and suppress the patriotic movement of their own people. In the style of all foreign aggressors, the Japanese imperialists made use of Korean and Taiwanese conscripts to help them overrun Southeast Asia.

In this same fashion, US imperialism has used Filipino troops in Korea and South Vietnam to fight their fellow Asians. Vietnam today suffers from military campaigns waged by a mercenary Vietnamese army and by mercenary troops from other Asian countries under the command of US imperialism. The shameless dispatch of Filipino troops in the guise of “civic action” to Vietnam is no different from the sending of Filipino expeditionary forces to the same place in Spanish colonial days in the middle of the last century.

What seems to obscure the fact that US imperialism continues to perpetuate its aggression in the Philippines is our World War II experience. Because we were on the same side against Japanese imperialism and because there was a brief interruption of direct US rule, many fell into the misconception that US imperialist aggression had already been superseded once and for all by the Japanese imperialist aggression and, furthermore, by the promise of fake independence. In truth, when World War II ended and after the July Fourth proclamation of “independence,” the United States had succeeded in reasserting its military and economic power over the Philippines. Its reoccupation and recontrol of the Philippines were essentially no different from the reinstatement of Spanish colonial power after the brief British occupation of the Philippines

during the latter part of the eighteenth century. The USAFFE siding with the US imperialists against the Japanese was essentially no different from Filipino civil guards siding with the Spaniards against the Dutch and the British. We fought a second aggressor only to be more subjugated by the first aggressor. We failed to make use of the war of two aggressors to build up our own national liberation forces that could eliminate both aggressors.

Indeed, the anti-Japanese struggle could have given the Filipino people the chance to build up their own national liberation forces. The masses of our people became armed and became highly organized. But they were not armed with the correct thought of fighting for their independence from both Japanese imperialism and US imperialism. Instead, the widespread USAFFE forces accepted and were even proud of their US commanders and they were childishly carried away by MacArthur's seemingly innocent and romantic slogan of "I shall return." Little did they realize that it would mean the return of US imperialism, with its bag of unequal agreements which up to now keep our people in bondage. Despite the fact that Wainwright shamelessly surrendered to the Japanese imperialists as a mock climax to the mock glory of Bataan, and despite the fact that we, the Filipinos, did the fighting and dying in multitudes in the absence of our US "protectors," we would still acclaim the latter as our "liberators." So servile are some of us to US imperialism that we obscure the fact that it was the genius, courage and patriotism of the Filipino people which unfolded a widespread guerrilla movement undermining the substance of the Japanese aggression and breaking its backbone before the other imperialist power came to reclaim its colony, destroy Filipino lives and property in its mopping-up operations.

The singular achievement of the Japanese imperialists during World War II was the brutal destruction of Filipino lives. The singular achievement of the US imperialists was the wanton destruction of Filipino homes and property under the pretext of engaging in mopping-up operations despite the fact that the Japanese had already fled the towns and cities in the face of avenging Filipino partisans. The US imperialists wantonly destroyed Filipino property with their air bombardment and artillery fire as if to prepare us for war damage payments, the war damage payments by which we were to be forced to approve the Bell Trade Act; the war damage payments which were given mostly to big US corporations, US citizens and to church institutions. These facts are attested to by the records of the US Congress and the War Damage Commission.

In its attempt to reinstitute the mercenary tradition in the military, the US government made it clear that only those guerrillas it would recognize would receive backpay and unrecognized ones had better disband or submit themselves to US purposes. Otherwise, they would be punished for war crimes. Filipino patriots who fought in Central Luzon and Southern Luzon and who wished to remain independent of the imperialist purposes of the United States were arrested, disarmed and subjected to massacres as in the case of Huk Squadrons 77 and 99. The conditions for civil strife, wherein Filipinos would kill Filipinos, were prepared by the imperialists in order to successfully reestablish their political, economic and military power over the Philippines.

Using its armed power and its local agents, the United States succeeded in destroying the national-democratic forces opposing the Parity Amendment and the Bell Trade Act. Likewise, under the guise of protecting the Philippines from the Soviet Union and Communism, its erstwhile ally in the great antifascist struggle, the United States succeeded in extorting from the Filipino people a series of military agreements which directly transgress our national sovereignty.

The 99-year US-RP. Military Bases Agreement was effected by the United States. It has meant US extraterritorial control of close to 200,000 hectares of Philippine territory. More than that, it is supposed to grant to US troops extraterritorial rights — the “right” to move to any part of the country without being bound by Filipino jurisdiction and sovereignty, particularly when such troops are on military duty. By this “right” the United States assumes that the Philippines is under its occupation and Philippine sovereignty dissolves as US troops by the presumption of their government move to any point in the country. What an arrogant presumption! The US military bases, as they are now, represent the reinstallation and perpetuation of US aggression against Filipino sovereignty.

These US military bases, as they have been so in other countries, serve as the trump card of US imperialist power in the country. They serve as the grim reminder of the US capability for violence against the Filipino people in the event that they effectively reassert their sovereignty in the uncompromising tradition of the Philippine Revolution. Of course, these military bases will be used only after so many intermediate measures of political maneuver by US interests shall have failed. US propaganda will always claim that these military bases are here to prevent a “communist takeover” or to prevent “communist aggression.” A national-democratic takeover will certainly be called a

communist takeover.

In a clear analysis of the problem of US military bases in the Philippines, Senator Claro Mayo Recto gave the lie to the claim of Yankee protection. These bases serve only to oppose the advance of national-democratic forces and to protect US investments in time of peace and these actually serve to attract nuclear belligerence from other countries — enemies of the United States, not our own — in time of war.

For a long time it may remain unnecessary for the US government to make any overt use of its military bases in order to protect its foreign investments in the Philippines. It has been said that after all it controls the Armed Forces of the Philippines; that the latter can be used to oppose the national-democratic movement that wishes to remove US imperialist power in the Philippines. The national-democratic movement can always be represented as an exclusive communist “conspiracy” and its organized forces can be subsequently attacked by the puppet armed forces. Even the President of the Republic of the Philippines himself has to be careful of an imperialist-inspired or CIA-inspired coup d’etat in the event that he dares to be nationalist in the anti-imperialist sense. President Carlos P. Garcia himself was once threatened with a coup d’etat for dilly-dallying on decontrol.

What the Filipino people should see with regard to other military agreements like the US-RP Mutual Defense Treaty and the Manila Pact or SEATO Pact is the formal recognition of the “right” of the United States to make military intervention in Philippine affairs, in the case of the first, and the extended “right” of the United States and other countries, members of the SEATO, to make multinational intervention, in the case of the second. At this moment, while the reactionaries in the Philippines do not yet need overt foreign troop intervention to maintain their rule, the Philippine government is being required to expend its limited resources for foreign adventures in the guise of helping put out the fire on a neighbor’s house. Many of us do not yet realize that in joining US imperialism, the Philippines becomes an accomplice of the real arsonist. It is clear that we need to reject the mercenary tradition in every field of our national life, especially in the military. We propose the full adoption of the patriotic tradition of the Katipunan and the Philippine Revolution.

The Filipino people fought under the banner of the Katipunan and the Philippine Revolution not because they were paid to fight but because they considered it a

patriotic duty to do so. It was a people's war; and as a people's war, our revolutionary fighters had to merge with the great masses and they had to keep away from the city strongholds of the alien enemy until such time that the latter had been weakened in the countryside where its forces were thinly spread and where the forces of the revolution could develop strong political bases over expanding areas. As it was applied, the Filipino people's war effectively weakened Spanish colonialism despite meager weapons at the start.

Before the Filipino revolutionary forces could reach Manila, however, the US imperialists forced, as in a coup, the transfer of power over Manila from the Spaniards to themselves. Subsequently the Filipino people's power had to be directed against US imperialism. But it failed because of the flabby class leadership of the Filipino ilustrados which initiated severe dissensions within the very ranks of the revolutionary government. The liberal-bourgeois character of the ilustrados enraged the anti-imperialist leader, General Antonio Luna, for compromising with the enemy and for their gullibility in the negotiations presided over by the enemy. The ilustrado leadership resorted to murder; it had to kill General Luna in order to clear the path for compromise.

During the Japanese occupation, we showed our capability for fighting against modern imperialism. We showed that we were capable of fighting successfully against the Japanese invaders despite the deliberate absence of arms distribution to the masses by the US imperialists before the imminent outbreak of the war; despite the US evacuation and Wainright's surrender order. As a matter of fact, the US imperialists refused a petition for arms distribution to antifascist organizations and the masses as a measure of preparing the people for the antifascist struggle.

In the course of the Japanese occupation, the US command in Australia ordered all anti-Japanese forces to maintain a "lie low" policy. This imperialist command obviously implied distrust in the Filipino people.

It was afraid of allowing the Filipinos to develop armed self-reliance. The US imperialists cunningly planned to land arms massively to their own agents in the USAFFE only when they themselves were about to land.

We gained experience and confidence in the people's war of resistance against the Japanese, nevertheless. Although we have again fallen into the hands of the US imperialists, we gained experience as a people in the anti-Japanese war of

resistance. We have shown our mastery of the techniques of guerrilla war and our ability to merge with the masses in time of crisis; but we need now to realize that we have to be guided by a thorough understanding of the tasks of a genuine national and social liberation and the motive forces that need to be impelled with the proper demands so as to move correctly against the current enemy and then the subsequent one, both of whom we should clearly identify.

We fought successfully against Japanese imperialism; we were successful in fighting and in arming ourselves. But we were inadequate in so far as it concerned arming ourselves ideologically and politically. Many fell for America's false promise of independence. Many thought that genuine independence could be granted by a foreign power. The "independence" that was indeed granted was empty of substance, particularly for the masses of our people. By arming ourselves with the correct ideology, all of us could have acted more independently and used our resistance forces to assert our independence from both Japan and the United States. For instance, we could have allowed the peasant masses all over the archipelago to enjoy land reform immediately on the lands abandoned by the landlords who sought safety in Manila under the care of the US imperialists. Instead a few US stragglers were allowed to lead the USAFFE. The leadership of the guerrilla movement was submitted to them on a silver platter. The mercenary backpay mentality was allowed to seep and corrode the patriotic movement. Until now, some of us suffer the humiliation of mercenaries; of constantly begging for veterans' pay from a foreign government.

If an occasion like the anti-Japanese struggle should again arise, we must make use of all our lessons as a people and strike out on our own as an independent force, independent of the strategic demands of a foreign power like the United States. It is not only that we on our own have learned our lessons or that we have developed as a more forceful nation, but it is also that we find ourselves now at a certain level of world development that is far higher than that on which we found ourselves during the Japanese occupation. National liberation movements are now all over the world; the socialist states have become more powerful. These two forces combined have now the capability of scattering and weakening the imperialist power of the United States; US imperialism is increasingly weakened by the overextension of its power and the consistent opposition of peoples all over the world.

The diabolic stories of "communist aggression" concocted and circulated by US propaganda have become too overused in the Philippines. More people are

reading about the experience of the socialist countries and how on the other hand they have been the ones subjected to imperialist intervention. The true facts about the Korean War and Sino-Indian border dispute are now coming to light before the Filipino intelligentsia; and the US aggression against South and North Vietnam, US occupation of Taiwan and the hundreds of US intrusions into Chinese territory certainly debunk the claim that China is the No. 1 aggressor and the United States is the No. 1 peacemaker.

“Communist aggression” is one of the myths we are beginning to perceive with greater clarity. As a matter of fact, our reactionary leaders have started to use such contradiction of terms as “internal aggression” and “aggression by proxy.” Whenever there are labor or peasant unrests and strikes, or anti-imperialist demonstrations of students and the youth, the pathological anti-communists see in these dynamic expressions of popular demands “the scheming hands of foreign communists using local agents.”

The soldiers of the government should ask themselves why in strikes they find themselves categorically on the side of the capitalist establishment or in agrarian conflicts, on the side of the landlords. In anti-imperialist demonstrations, they also find themselves together with the police lined up against unarmed ordinary people. Oftentimes, they find themselves being briefed that these strikers and demonstrators are “subversive” agitators.

I know for a fact that most of the enlisted men of the Armed Forces of the Philippines come from the peasantry. But why is it that in disputes between the landlords and the peasants, the soldier who is actually a peasant in government uniform finds himself being used as a tool of the landlord? Why point your guns at the masses and not at the foreign big comprador and feudal interests that exploit the people?

The officers and rank-and-file of the Armed Forces of the Philippines should have the honor and conviction to fight for the interests of the people. If they should find themselves being ordered from the top to take the side of the US imperialists, the compradors, the landlords and bureaucrat capitalists and fight the peasant masses, the workers, progressive intelligentsia and other patriots, they should have the honor and conviction of changing their sides and throwing in their lot with the oppressed who have long suffered from their exploiters.

“Peace and order” or “rule of law” has become the convenient slogan for

motivating the soldier against the masses who resort to their right of free assembly and expression. In the first place, it should be asked: Peace and order for whom? Rule of whose law? The exploited masses who daily suffer from deprivations and exploitation must be allowed to organize and express themselves freely. Why should they be quieted down by the force of arms, under the pretext of maintaining peace and order and rule of law? Why should they be prevented from making clear their demands? In taking your side against the oppressed masses, you become no different from the civilian guards of the landlords, the private security guards of the capitalists and the sentries of the US Embassy and US military bases.

In tracing the chain of armed power in the country, we can see that the possession of arms is attached to property as indicated by the license laws. So, the private entities who have the most private arms are the big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists and yet they have the most access to the use of the government police and armed forces. When a certain local situation cannot be taken care of by the civilian guards, the municipal police comes in and in a series, the Philippine Constabulary, the Philippine Army, Air Force and ultimately, US military intervention.

The chain of armed power leads to US imperialism. With this understanding, the masses have a strategic hatred for US imperialism. The exploiters and their armed satellites are recognized as being within the same hierarchy of power, with US imperialism as the presiding power. US imperialist propaganda keeps on harping that there would be no more serious threat to national security and internal peace and order without the Communists here and abroad. People were compelled to hate Communists or those who are construed to be Communists in the same way that the Spaniards and the friars tried to play up hatred against Filipinos who were called Masons and filibusteros. The Philippine military is indoctrinated to have a violent unreasoning hatred for Communists in the same way that the Civil Guards were indoctrinated to hate filibusteros by the Spaniards in order to maintain their colonial loyalty.

We must realize that the masses will always be restless so long as they are exploited. At certain stages, they may actually be quieted down by the violent force of the state. But when they rise up again, their previous rising, though defeated, serves as a mere dress rehearsal for a more powerful and sweeping revolution. In 1872, our colonial masters thought they had finished once and for all the popular protests. Only fourteen years later, they reaped a whirlwind —

not only a stronger wave of the secularization movement among priests but a widespread separatist movement which wanted national independence no less.

During the 1950s, the US imperialists might have thought that they had suppressed the national-democratic movement for good. But as they continue to deprive the Filipino people of true independence, they shall certainly reap the whirlwind — an even more powerful national-democratic movement. As the compradors and landlords have repressed the people for so long, they await a time when the people shall in a revolutionary tempest sweep them away from the land.

US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism are not the creation of communist agitators. They are objective results of extended historical processes. If the people join the nationalist or communist movement, we should first of all consider that it is the imperialists, the compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists who shall have forced them to lose trust in the present system. It is wrong to blame the Communists and all other patriots for the failure of the present system that is dominated by US imperialists, compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists.

I understand that the Armed Forces of the Philippines is now trying to engage in a “civic action” campaign more massive than the one initiated by the late President Ramon Magsaysay. It is also sending “civic action” groups abroad to help in the US war of aggression in South Vietnam.

As a piece of psychological warfare, “civic action” has only a tactical, superficial and temporary value if the basic problems of US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism remain unsolved. Even as a tactic, it can easily be counteracted by the masses becoming conscious that “civic action” comes only to critical areas where more basic demands for change are being raised. Thus, there is an overconcentration of “civic groups” in Central Luzon. The masses of many more neglected areas are complaining that they are not being benefited by “civic action” and that South Vietnam has been given priority. They regard the phrase “civic action” as a mere euphemism to deceive the people of its real military content, particularly its psychological and intelligence functions.

Many intelligent people have access to the literature and armed forces manuals on “civic action” provided by the Pentagon through JUSMAG. They have

expressed disgust over the emphasis placed on psychological warfare and deception of the people. They are disgusted over the obsession of hating the Communists and trying to gain the initiative from them through deception.

We can see very clearly that the “civic action” groups of the Armed Forces of the Philippines will not at all disturb the unjust structure of private ownership of land and the feudal and semifeudal relations in the countryside. As a matter of fact, they would only attempt to create the superficial image that they are friends of the people while at the back of that image they uphold the rule of the landlords, the US imperialists, the compradors, and the bureaucrat capitalists. They may build roads and bridges, they may build irrigation works and help in agricultural extension work, they may engage in sanitation work and they may perform so many other traditionally non-military projects. They will not change the basic social structure that keeps the masses exploited.

It was US Defense Secretary Robert McNamara who first announced that the United States will make its client-states field indigenous military forces in the guise of “civic action” groups. The idea is to build a different image of the local military and make it more effective in counterinsurgency. The United States is supposed to continue providing the military hardware as the shield but this new dimension, “civic action,” is created to deceive the people that the local military is no longer the instrument of feudal and foreign interests or the obnoxious parasite on the national budget. This entails the intrusion of the military in fields which have been traditionally in the hands of the civilians. In other words, this requires the militarization of operations formerly civilian in character. It is anticipated that the military will gobble up funds that should be allocated to the departments of public works, of health, of education and of others.

An increasing number of constitutionalists are seriously questioning the intrusion of the military into civilian affairs. They are wary of a developing process of fascization that might eventually push out civilian supremacy, what with the increasing control by military men of civilian offices. In accordance with this new method adopted by the Pentagon and implemented locally by the JUSMAG, the military is being made to operate in such a way as to take over civilian operations and to gain political influence. Indeed, it is evident in Asia, Africa and Latin America that when the United States becomes insecure over its control of the client-states it resorts to local fascism; for after all a local fascism depends on the military hardware and financial support of its imperialist master.

Another subversive development that needs careful watching is the reverse intrusion of certain civilian organizations into the military. There are those narrow-minded forces wanting to develop a clerico-fascism of the Franco and Salazar type. They wish to combine the sword and the cross. Not yet satisfied with the undue amount of foreign control and influence in the Armed Forces of the Philippines, a certain sectarian movement has carried over from Spain and Portugal certain fascist techniques and has been systematically “brainwashing” military men and police officers in a manner opposed to the principle of rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar’s and rendering unto Christ what is Christ’s.

Again under the banner of anticommunism, men are being led into anti-democracy. As believers of the freedom of religion, we need to be alert to any clerico-fascist movement that will reverse Philippine history to that long period wherein the exploiting power had a cross in one hand and a sword in the other. We do not want to revive a monster. Those who believe in liberal democracy are now deeply troubled by certain Jesuit priests with CIA credentials. Certainly, we do not wish to have a large-scale revival of the Padre Damasos and Padre Salvis.

Let us above all strive for national democracy in this country. For our national security, let us rely above all on the strength and national unity of the people. That national unity can only be created if we are bound with the masses in a common struggle against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

The political system is dominated by the political agents of the US imperialists, big compradors and landlords. The officers and men of the Armed Forces of the Philippines themselves have become victims of both the petty and grand political discrimination made by one political faction or another of the ruling class of exploiters.

Officers and members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines should learn to disobey US imperialism and the local exploiting classes and learn to side with the masses in their basic demands. Of course, it is really futile to expect the entire machinery of the state to go over to the masses even in time of the most decisive crisis when the ruling classes are entirely discredited. But these officers and men who join the masses in their fight against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, can always hasten the victory of the masses.

A movement within the Armed Forces of the Philippines should be started to

reclaim alienated territory of the Philippine government from the US government. We must uphold Filipino sovereignty over the US military bases in the Philippines. We must place these military bases under Filipino command. We should demand the immediate termination of the US-RP Military Bases Agreement as an instrument nullifying our sovereignty.

The true sons of Bonifacio, Emilio Jacinto, Gregorio del Pilar and Antonio Luna within the armed forces should reject US military dictation. They should reject the Military Assistance Pact and the JUSMAG as instruments of foreign control and influence over the Philippine military. They should reject all psychological warfare measures such as “civic action” and others that have been proposed by US counterinsurgency experts to deceive the people who must be patriotically assisted in their struggle to liberate themselves from US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

Let us not depend on one power which abuses our sovereignty and takes advantage of our people. Let us stop US indoctrination in the armed forces and the police force so that an anti-imperialist and democratic orientation can be propagated among them.

We should rely on the patriotism, courage and capability of the people in defending themselves. We demonstrated in the anti-Japanese struggle and other struggles that we could actually convert the enemy into a supplier of arms for the masses by capturing them. Let us dismiss the imperialist presumption that we can only be under the protection of a foreign power.

In this era of worldwide people’s war against colonialism, imperialism and neocolonialism, we are in a position not only to learn from our local experience but also from the struggles of so many other peoples. Let us not repeat the mistakes of Aguinaldo in the Filipino-US War. Let us not again make the mistake of being fooled by US imperialism. In this era of mounting worldwide anti-imperialist movements, the main enemy has become unmistakably clear, and objectively the national struggle shall be assisted by external developments to an extent higher than any other point in Philippine history.

Let us withdraw from the US-RP Mutual Defense Treaty because it is a license for the United States to intervene militarily in our national affairs.

Let us withdraw from the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization because it is

essentially an anti-Southeast Asia compact controlled by non-Southeast Asian imperialist powers. Let us redeem ourselves in the eyes of our fellow Asians from the ignominy of having long been dominated by US imperialism.

We have long been curtailed off by the United States from a huge part of the world. Many of us have long believed in the servile line that the enemies of the United States are also the enemies of the Philippines.

Let us be more aware of the present world reality. Let us be aware and let us take advantage of the contradictions among the imperialist powers and the contradictions between socialism and capitalism. Let us be aware of alliances against US imperialism. Let us join the international united front against US imperialism and its accomplices. Let us turn the present world situation to our national-democratic advantage.

Self-Determination and Foreign Relations

Speech delivered at the University of Nueva Caceres, Naga City

on October 28, 1965 and at the First Student Congress

for the Advancement of Nationalism at the Vinzons Hall,

University of the Philippines on October 22, 1966

For a nation to have its own foreign policy it must first be free and secure on its foundation, which is no less than its sovereignty. Apolinario Mabini and George Washington both agreed on this fundamental necessity of statehood and relations with other nations. Both of them, as policy-makers of their respective governments, upheld the basic principle that only the sovereign people can protect themselves and seek their true national interests. As fighters of a national-democratic revolution, they knew the sacrifices that a people must pay and the victories they must win in order to establish a nation-state that is the embodiment of the people's unity, strength and self-determination.

It is the task of the Filipino youth, amidst the chaos and confusion created by US power here and abroad, to link the present with our revolutionary fathers so that we may gain the firm purpose of recovering the international freedom of action that was totally annihilated by US imperialism and so that we may have more firm resolve and perspective in seeking relations with all peoples who are sympathetic to the reemergence of the Philippine Revolution and who are willing to deal with us fairly in the course of normal diplomatic and trade relations. In this patriotic task, the Filipino youth should seek to strengthen and extend the threads of Claro M. Recto's logic in calling for a rejection of our mendicant foreign policy, a policy subservient to the alien sovereignty that destroyed our

national freedom and prevented us from developing a truly Filipino democracy. We seek no less than the assertion of our own sovereignty.

We need always to uphold the principle of self-determination and our national interests as the starting point of our foreign relations. We need always to rely on the strength of our own people — predominantly the masses of peasants and workers — as the power of a genuine statehood. To rely on and argue for US protection and aid for our people, as all the so-called “statesmen” of the status quo or leaders of the neocolonial parties of today do, is to betray and to be traitorous to our own people. To perpetuate our inverted view of world reality that the benevolence of one world power should be the main factor of our national security and internal peace and order is to obscure and destroy the purpose and meaning of the Philippine Revolution and to give continued permission to US aggression against Filipino sovereignty. Our neocolonial politicians are blind to the fact that US power can be effectively fought and removed so long as the people are fully united and not divided against themselves by the neocolonial politics which provide false illusions and cockfight sensation, subsidized as it is by large US vested interests and their feudal and comprador allies.

Those who argue that the Philippines is under the protection of the United States and who, in that neocolonial line of thinking and acting, would narrow down the foreign policy of the Philippine government to an exclusivistic set of “special relations” with the United States that are formalized by such treaties that we now enumerate in this lecture, actually argue that the Philippines is a protectorate and not a “free” nation as often boasted by US propaganda. The argument of US protection has always been the last argument of a pro-US and pro-imperialist in justifying the overwhelming presence and power of US imperialism in the Philippines. For instance, it is absurdly argued: After the United States, whom would you like to take over the Philippines? This rhetorical question assumes that the Philippines should be a perpetual protectorate, either under US protection or under another alien power’s. The true and only alternative — Filipino sovereignty itself — is obscured by this neocolonial argument. This argument of US protection does not see the large implication of patriotic unity and struggle as a prerequisite for the vanquishment of US imperialism and the reinstatement of policies and instruments serving the sovereign interests of the Filipino people.

Those who argue for US aid and protection as a necessary condition for our

international relations are not aware of the history of their own people. Indeed, it has long been forgotten by many of us that US sovereignty was imposed on us, in a continuous act of aggression, against our own sovereignty from the very start. They obscure the fact that US imperialism — in its essential mission of expanding its world sphere for monopoly-capitalist exploitation — came to the Philippines exactly at the time in 1898 when the Filipino people were asserting their own sovereignty — by no less than the sovereign use of arms — over another alien power and had already established their own government and put out their Constitution to guide social order. US imperialism came only to intervene and use its own military force to crush Filipino sovereignty and its revolutionary government in the Filipino-US War of 1899-1902.

We seem always to forget that US imperialist power in this country, whether in the economy, politics, culture and the military, can be no less than perpetuated aggression. Up to the present, it signifies necessarily the brutal suppression of Filipino sovereignty and democracy. It signifies the unredeemed blood and destruction, the corruption and misleading of our people. No amount of semantical trickery or ceremonial show should veil our vision from the fact that up to now US sovereignty operates without restraint in all fields of our national life. Even after the six full decades of US imperialist brainwashing, we cannot honestly accept that sovereignty and independence can be granted or given to us by another sovereign people. It is a basic principle in political science that sovereignty cannot be given as if it were a gift. Every freshman student in political science would know this and yet our political leaders and teachers have drummed into our heads that the United States granted independence to the Filipino people on July 4, 1946. It should also be noted that neither can independence be restored nor given back by an aggressor-nation like the United States. Sovereignty is not given or given back; it is asserted by the sovereign people. In this light, therefore, the Philippine independence that was granted on July 4, 1946 can be no different from the independence that was also diplomatically granted by the Japanese invaders on October 14, 1943. The only difference lies in the source of the bogus gift. We are certain that Philippine history will soon reveal to us that US imperialism and Japanese imperialism are the same, in their aggression, brutality and deceptions.

Our foreign policy, as formulated by the successive administrations of Roxas, Quirino, Magsaysay, Garcia, and Macapagal, takes its beginnings from the state of perpetuated US aggression as formalized by the US-RP Treaty of General Relations of July 4, 1946. We take this treaty, together with the executive

agreements which went into its making, as a formalization of the resumption of US military hegemony in the Philippines after the brief Japanese interregnum. This treaty was supposed to have relinquished sovereignty to the Filipino people over their own national territory but it exempted the US military bases from relinquishment and only legalized further the persistence of these alien instruments of state power within our national territory. If the state exists by virtue of the coercive means it can use to exact obedience and the character of the state takes the character of the class or power which maintains superior coercive means within the same society, then how can we say that the puny armed forces that we have, which are dependent on the surplus disposal system and guidance of the JUSMAG, are capable of securing the Philippine state in the light of the well-entrenched US military bases which maintain superior military location and capability, with its own alien purposes, and which enjoys extraterritorial rights and whose troops enjoy extraterritorial rights? The strategic military reimposition of US military power, through the Treaty of General Relations and the Military Bases Agreement, was followed by the Bell Trade Act and the Parity Amendment which were meant and which have been used to perpetuate the “parity” rights of US citizens and to reestablish US control of the Philippine economy, currency and foreign trade. In order to control further the Philippine armed forces from its military bases, US imperialism imposed the Military Assistance Pact by which logistics, intelligence, indoctrination and operation should be guided by a Joint US Military Advisory Group. Altogether, these mean internal US control of the present Philippine state. In order to place the counterpart of JUSMAG in the civil bureaucracy, US imperialism imposed the Quirino-Foster Agreement by which imperialist aid is supposed to be administered more efficiently, as a departure from the surplus scandals, but actually by which the strategic branches and agencies of the Philippine government would be directed and their policies decided by overpaid US advisers who are oftentimes no better than sales agents of big US firms, and agents of the CIA. Alternately, the Mutual Defense Treaty was imposed in order to elaborate on the imperialist right of intervention in Philippine affairs which is already inherent in the extraordinary extraterritorial and exterritorial rights of US troops under the Military Bases Agreement. In 1954 came the Laurel-Langley Agreement to extend the right of US citizens to engage in all kinds of businesses. And then, the SEATO which was envisioned to involve the Philippine government in the internal affairs of the countries of Southeast Asia, particularly Indochina and Indonesia. The SEATO became the tiger on which the infamy of Filipino foreign policy makers rode, as it was immediately employed to place Southeast Asia under the gendarmerie of US imperialism.

The so-called special relations between the Philippines and the United States are defined by these said treaties and agreements which have alienated the Philippine government from the peoples both of Asia and Africa. In the historic Bandung Conference, the ebullient General Carlos P. Romulo (as Time Magazine would describe him) arrived only to try to shield US imperialism from the just denunciations of the representatives of Afro-Asian peoples. He went there only to perform the chore he had always done in the US-controlled United Nations, as the errand boy of the US State Department. Even after representation in the Bandung Conference, the Philippine government continued to obscure and even oppose the revolutionary movements of Asia and Africa. It preferred to view world reality from the US viewpoint which provoked the Korean War and which cheered the fascist-led revolt against the Hungarian government. The Philippine government preferred to hold on to the coattails of Uncle Sam as the latter seesawed between pro-Arab and pro-Israel sentiments. It hollered for intervention in the Taiwan question and in Indochinese affairs.

The arch-instrument of US imperialism, Ramon Magsaysay, had the temerity of pressuring Prince Norodom Sihanouk to join the SEATO. All the while supporting the actions of US imperialism, the Philippine government in its foreign policy closed its eyes to the various vicissitudes of the Indonesian people caused by the Dutch and assisted by US power, the Algerian revolution, the plight of Patrice Lumumba and other events which called for Filipino sympathy and support. Instead of being sympathetic to the Indonesian Revolution, the Philippine government tolerated the use of US military bases here against Indonesia in 1958.

“Special relations” have also involved the Philippine government in big-power bluffs of US imperialism against peoples who have already achieved the socialist revolution or who are about to achieve it. Bound as these countries are by proletarian internationalism, the Philippines has pitifully relied on the greed and deceit of US imperialism in its global maneuvers to expand its control over 60 percent of the world’s resources and maintain the 3,600 US foreign military bases. Through the US-controlled United Nations, the Philippines would become involved in the Korean War only to find that even in 1950 US imperialism could no longer exact what it wanted from peoples who unite and fight back to uphold their sovereignty and motherland.

Outline of world events

It is necessary to present the outline of world events today to show how our US protector stands, to show how insecure and unwise is our so-called “special relations” with the US and to show how detrimental they have been to us and to other peoples who have been subjected to US aggression.

On every level of international relations and struggle, US imperialism is losing its position of strength. Because of its unmitigated policy of superprofit exploitation and military aggression and intervention, arising from its imperialist nature, the US government has become isolated and has become the chief target of the national independence movements of Asia, Africa and Latin America and of the socialist camp. Even its capitalist allies are increasingly anti-US as they realize that they have been cheated of their colonies in the period of weakness immediately after World War II and as they are now trying to reclaim their colonial losses.

It is clear that US imperialism reached the peak of its power between 1945 and 1955. From the mid-1950s it started to meet the rising opposition of other world forces and to decline steadily, to its present status. It was within this period that it crushed the anti-imperialist movement in the Philippines and tied the Philippine government to a completely pro-US foreign policy that was marked by the errands run by the puny and peripatetic General Carlos P. Romulo, and was climaxed by the simultaneous crushing of nationalist organizations and the dispatch of Filipino expeditionary forces to the Korean War in an atmosphere of McCarthyism.

The Cold War policies of the US dominated the Philippine scene and successfully curtailed off the Filipino people from the Chinese revolution of 1949. The revolution became an established fact, however, and it frustrated the expansionist advance of US imperialism as early as 1950 in the Korean War. As the Chinese volunteers in the spirit of proletarian internationalism rolled back the US-directed UN Forces, the Soviet Union in 1951 exploded its first atomic bomb and broke the US nuclear monopoly. The proletarian internationalism of North Korea, China and the Soviet Union proved more than equal to US imperialism even at that time the latter was at the peak of its relative world power.

It is true that the US came out the strongest imperialist power after World War II at the expense of all other imperialist powers. It was on the basis of this strength that the US easily reoccupied the Philippines and imposed all the treaties

necessary to perpetuate US power in the Philippines as well as extend its influence and interests in the Far East. But World War II also gave birth to the most powerful anti-imperialist forces: the national liberation movements and the socialist camp. These two vigorous forces set into motion what we may now easily describe as the final stage of the general crisis of imperialism.

The two interrelated world movements of national liberation and socialism have developed from the basic alliance of the working class and the peasantry. These are the basic world forces against US imperialism. The internal conflict among imperialist powers themselves and their monopoly groups and the internal contradictions of US society itself have added to the decay of US imperialism as a whole.

The focal conflict in the world today is that one between the national liberation movements of Asia, Africa and Latin America on the one hand and the imperialist powers led by the US on the other. It is obvious that the most intense anti-imperialist struggles have been enacted in China, Cuba, Indochina and the Congo. The Vietnamese people are now fighting the most focal struggle in the world today. It is within the intercontinental area of Asia, Africa and Latin America that American imperialism finds itself most susceptible to the most vigorous blows by the main force of the worldwide anti-imperialist revolt which continues to raise the fighting spirit of two-thirds of mankind into various forms of resistance.

The oppressed and underdeveloped countries comprise the overwhelming countryside surrounding the metropolitan capitalist countries. The national independence movements of the world's countryside encompassing two-thirds of the world population are reducing the US imperialist areas of economic exploitation and military control. These are now forcing US imperialism to its worst crisis.

Deprivation of its superprofits is fatal to US imperialism. The national liberation movements are now curtailing the imperialist market and its field of investment and are now forcing US imperialism to its home grounds. Forced back to its home grounds by the anti-imperialist revolutions, US imperialism is sure to collapse under the strain of bearing the falling rate of profit which in the period of capitalist expansion has been buttressed by superprofits.

No less than in Latin America, the most probable last continental foothold of US

imperialism, the Cuban people have already chosen to free themselves from foreign exploitation, rendering US military might, represented by Guantanamo, useless; sustaining successfully the unfair blows of the US and the Organization of US States and therefore showing to all the peoples of Latin America that they too can fight US imperialism successfully. At present, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Brazil, Colombia and several other Latin US countries are in revolt.

In Africa, the Algerian Revolution, the Congolese Revolution, the Zanzibar Revolution and the revolutionary leadership of many African peoples are telling the US imperialists not to push their sphere of influence into Africa and subjugate them again. Thus the Peace Corps, the US lending institutions, and other imperialist instruments of subversion are being rendered ineffective. US treachery in the liquidation of Lumumba and the continued support to his killers, the US use of the UN to make possible the capture of Antoine Gizenga and the murders of tens of thousands of Congolese patriots with the paratroop drops by US helicopters in Stanleyville have enraged the entire African continent against US imperialism. The Organization of African Unity, particularly its Liberation Committee, is avowedly against colonialism, imperialism and neocolonialism.

The US War in Vietnam is a shocking proof of the barbarism of US imperialism. This was the same barbarism employed by it against our own people in order to impose its sovereignty upon us in the Filipino-US War at the beginning of the century. The US aggression against the North and South Vietnamese people is challenging all peoples to struggle against US imperialism in all its forms. As a result of its aggressive war in Vietnam, the US has become so isolated from the decent opinion of humanity. Its atrocities are excelling those of Hitlerite Germany and Tojo's Japan in their genocidal extent.

Notwithstanding the selfish and narrow point of view of puppet politicians in the Philippines, the world is changing rapidly and soon enough the internal laws of motion of Philippine society will breach the neocolonial framework. Pushed leftward by the national liberation movements, the balance of forces between socialism and imperialism is changing radically in favor of socialism. Before the emergence of modern revisionism, a world socialist system came about comprising 33.6 percent of the world population (1,000 million) and roughly 26 percent of the world area. Its share in industrial output has been greater than its share in the total population of the world. Per capita production in socialist countries is on the average higher than in the capitalist camp.

The astounding scientific and technological progress of socialist countries has spelled the constant advance of their economy and political strength, particularly in the case of the People's Republic of China. Socialist aid has encouraged fighters for national liberation to ward off the exploitation and enticements of imperialist aid, particularly US "aid." It has provided the disinterested alternative to the selfish offers of aid by various imperialist countries. Socialist aid agrees on the most disinterested terms as seen in comparison with imperialist aid.

Socialist aid is given at 1 to 2.5 percent interest, payable in twelve years; sometimes no more interest is required. Usually, the aid means the delivery of capital goods, the development of a self-reliant economy, a diversified agriculture and the construction of basic and heavy industries; it serves to increase the industrialization and independence of the aid recipient. Payment can be made in local currency, thus the aid giver is compelled to purchase local commodities. Socialist aid, therefore, encourages equivalent exchange of exports and imports. Furthermore, it requires no economic and administrative conditions such as imperialist aid requires that loans be spent as dictated by foreign advisers of the aid giver; and it has no political and military requirements such as that the aid recipient should join a military bloc and other bilateral and multilateral entanglements.

Imperialist aid, on the other hand, dictates so many conditions on the aid recipient, which amounts to the gradual or immediate surrender of the latter's sovereignty and industrial development. Loans from imperialist financing institutions, such as the Export-Import Bank, the Agency for International Development (AID), the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, are given at the interest rate of 4 to 7 percent and yet such basic conditions are made that the government receiving them is prevented from directly making productive investments. The aid recipient is dictated to use the funds for stabilization purposes; for public works and administrative purposes which ultimately favor the foreign investors and perpetuate the colonial trade pattern of cheap raw-material exports and high-price finished-products imports.

Always, the condition is made that foreign direct investors are given extraordinary tax-exemption privileges on their investments, direct support from the loans and unlimited right to repatriate profits and capital. Commodity purchases are made only according to the advice of the aid giver. Because the foreign aid adviser supplied by the aid giver must process and control the use of resources it is possible for him to overprice the goods in favor of the forms of his

country to the extent of 30 percent or more above the world price. US advisorship is spread out in the entire administrative system of the aid recipient. The advisers stay in strategic positions in the government; thus, they develop strong imperialist influence on the policies of the government. The aid recipient is compelled to be involved in political and military alliances against the interests of its people and against its own neighbors.

Aid under US Public Law 480 and the Mutual Security Act sets the most preposterous terms, such as the disposal of US surplus agricultural products by the recipient and the use of proceeds for controlling counterpart funds provided by the aid recipient and for cold war purposes under the direction of an overcompensated US advisorship spread out in the entire bureaucracy. Payment of imperialist loans in all cases can be paid only in the foreign exchange approved by the aid giver. Because of the wide difference in terms of imperialist and socialist aid, oppressed peoples and anti-imperialist governments always take the latter at the first opportunity.

Socialist economic aid is not only encouraging the oppressed peoples of the world to revolt against US imperialist power. The development of an Asian nuclear power, sympathetic to the national liberation movements of Asia and Africa, is bound to curtail the propensity of the US to frighten the progressive peoples of the world with total annihilation. The explosion of China's bomb, according to the anti-imperialist leaders of Asia and Africa, is now turning the nuclear stalemate in favor of socialism and the movements for national independence despite the revisionist policy of certain socialist countries. The biggest advantage, however, to be taken from socialist countries, especially the People's Republic of China, is to learn their principle of self-reliance.

It is not only the interrelated forces of national liberation and socialism which are forcing back US imperialism. Within the capitalist camp, the US has to meet the challenge of the Common Market and more particularly the French. The developing economic split of the West has its parallel effect in the NATO and the SEATO. The French claim for gold on Fort Knox is sending shivers along the spine of the US economy with its balance of payment problems. There seems to be no satisfactory resolution of the tariff war between the US and the Common Market. In the SEATO, we see how it had failed to act according to the designs of the Pentagon. The French opposition, not to mention Pakistan's, to US total aggression against Vietnam has complicated US relations with its Western allies.

In the United Nations, which has always been controlled by the US since its inception, the contradictions of world reality in which the US always finds itself at one end because of its greed and interventionism are beginning to rend the UN charter and structure of 1945 — the year at which the US came out richest and most powerful from the devastating war years.

The Afro-Asian nations resent the fact that they are unfairly represented in the agencies of the UN and many of them are appalled by the fact that China's seat has been usurped by the puny puppet government of Taiwan in the Security Council. Together with the socialist countries, the Afro-Asian countries always resist the payment of dues to the UN whenever they realize that the funds have been misused to install or protect puppet leaders of the United States such as in the Congo and other places.

At the moment, US society is suffering from the militarization of its economy, the balance of payments deficit, severe trade expansion difficulties, unemployment aggravated by automation, the color problem and civil rights, the rise of internal imperialist reaction and organized fascist politics.

As we continue to rely exclusively on the vaunted strength of US imperialism, we are bound to be surprised by every revolutionary turn of the world situation. At this point of our national history, we need to set ourselves free from imperialist domination so that our sense of internationalism, our sense of community with other nations would not continue to be narrowed down to the selfish imperialist interests of one foreign nation superimposed on our own.

We need to gain national freedom so that we can broaden our foreign relations with all nations willing to cooperate and to be friends with us. Let us not mistake the cosmopolitanism of the comprador ruling class as our internationalism. Let us think of the deeper fraternal ties that can be developed among the masses of Africa and Asia in facing our common enemy, US imperialism. Let us be one with the Afro-Asian people's solidarity movement and let us be guided by the spirit of revolutionary internationalism.

On the Standard Issues of the Day

Speech delivered at Silliman University, Dumaguete City,

on March 9, 1967 sponsored by the Beta Sigma Fraternity

The national democratic movement has too often been vilified wittingly and unwittingly as being unconcerned about current domestic issues and being concerned exclusively with questions of foreign policy.

It is our task to show that standard issues of the day such as graft and corruption, high prices, and crime and violence among others are concrete manifestations of the essential errors of our neocolonial status, our national subordination to the ruling policies imposed upon us by foreign and feudal exploiters in our society.

At this stage, it is a fact that nationalists or national democrats in their attempt to stress the fundamental roots of social inequities have spoken in generalities that the petty-minded or colonial-minded try to misrepresent as having no concrete basis.

It should always be stated strongly that the general causes of the suffering of our people are objectively observed in the chain of symptoms and in the chain of concrete reality that we see from day to day. It is our task to observe and list the concrete facts and issues of our national life, such as graft and corruption, high prices, crime and violence, unemployment, poverty, malnourishment, ill-education and ill-health; and from all these, we proceed to our general conclusions and to the basic causes if we plan to take national and fundamental action towards their solution.

We employ generalization only to stress what is fundamental on a national scale

or on an international scale. But it should be our task to relate what is general and essential to the concrete facts observed from one locality to another and from short period to short period. In other words, to know and say that the strategic problems of our nation are imperialism and feudalism entails a prior perceptual knowledge of those specific or concrete problems which appear at first as merely the responsibility of this or that particular political party or administration, or of this or that particular person. It is the task of objective and scientific analysis to determine the relationship between the particular facts and such general terms as imperialism and feudalism, or any other generalization.

We are bound by historical and objective conditions larger than anyone of us or any subjective aggrupation of men. No amount of preaching and individual or sectarian crusading will ever succeed if social inequities such as those we have mentioned are mere particular characteristics or symptoms of such a large historical and objective phenomenon as foreign and feudal domination. We have to develop on a general scale the large objective forces of national democracy that can effectively contend with the large objective forces of imperialism and feudalism.

In this discussion we have chosen only three of the standard issues of the day which frequently grace the front pages of our metropolitan newspapers. These are graft and corruption, high prices, and crime and violence which are often superficially said to be the issues or problems larger and more pressing than the basic problems that are imperialism and feudalism.

Graft and corruption

Let us take the issue and problem of graft and corruption. It has become the traditional basis for throwing out or retaining a political party or person in public office. Generally, however, despite our moral pronouncements about honesty, we have only perpetuated a system wherein the conservative political parties play what we call an in-and-out confidence game on our people. Whatever party gets in goes out later, but only after perpetrating graft and corruption, perpetuating a malevolent tradition of graft and corruption. Why is there so much lack of uprightness and integrity?

It is not enough to seek the help of God for light or to dismiss the problem as a mystery or to blame the erring officials as inherently crooked or simply opportunist, as suggested by the cliché "To err is human". What is needed is a

scientific analysis of the objective situation, of the entire system which gives rise to graft and corruption in the magnitude and regularity that we today observe. If we look around, we should know very well (from first-hand accounts of people who have gone there) that the People's Republic of China has successfully eliminated the problem of graft and corruption that had characterized the Kuomintang regime of Chiang Kaishek and which had inflamed the Chinese people against the regime. The experience of the People's Republic of China shows that it is humanly possible to eliminate graft and corruption or to reduce it to the degree of exceptionality or abnormality. In the United States, big-time contract-pulling persists and more sophisticated ways of making quick money have been developed by the military-industrial complex and by the big bosses of the capitalist parties. Retired military officers and men of political influence are hired by the big corporations to expedite war contracts with the government: the irregular is made so regular that it no longer looks irregular.

The problem of graft and corruption in the Philippines dates back to colonial times. If the colonial officials bought or incurred great expense to acquire their appointments in Madrid and in Manila, they would certainly commit graft and corruption to recoup their investment; read Rizal's essays and novels to confirm this statement. As in our own neocolonial times, leaders have to spend so much to run for office, the precondition for graft and corruption is perpetuated and, what is more serious, honest and genuine leaders of the masses are excluded from such office because they do not enjoy the financial support that the political representatives of the landlord class and foreign vested interests enjoy.

Because of the scarcity of opportunity for the people in colonial and neocolonial times, the government and the officials in turn become mere dispensers of privileges. To have a job, which should be a normal right of every citizen, is itself a privilege. Even within the middle social strata, such is the case; the bright boys and the mediocre ones in the middle class readily become the political agents and clerks of the ruling class. They have to conform to the exploitative system or else suffer the consequences for taking a different course of action or line of thinking.

The formal right of having a means of livelihood, the principle of freedom from want, has become a granted privilege in this society. The imperialists, compradors, bureaucrats and landlords are the selfish source of privilege, including the "privilege" of having a job. Don't they always say that they create and provide the jobs to us and they do not even mention the fact that they exploit

us?

Now, as in colonial times, there is a system that does not only prevent the equal allocation of limited resources and means but also prevent development in accordance with our national needs. The interests of a vested few – the foreign and feudal exploiters – dictate the policies and actions of the government and officials, and are opposed to the interests of the broad masses of our people.

The government is made to function only as the mere executive committee of foreign and feudal exploiters. This has come about because our political life has been narrowed down by force of arms or by the state power of the ruling classes to an internal competition of its shifting factions, those political parties maintained and financed by the vested interests in the country. The elections of today are essentially similar to the elections of the principalia of colonial times; the only large difference, of course, is that elections today are conducted on a grander and noisier scale, Madison Avenue style; and on the mere pretense that the populace is being given the chance to make a genuine choice.

But considering the fact that only the parties of the status quo like the NP and LP, including the PPP, prevail and that a genuine working class party has always been restricted from enjoying political freedom within the system, can it not be said that a class dictatorship actually exists in our country, a class dictatorship of imperialist agents, compradors and landlords who manipulate, to uphold their narrow class interests, the prevailing political parties to give us the mere illusion of democratic choice? The question in point is: Can the masses of our people truly make use of elections and other political methods provided us by the system to discipline miscreant government officials and eliminate graft and corruption?

We know for a fact that the greatest opportunity for graft and corruption presents itself in the breach between the government and the private business sector, especially the foreign monopoly firms and the local compradors. Contracts with private entities involving appropriation of public funds or government approval provide the opportunity for graft and corruption. Again, in the breach between two private entities vying for a government contract or approval, the corrupt bureaucrat gains another opportunity for making a fast buck under the table.

It is in the development of the private capitalist sector that graft and corruption has grown in the same way it grew in colonial times, as shown by the example of

Capitan Tiago, Quiroga and Don Timoteo Pelaez in Rizal's master novels—characters who symbolize the emerging cash relations in the womb of feudal society. Whereas graft and corruption can occur both between a public entity and a private entity, and between one private entity and another private entity, it cannot occur in the gap between one public entity and another public entity where public documents and public property can easily be checked and verified not only by the government officials themselves but by a political party of a new type that truly represents the interests of the masses and most importantly, by the masses themselves who have a high revolutionary consciousness.

Our proposal then is to change the entire system and make the public sector the leading factor in the command and development of our capital resources, in order to remove the malfeasance that attends the appropriation of public funds and in order to consolidate and direct our resources most effectively for accelerated economic growth. Moreover, we propose that in order to guarantee public control for the public sector, a new kind of politics, a new type of national democracy under the leadership of the working class, should prevail.

Those who would be the first to oppose the revolutionary transformation of our society and the strengthening of our public sector as the leading factor in the command and development of our capital resources are certainly those interested in the perpetuation of a colonial type of economy and a colonial type of society.

They are afraid that the public sector, if strengthened and rationalizes its investments towards industrialization, with the necessary support of the working class party and the masses, would be an instrument that can break the imperialist, comprador and landlord hold on the economy. They prefer to have their "free enterprise", meaning to say, the rapacity of corrupt bureaucrats, the foreign monopolists and the landlords.

What we are proposing is the strengthening of the public sector with the broadening of democracy to the extent that the public sector is the principal factor in our national development, and not merely secondary to the private sector which in turn is controlled as it is now by the foreign and feudal exploiters of this society.

The public sector is certain to take a leading role as the corrupt politics of the reactionary parties is replaced by national democratic politics. The organized masses under the leadership of the working class share and assume power and

effectively check on the integrity and performance of public servants.

High prices

Let us take the issue and problem of high prices. The subject cannot be seriously discussed without considering the colonial and agrarian character of our economy and its subordination to US imperialism. The current rise in prices can only be understood within this context.

It is certainly dishonest for our colonial-minded leaders not to acknowledge the disastrous results of the full and sudden decontrol of 1962. Decontrol doubled the peso equivalent of the dollar in the open market, thus automatically depressing the value of the peso. This is one imperialist debauchery of our economy.

Our national industrialists now have to pay more for imported capital goods, fuel, raw materials and spare parts replacements. With the resulting increase of the cost of production, some firms have been so hard hit that they have had to fold up while others have had to raise their prices in order to survive. In the course of the weakening of the peso, Filipino firms have been easily taken over by foreign firms. Otherwise, they are simply crushed by the foreign monopolies.

With the increase of the prices of the commodities that they buy and the resulting depression of their real wages, the workers have to demand an adjustment of their money wages. The hiking of the wage level in turn increases the costs of production and, the vicious cycle of capitalism, the capitalist must pass on the cost increment to the mass of consumers, leaving the workers with the same or even much lower real wages. The problem of high prices assails the vast majority of our people who have a low fluctuating income or a low fixed income.

Inflation in the Philippines has resulted from the consistent breakdown of local production in both national industry and agriculture. This in reality does not conform with the Keynesian notion that higher prices reflect higher production. This is the irony of a neocolony that must perforce be subject to developments in the imperialist metropolis.

In agriculture, the glaring irony has occurred. We are an agricultural country and yet we cannot produce sufficient food for our people. The Laurel-Langley Agreement has perpetuated the colonial character of the economy by the terms

of preferential trade which favor a raw-material export and a finished-product import trade relations. This is because our landlords have been carried away by the attractive price of sugar extended by the United States and they have turned from production of staples to

sugar production. Within the domestic market, even the price of sugar has risen for local consumers because the bulk of it has been exported without consideration of local needs.

Our government is so servile to US imperialism that it has allowed US agro-corporations to take over thousands of hectares of good agricultural lands in Cotabato and elsewhere for the production of pineapple, banana, and other fruits. This has also resulted in the decrease of ricelands in the second most important rice-growing area in the country.

In the US an inflation is going on as a result of massive military spending in the Vietnam War and other forms of deficit spending by the US government. And because we depend so much on manufactures from the US, due to lack of industries in our own country, we automatically import the inflation from the US. We have to pay more for US goods. The reactionary government also has to get US loans at more onerous terms only to cover artificially the chronic deficit in the colonial exchange of Philippine raw materials and US finished manufactures.

The Vietnam War has caused the upward spiral of prices in the United States. Men are drafted for the non-productive work of fighting a war and receiving pay for it. Basic materials are being diverted from consumer goods production to the production of war materials like bombs, chemicals, military vehicles, construction materials, fuel and the like. These materials have become more expensive because of the high demand from the war industry. Thus, commodities from the United States have become expensive in the Philippines.

We observe that in the Philippines itself, as in many other client-states of the United States, men and materials are being stimulated by higher prices towards the Vietnam war. To cite an instance, if Philippine cement is massively exported to Vietnam, the cost of constructing houses here would rise; the rent for apartment houses would also rise as it is rising now. Also, the expenditure of P35 million and more for the Philippine puppet expeditionary force to Vietnam because of subservience to US policies weakens the internal capacity of the

reactionary government to look after the welfare and security of our people.

We can very well see that US imperialist policies are basically responsible for the specific problem of higher prices.

Turning to the basic problem of feudalism, its perpetuation means the continued depression of the purchasing power of the peasant masses. Because of class oppression and backward methods, Philippine agriculture is not providing adequate food for the people. Because of imperialism, Philippine agriculture is not providing raw materials for local industries. Landlords constantly engage in luxury spending and this also tends to jack up prices. The whole feudal problem is sustained by imperialist domination.

The need to vigorously pursue national industrialization in order to provide jobs to the masses of our people is urgent. By it, we shall provide jobs for our people and they shall be afforded the chance to buy the products of their own labor. In the long run, the unrestricted industrial development of our economy will reduce the prices of commodities.

If basic land reform is used to support national industrialization, our peasant masses reaching 70 per cent of our population will be able to buy the products of our industries with their increased purchasing power. Our peasant masses would be providing adequate food and raw materials that serve as the basis for national industrialization. National industrialization and basic land reform are the main economic demands of the national democratic movement.

Only the public sector backed up and determined by the organized workers, peasants, students and other patriotic segments of our population can lead in the achievement of national industrialization and land reform. We cannot depend on foreign investors for these; it is futile to do so as our experience in the last six decades tells us – four decades under direct imperialist rule and two decades under indirect imperialist rule.

A small amount of capital is invested in quick profit areas by US firms, oftentimes from our own credit facilities, and in a period of even as short as one year, superprofits squeezed from Filipino labor and from the mass of consumers are already flowing out of the country. US investments always carry with them the curse of superprofit remittances which have plagued and restricted the growth of the Philippine economy. Consider the huge amount of capital that the

oil firms, Caltex and Esso, are taking out of the country; consider the danger of placing control of such a vital commodity as oil in the hands of foreigners. By this commodity alone, the US controls the motion and prices of all goods in this country.

Crime and violence

Let us take up the issue and problem of crime and violence. Smuggling, gambling, juvenile delinquency and prostitution, robbery, theft and homicide are rampant today. Their widespread presence is condemnable. But it is futile to preach about them if we do not make a systematic study of them and subsequently take critical and constructive action. It is also futile merely to do police work on the culprits. We have to attack the roots within the system which gives rise to all this malevolence.

Smuggling occurs in its pure form on our coastlines; in many instances, smugglers get their contraband through with the connivance of the PC and other armed apparatuses of the state. In its so-called technical form, the imported goods are undervalued or misdeclared at the customs area in order to avoid the payment of taxes. This is subversion of the economy systematically done with the connivance of the highest officials. The imperialist supplier of the smuggled goods, which includes the businessmen and their government, refuses to comply with the requirement of a

shipper's export declaration for purposes of checking the amount and kind of goods being imported into our country and also refuses to check on his side the use of boats for "pure" smuggling. As a matter of fact, the imperialist supplier connives with obvious smugglers who arrange the transport of goods by surreptitious means.

Smuggling intensified as a result of the full and immediate decontrol of 1962 which deprived the reactionary government of the right to control foreign exchange for purposes of proper allocation and industrial priority. With dollars now freely in the hands of private entities, their misuse for quick profit operations like smuggling and real estate speculation could be made. The policy of decontrol was adopted as a result of US imperialist pressures so that the foreign monopolies could destroy our local industrial gains, remit their superprofits and maintain a high rate of profit for their industries at home or their local subsidiaries. Under the guise of solving graft and corruption in dollar

allocations at the Central Bank, the US imperialists and their local agents agitated for decontrol; but graft and corruption merely shifted to the Bureau of Customs and to police agencies in even greater volume. The worst effects, of course, have been the sabotage of our economy and the massive outflow of much needed capital in the form of huge profit remittances by US firms and of luxury spending by their landlord and comprador agents.

At the upper rungs of our society, we see the corruption and decadence based on over-affluence amidst public want. To tide them over their boredom in a sea of mass poverty and to satisfy their distorted sense of values, our wealthy businessmen, politicians and evil gentry engage in maintaining *queridas*, in gambling, and in lavish banquets. Subsequently, juvenile delinquency even among their well-provided children results from the moral breakdown of the home and from their general exposure to the decadent values of imperialist culture which plays up sex and violence, as you will note from current American movies and other cultural vehicles, which are the fetishes of the wealthy.

Despite the preachiness of their religious pretensions, their exclusive Catholic school upbringing, they fall flat on their faces morally; they come out as split personalities of the worst cultural complex, that of imperialist and feudal decadence in our semicolonial and semifeudal society.

Murder and methods of fraud and terrorism have also characterized our political life. The stakes among our corrupt politicians are control and private appropriation of public funds, maintenance of *queridas* and relatives on government sinecures, expansion of private businesses through special government privileges, maintenance of vice dens and control of coastlines for smuggling, to cite only a few items that are the crimes of the rich. These comprise the adult delinquency of our so-called statesmen. The magnitude and malignancy of this delinquency makes the juvenile delinquency of their children look puny and awkward.

Prostitution, juvenile delinquency in slums, robbery, theft, killings for lack of appreciation of, or inability to use the present channels of justice, are correctly described as crimes of poverty. We may pass the strictest laws to discourage their commission; but so long as there is no change in the material basis for their occurrence, we shall continue to suffer these crimes of poverty.

Young women from the rural and city slums are annually misled into a life of

shame on the false promise of decent jobs or by the sheer lack of the chance to exist decently. Prostitution is the fetishism of any exploitative social system; woman is degraded into the status of mere commodity, the way labor is regarded in this exploitative society.

The vast majority of our people are caught between the stagnation of feudal conditions and the insufficiency of modern opportunities for employment in our neocolonial situation. Robbery and theft are generally forms of spontaneous retaliation by the dispossessed against those who have excessive possessions.

Killings for various reasons at the lower rungs of our society are related to crimes involving property or the alienation of so many people from the moral values that are preached by the ruling classes which at the same time employs legal or illegal means to violate them. Make a study of the records of our brothers in jails and penitentiaries to confirm the general causes of their crimes which at first appear as personal in character.

Of course, it is foolhardy to condone crimes of poverty. But it is simply hypocritical to make any condemnation without understanding the objective causes, which are actually larger and more compelling than the individual culprit.

We are living in a society where our foreign and feudal exploiters do not only provide us with backward, conflicting and alienated values but also restrict our own efforts to develop the forces of national and social progress and the material conditions necessary for a more democratic and nobler existence and culture for all.

The national democratic movement stands for the liberation of our nation and also the liberation of the oppressed Filipino masses. The exploitation of one nation by another nation and of man by man or one class by another gives rise to a chain of iniquities that should never be posed in isolation of their root causes if we truly stand for the freedom, creativity and dignity of man.

Philippine Independence Day

Speech delivered at the Independence Day celebration

at Odiongan, Romblon on June 12, 1968

It was in 1962 that the Philippine government decided to change the official Independence Day of our country. Previously, our people had been indoctrinated by the educational system and the entire officialdom that July 4th was our Independence Day.

A shifting of the tablets of Philippine history has occurred. No little embarrassment still flushes the face of teachers, government officials and our elders who pontificated not too long ago that, thanks to the United States of America, we were “granted” independence on the star-spangled day of July 4th. But, in many cases, it is not yet the significance of the error that embarrasses them, it is plainly the reversal of the dates.

The error of historical recall and political principle is calculatedly obfuscated by our officialdom which declares apologetically that July 4th may still be commemorated as the day when Philippine independence was “restored” by the US government.

There is a question of political principle as well as the question of historical truth in rejecting July 4th as our Independence Day. Independence cannot be granted or restored by one state or people to another people; sovereignty cannot be extended as if it were a gift. It cannot be properly proclaimed for us by a foreign president or a foreign power. It can only be recognized by other states or peoples. US jurisprudence itself would uphold that independence can be asserted or proclaimed only by the people themselves and that, therefore, the US

government could not have granted independence to the Filipino people on July 4, 1946.

The kind of independence that was so pretentiously extended to the Filipino people in dubious ceremonies all over the country was clearly a nominal one that carried the restrictions, limitations and qualifications required by the pseudo-donor. The United States was willing to tack the label of independence on the Philippines but was not willing to and could not let the sovereign Filipino people assert their political, economic, cultural and military independence. The grant of nominal independence was precisely to blunt and avert a genuine national independence movement among the Filipino people. After July 4, 1946, we continued to be deprived of the true essence of independence.

The process of granting what cannot be granted, sovereignty and independence, is reflected by such colonial documents as the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934, the Proclamation of Philippine Independence by the President of the United States of America and the Treaty of General Relations of July 4, 1946. These documents contain clever provisions and phrases which bless the continuance of US property rights and parity rights and the persistence of installations and occupied land areas essential to the maintenance of an imperialist hegemony.

A series of agreements and treaties has continuously unfolded to reflect the reality of an imperialist power stubbornly depriving the Filipino people of the substance of national freedom and democracy even as it proclaims itself to have “granted” Philippine “independence.” The Parity Amendment and the Bell Trade Act have perpetuated US violation of the national patrimony and of the very preamble of the Constitution and have allowed US citizens and corporations, together with their landlord and comprador allies, in the country, to foster a semicolonial and semifeudal type of economy. Economic subservience to US imperialism has detracted essentially from political independence. Economic independence is the basis of political independence.

The whole gamut of military pacts with the United States, the Military Bases Agreement, the Military Assistance Pact, the Mutual Defense Pact and the Manila Pact, respectively, provide the United States with the military and legal presumption to occupy large areas of Philippine territory and even to extend them in the course of military operations, to exert control and pressure on the Philippine government and to intervene in Philippine affairs in the name of mutual defense and even to allow other allies of the United States to intervene

likewise. If we truly grasp the meaning and content of state power, then we can very well say that a puppet state, a protectorate, has actually been created by the United States in the Philippines. Conservative and reactionary countrymen, those who are favored by the semicolonial and semifeudal conditions, are fond of referring to the United States as our “protector,” in addition to such titles as “liberator” and “independence-giver.”

What may lead some of our countrymen to believe that we have independence is the fact that there is an extensive native bureaucracy and that Americans are no longer to be seen conspicuously in government offices as was the case in former times. The electoral system is also boasted of as an effective medium of free nationhood although it has always been clearly monopolized and abused in visible and invisible ways by the political representatives of the dominant classes. It is relevant to refer to the public confession made by former President Diosdado Macapagal in a recent speech that no president or candidate for president can afford to incur the ire of powerful US interests in the Philippines. He said: “Filipino incumbent presidents and most presidential candidates endeavor to obtain the support of the US government or at least not to antagonize it in their bid for the presidency.” This is significant on two counts. Firstly, it indicates that US authorities perform acts, overt or clandestine, calculated to bear on the actions of incumbent Filipino presidents and most presidential candidates and to affect the campaign and its outcome. Secondly, this practice lessens the independence of mind and action of Filipino presidents, a fact which could jeopardize the interests of the Filipino people.

Our ruling politicians are very much within the political framework designed, built up and defended by the imperialists, compradors and landlords. Historically, our civil and military bureaucracy has been merely carried over to the present in its colonial mold. There are certain basic policies of a colonial and undemocratic cast that can be changed to advance the cause of national freedom and democracy only at the risk of incurring the ire and violence of those who fear the loss of imperialist and class privileges. Is it any surprise to us that there is now a growingly conspicuous alienation between the government and the governed?

June 12 is a glorious and significant date to celebrate, chiefly to accord honor to the masses of the people and their patriotic leaders who rose in armed struggle and shed their blood in a great endeavor to liberate their nation from foreign tyranny and oppression. June 12th is certainly a more honorable day than the

mock independence day of July 4th, made in the United States of America.

Nevertheless, let it be remembered that the Proclamation of Independence at Kawit in 1898 carried an unfortunate phrase to the effect that the Philippine Republic was “under the protection of the Mighty and Humane North US Nation.” This phrase, this fly in the ointment, reflected the fact that the Aguinaldo leadership had put good faith in the pledge of agents of the US government that it would provide military aid to the Filipino revolutionaries without prejudice to the cause of Philippine independence.

The chicanery and treachery of US imperialism soon came to light in their arrogant exclusion of the Filipino revolutionaries from the capture of Manila and in the subsequent all-out US aggression against the Filipino people. The Filipino-US war had to explode as an extension of the Philippine Revolution of 1896, with Apolinario Mabini and General Antonio Luna steadfastly denouncing the US imperialists for robbing us of our independence, for slaughtering Filipino patriots, for suppressing our democratic aspirations.

The First Philippine Republic or the Aguinaldo government was over-powered by both the imperialist superiority of arms and by dissensions created in the revolutionary ranks by those ilustrados who capitulated in the face of the enemy, who were carried away by McKinley’s pretentious proclamation of “benevolent assimilation.”

The era of the national democratic revolution of the old type under the ideological and political leadership of the liberal bourgeoisie is over. The period of suppressed nationalism, the period of the Jones Law, the period of the Commonwealth, the period of the Japanese occupation and US retreat and this period of nominal independence have proven beyond doubt that the national democratic revolution will continue to be frustrated by the traitors and opportunists in our midst, if it is not renewed accordingly at this higher historical stage by arousing and mobilizing the masses of workers, peasants, the urban petty bourgeoisie and militant youth under the ideological and class leadership of the working class.

A new type of national democratic revolution, a continuation of the Philippine Revolution of 1896 and yet a renewal of strength in a more advanced way, needs to be waged. The basic problems of imperialism and feudalism must be rooted out by the broad alliance of workers, peasants and all other patriots under the

leadership of the working class.

A new type of national democratic revolution is now rising in our country at a time that the people of the world are striking at every overextended tentacle of the US imperialist octopus, at a time that all capitalist societies, especially their US bulwark, are internally crisis-stricken, at a time that the Filipino people are learning the lessons of the past and the present and are fighting for a far more definite future founded on the democratic alliance of workers and peasants.

Because the proclamation of June 12th was not crowned by a lasting revolutionary triumph and because we cannot accept the improper proclamation of July 4th, a challenge continues to face the Filipino people to stand up and fight for genuine independence and democracy and to inaugurate a new republic and a new proclamation of independence.

It is easy to draft a new proclamation of independence and to adopt a new independence day as a matter of form and ceremony but we must be determined to struggle at all cost for its substantive realization. A new proclamation and a new day of independence can only emerge from the renewed efforts at national democratic revolution. A day is still to come when we shall deal the most effective blows against imperialism and feudalism, when the youth of the land and the masses of the people shall reassert their national and democratic aspirations with revolutionary feats. A day will surely come when true independence shall have been won and its bounties shall belong to the masses of the people.

Anatomy of Philippine Politics

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Economic power makes political power

It is beyond doubt that economic power makes political power. A political system is possible and can last only because it is based on an economic foundation, on the mode of production that gives sustenance to the political ideas and institutions in the superstructure of a society. With this basic assumption, we may start to make a comprehensive presentation of the anatomy of Philippine politics.

However, we cannot really make a profound critique of Philippine politics if we do not grasp the historical principle that the masses of our people in a semicolonial and semifeudal country can build up their own political power in the countrywide in the course of a struggle entailing the area-by-area and step-by-step elimination of the political and economic power of the local exploiters and local bullies, without as yet being in full control of the national economy. We keep this principle in mind even as our topic is the anatomy of Philippine politics as it is now.

To know well a political system or a particular form of society, it is necessary to comprehend the basic political contradictions that are at work, emerging from basic contradictions of socioeconomic classes even if these should at first appear as being in equilibrium. If we try to make a presentation of the Philippine

political system without considering its basic socioeconomic contradictions, then we would be merely trying to depict a lifeless skeleton seeming to have the quality of permanence. It is the relentless conflict of classes in our society that keeps our politics dynamic and impermanent. The very existence of class exploitation gives away the fact of class struggle, no matter how suppressed or obscured by one means or another, and also gives away the prospect of social revolution, no matter how much it is restricted by the state power of the ruling classes.

If we are interested in the anatomy of Philippine politics as if it were a dead or passive structure, all that we have to do now is to read and reread the Philippine Constitution. So, we would just say that we have a republican and presidential form of government which has three basic branches-executive, legislative and judicial-in equilibrium under a rule of check and balance; that the Filipino electorate has the democratic right to vote in and vote out men in the government; that electoral choice is mainly provided by a two-party system ensured by a constitutional provision on electoral inspectors; and that in-between and during elections, the Filipino people are formally gifted with a bill of rights which is supposed to allow them to act in and speak out their interests collectively and individually.

But, in these turbulent times, we cannot afford to be naive and superficial. We cannot refer dogmatically to formal rights and say that sure enough we have democracy in this country. We have to investigate the national and social reality. Especially at a time that more and more people are getting dissatisfied with the political system and its political processes, it becomes more compelling in our part to look into the most vital struggles that are now severely straining the ability of the system to contain. In other words, we have now to see Philippine politics in the light of fundamental issues and demands that divide social classes and political aggrupations daily driven on the course of irreconcilable disagreement or conflict.

The class basis of political tendencies and trends

We have to have a clear perception and knowledge of the economic classes within our semicolonial and semifeudal society. Their basic demands are of a political character, involving relations of members within the same class, relations between classes, relations within the nation as a whole and relations with other nations. Political tendencies, trends, issues and possibilities are

founded on these classes existing and operating within Philippine society. What can sustain a political movement or a political system is a definite economic class or an alliance of economic classes that have certain interests or that have certain aspirations and demands.

It is not possible, in a class-divided society like that of the Philippines, for all classes to have common or similar interests to protect and advance. The fact is that some classes are united against other classes because of a basic contradiction of interests. Thus, the diametrical opposition of basic political standpoints.

With regard to the basic struggle for national democracy to which all patriotic Filipinos should be committed, the entire range of social classes in the Philippines is divided into two camps. There is the camp of those classes who wish to achieve the completion of the national-democratic revolution and there is the opposite camp of those classes interested in the perpetuation of imperialist and feudal power in this country.

The masses of workers and peasants, the intelligentsia, the petty property-owners and nationalist businessmen are interested in the success of the struggle for national democracy. On the other hand, the imperialists, their comprador agents, their landlord and corrupt bureaucrat allies would rather have semicolonial and semifeudal Philippines which they can easily exploit.

The Filipino workers who are enlightened with the most advanced ideas of this era are interested in a national democracy in the Philippines because this rejects and supplants the political power of foreign monopoly capitalism and landlordism. Because this means actual sovereignty and genuine independence, Filipino-owned industrialization, a thoroughgoing land reform and the opportunity of the working class to establish and build up the democratic power of the people and lead in the march to social revolution and progress.

The Filipino peasants are interested in national democracy in the same way that the workers are, but they are most interested in national democracy because it breaks feudal chains and provides them the substance of freedom. All other patriotic segments of the population are interested in national democracy because they are adversely affected by the ill state of the nation and principally by the prevailing interests of the big foreign businessmen, the compradors, the landlords and the corrupt bureaucrats.

The state as an instrument of ruling class interests

The present state in the Philippines signifies the long-drawn rule of certain classes over other classes. The class interests that today dictate the state are those of the imperialists, compradors and the landlords. The theory is bandied about that it is the “ordinary citizens” who have created the present state and who can use it as their own instrument. But this is contrary to the fact that the state is merely the executor of the will and interests of those exploitative classes ruling our society today.

A time has yet to come when the nature and character of the state is changed by the national-democratic movement. The present state is an instrument of the ruling classes to command order and submission to the existing class relations in Philippine society even if these are disadvantageous and antagonistic to the class interests of the vast majority of the people. The power of the state to command lies in its essence as an institution of violence. What does the state have the armed forces, the police, courts and prisons for, if not to keep the peace and order that preserves a particular social order? When all suasive means have failed to mislead or appease the oppressed people, the coercive power of the state is ruthlessly used by the exploiting classes to pacify the national and social unrest that arises.

The nature and character of the present state in the Philippines can easily be seen also in the regular operations of its civil bureaucracy, its executive, legislative and judicial branches. Look at the unfair executive agreements and treaties made with the US government. Look at the programme of the government and the kind of contracts it expedites. Look at the prevailing interests of congressmen and senators in their legislative deliberations. Look at the pitiful common man who cannot afford the cost of litigation in courts. There are many more things we can bring up that can expose which classes are the subject of the pacifactory or concessionary efforts of the state which is primarily interested in the preservation of the ruling classes.

We have today a state that serves imperialist and feudal interest and opposes the national democratic interests of the Filipino people. And yet it is still pontificated that the Philippine government is a government of the people, by the people and for the people.

The elections and political parties

The elections are supposed to be a decisive process or measure by which the Philippine political system is to be established and preserved. Elections are supposed to allow the people to choose their representatives democratically. But the question that should be propounded by serious students of the Philippine political system is this: Is the electorate actually allowed to make a real and fundamental choice, say, a choice between political parties and candidates who stand for national democracy and those who stand for opposite interests?

It is superficial to say that a basic political choice is made possible to the electorate with the mere existence of two parties. A study of the platforms and the principal driving forces behind the Nacionalista Party and the Liberal Party shows that they are basically the same.

Political campaigns require heavy financial support. It is standard operating procedure for the two parties to collect from moneyed interests, imperialist comprador and landlord. Nationalist businessmen give modest financial support to the political parties and candidates but they are not as hard-driving a force as the imperialists and the compradors who have the greater capability for financing electoral campaigns.

The basic similarity of standpoint of the two parties is such that big vested interests play it safe by giving financial support to both parties and all candidates. Whoever wins, it is still the vested interests that prevail.

It is not only the fact that the electors go through the motion of voting for their candidates that create the illusion that a free and democratic choice of leadership is possible in this country. It is also the fact that there are so many politicians who style themselves as men of humble origins and as men of the masses. And yet it is clear that they run for public offices because they themselves are members or running dogs of the exploiting classes.

A percipient study of the Philippine politics would reveal that to become a mayor in a municipality, one must ordinarily have the support of the landowners who dictate blocs of passive tenant votes and that of the municipal bourgeoisie which includes the town professionals and the barrio captains who are usually rich peasants as ward leaders.

To run for congressman or governor, one has to get the same kind of class support that a mayoralty candidate gets on a smaller scale. Within the province,

the issues fought out skirt the problem of land although the basic class demand of the majority peasant population in the province is land reform. If it is ever mentioned in electoral campaign, what is skirted is the necessity for the poor peasants or the sharecroppers to band themselves together as a political force independent of the political control by rich peasants and the landlords themselves.

On the national scale, the politicians play it safe by not antagonizing the big vested interests who are potential or tested campaign contributors or partners in business. The big conservative politicians play to the tune of the ruling class interests. They often do not mind when they discover that certain corporations and business groups put money on both sides of the electoral campaign unless the disparity of support amounts to “non-neutrality”.

The interests of the Filipino “middle class” may at times be orated upon by certain politicians and this would make them appear “progressive”. But all their words are meant to “reconcile” opposing class interests.

The Nacionalista Party and the Liberal Party today monopolize the elections as the organizational instruments of basically the same vested class interests. Even the Progressive Party of the Philippines, which apparently received a great deal of financial support from conservative sources, has shown its utter incapability to beat the electoral machinery of the Liberal Party and Nacionalista Party.

The stability of the two-party system will for some time signify the stability of the regime of the ruling classes. But let us watch with the keenest interest the growing realization by the people that the NP and LP are no different from each other and are not wholesome for the masses of the people. The masses are beginning to demand a new alternative party, truly different from the well-established conservative political parties. They are beginning to see the elections as a farce, as a mere occasion for the vested interests at the top to give the electorate the false illusion of democratic choice from among a highly limited range of personalities who have no basic political differences but who agree on taking personal advantage of their public offices, the winning of which is so expensive that the normal outcome consists of corrupt bureaucrats.

The Making of “Public Opinion” and Political Power

Outside of the party machinery and outside of the government facilities that an

incumbent government official can use to make his political campaign, there are other instruments which can be used to make “public opinion” and build up political power. There are the mass media and the mass organizations that are always dictated upon by a definite class or some definite classes. These are intermediate instruments in the building of political power and influence either within the established political system or without and against it.

The mass media, newspapers, radio, TV, movies and others are accessible mainly to political personalities and parties that can afford to shoulder the necessary fees and are in a social position to influence the slant of information, programs and opinion campaigns. The ownership of the mass media is, in the first place, in the hands of corporations that are controlled and influenced businesswise by imperialist and reactionary interests.

It takes not a few millions of pesos to finance an electoral campaign under the Philippine political system. There is a curtain of finance that shuts out the political organizations of the working class and peasantry from having an “equal” chance to utilize the reactionary mass media.

The big corporations are themselves organizations of the big vested interests that can exert a great deal of political influence, especially among their stockholders and among employees who may not as yet be radicalized. These corporations are in turn organized into chambers of commerce and advertisers groups which serve as important lobby groups.

Individual big businessmen are leading members of civic clubs, like the Rotary, Lions, Jaycees and other American-style clubs, which include a good number of social-climbing professionals and managers. All these seemingly harmless aggrupations serve as contact points not only for business connections but also for political combinations.

There are organizations of landlords, whether they are sugar and coconut exporters or rice and corn dealers. There are also organizations of big loggers and mining magnates. They serve as political pressure groups on the government, political parties and personalities. Their scope of power is both national and local.

The “middle class” has the professionals’ organizations, highly localized merchants’ associations and community clubs. These serve as channels for

“public opinion” from the top. Members of the middle social strata have the special talent for echoing opinion that they derive from the mass media. They are newspaper subscribers, TV watchers, and radio listeners. When it comes to opinion of national significance, they merely echo the dominant going opinion in the mass media. Through their mass organizations they take the initiative of adopting some collective opinion but this opinion is usually of limited scope and, unwittingly, they merely apply locally the “public opinion” that the big political interests at the center of communications are trying to spread.

At the lower levels of our society, there are the trade union in factories and mines, peasant association in farms, the official barrio councils and neighborhood clubs. But these aggrupations of workers and peasants have various class tendencies.

Among the barrio councils in the Philippines today, the vast majority are still controlled by rich and upper middle peasants who oftentimes are political agents of the landlords and the municipal bourgeoisie. Among peasant associations, there are those controlled by landlords themselves or by their political agents. There are those controlled by rich and middle peasants associations which are controlled by poor peasants and lower middle peasants and are well-led.

In city slums and in the farms, there are special organizations controlled by agencies of the United States government and the Philippine government and by religious corporations. They play the role of restraining the masses from taking part in any serious national democratic movement.

As in the case of the mass media, class analysis must be made in the case of mass organizations. We have to stick to class standpoint in studying even the supposedly lower-class organizations.

The type of mass organizations predominating in the Philippines now is also part of the curtain alienating the true interests of the masses from those of the native oligarchy and imperialism. This curtain also serves to block off the political advance of the working class and the peasantry. The predominating mass organizations which maintain basic allegiance to the ruling class interests are purveyors of wrong ideas for misleading the masses.

For the political power of the masses to develop, the working class and the peasantry must recognize their own class interests and struggle for them; and

establish and develop mass organizations, a system of public-opinion making and a political party that would genuinely struggle for their own class interests.

On the 1971 Constitutional Convention

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An instrument of national and class oppression and exploitation

The essential nature of the Philippine Constitution since the very start has been its being an instrument of national and class oppression and exploitation. It is a constitution designed to synthesize and synchronize the interests of US imperialism and those of the local ruling classes under the camouflage of pious bourgeois populist expressions and the myth of self-government.

The making of the Philippine Constitution was part of the rotten deal to effect the false grant of independence by US imperialism to the Philippines under the Tydings-McDuffie Law. The convention of 1934-35 that drafted the constitution was packed by the political agents of US imperialism and those of the local ruling classes. Inevitably, the interests of the US imperialists, the big compradors, the landlords and the bureaucrat capitalists were given blessings by the convention. The constitution as a colonial piece of document was approved by the president of an alien government, the United States.

Never has the Philippine Constitution been free from its origin and nature as a legal instrument of national oppression and exploitation. Its colonial validity hinged on the Tydings-McDuffie Law. The constitution contained special provisions (Article XVIII) and the first ordinance appended in 1939 which demanded allegiance to the United States and which ensured the perpetuation of the political, economic, military and cultural control of the Philippines by the United States during the entire period of the Commonwealth. These made sure that even upon the false grant of Philippine independence by US imperialism the Philippines would still be under its control. It is a big crime to accede to this kind of constitution as has been done by the old merger party of the Communist Party and Socialist Party.

The US-RP Treaty of General Relations was signed on July 4, 1946 by both the US government and the Philippine puppet government so that corporations and citizens of the former would enjoy property rights like those of the latter in the

Philippines, so that US military bases and reservations would remain in violation of territorial integrity and so that Philippine foreign relations would be under US control.

Not satisfied with the constitutional provision expressly allowing 40 percent foreign equity in Philippine corporations engaged in the exploitation of natural resources and operation of public utilities, the US imperialists extorted the Parity Amendment in exchange for war damage payments and trade preferences for the benefit of the big comprador-landlord-bureaucrat sector in the country. The Parity amendment which extends not only parity rights but even superior rights to US monopolies in law and in practice remains the most blatant manifestation of the colonial character of the Philippine Constitution. Until now, the Parity Amendment remains intact in the Laurel-Langley Agreement.

To protect its huge economic interests in the Philippines, US imperialism further extorted the US-RP Military Bases Treaty, the Military Assistance Pact and the Mutual Defense Treaty. These military treaties ensure US extraterritorial rights, control of the puppet reactionary armed forces and the privilege of imperialist intervention in Philippine affairs under the guise of mutual defense. All of these violate the national sovereignty of the Filipino people and make the Philippine Constitution a rag of scorn.

At present, the Philippine Constitution is patently a colonial document on incontrovertible grounds. It completely disregards the principle that for a colony or semicolon to liberate itself genuinely and fully from imperialist tyranny, there has to be a revolutionary assertion of the people's sovereignty and democratic rights. Instead, there is the cowardly acceptance of puppetry and the false notion that independence can be granted by an alien power to the people. It does not show how the political, economic, military and cultural dominance of US imperialism can be undone within the Philippines. The Parity Amendment and also the provision allowing 40 percent foreign equity in Philippine corporations nullify the very preamble which preaches the conservation of the national patrimony. There are so many executive agreements, treaties and statutes that have been passed to perpetuate puppetry to US imperialism in an all-round way. The constitution has often been invoked by the reactionaries to justify these.

The present constitution is essentially an instrument of class oppression and exploitation. To conceal the fact that it is the biggest piece of class legislation, it

obscures the basic class differences in Philippine society and dishonestly tries to incorporate in the general category of people the very ruling classes that oppress the democratic majority of the people, the masses of workers and peasants. By denying the existence of classes and class struggle, the present constitution seeks only to bless the kind of order where the reactionary state is used by the US imperialists, compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists to oppress and exploit the broad masses of the people.

The high-sounding terms of the preamble, declaration of principles and the bill of rights are mere bombast in the absence of clear class distinction. To take up one basic point: so it is recognized as a matter of constitutional right to be secure in one's property. Certainly, it would be a fundamental principle of democracy to recognize the right of workers and peasants to be secure in their hard-earned private property. But it is utterly wrong to recognize in the same breath the "equal" right of the big bourgeoisie and the landlord class to own property for the oppression and exploitation of the broad masses of the people. Under the present constitution, the reactionary state can only claim to "regulate" labor-capital and landlord-tenant relations and it is empowered to exercise compulsory "arbitration" in favor of the exploiting classes. In practice, the intervention of the reactionary state in the class struggle means the use of the police, armed forces, the courts and prisons against the workers and peasants.

All the twenty-one sections of the Bill of Rights (Article III) are negated essentially by the reality that it is the US imperialists and their local stooges, the big compradors, landlords and the bureaucrat capitalists, who monopolize the "freedoms" under the guise of enjoying them in their capacity as individuals or as corporate entities. The truth is that these tyrants in their class roles actually deprive the broad masses of the people, especially the workers and peasants, of their national, class as well as individual rights.

A constitution would not be useful to these oppressors and exploiters if it did not dangle deceptive promises before the oppressed and exploited masses. After recognizing the right of the ruling classes to be secure in their right to own the means of oppressing and exploiting the people, the constitution boasts of the right of expropriation and police power belonging to the state in the "public interest" or in time of its own emergency. The US imperialists, compradors and landlords can feel secure that their constitutional demand for "just compensation" will only reinforce, instead of decrease, their wealth and power. The present government is their own government. Their reactionary government

is in no economic and political position to expropriate nor cause the expropriation of the capital of the big bourgeoisie and the lands of the landlord class for redistribution to the peasants except for token purposes or when the landlords can exact a good price.

The forthcoming constitutional convention

False hopes are being raised about the 1971 constitutional convention as a possible means of “revolutionary” change to head off a real armed revolution of the broad masses of oppressed and exploited people. Reformists of various stripes and undisguised counterrevolutionaries play down the fact that this constitutional convention shall be held within an unchanged system under the sponsorship of a counterrevolutionary government in the service of US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. Erroneously, they play up the fantastic expectation that by a mere stroke of the pen after long-winded debates fundamental changes can be effected irrespective of the basic colonial and class character of the constitutional debaters.

A constitution can be nothing but a mere reflection or summing up of the general situation or particular balance of forces in a society. It cannot escape from the reality that antinational and antidemocratic forces, US imperialism, the comprador bourgeoisie, the landlord class and the bureaucrat capitalists dominate Philippine society. It is nothing but a fig leaf for a reactionary state. Never has it occurred in the entire history of mankind that a piece of document alone would suffice to persuade the foreign and local tyrants to leave their well-entrenched positions and ways.

It can never be hoped that US imperialism and the local exploiting classes shall allow themselves to be written off without a sanguinary fight. On the other hand, it can only be expected that these malefactors will exert every effort to have their political representatives elected to the constitutional convention in order to design the new constitution in such a manner as to deceive the people with glittering generalities and essentially permit national and class oppression and exploitation through some general terms in the same constitution or through the actual operation of the present system.

During the last whole decade, US imperialism and the local ruling classes have taken full advantage of the semicolonial and semifeudal status of the Philippines in preparing for the formal termination of the Laurel-Langley Agreement in

1974 and for the perpetuation of their privileges. By manipulating the Philippine financial situation alone, US imperialism has succeeded in maneuvering the Philippine reactionary government into its position today of begging for “stabilization” loans and preferential trade in exchange for the recognition of US “vested rights” in the Philippines and the extension of “national treatment” (a synonym of “parity rights”) for its new investments.

By following the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, two US-controlled financial institutions, the Philippine reactionary government has implemented the policy of decontrol which has facilitated the huge profit remittances of US monopolies and the aggravation of the colonial exchange of Philippine raw material exports and foreign manufacture imports benefiting the US monopolies and such evil local forces as the compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists.

Under the same recommendations, the Philippine reactionary government has made heavy expenditures mainly to provide the infrastructure for the imperialist domination of the country and for further reinforcing the economic and political power of the US imperialists, compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists. At the present moment, the external and internal debts of the reactionary government for such purposes have resulted in a crisis (inflation, balance of payments problem, increasing unemployment, heavy taxation and tight credit) especially during the fascist puppet regime of Marcos.

At this early stage, US imperialism and its puppets have clearly established the ground level for the retention of imperialist privileges as this is evident from the Investment Incentives Act and the Magna Carta of Social Justice and Economic Freedom, two pro-imperialist documents misrepresented as “nationalist.” Furthermore, the US-RP panels renegotiating the Laurel-Langlely Agreement are colluding secretly to give more and bigger privileges to the US monopolies and are biding their time. Already the US imperialists have clearly exacted assurances for the extension of national treatment and incentives such as the privilege of monopolizing “preferred areas,” non-expropriation, investment insurance, tax exemption, tax credit and the like.

It is being made to appear by the reactionaries that it is progressive enough to limit foreign equity in the Philippine corporations to 40 or 30 percent but at the same time the reactionaries are determined to extend parity rights to US monopolies upon the “case to case” decisions to be made by an executive agency

like the Board of Investments.

The US imperialists see clearly that it remains the policy of the Philippine reactionary government to attract foreign investments. But fearing the growing revolutionary mass movement that is profoundly aware of them as evil bloodsuckers, they are subsidizing the gang of Manglapus, the Christian Social Movement, to propagandize the finance capitalist idea of “profitsharing.” This sinister tactic of US imperialism is to dangle before the people the false hope of being able to buy out the incumbent US assets or to buy additional shares that US-owned or US-controlled corporations in the Philippines may issue. This is calculated not only to keep intact US involvements here but even to trap a big mass of small Filipino shareholders in corporations controlled by a solid bloc of US monopoly capital. The finance capitalist idea of “profitsharing” leads to the reactionary line of proportionate or relative decrease of US assets through “joint ventures” and through the stock market.

The idea of “democratizing” a \$100 million corporation by selling \$90 million incumbent shares or \$900 million additional shares to ill-paid Filipino workers is as fantastic as the old preposterous idea of liquidating or reducing landlordism by selling land to impoverished tenants as in the Agricultural Land Reform Code. The advocates of Christian socialism or “bayanicracy” (with “universal capitalism” as its main formula) are not simply playing the role of idiots. They have the sinister purpose of fooling the workers and peasants into accepting US imperialism and feudalism.

Under the present dire situation of the Philippines, the 1971 constitutional convention will only prove to be an occasion for updating the present reactionary constitution in a way as to express in a more deceptive language the impositions of US imperialism and their comprador-landlord-bureaucrat puppets. The political organizations and personalities that will prevail in this year’s election of convention delegates are organized, supported and manipulated by US imperialism, the comprador bourgeoisie, the landlord class and the bureaucrat capitalists.

These antinational and antidemocratic forces will use their well-tested political machineries, the Nacionalista Party, the Liberal Party and such other partisan groups as the Christian Social Movement and other allied organizations under the influence of the Catholic clergy. No matter how much politicians and narrow partisans of the type of Manglapus, Pelaez, Araneta and the Catholic bishops and

parish priests try to misrepresent themselves as “non-political,” the Nacionalista Party and Liberal Party will be the major determining forces either in a direct or indirect way. It is foolish to expect that the Pelaez bill or any such legislation will stop NP and LP partisans from running for the constitutional convention under the banner of the Cursillo or the Rotary Club.

The various organizations formed recently in connection with the constitutional convention will not have much say in the election of delegates different from the usual bunch of politicians. Some of these organizations misrepresenting themselves as “civil” or “non-political” can only lend bourgeois prestige to various personalities. The only political force with some amount of independence from the NP and LP but without any basic independence from US imperialism and the local ruling classes which might succeed in making a significant number of its candidates win is an organization or a group of organizations enjoying the support of the Catholic clergy.

The purpose of the Christian Social Movement and other religio-sectarian political organizations in agitating for the exclusion or reduction of NP and LP influence in the forthcoming constitutional convention is to give the Catholic clergy and its political sacristans the biggest possible opportunity in their sinister attempt to dominate the constitutional convention on behalf of US imperialism and the local ruling classes and, of course, on behalf of the special interests of the Catholic Church. Truly progressive elements will be an extremely small minority in the constitutional convention.

The growing political activism of the Catholic clergy and its political sacristans under the guise of moral superiority will not reduce the filthiness of counterrevolutionary politics. The political intervention of the clergy is but an ingredient in the rise of fascism in this country. It is but another camouflage for the social cancer and reign of greed.

The manner of elections for the constitutional convention will be no different from that of previous elections for the bureaucracy. The constitutional convention will not simply be an occasion for debate among populist orators who take the name of the people in vain. US imperialism and the local reactionaries will grab as much privileges as they can. They will subsidize their political agents in their bid to get seats in the convention. The stakes are too big for them to be indifferent.

Especially now, they need the constitution to give blessings to the aggravation of their oppression and exploitation of the people. The candidates will fight bitterly for a position in the convention not only to gain prestige to be able to run for other elections later. They will fight bitterly because there is plenty of money to be gained by them by running and also by selling their delegate votes to the highest bidders when such big issues as foreign investments and feudal privileges come up in the agenda of the convention.

Within the convention, the delegates will be subjected to the same pressures and manipulations that those in the present reactionary government are subjected to. Money will flow in the constitution convention to make sure that privileges and compromises will be decided in favor of foreign and local tyrants. The people will be afforded only with debates comparing advantages and disadvantages of a number of alternatives within the range of puppetry to the foreign and local tyrants. The people will be provided with the spectacle of parliamentary debate with regard to mere questions of form. The reactionaries will exert every effort to focus public attention on such questions of form as whether to have a parliamentary or presidential form of government; a six year term without reelection for the president or otherwise; a two-party system or electoral inspectors for all parties; suffrage for those 18 years of age; foreign loans or foreign direct investments from the same imperialist sources; and the like.

These questions of form will be used to obscure questions of substance such as the continued violation of national sovereignty and territorial integrity; plunder of the national patrimony by US imperialism and the antidemocratic and feudal right of landlords to own vast lands and exploit the peasant majority of the people. The extension of special privileges to the Catholic Church such as the medieval privilege of indoctrinating the youth, tax exemption in its business enterprises and possession of vast landed estates is also a major question of substance.

What is to be done

The main task of all proletarian revolutionaries and all those who adhere to the people's democratic revolution is to expose and oppose the 1971 constitutional convention as a farce. In doing so, focus must be put on questions of substance. These questions can be drawn from the Program for a People's Democratic Revolution of the Communist Party of Philippines. By raising the most important questions involving the national freedom and democratic rights of the

people, the 1971 constitutional convention can be more easily shown up as a mere pretense to deceive the people once more. The constitutional convention will certainly fail to liberate Filipino people from US imperialism and such other oppressors and exploiters as the compradors, the landlords and the bureaucrat capitalists. It is only through an armed revolution that these can be overthrown by the workers, peasants and all patriotic and progressive strata of this society and that a new democratic constitution can be effected to sum up the correct relations and express the true aspirations of the people without being shamed and frustrated by clever provisions and escape clauses that in practice negate the most bombastic preamble and the most pious declaration of principles.

During the constitutional convention, mass actions assailing the basic reactionary pattern of convention deliberations will even be more important than the speeches and debates made by those few in the minority who will seem to be patriotic and progressive within the convention hall. Those few in the minority who will make positive actuations in the constitutional convention will be proven worthy of admiration only to the extent that they can expose and oppose both the covert and overt maneuvers of the reactionaries to use the constitution as another instrument for oppressing and exploiting the people. However, the moment that they start arranging compromises with the reactionaries they become the object of our just contempt. All those who will sign the final draft of the constitution despite all its counterrevolutionary provisions will only affirm their opposition to the true national and democratic interests and aspirations of the Filipino people.

Before, during and after the 1971 constitutional convention, the Program for a People's Democratic Revolution is the guide for taking the correct road of armed revolution. Only after an armed revolution has overthrown the exploiters with their oppressive laws can the Filipino people convene a revolutionary congress to draft and ratify a constitution that truly expresses their sovereign and democratic interests and aspirations.

The Lava revisionist renegades are condemnable for helping the barefaced counterrevolutionaries spread the false illusion that a constitutional convention can be the occasion for a peaceful putsch or that all legal possibilities can be exhausted. The reactionary state may favor them with more liberties and bigger opportunities for relations with their revisionist masters, the Soviet social-imperialists. But the true proletarian revolutionaries correctly view the constitutional convention as another swindle perpetrated on the people. We

should cease to be duped by the counterrevolutionary idealist cliché that “those who have less in life shall have more in law.” Laws are deliberately passed by the foreign and local tyrants of this society precisely to deceive and oppress the broad masses of the people. What is pompously called the “rule of law” by the reactionaries is nothing but their own class rule.

**Political Report to the Second Plenum
of the First Central Committee
of the Communist Party of the Philippines**

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I. From the 1960s to the 1970s

The decade of the 1960s was marked by great upheaval, great division and great reorganization. The fundamental class contradictions of the world underwent deepgoing development. US imperialism, Soviet social-imperialism and all reaction met with disastrous defeats one after the other.

Amidst the turmoil of great revolutionary struggles, the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought emerged triumphantly and gloriously to give correct direction to the revolutionary people of the world.

As soon as the decade of the 1970s set in, the flames of revolutionary struggle rose higher and shone brighter throughout the world and in the Philippines. More and greater victories beckoned to the world's proletariat and the broad masses of oppressed people.

Chairman Mao has correctly pointed out: "Revolution is the main trend in the

world today.” In preparing against war, the people of the world are waging fiercer revolutionary struggles. The more US imperialism and its counterrevolutionary allies threaten and provoke a global war the more do they find themselves encircled by a ring of fire which they have to go against like mad bulls.

The overextension of US imperialism throughout the globe has become wilder and more self-defeating. It is more than ever hopelessly spread thinly and open to the deadly blows dealt by the people of the world, including the great US people. Chairman Mao has correctly described the nature of US imperialism: “US imperialism, which looks like a huge monster, is in essence a paper tiger, now in the throes of its deathbed struggle.”

No one fears the vicious grimaces of a moribund monster. Though ferocious in appearance, US imperialism has been rendered weak by revolutionary struggle. Its losses in so many parts of the world are now resulting into its internal decline. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the latest epochal achievement of Marxism-Leninism, has frustrated the desperate efforts of US imperialism and world reaction to use modern revisionism to corrode and destroy the forces of world proletarian revolution from within. Under the correct leadership of Chairman Mao Zedong, the Communist Party of China, together with the Albanian Party of Labor and all other Marxist-Leninists of various countries, has forthrightly and firmly stood up against the treacherous attempts of Soviet social-imperialism to prolong the reign of imperialist oppression and exploitation. In the transition from the decade of the 1960s to that of the 1970s, the single most important development in the Philippines was the reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines as a revolutionary party of the proletariat holding aloft the great red banner of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. In so short a time since its reestablishment, the Communist Party of the Philippines has attained leadership over the armed struggle and the national united front against US imperialism and all its reactionary allies.

The Philippines is now in the throes of a national democratic revolution. The broad masses of the people are fast rising up against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. Trying to recover its losses in other parts of the world, US imperialism has intensified the oppression and exploitation of the Filipino people. By doing so, it has only engendered popular resistance.

The broad masses of the people find immeasurable inspiration and strength in Chairman Mao's thesis: "A weak nation can defeat a strong, a small nation can defeat a big. The people of a small country can certainly defeat aggression by a big country, if only they dare to rise in struggle, take up arms and grasp in their own hands the destiny of their country. This is a law of history."

In addition to their own strength within their own country, the Filipino people can count on the powerful support of so many other people abroad who are fighting against US imperialism and all its counterrevolutionary allies. By uniting in waging revolutionary struggles, the people of the world can defeat US imperialism and all its running dogs. It is the broad masses of the people who are the real gigantic force. It is their enemy who is puny.

II. The world proletarian revolution

The world proletarian revolution is sure to win victory. We are now in the era when imperialism is heading for total collapse and socialism is marching toward world victory. The revolutionary people of the world are rapidly grasping Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought as their invincible weapon. The great, glorious and correct Communist Party of China under the direct leadership of Chairman Mao, the Lenin of the present era, has successfully led the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution to solve the problem of preventing capitalist restoration in a socialist society and to smash the bourgeois headquarters of the renegade, hidden traitor and scab Liu Xiaoji.

The People's Republic of China has become ever more consolidated as the center of the world proletarian revolution. Tempered by the process of continuing revolution under proletarian dictatorship, the 700 million Chinese people are the iron bastion of the worldwide anti-imperialist struggle. They provide an invulnerable rear for the revolutionary people of the world. They are thoroughly prepared against the war conspiracy of US imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism. They are the shock force of the world proletarian revolution.

In Europe, the Albanian Party of Labor led by Comrade Enver Hoxha has also successfully conducted an ideological revolutionization movement among the Albanian people. Albania stands today as a powerful bulwark and inspiration for all people in Europe resisting US imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism.

All over the world Marxist-Leninist Parties and organizations have grown

rapidly in strength and maturity. While old revisionist parties continue to disintegrate, Marxist-Leninist Parties and organizations have emerged to give correct direction and to lead revolutionary struggles. With greater confidence, the people of the world are steadfastly advancing.

The main regions of the storm of world revolution are Asia, Africa and Latin America where armed struggle is raging in more than thirty countries. People's war is being waged vigorously in the whole of Indochina, Thailand, Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Palestine, Mozambique, Angola, Congo (Kinshasa), Dhofar, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, and so many other countries that make the world's countryside. The people are held in bondage by arms; only by arms can they liberate themselves. They recognize unflinchingly that political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.

The expansion of the US war of aggression in Vietnam and Laos to Cambodia have only multiplied the losses of US imperialism and enlarged the scale of its defeat in Indochina. Contrary to its sinister expectations, US imperialism has not gained anything but aggravated its hopeless situation by engineering the coup d'état of the Lon Nol-Sirik Matak clique in Cambodia. Under the powerful counterattack of the Cambodian people and the people of the world, US imperialism has been forced to feign a voluntary withdrawal of its aggressor troops from Cambodia. It is now callously sending in cannon fodder from southern Vietnam and Thailand and flaunting its air power.

While the Cambodian people are surging forward to wipe out their enemies, the South Vietnam and Laotian people's armed forces are also advancing without letup. The National United Front of Kampuchea, the Laotian Patriotic Front, the South Vietnam National United Front for Liberation and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam have forged an unbreakable revolutionary unity. The three Indochinese peoples are closely fighting together against US imperialism and its running dogs. Furthermore, all the Indochinese people have the most powerful rear in the world, the People's Republic of China.

The revolutionary armed struggles waged by the people of Thailand, Burma, Malaya, Indonesia, Kalimantan Utara and the Philippines are immeasurably supported by the heroic resistance of the Indochinese people for liberation and national salvation. So are the agrarian revolution now waging in India and the Palestinian and Arab struggle against US imperialism and Israeli Zionism supported.

The determination of the Chinese people to liberate Taiwan, of the Korean people to reunify their fatherland and of the Japanese people to fight US domination and the resurgent militarism of the Japanese reactionaries has risen ever higher.

US imperialism cannot escape from being swept away from the wide storm belt in Asia, ranging from the Philippines to Palestine. It cannot escape the wrath of the people. The upsurge of people's war all over Asia spells the doom of US imperialism and its running dogs. US imperialism tries by every means to push forward its global alliance with Soviet social-imperialism. It also tries to use Japanese militarism as its fogleman in Asia. But it can never escape its responsibility as the principal aggressor. Its co-aggressors, no stronger than itself, are only bound to suffer its fate. Soviet social-imperialism has become utterly rotten to the core and has become as overextended as its US imperialist master. Within its own borders, revolutionary organizations are steadily growing to oppose monopoly bureaucrat capitalism, social-fascism and social-imperialism. The people of some countries in Eastern Europe and Outer Mongolia which are under revisionist and social-imperialist rule are straining to be liberated.

Soviet social-imperialism has become isolated even in areas long known to be its sphere of influence. That is why it sends its hundreds of thousands of aggressor troops into Czechoslovakia and threatens fascist aggression against other countries in Eastern Europe. As the new tsars, the Soviet revisionist social-imperialists madly insist on the conquests of the old tsars and try to grab more territory from China. Their adventures have met powerful rebuffs from their intended victim. The bankrupt "peaceful" revisionism of Krushchov has become the more bankrupt violent revisionism of Brezhnev; all along modern revisionism has not meant peace but imperialist violence against the people.

Japanese monopoly capitalism has found it profitable to stand in support of US imperialism, as in the Korean War and the current war in Indochina. But its rapid remilitarization and its boasts of carrying out anew its policy of "greater East Asia co-prosperity sphere" under the Nixon Doctrine of "making Asians fight Asians" will doom it to worse defeat. The artificial strength of Japan dependent on US loans and raw materials from abroad cannot long stand the blows of the Asian people. Within Japan and abroad, especially in Asia, Japanese militarism is incessantly detested by the people. By becoming a tool of US imperialism, it is bound to suffer a more disastrous defeat than in World War II in the present

period when a great socialist giant and powerful national liberation movements are growing in the East.

Within all the imperialist countries, the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is developing in depth. Within the United States, the black and white proletariat are joining up rapidly with the student youth in fighting monopoly exploitation, arms expansion and wars of aggression. Within the Soviet Union, the proletariat is thoroughly disgusted with the betrayal of Leninism and is developing underground organizations to overthrow the revisionist rulers. Within Japan, revolutionary mass actions are becoming bigger and bigger both against US imperialist domination and the resurgent Japanese militarism.

Though they are engaged in allround counterrevolutionary alliance against China, communism and the people, US imperialism, Japanese militarism and Soviet social-imperialism are at the same time contending with each other for world hegemony. Among all imperialist powers, there is ceaseless strife for raw materials, markets, dependencies, strategic points and spheres of influence. Objectively, they are eating up each other's strength. The firm proletarian dictatorship in the People's Republic of China and the People's Republic of Albania guarantees a socialist future for the entire world. The imperialist countries cannot make light of the strength of these socialist countries. Their revolutionary victories in class struggle have directly promoted production and scientific experiment. The People's Republic of China has nuclear power and has struck into outer space. These technological achievements signify a powerful modern industry in the service of the world proletarian revolution.

In all major contradictions of the world today, it is imperialism and social-imperialism that are at the losing end. The oppressed people and nations are striking at every tentacle of US imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism. Within the capitalist and revisionist countries, the proletariat is waging unprecedented struggles against the bourgeoisie. Among the imperialist powers themselves, they cannot help but act according to their imperialist nature despite their anti-communist alliances. In an international situation where all exploiters of the world led by US imperialism are going downhill, the socialist countries increase their strength, lend support to the revolutionary people and lead the entire world to socialism.

Arising from the major contradictions in the world today is an ever expanding

international united front led by the revolutionary proletariat. US imperialism and its running dogs are becoming rapidly more isolated while the socialist countries and the revolutionary people who are fighting for national liberation and democracy are growing stronger.

At any the Korean peninsula to Indochina. We are now witness to a powerful united front that will destroy imperialist aggression along the same arc. US imperialism may try to provoke a global war anywhere else. It will still meet a more expanded and more powerful international united front than the present one that now girdles the entire world.

Imbued with the revolutionary spirit of proletarian internationalism, the Communist Party of the Philippines is leading the Philippine revolution arduously and self-reliantly not only so that the Filipino people shall be liberated in their own land but also so that the entire mankind shall be liberated from US imperialism and its running dogs. The Communist Party of the Philippines is ever grateful to the people of the entire world for their resolute struggle against imperialism, modern revisionism and all reaction.

To heed Chairman Mao's call in his May 20th solemn statement for the people of the world to unite and defeat the US aggressors and all their running dogs is to move closer to communism.

III. The true state of the nation

1. The political situation

To make up for its losses elsewhere in the world, US imperialism sucks more blood from the broad masses of the people. Its political puppets headed by the fascist chieftain Marcos resort to every foul trick to prolong and intensify the colonial rule of US imperialism. The puppetry of the Philippine reactionary government to US imperialism has caused the broad masses of the Filipino people to rise up more vigorously than ever before. They can no longer stand the oppression and exploitation imposed by US imperialism and its local running dogs.

The Philippine reactionary government is increasingly characterized by fascism. It has become daily fare for the fascist puppet chieftain Marcos to issue secret orders for the arrest and murder of democratic elements who dare to expose the scheme to prolong and intensify the subjugation of the people. In both city and

countryside, martial law is in fact already in operation against specific targets of the Marcos fascist puppet clique. Not satisfied with so many assassinations, kidnappings and massacres already perpetrated by his minions, Marcos threatens almost daily to formally declare martial law and ban democratic mass organizations all over the country to forestall the mounting revolutionary mass movement.

But the people dauntlessly chant in demonstrations, strikes and other protest mass actions that people's war is the answer to martial law. They are not afraid even to express their support for the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army. The demand for armed revolution has become stronger and stronger since the storm of the first quarter of this year. Despite the ruthless killing of several demonstrators by the fascist brutes, the people have remained fearless in launching powerful mass actions against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. The Communist Party of the Philippines firmly maintains leadership over the New People's Army which is courageously carrying forward the banner of armed struggle. Workers, peasants and the national minorities are enthusiastically raising arms against the reactionaries at various points in the country. The determination of the people to wage armed struggle against their enemies grows daily.

The targets of their hatred are US imperialism and its local running dogs; namely, the big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists. The Marcos fascist puppet clique has completely proven the bankruptcy of the present political system by employing fraud and terrorism on an unprecedented scale in the last elections. The broad masses of the people have become fully convinced of the necessity of taking direct democratic action because of the overexposed futility of the "normal" channels of the reactionary state. A chain of killings and other criminal abuses continue to intensify the internal contradictions of the ruling classes. This only serves to step up the people's repudiation of the present political system. As usual in moments of crisis for a despotic regime, the despots are worried to death both by the surging revolutionary mass movements and the threat of a coup d'état from the direction of a rival faction.

The Marcos fascist puppet clique is trying every ruthless measure to give its armed minions the upper hand. In a desperate attempt to keep his limited ground, Marcos makes use of counterrevolutionary dual tactics. He proclaims himself as neither Left nor Right and accuses both Left and Right of unwittingly helping each other to topple him down. He calls himself an adherent of "liberal

democracy.” Despite all the sham professions he makes, his criminal fascist actions against the people have become too conspicuous and callous. Resorting to counterrevolutionary dual tactics will not help the Marcos fascist puppet clique the least. The revolutionary masses are now singly determined to strike against the rightist regime. They firmly shout to the face of Marcos that he deserves a beating because he is already vicious enough against the people. When he himself becomes more vicious or some other more vicious clique should replace his clique, then they would only intensify their revolutionary struggle and destroy anyone who stands to oppose them.

The counterrevolutionary revisionist renegades and clerico-fascists attack the revolutionary masses and single out the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People’s Army for the most vicious attacks. They vehemently denounce the masses whom they describe as “pressing Marcos to the wall” and making the “insignificant Marcos” the “sole culprit.” They echo the threats of Marcos to attack the people even more viciously in a futile attempt to discourage the revolutionary mass movement.

The counterrevolutionary revisionists and clerico-fascists are colluding with the Marcos fascist puppet clique. All of them say that they are for “peaceful revolution” in a vicious campaign to mislead the people. The Lava revisionist renegades and the clerico-fascists have for quite a long time been toadying up to the Marcos fascist puppet clique through the Movement for the Advancement of Nationalism and the Christian Social Movement, respectively. In the rotten 1969 elections, the leaders of these organizations scandalously deodorized Marcos as a “nationalist.” Marcos has frequently found their endorsements handy for covering up his fascist character.

The Marcos type of nationalists, the Lava revisionist renegades and the clerico-fascists continue to conspire in peddling the malicious line of letting the Filipino people “Filipinize” the economy by “buying out the US monopolies” or letting the landless tenants become owner-cultivators or even landlords by “buying out the landlords.” All of these counterrevolutionary reformists ceaselessly sing hymns of praise for the Investment Incentives Law and the Agricultural Land Reform Code. They harp on such counterrevolutionary requirements as “constitutional due process” and “just compensation.” They misrepresent the so-called Magna Carta of Social Justice and Economic Freedom as a progressive resolution, despite its thinly veiled endorsement of domination by US imperialism and feudalism through “joint ventures” and “foreign loans.”

All the counterrevolutionaries are rallying round the farce of constitutional convention. They wish to hoodwink the people into believing that a mere rewriting of a colonial document by the delegates of the reactionary classes can write off the basic problems of the Filipino people. The dirtiest politicians of the Nacionalista Party, the Liberal Party, the Christian Social Movement and various other organizations parade themselves as “independent individuals” worthy of being delegates to a counterrevolutionary convention.

The constitutional convention is nothing but a device to sanction the prolongation and intensification of the oppression and exploitation of the people by US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. The US imperialists and their international allies will be allowed to enjoy undiminished property and investment rights. The landlords will continue to ride roughshod over the poor peasants and to taunt them with impossible offers of land sale. Clerico-fascist organizations will still make high profits, be exempted from taxes and enjoy more feudal privileges. The bureaucrat capitalists will still be around to serve their imperialist and feudal masters.

The most reactionary forces in Philippine society today are performing all kinds of antics, including the imitation of genuine protest actions, in order to drive in the lie that they are progressive and that the present reactionary government deserves the support that it does not. The clerico-fascists manipulated by the CIA and the US Jesuits render a special service to the Marcos fascist puppet clique by trying to head off the revolutionary mass movement.

The Marcos fascist puppet clique has the illusion that by repealing the Anti-Subversion Law and opening trade and diplomatic relations with Soviet social-imperialism it can pass itself off as pursuing a “left” and “independent” policy. The Lava revisionist renegades are gleeful that the Philippines is being included in the global counterrevolutionary alliance of US imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism. They also help the pro-Japanese clique of Laurel in pushing ahead the interests of the Japanese militarists in the Philippines.

The other pack of renegades, the Taruc-Sumulong gangster clique, has utterly disintegrated with the surrender of “Commander” Sumulong. This is the culmination of the efforts of the chieftains of the clique to spread the poison that the Marcos fascist puppet clique is capable of solving the problems of Central Luzon. Upon his surrender, the common criminal Sumulong volubly praised the reactionary government and blatantly exposed himself as the enemy’s special

agent assigned to misrepresent and attack the revolutionary mass movement.

The special services of the Lava revisionist renegades and the Taruc-Sumulong gangster clique to the class enemy have become too blatant and in fact violent. They have gone to the extent of carrying out the fascist policy of the Marcos puppet clique. Adopting the swindler outfit called “Armeng Bayan” as their goon squad and becoming enmeshed in the activities of the “Monkees,” the Lava revisionist renegades have merely imitated the Soviet revisionist example of discarding the “peaceful” mask of Krushchov in favor of the out-and-out policy of aggression of the Brezhnev gang. The Taruc-Sumulong gangster clique and the Lava revisionist renegades are no different from each other in employing tactics of bloody intrigue in Central Luzon and elsewhere. By resolutely waging armed struggle and winning more and more friends under the national united front, the revolutionary standing of the Communist Party of the Philippines has never been higher. The Party is looked up to by the Filipino people as the vanguard of the new democratic revolution.

2. The economic and social situation

The most incontrovertible sign of the economic and social crisis of the Philippines today is the rapidly rising prices of basic commodities and all other commodities. The value of the peso has sunk so low and is still sinking fast to the detriment of the oppressed masses of workers and peasants and the petty bourgeoisie who have low and limited income. The national bourgeoisie is also suffering from the devaluation of the peso.

The material basis for the unrest now sweeping the whole country is the intensification of US imperialist oppression and exploitation of the people. There has never been a better instance than now in explaining to the people the full range of causes for their suffering.

US imperialism has caused the Philippine reactionary government to incur an enormous amount of internal and external debt. There are two outstanding reasons for the consistent pressure of US imperialism to weigh down its puppet government with exceedingly heavy financial obligations. First, it seeks to make up for its losses elsewhere in the world by taking advantage of its stranglehold on the economy. Second, it seeks to perpetuate its monopoly of privileges in the country in the face of the people’s clamor for the abrogation of unequal treaties and agreements by pursuing the tactic of bogging down the puppet government

into enormous debts.

At the beginning of this year, the internal debt of the Philippine reactionary government reached ₱4.7 billion and the external debt, \$1.5 billion. After only six months, these debts again leaped to close to ₱6.0 billion and \$1.9 billion, respectively. These debts have been used mainly to benefit the imperialists, compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists at the expense of the broad masses of the people. Through excessive spending for nonproductive purposes, the reactionary government has contributed heavily to the inflation. The excess supply of the peso has been used only to buttress and fatten up further the local exploiting classes and encourage the production of raw materials for export, such as sugar, coconut, copper and logs, and the internal distribution of imported finished manufactures from the imperialist countries led by the United States and Japan.

The dollar loans taken by the reactionary government from the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, consortia of US private banks and other foreign banks have been used to cover the increasingly large deficits incurred in the unequal exchange of raw material exports and finished manufacture imports; the local borrowing, remittance of profits and foreign payments of US firms; the servicing of accumulated loans; and payments for construction equipment and engineering services provided by foreign equipment and construction firms. In his state-of-the-nation address last January 26, Marcos repeatedly dished out the lie that the equipment imported at great overprice for his infrastructure program (roads, bridges, ports and irrigation facilities) will result in the expansion of local manufacturing.

An integral element in the depletion of financial resources in a semicolonial and semifeudal society is the bureaucratic corruption and the profligate luxury spending by the local exploiting classes. US imperialism would not persist in controlling the Philippines were it not for the bribes that it gives to its puppets.

The wanton depletion of the financial resources of the puppet government is subsequently taken as a cause for US imperialism to step in and hypocritically call for fiscal restraint and imperiously demand the devaluation of the peso. The puppet government cannot beg for additional loans to pay off old loans and import essential commodities unless it accepts the impositions of US imperialism. Thus, the reactionary government is dictated upon to issue a hypocritical call for “austerity” and “self-discipline.” It uses these catchphrases

to lay off government employees and reduce public services, increase taxes ostensibly on those who receive higher income but which are actually passed on to the toiling masses in the form of higher prices, give more incentives to raw material exporters and subsidize finished products imports, increase costs of basic public services like transportation, light and water; and subject the peso to rapid devaluation.

The devaluation of the peso currency is a vicious clever trick of US imperialism to practice international usury. With the peso equivalent of the dollar reaching up to more than ₱6.3 from a previous level of ₱3.9, the external debt of the reactionary government increases in value and becomes more difficult to pay back. The value of local US assets becomes automatically inflated far beyond the wishful thinking of nationalist reformists who expect to buy out the US monopolies in the stock market. The US dollar can now grab more raw materials at a lower dollar cost, take over dollar-starved local enterprises that depend on imported capital goods, spare parts, fuel and raw materials and make more profits from the importation of finished manufactures. The result is the aggravation of the economic crisis and the continued enslavement of the Philippines.

The toiling masses of workers and peasants suffer the main brunt of rising prices. Essential commodities are imported at a greater peso cost. There is not a single commodity in the Philippine economy, whether partially or wholly processed in the Philippines, that does not entail the use of certain imported commodities. Oil is one commodity monopolized by US imperialism which affects every commodity or service marketed in the Philippines. Appropriately, US monopoly control of oil has been the target of repeated general strikes by the workers. The Rockefeller monopoly group controlling oil also controls fertilizers and pesticides the increased price of which has also hit the peasants severely.

Unemployment has become aggravated. Government offices and private enterprises have already laid off 10 percent to 65 percent of their employees. Those who are retained in their work have to submit themselves to depressed wages. The reactionary government has fixed the new minimum wage at ₱8.0 for industrial workers and ₱4.75 for farm workers. But this is inadequate and still subject to circumvention by the exploiting classes. The peso has been devalued by at least 61.5 percent and yet the minimum industrial wage has been increased by only 33 percent and the minimum farm wage, by only 30.28 percent. Hardly had the wage earners coped up with the effects of the 1962

devaluation, they are subjected to a second devaluation further depressing their wages in 1970. Now a third devaluation looms before they can cope up with their present hardship.

The land reform program of the reactionary government becomes more exposed as a sham. It becomes starkly clear that the reactionary government is in no position to make even a token land reform. From 1963 to 1970, the actual amount appropriated for the Land Bank was a measly ₱13.0 million, an amount manipulated by the landlords and bureaucrats. The amount appropriated for the counterrevolutionary armed forces to suppress the people ran into billions for the same period. The amount appropriated for the Philcag alone is already several times more than that appropriated for the sham land reform program. Not a single tenant has been able to afford to buy a hectare of land at the high redistribution price set by the reactionary government and the landlord class. That is why the reactionary government is now talking of setting up state farms and “cooperatives” under the management of the big landlords. The biggest comprador firm in the country, the Ayala, Soriano y Cia; the Christian Social Movement; such counterrevolutionary organizations as the Federation of Free Farmers, Masaka (Lava) and the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement and such landlord personages as Montelibano are busy deceiving poor peasants and farm workers. The landless peasants who have settled in forest regions are today being squeezed by the economic crisis and the intensified landgrabbing operations of landlords, bureaucrats, mining speculators, timber concessionaires and all kinds of exploiters. Together with the national minorities who inhabit the hinterlands of the country, they have no alternative but to fight against the counterrevolutionary armed forces and the private armed gangs of the reactionaries.

At a time that the people are subjected to an ongoing inflation and repeated devaluation, the reactionaries taking the guise of “progressives” talk of “profitsharing.” It is vicious to compel the workers to buy shares of stocks in corporations with a part of their starvation wages or their future wages. Obviously, the call for “profitsharing” is merely a trick to cover up the raids being made by the reactionaries on the entire financial system. It is also a trick for US companies in the Philippines to create the illusion that they are reducing their equity by “going public.” Even the petty bourgeoisie, with its limited fixed income, is increasingly threatened with bankruptcy. Many of those who belong to the upper section of the petty bourgeoisie have been swindled of their savings in the stock market on fake mining issues.

Under the pretext of campaigning for tourism, the puppet government and the reactionaries are preparing public opinion throughout the country for the perpetuation of US imperialist privileges. Patriotic mass actions are being slandered as “inhospitality” to foreign guests. Every town or barrio is expected to put up a façade as a “tourist spot” and yet because of the sinking value of the peso the few foreign tourists that come into the country exchange their dollars in Hong Kong or Los Angeles at rates higher than what the Central Bank offers. The Laurel-Langley Agreement will be allowed to lapse. But even before the termination of the treaty, there are already the Investment Incentives Law and Export Incentives Law which allow 100 percent foreign ownership and control of local enterprises.

The constitutional convention of 1971 will be held to put out new phrases sanctioning these iniquitous laws. The US-RP treaty of friendship, commerce and navigation is under preparation to sum up and elaborate on the laws that US imperialism is already getting piece by piece in its favor. More US economic enclaves being put up by US imperialism in the form of plantations enjoying “grower agreements”; “industrial estates”; mining camps and free trade zones like the Mariveles free trade zone. In an attempt to obscure the fact that it is the main exploiter of the Filipino people, US imperialism is further encouraging its Japanese monopoly wards to participate in the exploitation of the Filipino people. Resurgent Japanese militarism has turned the Philippines into its raw material base and has assumed the status of being the biggest foreign investor next only to the United States.

The Marcos fascist puppet clique has long put the unequal Japan-RP Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation into effect through executive permits even before its ratification. Marcos does all sorts of errands for the biggest US running dog in Asia, thus becoming the dog of a dog. He insists that the unequal Japan-RP Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation be ratified. Under his regime, Japanese monopoly firms have expanded their business operations in the Philippines. Japan has been relied upon for public construction and for the establishment of new sugar mills and mines. It is now engaged in the construction of the strategic “Japanese Friendship Highway” and is also helping in the establishment of a local munitions plant.

Japanese imperialism has gone deep into the Philippine economy through an extended period of time by using its programs of reparations and “regional arrangements” like the Asian Development Bank, Asian Pacific Council

(ASPAC) and others which are masterminded by US imperialism. The revisionist countries headed by Soviet social-imperialism are also being manipulated by US imperialism to dangle false hopes to the reactionary government, crop exporters and the national bourgeoisie for relief from the present economic crisis. Soviet social-imperialism wishes to draw superprofits from the Philippines like US imperialism and Japanese militarism.

3. Cultural situation

The most striking development in the cultural situation of the country today is the rapid growth of mass actions among the student youth and the increasing number of those politically advanced among them who go to the factories and the countryside to arouse the workers and peasants to rise in widespread and concerted mass actions against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

A cultural revolution has broken out. At the beginning of this year and of this decade, an unprecedented storm of demonstrations, people's marches and people's congresses unfolded in Manila with the repeated participation of hundreds of thousands of students, intellectuals, workers and peasants in opposition to US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. This cultural revolution is essentially a propaganda movement for people's war to achieve national liberation and people's democracy.

The patriotic mass actions surged to an unprecedented high during the entire first quarter of the year. The people, especially the student and out-of-school youth, repeatedly rose up in mass protest despite the concentration of major combat contingents of the Armed Forces of the Philippines to intimidate them and actually to murder some of them. Even as the reactionaries exacted seven deaths from the demonstrations, the people were not cowed but inspired by the martyrdom of their fallen comrades. The Manila demonstrations shook the entire nation and were reflected by demonstrations in other parts of the country. The reactionary state bared fully its nature as a violent instrument of the exploiters and compelled the broad masses of the people to fight back.

Learning a lesson from their experience in city demonstrations that they needed an even greater mass support, the student youth spread out during the summer vacation to factory centers and various parts of the country in a massive movement to arouse the people to revolution. They had been preceded there by

quite a number of their fellow students who had quit school to devote themselves to revolutionary work. Even as the student youth spread out to arouse the masses, the fascist brutes tried vainly to track down their movement and harass those they could come across. The reactionary government hurried to create terror squads like the Barrio Self-Defense Units and the “provincial strike forces.”

The entire nation, especially the youth, has been angered by the fascist arrest of the national chairman of Kabataang Makabayan who was conducting rural investigation and mass work in a barrio in Southern Luzon. His arrest, imprisonment and trial on the basis of a fascist law, the Anti-Subversion Law, has been used not only to abuse his democratic rights but also to attack the Kabataang Makabayan and the entire national democratic movement. This event has only served to underscore the numerous abuses inflicted by the fascist state on young militants, which abuses include massacre, selective murder, frame-up, illegal detention and searches, torture, trailing, eavesdropping and the like.

Coming back to school for academic year 1970-71, the students have continued to arouse and mobilize their own ranks. They have found common cause in demanding the freedom of the KM national chairman and the end to persecution of the national democratic movement. They have also intensified their struggle against the reactionary orientation of educational institutions and academic authorities. An upsurge of militant student mass actions is to be expected during the last quarter of the year.

Since last year, the student youth have conducted nationwide campus revolts on issues ranging from the economic to the political. In a moment of crisis as the present, the struggle against higher tuition fees is necessarily joined with the struggle against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. State violence has only served to teach more and more students and people to fight back in great mass.

The predominant influence of US imperialism, under the guise of “liberalism” in the state university, has been vigorously repudiated by the students. The exposure of the Americanization of the University of the Philippines has served to arouse students all over the country to question the reactionary orientation of their respective schools. In all state schools, the students condemn the Marcos fascist puppet clique for having funds only for projects that suit US imperialism and the exploiting classes.

Cleric-run schools have been subjected to attacks by their own students as purveyors of medieval obscurantism and reactionary bourgeois ideas. In an attempt to deceive the people, church authorities are busily engaging in “social action” and “ecumenism.” Yet they fail to mislead their own students. Clerico-fascist propaganda masterminded both by the Catholic hierarchy and the US Jesuits is mainly directed towards spreading anti-communist hysteria and upholding the present system of oppression and exploitation.

The clamor for a national, scientific and mass culture has stirred the student youth and teachers to their very souls and has involved the entire people. The cultural revolution now raging reflects the struggle for national liberation and people’s democracy against the political oppression and economic exploitation inflicted by US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

To draw powerful and correct inspiration, the student youth have turned to the assiduous study of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. They strive to remold their thinking for fiercer revolutionary struggles. There is now an upsurge in the living study and application of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought among the student youth, workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals. Publications and teach-ins widely disseminate Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. Quotations from Chairman Mao are courageously written on placards raised in demonstrations and on wall posters. Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought is guiding the cultural revolution.

Dramatic presentations depicting the heroic struggle of workers, peasants and revolutionary fighters are being made in schools, city plazas and streets and in barrios by the revolutionary youth. They are bringing to the fore the revolutionary struggle of the people in a conscious effort to supplant the reactionary content of the mendacious and vulgar culture peddled by the people’s enemies in the radio, movies, TV, comics, magazines and other vehicles of propaganda. The revolutionaries are now trying to infuse revolutionary content in various forms of art and literature.

The fascist puppet chieftain Marcos has not stopped having nightmares since the January 26 and 30-31 demonstrations. Repeatedly he expresses fright at the powerful influence of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought among the youth and at the fact that not only the youth but also the oppressed masses have begun to grasp this great fighting and liberating ideology.

Diehard reactionary elements in the schools, press and government who take pride in their reactionary education and opinions are getting fast isolated. The entire cultural system is increasingly regarded as a brainwashing machine designed to produce intellectual robots to support the system of oppression and exploitation.

The propaganda agencies of US imperialism and the Marcos fascist puppet clique are further aggravating the counterrevolutionary character of the cultural system. Turning black into white, they picture the exploiting classes and their political representatives as “peace-loving” and “freedom-loving.” They obscure the atrocities committed by these monsters against the people.

Reacting to the new wave of revolutionary culture, the reactionaries outrightly dish out anticommunism, revisionism and what is pompously called the New Left. Those who stand on the revolutionary principles of Mao Zedong Thought are also being misrepresented as anarchists while the reactionaries misrepresent themselves as “men of peace” and as “conciliators” in the class struggle.

All these tactics only serve to isolate the reactionaries further. Their lies are exposed by their own deeds. The cultural revolution against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism is exposing their rottenness and hastening their defeat.

4. The military situation

The fascisation of Philippine society continues unabated. The present reactionary government is preoccupied with its US-dictated policy of counterinsurgency. It blatantly admits that it is afraid of the broad masses of the people. Boggled down in political and economic crisis, it has to rely on armed force to suppress the growing protests of the people. It tries to make use of anticommunism as its last refuge.

Whereas the Marcos fascist puppet clique repeatedly admits that it has no more funds for its many pompously-labeled projects, it does not hesitate to ask for a ₱1.4 billion appropriation for “national security” and calls it a small amount. From year to year, appropriation for the reactionary armed forces has risen. The appropriation in 1968-69 was ₱513 million; and in 1969-70, ₱670 million. For the fiscal year 1970-71, the appropriation is ₱740 million. Over and above these open appropriations are funds rechanneled to the armed forces from other items

in the budget.

US imperialism is goading the reactionary armed forces to attack the people. During the first half of the year, it supplied \$60 million worth of helicopters, jeeps, armalites, patrol boats and other military goods through the JUSMAG under the US-RP Military Assistance Treaty. The AID Public Safety Division through the Police Commission has stepped up the training of local police forces in “anti-riot” techniques and the installation of communication facilities. It is US imperialism which pushes the puppet armed forces to unleash a brutal war against the people. Increasingly, US military advisers are seen in the field on the ground or aboard observation planes.

From the time that the reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the formation of the New People’s Army came to light, the reactionary armed forces have incessantly waged campaigns of encirclement and suppression or search and destroy operations. Underestimating the strength of the people’s army, the fascist brutes probed the field with platoon-sized patrols before June 1969. As the New People’s Army fought back effectively, the enemy would deploy a battalion and then a whole regiment in conducting raids with the support of heliborne troops. By the end of May 1970, the enemy started to deploy an entire division to swoop down on an unprecedentedly large area at every raid. Task Force Lawin is now often joined by the Tabak Division which is a strategic reserve force.

As the enemy intensifies military operations, more massacres, assassinations, mass arrests, kidnappings and lootings are inflicted on the peasant masses. Peasants are being rounded up to be tortured and then misrepresented in the press as surrenderers from the New People’s Army. Under the cover of large military campaigns, the reactionary troops and their gangster agents called the “Monkees” and BSDUs go on a rampage. The Marcos fascist puppet clique imagines that the brutality of its minions will terrify the people. The truth is that it is only hastening the advance of the revolutionary masses.

In Central Luzon, the activities of the “Monkees” have been expanded and intensified despite the mendacious press releases of Marcos and his running dogs “dissolving” these murder outfits several times over. The Home Defense Forces (another name for the infamous US-inspired “special forces”) take charge of banding together local ruffians into the so-called Barrio Self-Defense Units. Five to ten military troops supervise the predatory activities of about ten ruffians in

every barrio. These outfits are avowedly for protecting the exploiting classes and suppressing Communists and the peasant masses. In the course of their anti-people activities, they engage in murder, extortion, robbery and other evil activities. To create the false illusion that the BSDUs are publicly demanded, barrio councils are compelled by the Philippine Constabulary and by local tyrant officials to sign resolutions “requesting” the creation of local BSDUs. If a local barrio council so much hesitates to sign the resolution, it is subjected to the worst atrocities such as the Tarlac massacre. The signal for the creation of the BSDUs was the kidnapping and murder of the chairman of the association of barrio captains in Tarlac who led a demonstration of 50,000 peasants in Concepcion, Tarlac against the abuses of the Philippine Constabulary.

The people hate the BSDUs; they have had enough of the civilian guards in the 1945-55 period. Even the factions of the ruling classes that are not yet in power recognize in this monster an instrument of factions incumbently in power for monopolizing seats in the government. The creation of the BSDUs has been used to favor local tyrants subservient to the Marcos fascist puppet clique.

As of July 1970, there were already 304 barrios ruled by BSDUs with a total force of 3,040 members. They are concentrated in Tarlac where there are 164 units. Pampanga has 87 units; Bataan, 29 units; Nueva Ecija, 12 units; Pangasinan, 7 units; and Zambales, 2 units. The enemy makes it a point to cover the whole of the second district of Tarlac and important points at the boundaries of provinces adjacent to Tarlac.

The enemy has been able to pass arms to the BSDUs because of the new supply of weapons from the JUSMAG to regular troops. Thus, US imperialism is manipulating the landlords and the local gangsters to ride roughshod over the people. In some towns of Bulacan and Nueva Ecija, the Masaka (Lava), Armeng Bayan and the “Monkees” collaborate with each other so that there are yet no BSDUs there. These collaborate with each other in attacking the people, the Party and the New People’s Army.

All over the country, the Marcos fascist puppet clique enjoins the local tyrants to organize “provincial strike forces.” The rise of the revolutionary mass movement is anticipated everywhere. Brute military force is the answer of the enemy to the nationwide campaign of the Party and the New People’s Army to arouse the broad masses of the people. But instead of being able to suppress Communists who closely link themselves with the masses, the “provincial strike forces” only

hasten the people's understanding of the need for rising up in arms. These murder gangs are used indiscriminately by local tyrants to settle scores even with their non-communist enemies. The pillage of Bantay is a handiwork of Crisologo's "provincial strike forces" in Ilocos Sur. The deadly struggle between the Sulu provincial governor and the mayor of Jolo or between the Ifugao provincial governor and the mayor of Banawe is a struggle of "strike forces." There is actually nothing new in the "strike forces," only another label for the goon squads of local politicians.

The infamous Philcag has been brought home as a result of public indignation and also as a result of its failure as a mercenary force to assist the US war of aggression in Vietnam. Until now, the Philcag remains an object of public derision for its puppet and corrupt activities in the Vietnam War and also for the private manipulation of funds given by the United States to pay for its equipment, maintenance and services. It has been relabeled as the ACAG (Army Civic Action Group). It has been brought home only to be deployed against the people particularly in Central Luzon. It continues to engage pretentiously in propaganda activities mislabeled as "civic action." Actually it engages mainly in intelligence work and is described in complete scorn by the people as the "eyes and ears" of murderers.

The criminal depredations perpetrated by the reactionary state is not limited to the countryside. Demonstrations and workers' strikes in cities and provincial capitals have been brutally suppressed by the reactionary military troops and police. Unarmed demonstrators and strikers have been attacked with full force in Manila and other urban areas. So many of them have already been murdered and maimed with gunfire and truncheon blows in the course of demonstrations and strikes. Thousands have been wounded and arbitrarily arrested. Patriotic mass organizations and their democratic leaders have been subjected to assassinations, arrests and various forms of harassment.

The Marcos fascist puppet clique shamelessly boasts that it will use all the forces at its command to suppress the democratic rights of the people. It can only fan the flames of revolutionary war in the country. Every day it finds itself bogged down deeper in its puppetry and is terrified by the advancing waves of the revolutionary mass movement. It finds it necessary to intimidate the people and make frantic preparations for more vicious campaigns of suppression.

US imperialist agents are frenziedly hastening the fascisation of the country.

Special warfare training is being intensified under the close supervision of the JUSMAG. The CIA-controlled Polcom and the AID Public Safety Division are tightening their grip on local police forces. The National Defense College and the Philippine Military Academy are being used to teach military officers how to tighten their hold over the reactionary government gradually or through a coup d'etat.

Military officers in the ROTC and PMT are now trying to step up anti-communist hysteria among the students. Even elementary school children are subjected to a heavier dose of anticommunism from the USIA, the Peace Corps and the Department of National Defense. Nevertheless, because of the consistent rise of student demonstrations and the fascist suppression of these demonstrations, the officer reserve trained under the ROTC by the reactionary military is now seriously undermined by the fascist brutes themselves. A movement to have the ROTC and PMT abolished is fast growing among students.

More and more out-of-school youth are being called for military training in so-called Home Defense centers. Nevertheless, these trainees only develop contempt for the corrupt and hazing practices perpetrated by the fascist brutes. An increasing number of the youth being called for training duty now simply refuse to report or they escape from their training camps. Those who cannot escape the draft call think of using their military training in the service of the revolution.

The reactionary state is already politically and economically bankrupt and yet it has a mere 50,000 troops to preserve itself militarily. It cannot give decent wages to its mercenaries. Supplies in camps are big rackets for officials. Even the pension funds for the rank and file are manipulated and pocketed by the officers. The reactionary troops are demoralized and are maltreated and cursed like the filthiest dogs by their own superiors. Troop demoralization on the side of the enemy has reached such a point that top-ranking officers are forced to take to the field themselves in order to direct company operations.

The reactionary state tries to lessen its expenses by organizing the BSDUs. But these units have started to demand compensation and other things given to the regular troops. These units insist on being paid because they are even the ones who are ordered to be out front fighting the battles for the regular troops and who are taking more risks in their barrios. In the absence of any compensation

for them, they make use of their arms to rob and extort from the people and thus only incense the people.

Just as the increase of regular military troops is not limitless, that of the BSDUs is likewise not so. Momentarily the organization of BSDUs has been stopped pending the arrival of more arms from the United States. The PC provincial command of Isabela keeps on clamoring for more troop reinforcements and BSDUs but cannot be given enough of such. Everywhere in the archipelago, the reactionary armed forces are kept occupied by concerted armed uprisings of peasants and national minorities, by strikes and demonstrations and by the increasingly bloodier factional struggles of ruling politicians.

With US imperialism bogged down in so many wars throughout the world, the exploiting classes in the Philippines cannot expect their state power to be limitless in the face of the people and the Communist Party of the Philippines which is assiduously applying Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought.

5. Foreign relations

Caught in insoluble contradictions at home and abroad, US imperialism through its chieftain Nixon has issued the Nixon Doctrine of “making Asians fight Asians.” This is clearly a maneuver to pass on to Asian puppets the increasing military burden and cover up the increasing US defeats all over Asia. Nixon has even hypocritically called for “self-reliance” among puppet states like the Philippines. It means to say that there is no more point in talking about “altruism” as US imperialism sucks more and more blood from colonies and semicolonies.

While the Nixon Doctrine implies that US imperialism is facing total defeat in the Asian mainland, Nixon minces no words in insisting that by all means US imperialism will fight to remain a Pacific power. In this regard, US imperialism will never withdraw from the Philippines unless forced to by the Filipino people through revolutionary struggle. The Philippines is a strategic base for US control of the Pacific and is a forward staging area for US aggression in the whole of Asia. Talks of US withdrawal from Asia are being deliberately spread by the reactionaries to throw cold water on the flaming anti-imperialist struggle.

The Nixon Doctrine is nothing but a formal declaration of the regional collaboration of US imperialism and Japanese militarism in oppressing and

exploiting the Asian people. Japanese militarism has been revived and is being ordered by US imperialism to participate actively in the counterrevolutionary plot against the people, communism and China. In exchange for its services as the fugleman of US imperialism, Japanese militarism is being accommodated in areas like the Philippines which are under US imperialist domination. Being extremely isolated, US imperialism goes to the extent of foisting the much-hated Japanese militarism on the Asian people.

US imperialism entertains the vain illusion that it can make use of Asian manpower as cannon fodder. It brazenly states that it will only supply weapons and war material to local puppets who will do the fighting. Thus, there are such lies as “Asianization” and “Vietnamization” repeatedly spouted by Nixon. But Nixon never hesitated to deploy US aggressor troops in Cambodia when he saw that the Lon Nol-Sirik Matak coup merely caused an avalanche of people’s war. The US imperialist chieftain describes the mere rotation of troops in Indochina as “withdrawal” and shamelessly boasts in gangster fashion that he shall not preside over any military defeat of US imperialism.

The Philippine reactionary government is in complete agreement with the US policy of making Japan its fugleman in Asia. The Marcos fascist puppet clique abjectly kowtows to Japan as the “regional leader” in Asia. In no uncertain terms, Marcos has declared that only Japan should fill the “vacuum” that will result from US withdrawal from Asia. Japanese militarism boasts of preparing for an all-out war against the Asian people over Taiwan, Korea and what it calls its “entire lifeline” in Asia. The resurgence of Japanese militarism has been due to war profits made possible by the US war of aggression in Korea and lately in Indochina. Because it has to depend on a raw material base and market abroad which are controlled by US imperialism, Japanese militarism has no alternative but to join its imperialist master in launching war for the retention of these.

The US-Japan imperialist combine is being used to keep the Philippines in tow. Their joint control of the Asian Development Bank is a clear manifestation of the “co-prosperity” arrangement between these two imperialist powers. Through Japanese militarism, US imperialism maintains firm control over such “regional alliances” as the Asian Pacific Council (ASPAC) and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In turn, US imperialism keeps Japanese militarism in tow through such puppet governments as the Philippines.

The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) is being reinforced by the

ASPAC and the ASEAN and is now in the process of reorganization to get rid of such dissatisfied member-nations as France and Pakistan and pave the way for the more aggressive activity of US imperialism and Japanese militarism.

When the Marcos fascist puppet clique talks about hewing an “independent” foreign policy, it is merely to help US imperialism tighten its control over its puppets. Marcos proposed the Asian Forum for the purpose, as he himself has admitted, of building up the ASPAC, ASEAN, SEATO and other puppet alliances. Soon after his call for an Asian Forum, the reactionary government ironed out its kinks with “Malaysia,” prated more about strengthening puppet alliances in the region and made more bellicose statements against the People’s Republic of China.

As soon as the Lon Nol-Sirik Matak clique made the coup d’etat in Cambodia at the bidding of the CIA, the Philippine reactionary government met with other Asian puppets of US imperialism in what they called the “Asian Pacific Conference on Cambodia” which was hosted in Jakarta by the Suharto military fascist clique at the bidding of US imperialism. In this puppet forum, the coup d’etat against the legitimate government of Cambodia was wildly endorsed and the Asian puppet governments talked bellicosely of preserving the “peace, neutrality and independence” of the Lon Nol-Sirik Matak puppet clique. They boasted about US, Japanese and Soviet support for the Lon Nol-Sirik Matak clique and about their own puppet conspiracy. Marcos calls this gangster meeting a realization of his Asian Forum.

The Marcos fascist puppet clique has aggravated its mercenary role in Indochina. Despite the so-called withdrawal of the Philcag from South Vietnam, Filipino mercenaries still abound not only in one Indochinese country but in the whole of Indochina under the Philcon, Operations Brotherhood and other aggressive outfits in the pay of US imperialism.

In line with the US imperialist policy of employing Soviet social-imperialism against China, communism, revolution and the people, the Philippine reactionary government is steadily establishing relations with the revisionist countries headed by the Soviet social-imperialists. Several economic and cultural missions from the revisionist countries have already paved the way for diplomatic and trade relations with Soviet social-imperialism. The amount of Philippine-Soviet contacts so far made has been turned into an occasion for reactionaries to whitewash the Marcos fascist puppet clique as “left-leaning” and “independent.”

The Soviet monopoly bureaucrat capitalists find the local puppet bureaucrat capitalists convenient tools for the plunder of Philippine natural resources and raw materials as they have found the bureaucrat capitalists in India, Indonesia, Burma and other countries.

On all international issues within and without the US-controlled United Nations, the Philippine reactionary government has obdurately taken the counterrevolutionary line set by US imperialism. The reactionaries either raucously attack the People's Republic of China or endorse a two-China policy. They cling tightly to US imperialism in every eventuality in Southeast Asia. They play up every nuance of imperialist and Zionist propaganda against the Palestinian and Arab people. To know the policies of the US State Department is to know the foreign policy of the Philippine reactionary government. What is utterly wrong in this regard is the betrayal of national interests and of genuine internationalism in favor of US imperialism.

IV. The rapid growth of the Party

1. Ideological

The Communist Party of the Philippines has been reestablished under the supreme guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. It continues to be built in accordance with this correct proletarian ideology. It recognizes the principle that party building is first of all ideological building. Party cadres and members in mass organizations as well as in the New People's Army are deeply aware that the living study and application of Mao Zedong Thought is of primary importance. Without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement.

The living study and application of Mao Zedong Thought has been enthusiastically carried out by Party cadres and members and a rapidly increasing number of people outside the Party. The Party Central Committee has indefatigably led the Revolutionary School of Mao Zedong Thought as the higher Party school, Ang Bayan (The People) as the central publication of the Party and the education department of the Party secretariat in the dissemination of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought.

The rectification movement continues without letup against the counterrevolutionary revisionist ideas emanating from such anti-Party and anti-

communist traitors as the bourgeois reactionary gang of the Lavas and the Taruc-Sumulong gangster clique as well as those emanating from abroad, principally from the Soviet social-imperialist scoundrels.

Being circulated extensively as the basic documents of the Party and the people's army are Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong and Five Golden Rays ("Serve the People," "In Memory of Norman Bethune," "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains," "Combat Liberalism" and "Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party"). Translation work is being vigorously undertaken in order to make available to the toiling masses of workers and peasants more writings of Chairman Mao.

Embodying the efforts of the Party in integrating the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought and the concrete conditions of the Philippines is the Guide for Cadres and Members of the Communist Party of the Philippines which is a compilation of "Rectify Errors and Rebuild the Party," "Program for a People's Democratic Revolution," "Constitution of the Communist Party of the Philippines," "Declaration of the New People's Army" and the "Rules of the New People's Army."

Philippine Society and Revolution is another document which strives from the standpoint of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought to present the history, basic problems, character, motive forces, targets, strategy and tactics and perspective of the Philippine revolution. This is a basic textbook for mass political education as well as for basic ideological training within the Party.

The firm unity now obtaining in Party ranks is based on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. Close links are maintained with the broad masses of the people on this basis. Criticism and self-criticism to improve work and style of work is conducted regularly and as often as necessary. The entire Party always analyzes and sums up its experiences under the clear illumination of Mao Zedong Thought.

A high tide in the living study and application of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought has been kept up since the reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines. As a matter of fact, this is at the core of the upsurge of the national democratic cultural revolution that is sweeping the whole country and fanning the revolutionary armed struggle in the countryside.

Cadres and members of the Party are being tempered in the furnace of the revolutionary mass movement. Their grasp of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought has been made more firm through revolutionary practice. Their theoretical knowledge has been enriched by the process of turning revolutionary ideas into a material force against the enemy.

2. Political

Since the reestablishment of the Communist Party, unprecedentedly great mass struggles have broken out in both city and countryside. These prove the correctness and effectiveness of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought as the supreme guide of the Party in making revolution. In so short a time, the Party has been able to hold firmly the leadership in the revolutionary mass movement.

The Party has succeeded in bringing the broad masses of the people around itself. The broad masses of workers, peasants, student youth and the intelligentsia all look up to the Party for revolutionary leadership, whether it be in city demonstrations and strikes or in the armed struggle in the countryside.

The road of armed revolution has been opened. More and more people are joining the united front against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. The upsurge of cultural revolution all over the country has cleared the way for the intensification of the armed struggle. The spark of the armed struggle is turning into a prairie fire.

We are indefatigably building the organs of political power in the countryside, the barrio organizing committees and the revolutionary barrio committees. We are also organizing underground committees of revolutionary workers, students and intellectuals and residents in cities and town centers. Our mass organizations and armed propaganda teams are all over the country to arouse the people.

As this decade started, the people's cry for armed revolution drowned out the empty slogan of "peaceful revolution" raised by the reactionaries. Resort to deception and armed force by the reactionaries has only enraged the people into fiercer revolutionary action. The political and economic bankruptcy of the reactionary state has become too obvious.

The enemy is frenziedly hunting for Communists. The Marcos fascist puppet clique raves mad about the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the propagation of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. We can only

be complimented by the attacks made by the enemy. But no matter how savagely he tries to hunt us down, he cannot get us. That is because we are so closely linked with the broad masses of the people.

The enemy is so completely at a loss that it even tries to dangle the bait of legalizing the Party and offering amnesty while at the same launching every form of suppressive and intimidating action against the Party and the people.

The ideological difference between real Communists and sham communists has become more conspicuous in the course of massive political struggles. Both the Lava revisionist renegades and the Taruc-Sumulong gangster clique have not only excluded themselves from the great mass struggles but have also sought to attack them out of desperation. Every time that they open their mouths against the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army and the truly patriotic mass organizations they only succeed in displaying their treachery and isolation from the broad masses of the people. These traitors to the revolutionary cause have become as isolated as the Marcos fascist puppet clique which they always try hard to please.

The Communist Party of the Philippines is courageously and firmly wielding the two weapons of armed struggle and national united front under the powerful inspiration of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought.

3. Armed struggle

In so short a time following its reestablishment, the Party has succeeded in forming the New People's Army by repudiating the Taruc-Sumulong gangster clique and by uniting all Red fighters and commanders who have persisted in revolutionary armed struggle.

The revolutionary armed struggle led by the Party is daily gaining strength and expanding its area of operations. The New People's Army has won brilliantly victories in the battlefield over the reactionary armed forces and has steadily wiped out local spies and tyrants despite the continuous enemy campaigns of "encirclement and suppression" or "search and destroy" operations.

Within the period of March 29, 1969 to March 29, 1970, the level of revolutionary armed struggle was raised with more than 200 enemy troops, spies and local tyrants wiped out in at least 80 operations fully supported by the masses. In addition, 17 US military personnel were punished, with 11 of them

killed and 6 seriously wounded. Starting from a capability of annihilating isolated enemy troops, spies and local tyrants one by one, the New People's Army progressed to annihilating half squads. Now it can annihilate whole squads and scores of encamped enemy troops and BSDUs which are in platoon size.

Since the beginning of this year, our attacks against the enemy have become fiercer and more frequent. The rate at which we are launching operations and at which we are annihilating the enemy is at least double the rate of last year.

The organization of the BSDUs has only served to spread the strength of the enemy thinly. There are now more isolated outposts to attack than before and diehard counterrevolutionary elements of the barrios have become more exposed. While enemy troops in division size have been frequently concentrated against us, their movements have been an occasion for our circling round and attacking enemy weak points not only in Central Luzon but also elsewhere.

The fiercer the enemy becomes the more he incurs the ire of the people whom he arbitrarily attacks. The application of counterinsurgency tactics not only in Central Luzon but in other parts of the country has only served to aggravate the internal contradictions among politicians of the ruling classes and to teach the masses to defend themselves and assert their own power through armed struggle. The enemy is stupidly importing tactics that have failed in South Vietnam.

The successful ambushes, raids and arrests being made by the New People's Army in the plains of Tarlac and Pampanga and some other provinces is possible only because of its close links with the broad masses of the people, especially with the peasants, and because of its utter devotion to their national democratic interests. The people have become thoroughly hateful of the abuses perpetrated by the fascist brutes of the reactionary state. The New People's Army has always put politics in command of military activities. No military operation has ever been launched without a thorough consideration of its service to the people.

The number of Red fighters and commanders has increased several-fold. There are more armed propaganda teams and guerrilla squads and platoons that the enemy has to reckon with. There are now widespread militia units to give auxiliary support to the regular units of the New People's Army. The regular and irregular units of the New People's Army are no longer confined to one or two provinces or a few towns. Guerrilla zones in Northern and Central Luzon are increasing and expanding rapidly.

The Party and the people's army are exerting every effort to develop guerrilla warfare at several points in the archipelago. The expansion and consolidation of guerrilla zones are being conducted with the view of creating one or more stable base areas. Certain areas have already been identified as the most promising.

The New People's Army has inspired the upsurge of the revolutionary mass movement in urban areas. In turn the gigantic demonstrations have inspired the New People's Army to greater effort. The Party is firmly upholding the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat in both city and countryside.

4. Organizational

Democratic centralism is faithfully followed in the Communist Party of the Philippines and in the New People's Army. The essence of this organizational principle is Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. There is conscious discipline in the ranks of Party members and the Red fighters. This accounts for the organizational strength of the Party.

Party branches and groups have been set up in the mass organizations and in the New People's Army. Cadres within the people's army and in mass organizations have arduously worked together to create people's organizing committee in barrios, factories, schools and other areas to serve as the organs of political power or as the embryonic organs of political power.

The Party has taken roots in the six regional areas defined by the First Plenum of the Central Committee. These are Northern Luzon, Central Luzon, Greater Manila, Southern Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao. The distribution of the Party strength is uneven as in the nature of all things in development. In four regions, the Party has struck deep roots in the countryside. In all regions, ideological work is being carried out to prepare for further organizational and political advance by the Party.

From the current upsurge of the revolutionary mass movement, the most advanced elements are being sifted to be developed as cadres and members of the Party. The new Party cadres and members will in turn create greater mass struggles which again will create more Party cadres and members.

Though the actual number of Party cadres and members is still relatively small, their capabilities have been well tested by the current upsurge of the revolutionary mass movement in the city and countryside. They have been able

to prove the correctness of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought and of the political leadership of the Party. In the next few years, the Party is certain to grow big and strong on the basis of revolutionary struggle.

Since the First Plenum of the Central Committee, the number of revolutionary cadres abandoning the old Communist Party and joining the ranks of genuine Communists has been mounting. The bankruptcy of the Lava revisionist renegades has become all too clear. We have also welcomed into our ranks a number of comrades who at first were hoodwinked by the revisionist scoundrels and who attacked us but did not commit serious offense. We welcome them because they have proven their sincerity.

We have a fighting, hardworking and persevering Central Committee which uses every second of an hour for the revolutionary cause. That the Party Central Committee shares the risks and sacrifices of the rank and file of the Party and the people's army is well proven by the martyrdom of a number of our comrades in the Central Committee. To them we pay the highest and most heartfelt tribute for laying down their lives in the service of the people.

To all Party members and Red fighters who have suffered martyrdom and torture in the hands of the enemy we pay tribute equal to that which we pay to our fallen comrades in the Central Committee. They have not died nor suffered in vain. Their sacrifices have greatly contributed to the advance of the Philippine revolution. We will continue to avenge their death. We will always turn our grief over the passing of our comrades into revolutionary strength.

5. Production and finance

The Party and the New People's Army have production units. These are completely integrated with the revolutionary struggle. In certain cases, these can take care of a great portion of the needs of particular fighting and organizing units of the Party.

The greater portion of the overall income of the Party and the New People's Army, accounting for about 90 percent, is in the form of voluntary cash and grain contributions from friends of the revolution, mainly from the peasant masses. We have always followed the policy of receiving contributions from the oppressed masses with the closest consideration of how much we have actually done to serve them or increase their own income. We have been willing to

receive only a very small fraction of any increase of income among them resulting from rent reduction or effective seizure of landlord property.

In the case of contributing allies, we have always made it a point to maintain our independence and initiative even while accepting their aid. In return, we protect their legitimate interests and we avoid putting them in difficult situation.

Direct and exclusive income for the Party and the New People's Army from the confiscation of enemy property has been marginal. Confiscation of cash from the enemy is practically nil. From annihilated military personnel, we have only taken away their arms and ammunition.

The income of the Party and the New People's Army is limited and irregular in quantity. But it can adequately sustain a certain regular level of activity which we have maintained. The Party manages to support Party cadres and units of the New People's Army in expansion work.

The Party has endlessly emphasized the need for self-reliance. An austere style of living is demanded of all Party cadres and members and Red commanders and fighters. Every centavo is accounted for. Allowances for personal needs are now collectively decided by every unit of the Party or people's army to which the individual belongs.

There are some comrades who expect heavy material support from fraternal parties. The best support that our comrades abroad can extend and have extended to us takes the form of political support. We are already enormously supported by their resolute revolutionary struggle against our common enemy, US imperialism.

V. Tasks of the Party

A. Build the Party!

In building a truly revolutionary party of the proletariat, the most important and fundamental task is to raise the ideological consciousness of the entire Party membership through the living study and application of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. There must be a definite educational plan and curricula ranging from the basic to the advanced. To deepen, realize and heighten the ideological consciousness of the entire Party, sustained political campaigns must be waged in order to arouse and mobilize the masses. There must be clear

policies emanating from the leading organs. To sustain the revolutionary struggle and lead the ever surging waves of the masses, the Party must constantly be enlarged and must draw the most advanced elements from the masses. There must be an organizational plan to build the membership of the Party in the ranks of the proletariat, peasantry, students and intelligentsia.

1. Educational plan

In all study courses as well as during practical work, the Five Golden Rays and the Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong should be used extensively and often referred to in the ideological remolding of entire units and individual members of the Party.

All study courses should fall under the direction of the Revolutionary School of Mao Zedong Thought. However, it is the responsibility of the education department to handle instruction in primary and intermediate courses from the branch to the regional level. Studies should be conducted locally. At this stage, however, the central office of the education department should often take a direct hand in instruction in order to develop cadres for the people's army and local Party organizations.

The primary course should cover Philippine history, the basic problems of the Filipino people, the people's democratic revolution, Party history, Party program, Party constitution, history of the people's army, rules of the New People's Army, organs of political power and the current political report of the Central Committee. The basic texts of the primary curriculum should include Philippine Society and Revolution, Guide for Party Cadres and Members of the Communist Party of the Philippines, On People's War, Organs of Political Power and the current political report of the Central Committee.

The intermediate course should cover materialist philosophy, class analysis and social investigation, party building, armed struggle, united front, economic work and land reform, and culture. Complete texts of the writings of Chairman Mao should be studied. These are contained in the list entitled "Schedule of Reading, Translation, Reproduction and Distribution of Chairman Mao's Works." Those attending school are expected to have read these in advance and to express their understanding of Chairman Mao's works and bring up theoretical and practical problems for exhaustive discussion. At the present stage, cadres assigned to work of district scope should undergo the intermediate course.

Upon the recommendation of the education department, those who have finished the intermediate course shall take the advanced course under the central teaching staff of the higher Party school, the Revolutionary School of Mao Zedong Thought. The advanced course should cover dialectical materialism, political economy, history of the international communist movement, strategy and tactics, and the Party. The texts for study should include the works of the great Communist thinkers: Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Zedong.

The Central Committee should lead in ideological study. It should hold theoretical conferences as often as once in four months or in combination with timely working conferences. It should cause to be published in *Ang Bayan* articles and directives that concern problems that arise from time to time so that the Party rank and file can be guided properly and participate in the tackling of problems. Wherever they are, members of the Central Committee should lead in ideological study on a daily basis.

Publications of the Party Central Committee, *Ang Bayan* and special pamphlets, should be diligently distributed to all Party members. All Party members should be made aware of important developments throughout the country and the world. Local publications, newspapers or leaflets should be put out by local cadres subject to control by leading Party organs.

The Party should ceaselessly conduct mass education not only to raise the consciousness of the masses in general but also to develop Party members from their ranks. Mass schooling should be undertaken by Party members, branches, groups or teams. *Philippine Society and Revolution*, Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong and the three constantly read articles (“Serve the People,” “The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains” and “In Memory of Norman Bethune”) are the basic texts for mass schooling. The basic principles of revolution should be related to the concrete local situation. The cadres can impart revolutionary principles to the masses in a simple and effective way only after learning the local situation through close investigation.

Educational mobilization of the masses should be effected for revolutionary struggle. Party cadres should frequently conduct struggle meetings in order to strengthen their revolutionary outlook and denounce the exploiting classes in a concrete way. In this manner, the masses also educate themselves and assume responsibility for their own struggle. By letting the masses speak up, the Party can choose those who are most articulate, boldest and most reliable in opposing

the enemy. The Party can also draw from the masses the sharpest slogans to cast against the enemy in this manner.

Cultural activities should be conducted among the people in order to advance the revolutionary propaganda of the proletariat. Stage performances, especially drama, song festivals and speeches, should be utilized to the fullest extent to arouse the people for a new democratic revolution.

The unity and discipline of the Party can be maintained and strengthened only by doing our ideological work well. Our link with the masses can withstand the worst attacks of the enemy only if we have done well in our propaganda work.

2. Political mobilization

All Party members should recognize the importance of policy. The Party Central Committee exists to decide on policy. Without a policy on a situation, there would be confusion even if the most diligent efforts were exerted by everyone. There must always be a guide in doing things.

The Party Central Committee and all leading organs should take the matter of policy seriously. Correct policies should be drawn from revolutionary practice. It is extremely important for leading bodies to meet regularly and as often as necessary in order to receive reports and to analyze and sum up the situation so that policies can be correctly laid down in a collective way.

It is our constant policy to arouse and mobilize the masses for revolution. Any deviation from this single policy is counterrevolutionary.

The Party should maintain and intensify its leadership over the great mass struggles that have erupted in both city and countryside. It should consistently engage in mass work in the ranks of workers, peasants, student youth and the intelligentsia so as to be able to lead and launch bigger revolutionary mass actions against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

It should build mass organizations of workers, peasants, student youth and the intelligentsia and place itself at their core. Through the gigantic and militant actions of these mass organizations, the Party can advance the Program for a People's Democratic Revolution. The ultimate object of all mass actions is to spread and heighten the consciousness of the need for people's war to counteract the rise of fascist and the intensified political and economic oppression of the

people.

The Party should make use of the mass struggles initiated by the students and the intelligentsia to effect a nationwide new awakening to the need for armed revolution in the face of increased oppression and exploitation. Immediately in the city, the Party should bring together the most advanced activists from the ranks of the students and the intelligentsia with the bigger masses of workers. They should also be encouraged to go to their respective provinces of origin to promote the people's democratic revolution among the oppressed masses in their own hometowns and barrios.

The Party should take steps to arouse and mobilize the workers into political and economic struggles. These will certainly entail attacking the oppression of the people by the reactionary government, exploitative employers and yellow labor leaders. Workers' caucuses must be used to start campaigns of exposing the rottenness of the entire system and educating the workers on the necessity of staging general strikes and the inevitability of armed revolution. These should lead to the organization of workers' organizing committees and then genuine unions with a Party branch at the core.

In the countryside, the peasant masses should be aroused and mobilized in order to weaken and destroy the pillars of feudalism. Among the rural masses, barrio organizing committees and then revolutionary barrio committees with a Party branch at the core should be organized. The peasant masses must be made to recognize the need for armed force to achieve their ends. Stable base areas and guerrilla zones must be created among them in order to advance the entire people's democratic revolution. Farm workers, the national minorities, fishermen, and transportation, logging and mining workers must be given close attention in areas where they are to be found with the peasant masses.

The Party can be strong only if it succeeds in transforming the masses into a vast sea of flames where the enemies of the people's democratic revolution are consumed. The mass line must be firmly grasped by the Party so that it enjoys at every step the all-powerful support of the masses.

3. Organizational plan

With the present number of Party members as a clear base, it must be clear as to how the general membership can be increased. It is good enough that though the

present number of members is relatively small, they are already capable of carrying system becomes more rotten and the people become more eager to strike blows at the enemy, the Party must have more cadres and members to be able to perform its revolutionary leadership adequately.

There must be an organizational plan to build the Party within the New People's Army and in mass organizations. In our present guerrilla zones, the New People's Army can be expected to make a bigger harvest of victories only if the Party within it is strong and also if at the same time the Party in local areas is strong. Having a Party that is organizationally strong and that is soundly based on the masses is a guarantee for the growth and success of the New People's Army and the consolidation of people's democratic power.

All-out efforts should be made within the next whole year to accomplish the organization of the six regional committees of Northern Luzon, Central Luzon, Greater Manila, Southern Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao. Where there are already regional committees of a provisional and appointive character, all-out efforts should be made to have regional committees elected by provincial and district Party representatives. We must exert all efforts to have at least provisional regional committees in those regions where we have only a few Party members. These shall be organized and strengthened under the supervision of the Central Committee with the assistance of the organization department.

In establishing Party regional committees, the Central Committee should see to it that the committee members are of the highest ideological and political quality and are resourceful in conducting organizational work. They should be able to draft a regional program of action based on their local investigation and actual mass work.

Party branches should be set up where they can be set up. But the Central Committee and all other leading organs should see to it that there are areas of priority to which Party cadres can be assigned to conduct mass work, Party building and army building. These areas of priority should be determined by the Central Committee in order to achieve the wisest disposition of reliable Party cadres available for expansion work.

The correct form of organization and organizing method based on the mass line should be grasped by all Party cadres and members. People's organizing committees, such as barrio committees in the rural areas and workers'

committees and student committees, should be formed to prepare for mass struggles and Party building.

Democratic centralism should be the main guiding principle in the organizational life of the Party. The leading organs should meet as often as necessary to strengthen ideological and political unity. They should receive reports both regularly and on a timely basis from lower organs and units. At the same time, frequent consultations with lower Party organizations within the New People's Army and in local areas should be made so that the leading organs will always have intimate, correct and sufficient knowledge of the situation and will be able to direct the revolutionary struggle.

B. Build the New People's Army!

To build the New People's Army, the Party must accelerate political-military training and raise the level of armed struggle, carry out firmly the revolutionary agrarian policy and move towards the establishment of base areas. The Party must respond to the people's call for armed revolution now reverberating in both city and countryside.

1. Military training and armed struggle

There must be a political-military training program. It should be intended mainly to develop cadres who can serve as commanders and political commissars in the New People's Army. This training is not only intended to develop combat skills. It is conducted in a way as to put the New People's Army under the command of politics, under the leadership of the Party. It is thereby to build a people's army that is good in political and ideological work, good in working style, good in military training and good in arranging everyday life.

After finishing their political-military training, Party cadres should be immediately dispatched to lead or join armed propaganda teams or guerrilla units. The cumulative increase of cadres for the people's army will certainly lead to the emergence of larger fighting forces and more fighting units of the New People's Army. The level of armed struggle should be raised on the basis of ample political preparations.

In the near future, the New People's Army should be able to annihilate repeatedly a platoon or a company of the enemy at an average per operation. While making an ambush or attacking an isolated outpost, reinforcements should

also be attacked and their paths mined. This is a dialectical development of the present capacity of the New People's Army to easily annihilate a squad of the enemy.

Our guerrilla squads and platoons should in due time develop into guerrilla companies. These should in turn develop into regular mobile forces in the future. In preparation for further growth, our fighting units which are dispersed to arouse and to organize the masses should be repeatedly concentrated to launch larger operations which are not possible when these are dispersed. At all times, we should maintain our guerrilla units and militia units both in areas where we have regular mobile forces and where we do not yet have them. The armed city partisans should specialize in sabotage work and in limited punitive actions.

2. Revolutionary agrarian policy

The Party should see to it that the New People's Army carries out what is mainly a peasant war. A revolutionary agrarian policy should be implemented in the countryside so as to get the massive support of the peasantry for the people's democratic revolution.

Our guerrilla zones cannot be expanded and consolidated without fulfilling certain reforms that a genuine people's army should conduct. Rent and interest rates should be greatly reduced and local landlord despots, local bullies, fascist marauders and bad elements like bandits and cattle rustlers should be punished and done away with. There should be a great difference between our presence and absence in a particular area. When we are around, the peasant masses should enjoy so many benefits that they inevitably lose should the enemy take full control of the area.

The peasant masses should be made to realize that should the New People's Army wipe out the counterrevolutionary armed forces, feudal and bureaucrat tyrants and bad elements in a given area, it shall be in a position to distribute land to those who have none or those who do not have enough, wipe out usury completely, heighten productive cooperation among the peasants and strengthen the people's organs of political power.

In carrying out the agrarian policy of the Party, the New People's Army should arouse and mobilize the masses to attack their own exploiters and assert their democratic power. We should never flinch from our policy of relying mainly on

the poor peasants, winning over the middle peasants and neutralizing the rich peasants to isolate the enemy. Without losing sight of the main direction of their work and of their attacks against the enemy, the Party and the people's army should employ guerrilla zones to open the way for the development of one or more stable base areas and to be able to strike at the enemy at several points.

3. Stable base areas

Three basic conditions must be gradually fulfilled for a stable base area to emerge: the people's armed forces are well built up; the enemy has repeatedly suffered defeats; and the people are aroused.

At this early stage, we should seriously consider creating an armed independent regime. Conditions for survival and growth of a stable base areas should be properly attended to. These are: (1) a sound mass base; (2) a sound Party organization; (3) a fairly strong Red army; (4) terrain favorable to military operations; and (5) economic resources sufficient for sustenance.

To be able to win the revolution we must be able to destroy the enemy in ever increasing numbers. This will entail and result in the liberation of large areas by the New People's Army.

The Party and the New People's Army should have a good grasp of the strategy and tactics of people's war. There should be a clear view now as to how to create stable base areas. These shall be the centers of gravity for widespread guerrilla actions.

C. Build the united front!

The Party must build a united front for armed struggle. In this regard, the revisionist renegades and other saboteurs of the Philippine revolution must have no place in the united front envisioned by the Party. The Party must use the weapon of united front as its shield and the weapon of armed struggle as its spear in making its resolute revolutionary advance. Wielding one weapon without the other will be damaging to the Party and the people.

Now that the Party has the New People's Army, it should have the National Democratic Front in due time in order to combine all patriotic and progressive forces against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. The committee entrusted with the task of preparing for the establishment of the front

should perform the task of coordinating patriotic classes, organizations, groups and personages under the principle of a national united front.

The program of the National Democratic Front must affirm the general line of national democratic revolution and must be in basic agreement with our Party's Program for a People's Democratic Revolution. All patriotic and progressive classes, parties, groups and personages participating in the front must be allowed initiative and independence and must maintain the broadest unity and cooperation against the enemies of national liberation and democracy. The Party must strive to build the national united front on the following ten points:

1. Fight for national democracy against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism;
2. Create people's organizing committees to arouse and mobilize the broad masses of the people for armed revolution;
3. Campaign for the establishment of a united front government of all democratic classes, parties, groups and individuals;
4. Adopt a truly democratic system of representation based on free and popular elections undominated by the reactionary parties;
5. Give material and moral support to the people's armed forces;
6. Solve the land problem by liberating the peasants from landlord oppression and fostering agricultural cooperation;
7. Build a national economy free from foreign monopolies and protect the people's livelihood;
8. Promote a national, scientific and popular culture;
9. Unite with all national minorities with genuine respect for their rights to local autonomy; and
10. Support the international united front against US imperialism, Soviet social-imperialism, Japanese militarism and all reaction, and maintain an active and independent foreign policy based on mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Philippine Economy Worsens in the Wake of the Worldwide Crisis of US Imperialism

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Chief US puppet Ferdinand E. Marcos, in a recent speech before businessmen, rattled off a chain of claims in an attempt to show that the Philippine economy had improved under his fascist regime. He forecast, in the fashion of a sorcerer, that the economic situation would improve “further” in 1972.

As usual, he merely mouthed the policies dictated by US advisers, the IMF, World Bank and other agencies of US imperialism. The stark realities were there to see: the economy had suffered from an unprecedented inflation since 1969 and was still on its rapid backslide. By no stretch of the imagination could the prospects for the new year be encouraging.

The people suffer increasing unemployment, fast declining purchasing power of the peso, unmitigated increase in the cost of living (prices of basic commodities, house rental, electric and telephone rates, transportation rates, tuition fees and other needs), higher taxes and the threat of more of them, and deteriorating peace and order (rampant killings, robbery, kidnappings, mass arrests and other crimes).

Since the de facto peso devaluation via the floating rate on February 21, 1970, the broad masses of the people have been agitated by a grave economic crisis. The steeply rising prices have pushed the workers to demand for higher wages and strikes have become common among business and industrial houses. Credit

has tightened further because the government has been grabbing more and more private funds to shore itself up. Cost of imported raw materials to feed the local industries has remained prohibitive. The government is foisting more taxes on top of so many, while bureaucratic corruption has further cramped the initiative of the national bourgeoisie in the face of intensifying competition from foreign capital spurred by state policies barefacedly geared toward attracting more foreign capital to exploit and plunder the country.

The devaluation of the Philippine peso in February 1970 was prescribed by US imperialism through the International Monetary Fund as a precondition for the Philippines to be able to have its old external debts “rolled over” as well as secure new external debts. Through this measure, US imperialism sought to shift on a part of the burden of its own worsening financial and economic crises to the broad masses of the Filipino people. As is to be expected, the prescription has only exacerbated the internal crisis. Inflation persisted and breakdown in industry and agriculture ensued, spawning price increases and worsening unemployment.

The so-called technocrats harnessed by the US-Marcos regime exhausted their expertise and failed to stem the deterioration of the economy. These so-called technocrats have simply proven themselves servitors of the US imperialists and the domestic ruling classes. The policies and stopgap measures that they push have only served to accommodate the rapaciousness of the US monopoly capitalists, the comprador-landlords and the bureaucrat capitalists and spawned the outright graft and bureaucratic corruption of the US-Marcos clique at the expense of the broad masses of the people. Also, the external factors bred by the intensifying worldwide crisis of imperialism have aggravated the internal economic crisis.

It was, in fact, the worldwide crisis of imperialism, the decay and decline of the entire capitalist system, that set the destructive forces at work in the Philippine economy.

A concrete manifestation of the worldwide crisis of imperialism is the deterioration of the value of the US dollar which from 1944 to 1958 held undisputed sway over the world capitalist economy. Since 1958 when US imperialism intensified its wars of aggression in various areas of the world, the dollar consistently lost value vis-à-vis the currencies of other capitalist countries, such as Japan and West Germany. US imperialism accumulated external debts by

war spending, maintaining military bases overseas and supporting unpopular regimes in client-states.

US imperialism built up a balance of payments deficit running to \$10.7 billion as of 1970. So heavy has been its spending for its war of aggression in Vietnam, which in any case it cannot hope to win. Inflationary pressures at home caused a rise in consumer prices from a 3 percent rate of increase in 1967 to 6.6 percent in 1969, something alarming for Americans struggling to maintain a high standard of living. The US economy's growth rate dwindled from an average of 5 percent in 1965-68 to only 3 percent in 1970. The unemployment level rose from 3.3 percent in 1968 to 5.9 percent in 1970, which is serious for a highly industrialized country. In certain areas in the United States, unemployment went up to as high as several tens of percent.

The measures to "protect the dollar" adopted by the Nixon ruling clique on August 15, 1971 showed that US imperialism respects no commitment it makes with other nations when its interests are threatened. By suspending the convertibility of the dollar into gold to stop speculations in the major currency markets where the dollar had been losing value, US imperialism threw overboard the Bretton Woods Agreement⁴ (IMF Articles of Agreement) and set off a chain of crises for the currencies of other capitalist countries principally Japan, West Germany and other West European countries.

Not satisfied with junking an international commitment, the Nixon ruling clique slapped a 10 percent additional tax or surcharge on US imports to protect domestic industries on the slump. As a result, exports to the United States became more expensive and were therefore discouraged. This move spurred protests and threats of retaliatory action on US exports by the countries affected. For small exporting countries such as the Philippines, this meant a tremendous blow to the effort to build up dollar earnings so as to meet growing payment requirements for imports and foreign loans.

The Nixon ruling clique used these unilateral measures as clubs to force the other big capitalist nations to up-value their currencies vis-à-vis the dollar instead of the other way around, as these countries had demanded. Principal US protagonists were Japan, West Germany, France and other West European nations. These countries opposed the Nixon position because upvaluing their currencies without any devaluation of the US dollar would make their exports much costlier than those of the United States in the world market, thus

diminishing their competitive position in world trade.

A temporary compromise was reached among the capitalist countries within the "Group of Ten." US imperialism agreed to increase the price of gold from \$35 per ounce to \$38, thus devaluing the dollar by 7.89 percent on December 18, 1971. It also agreed to lift the 10 percent import surcharge. In return, the other capitalist countries agreed to upvalue their currencies.

The net effect of the accord is still to the advantage of US imperialism at the expense of the other capitalist countries. Japan and West Germany have in fact started to suffer slowdown in production, the former predicting its gross national product growth rate to be reduced by more than half the 10 percent average over the last few years. These two countries are now contending with rising prices and growing unemployment.

Intensified trade war is inevitable among the imperialist countries: a battle for exports markets, for a redivision of the countries of the world as economic preserves. US imperialism is bent on waging a trade offensive in areas dominated by other big trading countries, but Japan, West Germany and the European Economic Community are not likely to take this lying down. This trade war will mean further exploitation of colonies and semicolonies, like the Philippines.

In this trade war, US imperialism will try hard to remain dominant, arguing the need to preserve the world capitalist system with the United States as its center. In fact, US imperialism has long laid the foundation for holding on to its status as No. 1 imperialist power. It has kept a tight hold on West Germany and the rest of Western Europe through its military bases and its overseas investments now either well-entrenched in key industries or safely tied up with local capital all over Europe. It has made Japan its fogleman in Asia by tying up its remilitarization with the US privilege of maintaining military bases all over Japanese territory and by forcing it to open up its investment fields to US monopoly capital via joint ventures which require less dollar outflow. Japan remains US imperialism's biggest military ward in Asia, a fact that has only fanned the fire of protest and anti-imperialist and anti-militarist struggle of the Japanese people.

The crisis of imperialism is not likely to be solved either on the short range or over the long haul. Since it carries within itself the seed of its own destruction,

imperialism will reel from one crisis to another. The raging anti-imperialist movement of the world within and outside the capitalist countries and the growing strength of socialism with the People's Republic of China as its iron bastion will not give imperialism any respite, till its doom.

Meanwhile, the Philippines under a puppet regime of US imperialism will continue to be pressed down by the crisis of imperialism. There is no prospect of improvement in the Philippines' balance of payments position. Contrary to earlier projections of a surplus by monetary authorities, the year 1971 was projected to end with a deficit because of falling prices of primary exports and the high cost of imports of capital goods, raw materials and other basic commodities composing the bulk of Philippine imports. Higher price of crude oil, for instance, greatly boosted the value of imports. Now the US and British monopoly oil companies are seeking another round of price increases for gasoline and other products from crude oil. The US-Marcos regime is bound to grant such price increases as well as those asked by other foreign monopolies, to the detriment of the consumers.

The continuing payments imbalance will not permit a fixing of the new peso rate, hence speculation and inflation will persist. Fixing the rate would spawn new problems since the peso will surely go down further in value following the US dollar.

Filipino entrepreneurs must also contend with intensified competition from and growing dominance of US and Japanese monopoly capital and other foreigners. The policies adopted by the US-Marcos clique through the Board of Investments have opened the gates to the invasion by Japanese monopoly capital of key sectors of the economy, such as mining, merchandising and manufacturing. US and Japanese monopoly capital, including Guomindang capital, has been allowed to dominate the field of oil exploration, as well as various manufacturing sectors.

Japanese monopoly capital poses the newest and gravest danger to the Philippine economy, particularly because it is squarely tied up with US monopoly capital in many areas. While records of the Securities and Exchange Commission show that Japanese monopoly investments in the country amounted to only ₱91.6 million as of June 1971, Japanese publications indicate that they have reached \$450 million, which presumably includes capital equipment sold on long-term payment terms. But even on the comparatively smaller figure of the SEC,

records of that office reported in the bourgeois press show that Japanese firms had borrowed from local sources no less than ₱15.5 million.

The US-Marcos clique directly facilitated the entry of Japanese capital into the country, proving itself a true servitor of foreign monopoly interests. In 1967 the chief US puppet Marcos directed the National Economic Council and the department of commerce to allow 17 Japanese liaison offices to do business here, despite the nonratification of the “treaty of friendship, commerce and navigation” which is an unequal treaty in favor of the Japanese. Subsequently, under the Investment Incentives Act, the BOI rolled out the red carpet for Japanese monopoly and other foreign capital.

This collusion between US-Japanese monopoly capital and the US-Marcos clique, unless stopped by the resolute struggle of the Filipino people, will aggravate the already wanton exploitation of the country’s natural resources and the foreign monopoly domination of the national economy. Militarist Japan is determined to appropriate for itself the raw material resources of the Philippines, as well as those of other countries like Indonesia, to feed its bloating industries and fuel its military machine. By 1980, Japanese militarism is projected to require 80 percent of the world’s supply of raw materials. With the other imperialist countries competing with Japan, what would remain for indigenous industries in the raw-material-supplying countries? In the face of these realities of world imperialism and the Philippine economy, the Filipino people shall not relent in their struggle to destroy the stronghold of imperialism in the country and sweep away all local lackeys. They will carry on the fight for national liberation and join forces with all other anti-imperialist forces all over the world.

Notes

Under the IMF Articles of Agreement signed in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, USA in 1944, the US dollar was made the basis for settling the values of all currencies of countries in the capitalist world, to facilitate world trade and currency exchanges. This was done because the US dollar then was the world's strongest currency as a result of the unprecedented boom in the US economy fueled by armaments production during World War II. While all currencies are supposed to be fixed in value in relation to the dollar, the value of the dollar was in turn pegged in relation to gold; that is, a dollar could be exchanged for one-thirty-fifth ($1/35$) of an ounce of gold (which explains the \$35 per ounce gold price).

Theoretically, any country in possession of US dollars may present these to the United States in exchange for gold. The United States was supposed to keep a sufficient reserve of gold to make good this exchange anytime. But the US gold reserve in Fort Knox dwindled from \$26 billion worth at the end of the war to only \$9.7 billion by August of 1971. Against this low reserve, governments and private sectors in Europe hold \$95 billion in US currency and \$15 billion in Japan, all theoretically exchangeable for gold by the United States. The United States, however, is no longer in a position to make good the exchange.

This situation caused alarm among the dollar holders in Europe and in Japan and as a consequence of massive speculation, the dollar gradually lost value in the currency exchange markets. On the other hand, the currencies of the other big capitalist countries which had built up dollar reserves rose in value in terms of the US dollar. Thus, the US dollar lost its reliability as a medium of exchange in international trade and currency transactions.

The pressure of the countries with huge dollar holdings for the dollar to devalue and US imperialism's insistence against devaluation caused the monetary crisis in the capitalist world to escalate.

Anti-Imperialist and Anti-Chauvinist United Front Gains Ground in Mindanao

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During the past year, the Filipino masses were witness to the most brutal and atrocious massacres perpetrated against the oppressed masses of Mindanao since 1969 by the reactionary Philippine Army and Philippine Constabulary troops and their Christian chauvinist cohorts. Last year, these massacres claimed an annual toll of over 3,000 lives among the Muslims alone and countless others among the non-Muslim minorities and the poor peasant settlers from Luzon and the Visayas.

Among the most heinous of these massacres were those of Manili, Carmen, Cotabato (79 killed in a mosque and 10 in a schoolhouse) on June 19; the Natividad massacre in Northern Cotabato (scores killed); the Tacub, Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte massacre (61 killed and 54 wounded) last November 22; the Nunungan, Lanao del Norte massacre; the Lebak, Cotabato massacre (47 killed) of November 27; and the Kisolun, Bukidnon massacre (67 killed) of November 30, which like the Lebak massacre was unreported and even denied by the military authorities for obvious reasons. This list of course does not include the unreported murders, killings and massacres similarly perpetrated by the fascist brutes of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and their Christian chauvinist cohorts.

What makes these treacherous crimes all the more condemnable is that they are committed over and over in a genocidal fashion against the Muslim and non-Muslim minorities and the poor peasant settlers who dare to oppose the sinister designs of the big-time landgrabbers, namely, the US imperialists, Christian and non-Christian landlords and the big bourgeois politicians. Moreover, each

murderous crime is followed by a corresponding whitewashing and the promotion of the perpetrators to higher ranks in the reactionary armed forces. All these abuses, however, have heightened the armed struggle of the Muslim minorities for self-determination and further incensed the Mindanao masses and the rest of the oppressed Filipino people against the perpetrators.

The Manili and the Natividad massacres were perpetrated with the same treachery, deceit and brutality as the My Lai massacre where US GIs led by one Lt. William Calley, swooped down on My Lai village, herded some 100 Vietnamese, mostly women and children, and mercilessly butchered them. In pursuance of the “search and destroy” policy of the Manila government towards the national minorities in Mindanao (it was “burn and destroy” for Calley and company in My Lai), Christian chauvinist mercenaries, led by a handful of regular officers of the Philippine Constabulary, rounded up some 150 Magindanaws and gathered them inside a mosque under the pretext of holding a peace conference. Once inside the mosque, the Magindanaws, mostly women and children, were attacked with grenades and gunfire. Seventy-nine of the Magindanaws were killed and the rest were seriously wounded. On the same day in a nearby school building, another barbarous crime was perpetrated, resulting in the death of ten Magindanaws. A similar atrocious act was committed in Natividad, a small Bilaan village in North Cotabato. Armed men, swooping down on the village when the men of the village were out selling their products in a nearby town, slaughtered its inhabitants, mostly women, children and old people. Scores of bodies, brutally mutilated and mangled, were strewn all over the village.

Another genocidal act, the Tacub massacre, exposed once again the fascist policy of the Manila government with regard to the oppressed Mindanao masses. In the midst of the November 22 “special elections” staged by the reactionary state, three trucks of Muslim voters were fired upon pointblank by elements of the Bravo Company, 21st Army Infantry Division. Ironically, the said Muslims, evacuees from Magsaysay, Lanao del Norte, had returned to their hometown to vote, having been assured of security by the Philippine Constabulary. On arriving there, however, many of them decided not to risk the trouble of voting, as they were accused by some Christian chauvinist elements of being “flying voters.” The evacuees boarded their trucks and left. When they reached the Tacub checkpoint on their way to Iligan, they were met with hails of bullets from the carbines, machineguns and M-79 grenade launchers of the Bravo Company. Then the notorious “Ilagas,” the Christian chauvinist version of the much-hated

BSDUs of Luzon, participated in the mass slaughter by hacking away with bolos at the dead and wounded, leaving behind scores of mutilated bodies. The latest count established 61 dead, 54 wounded and 140 missing. The reactionary military authorities were quick to claim that the Tacub incident was a mistake encounter.

Two of the most recent massacres perpetrated by the PC-“Ilaga” combined forces occurred on November 27 in Lebak, Cotabato, where 46 unarmed Muslims were massacred and on November 30 in Kisolun, Bukidnon, where 67 Muslims were massacred while returning from Kalilangan, Wao, Lanao del Sur to Marawi City. In an effort to cover up their most recent crimes, the Philippine Constabulary immediately belied reports of the occurrence of the said massacres.

These brutal criminal acts against the Mindanao masses have been going on for more than two decades, only to be intensified during the fascist rule of the Marcos puppet regime. Indeed, the oppression of the Muslim and non-Muslim minorities of Mindanao is but a part of the general oppression and exploitation of the masses of the Filipino people in the whole country. The source of the various massacres, the wanton killing of women and children, the plundering of Muslim and non-Muslim peasant settlements, the mosque-burning and house-burning in Cotabato and elsewhere in Mindanao can be traced to the basic problems of the Filipino people, US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

The Marcos fascist puppet regime, following the dictates of its imperialist and landlord masters, is directly at the helm manipulating the Mindanao situation so as to widen the way for big plantation and ranch owners, logging and mining concessionaires and the like to grab the lands of the national minorities and the small homesteads of the poor peasant settlers from Luzon and the Visayas. The corrupt bureaucratic government machinery operates against the interests of the oppressed masses of Mindanao in favor of the big-time landgrabbers. For instance, not a single land title has been issued to any member of the minority groups; fake titles are instead given to them. Also, the settlers are almost always forcibly eased out from their lands by the big-time landgrabbers who have as their latest targets the rich mineral lands (oil, copper, nickel and the like are the minerals) of Mindanao.

The broad masses of the people of Mindanao suffer most the insidious manipulation of the affairs of the region by the US-Marcos clique. The US-

Marcos clique has imposed on them its vicious “divide and rule” policy. By harping on their religious and cultural differences so as to facilitate its sinister activities, and most important of all so as to divert popular opposition to big-time landgrabbing which thrives on Christian chauvinist laws, the US-Marcos clique has intentionally created dissensions among the masses in Mindanao by pitting off the Christian settlers from Luzon and the Visayas against the Muslim indigenous minorities.

This accounts for the creation of such notorious armed bands as the PC-controlled “Ilagas” and the “cursillo”-controlled “Samarias” which have instigated the various Mindanao atrocities. Still not content with such treachery, the Marcos puppet regime continues to assume the basically anti-Muslim Zionist stance of its master, US imperialism, as it promotes Christian chauvinist propaganda through the reactionary educational institutions and the mass media. Such propaganda is being used to justify the Christian chauvinist laws which were first imposed by US imperialism to dispossess the national minorities of their lands. These laws are now being enforced by the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Christian and non-Christian landlords and big bourgeois politicians to further grab the lands of the national minorities.

Under the pretext of providing for the “security and well-being” of the more than a quarter of a million Muslim and non-Muslim evacuees, Marcos has ordered the establishment of “security centers” in Lanao and Cotabato. The setting up of these “security centers,” which are no different from the “strategic hamlets” in South Vietnam and the “concentration zones” in Laos, is actually a scheme of the US-Marcos clique to facilitate the further oppression of the Mindanao masses. It involves the same fascist methods being used against the peasants in Luzon through the notorious “Barrio Self-Defense Units.” The “security centers” only serve as a convenient excuse to further arm the local political hatchetmen of the US-Marcos clique and provide further license to the reactionary armed forces to perpetrate more heinous crimes against the Mindanao masses. It is on these fascist agents that the US-Marcos clique depends upon for the protection and furtherance of imperialist and landlord interests.

The establishment of the “security centers” in Mindanao fits perfectly into the militarization scheme being employed by the US-Marcos clique throughout the country in preparation for its formal imposition of martial law. Even at this early stage, however, the Muslim and Christian settlers who are directly the objects of this latest deceptive machination of the US-Marcos clique have repulsed all

initial efforts to convince them to occupy the “security centers.”

There is no doubt that the oppressed masses of Mindanao have profoundly seen through the evil scheme of the US-Marcos clique of further intensifying their oppression and exploitation. The Muslim minorities have been more vigilant than ever in their armed struggle for self-determination. Opposing the treacherous call of the fascist puppet chieftain Marcos to lay down their arms, the Muslims have firmly held on to their guns in resolute adherence to Chairman Mao’s teaching that “political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.”

Also opposing the preposterous claim being conveniently peddled by the Marcos regime that religious and cultural differences are at the bottom of the Mindanao problem, the Muslim minorities have correctly singled out who the real perpetrators of the criminal acts against them are. In a letter of appeal to the United Nations wherein the Muslim minorities elevated their case for an investigation, they explained that the massacres were perpetrated by the armed agents of the Philippine reactionary government in apparent collusion with the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States government, international Zionism and the Catholic Church. They correctly attributed the dispossession of their lands as part of the evil scheme of the Philippine reactionary government that serves the big-time landgrabbers — the US imperialists, Christian and non-Christian landlords and bureaucrat capitalists.

The Muslim minorities are cognizant of the fact that their oppression is part and parcel of the oppression of the broad masses of the Filipino people by US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

The intensification of the oppression of the people of Mindanao as evidenced by the massacres has only aroused the just anger and further heightened the revolutionary vigilance of the Filipino people in their struggle against the US-Marcos clique. Recent events, among them the massacre of national minority groups in Mindanao, of demonstrators in Manila and of peasants in Central Luzon, have brought to light the fascist massacre policy of the US-Marcos clique against the broad masses of the people. The Filipino masses understand very well that this massacre policy is but an integral part of the fascist militarist policy of the US-Marcos clique, which is its last weapon in its desperate struggle to remain in power. With a profound understanding of the significance of these latest fascist crimes against the people, the Filipino masses have turned their outrage into revolutionary vengeance as they have forged greater unity in their

struggle against the fascism and militarism of the US-Marcos regime. Mass demonstrations protesting the fascist massacre policy have been repeatedly held jointly by Muslim youth groups and revolutionary mass organizations in Manila as well as in other parts of the country.

As all the bloody intrigues, chauvinist “psywars,” deceptive “security” measures and other sinister manipulations of the US-Marcos clique are exposed one by one, the Muslim and Christian masses of Mindanao become all the more convinced that their real enemies are US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. In the past year they only became more aware of the need for unity among the Muslim and non-Muslim minorities and the poor peasant settlers from Luzon and the Visayas in order to build a strong fighting force against the counterrevolutionary violence being perpetrated against them. This unity, in turn, should be part of the broader unity, the revolutionary anti-imperialist and antichauvinist united front founded on the basic alliance of workers and peasants, regardless of culture and religion. It is through this united front that revolutionary workers, peasants, youth and intellectuals all over the country, including the oppressed Muslim and non-Muslim minorities and the Christians in Mindanao, can wage a revolutionary people’s war against the foremost enemy, the US-Marcos clique.

Overthrow the US-Marcos Dictatorship

to Achieve National Freedom and Democracy

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The essence of the formal declaration of martial law through Proclamation No. 1081 is the brazen imposition of the US-Marcos dictatorship on the entire Filipino nation and people. This proclamation is in effect the formal declaration of civil war by the US-Marcos clique against the broad masses of the people. At the same time, it is in the final analysis the death sentence for its criminal authors because the people shall win in the end through revolutionary struggle.

As a result of the complete self-exposure of the US-Marcos dictatorship, the conditions for the rapid advance of the Philippine revolution against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism have become far more excellent than ever before. The ranks of the revolutionary movement have rapidly broadened and the various forms of revolutionary struggle, principally armed struggle, have further intensified.

A new level of revolutionary struggle has come about. All over the country, the people are brimming with revolutionary hatred for the US-Marcos dictatorship, the violent opposite of national freedom and democracy which they cherish. It is starkly clear to everyone that a fascist dictatorship, seeking to perpetuate itself through counterrevolutionary violence, can be overthrown only through revolutionary violence. The US-Marcos clique has only dug its grave deeper.

The usurpation of absolute power by the US-Marcos dictatorship

With an autocratic arrogance reminiscent of absolute monarchy in feudal times, the US-Marcos clique has converted Article VII, Section 10, Paragraph 2 of the reactionary constitution into an overall license to suppress the sovereign rights of the Filipino people in violation of every concept of republicanism. It is the absurd stand of the US-Marcos dictatorship that it can declare and implement an “unlimited form of martial law.” If the fascist logic of the dictatorship were to be followed, this particular constitutional provision should have merited being the Preamble, Article I or Article II, but never lower than Article III entitled “Bill of Rights” of the reactionary constitution. Indeed, fascist dictators themselves wantonly violate the priority of principles laid down hypocritically in bourgeois constitutions and pick constitutional provisions out of context in order to suit their tyranny.

Without bothering to get any authorization from Congress, Marcos highhandedly signed Proclamation No. 1081 on September 21 and subsequently signed corresponding general orders, letters of instruction and a presidential decree on September 22 and September 23 before finally making them public at 7:15 on the evening of September 23, 1972. In his “background” speech for his prior acts, all essentially calculated to usurp and concentrate absolute governmental power in his hands and suppress every kind of democratic and revolutionary opposition to his regime, he boasted of wanting “to save the republic and to reform society” and of doing so in his capacity as commander-in-chief of the reactionary armed forces alone. In this regard, the puppet dictator Marcos keeps repeating “I” and “me personally” to stress his autocratic pretensions.

Proclamation No. 1081 lays down at length the pretexts for martial law and dictatorship, such as that there is not only a “state of rebellion” and “subversion” but even “an actual state of war” throughout the country, including the Greater Manila area. This is supposed to be due to a “criminal conspiracy” of such diverse groups of men as the Communist Party of the Philippines; the Liberal Party; the publishers, editors and other journalists; members of the constitutional convention; Manila TV-radio broadcasters; leaders and members of mass organizations of workers, peasants, students, teachers and professionals, women and others; the national minorities, especially those of Mindanao; and even such unwholesome groups as crime syndicates, petty warlords and the Lava revisionist renegades. Then, the proclamation orders the reactionary armed forces to put the entire country under martial law and detain indefinitely at the whim of the commander-in-chief all those deemed opposed to his fascist puppet regime.

The promulgation of Proclamation No. 1081 immediately violates Article VI, Section 26 of the reactionary constitution which clearly states that “in times of war or other national emergency, the Congress may by law authorize the President, for a limited period and subject to such restrictions as it may prescribe, to promulgate rules and regulations to carry out a declared national policy.” This constitutional provision points out the authority of Congress and the necessity of having a declared national policy emanating from it. Marcos did not bother to consult Congress as the national policy-making body of the reactionary government before signing his fascist proclamation. He even went farther by issuing General Order No. 1 and Presidential Decree No. 1 which put Congress to naught.

General Order No. 1 proclaims that the entire nation and the entire government, including all its agencies and instrumentalities, are under the absolute authority of the US-Marcos dictatorship. Under this order, both the legislative department and the judicial department, coequals and coordinates of the executive department under the constitution, are arbitrarily rendered inutile and even nonexistent. This order also carries with it the implication that the commander-in-chief of the reactionary armed forces can at whim disregard and violate anyone’s right to public office by virtue of election or civil service rules. In effect, the fascist dictatorship has torn to pieces the very same constitution which it pretends to defend and draw authority from.

The promulgation of Presidential Decree No. 1 clearly shows that Marcos has arrogated unto himself the prerogatives and functions of Congress or the legislative department. Under this decree, the “Integrated Reorganization Plan” is simply declared “part of the law of the land” despite the fact that this is a pending congressional bill. The fascist dictator has even seen it fit to berate Congress for not having had enough sense to pass this bill before. By way of confirming the dissolution or absorption by him of Congress, he invited a number of congressmen on September 25 only to tell them to become “models in their communities” and to threaten them veiledly with dispossession of their property by the Bureau of Internal Revenue. To stress the point that he has assumed fascist dictatorial powers, he has ordered the detention of several members of Congress in military camps or placed them under house arrest or under threat of detention and other punitive measures.

General Order No. 3 clearly puts all actions of the US-Marcos dictatorship above the civilian courts, including the Supreme Court. It takes away from these the

prerogative of trying seven categories of cases of vital importance, such as those involving: 1) the validity, legality or constitutionality of any decree, order or acts issued, promulgated or performed by the dictator himself or his duly designated representative; 2) the validity, legality or constitutionality of any rules, orders or acts issued, promulgated or performed by public servants pursuant to decrees, orders, rules and regulations issued and promulgated “by me” or by “my duly designated representative” pursuant to Proclamation No. 1081; 3) crimes against national security and the law of nations; 4) crimes against the fundamental laws of the state; 5) crimes against public order; 6) usurpation of authority, rank, title, and improper use of names, uniforms and insignia; and 7) crimes committed by public officers.

The abovementioned cases are put within the exclusive jurisdiction of military commissions or military courts created by the chief of staff of the reactionary armed forces and under the direction of the dictatorship. In other words, the US-Marcos dictatorship and its fascist minions can commit every crime with absolute impunity. Marcos himself has scorned the petition of detainees for the writ of habeas corpus in the Supreme Court as an exercise in futility since he claims now to be the sole authority on judicial matters as commander-in-chief of the reactionary armed forces. He has also declared that he will remove and replace public officials in any government department, including the judiciary; in fact, he has already demanded the resignation of all judges of the lower civilian courts and special courts like the Court of Industrial Relations and Court of Agrarian Relations. The scope of authority given to the military courts is so comprehensive that all civilian courts, including the Supreme Court, are left with no more cases to try, except some of a marginal nature.

General Order No. 3 orders that the present officers and employees of all executive departments, bureaus, offices, agencies and instrumentalities of the national government, government-owned or controlled corporations, as well as all governments of all the provinces, cities and municipalities and barrios can remain in office only at the pleasure of the US-Marcos dictatorship and can no longer consider as sufficient basis for tenure previous elections or civil service eligibility.

Provincial governors and town and city mayors are now so much threatened that some of those who were previously critical of the US-Marcos clique, especially those from the Liberal Party, have started to sing paeans for Marcos as if the criminal character of this scoundrel can be appeased by capitulation. Presidential

Decree No. 1 emphasizes the threat of dismissal against appointive officials and employees even without due process and due cause. The real intention of the “Integrated Reorganization Plan” is to effect mass dismissal of civilian employees so that their salaries could be used for the purposes of the fascist military although the avowed intention of the dictatorship is to reduce the costs of government by “weeding out” those whom it categorizes as “corrupt, inefficient, ignorant and useless.”

By acting on the sole basis that he is the commander-in-chief of the reactionary armed forces and by implementing his line of “unlimited martial law” above and beyond the entire constitution, Marcos has supplanted “civilian authority” with “military authority,” notwithstanding his previous declaration on September 23 that there was “no military takeover,” and has calculated to perpetuate his dictatorship, notwithstanding his oft-repeated claim that he wants the “national emergency” to end “as soon as possible.”

In his address to his military lapdogs on September 26, the dictator himself declared: “By and large, the military in the Philippines have demonstrated their capacity to govern, rule and exact obedience.... This is the first new principle or main manifestation in the New Society which we would like to create: that there is a breed of men capable not only of ruling others but of governing themselves.... we must thank you and the men under you, noncommissioned officers and enlisted men, all the way down to the lowest level, have shown and demonstrated that this principle in which we believe, that is, that the military can be given all the power....”

For all intents and purposes, the US-Marcos dictatorship is hell-bent on employing an armed minority of men (at the moment only about 65,000 including noncombatant personnel) to ride roughshod over the people. This is absolutely necessary as the dictatorship intends to perpetuate itself for “two years or more” (as revealed by top CIA agent Alejandro Melchor in a press interview in the United States, after making a special report on the Philippine situation to his US imperialist masters). This is far beyond the one year and three months that is left of the constitutional tenure of Marcos.

The suppression of the basic democratic rights of the people

In line with the vile scheme of the US-Marcos dictatorship to perpetuate itself in power, General Order No. 2, General Order No. 4 and General Order No. 5 are

all aimed at directly intimidating and actually curtailing and suppressing the basic democratic rights of the broad masses of the people. Of course, these are closely related to General Order No. 3 which, elaborating on Proclamation No. 1081, subjects the people to final judgment by their fascist persecutors.

General Order No. 2 reiterates the order for mass arrests and mass detention immediately embodied in Proclamation No. 1081. It orders the fascist troops to arrest and detain for as long as it pleases the dictatorship “such persons as may have committed crimes and offenses in furtherance or on the occasion of or incident to or in connection with the crimes of insurrection or rebellion, as well as persons who have committed crimes against national security and the law of nations, crimes against public order, crimes involving usurpation of authority, title, improper use of name, uniform and insignia, including persons guilty of crimes as public officers, as well as those persons who may have violated any decree or order promulgated by me personally or promulgated upon my direction.”

Under this order, anyone can be blacklisted by the US-Marcos dictatorship, blackmailed or actually put through sham trial in the military courts and punished arbitrarily. In the first wave of nationwide mass arrests, conducted from 9:00 p.m. of September 22 to 6:00 a.m. of September 23, several thousands of leading personalities in various legal endeavors and common people were apprehended and thrown into military camps and many of these were brutally tortured or even murdered. So far, only a little over a hundred detainees in the Manila-Rizal region have been reported through the Marcos-controlled government radio stations and the Marcos-owned Kanlaon Broadcasting System (KBS) and Daily Express.

General Order No. 4 orders the maintenance of a daily curfew throughout the Philippines from 12:00 midnight to 4:00 in the morning. This has immediately resulted in the disruption of the livelihood of a great number of people, including workers on the night shift, fishermen, market vendors, transport workers and businessmen, restaurant employees, street peddlers and so many others. To disregard this order infringing on the free movement of the people is to suffer brutal treatment and indefinite detention in a military camp and subsequently in a prison camp. Exemptions to this order can be taken only from a military commander-in-charge in the given area. That military officer acts as the overlord in the area. Within or outside curfew time, it is now the fascist troops roaming the streets who commit all sorts of crimes, frequently extortion, robbery,

maulings, drunken behavior and rape. Anyone who complains can easily get accused of slandering the dictator Marcos and the fascist military.

General Order No. 5 orders the suppression of the basic democratic rights of free assembly and free expression. This is directed against the workers, peasants, youth and all other sections of the population, including political parties, trade unions and other mass organizations. It prohibits under pain of fascist punishment all rallies and demonstrations and other forms of mass actions, including strikes and picketing by workers and others, in vital industries such as in companies engaged in the manufacture or processing as well as in the distribution of fuel, gas, gasoline and fuel or lubricating oil, in companies engaged in the production or processing of essential commodities or products for export, and in companies engaged in banking of any kind, as well as in hospitals and in schools and colleges.

It is clear by this order that while he acts as a dictator towards the broad masses of the people, Marcos is a despicable puppet of the big bourgeoisie, especially the US imperialists. He is especially interested in suppressing protest mass actions against the US oil monopolies and their arbitrary price hiking. At any rate, he is violently opposed to all forms of democratic assembly and expression. He has gone as far as to issue a special order to the armed forces, particularly his secret agents, to eavesdrop on ordinary conversations in order to catch people for “rumormongering.”

Letter of Instruction No. 1 also involves the suppression of the democratic right of free expression. It orders the Press Secretary of the Department of Public Information (DPI) after Presidential Decree No. 1, to take over all newspapers, magazines, radio and television facilities and all other media of communications, wherever they are. The closure of the major Manila newspapers and radio and TV stations has disrupted the livelihood of printing workers, journalists, staff employees, radio-TV talents, newsboys, newspaper dealers and so many others. Pursuant to Letter of Instruction No. 1, the DPI secretary has started to issue his own department orders. Department Order No. 1 orders, among others, that all materials for publication in the newspapers or broadcast on radio and television shall have to carry the approval of the Department of Public Information and that these shall have to fall in with the fascist dictatorship and strictly avoid expressing the true national and democratic interests of the Filipino people. Department Order No. 2 orders that no printer may print any newspaper, periodical, news sheet, pamphlet, leaflet or any publication for mass

dissemination of any kind without approval of the Department of Public Information and that these shall also have to conform with Department Order No. 1. Because of bureaucratic run-around involved in getting approval for printing orders, the livelihood not only of the press owners but also of the printing workers are adversely affected.

The US-Marcos dictatorship wants to monopolize all channels of information with the vain hope of controlling the minds of the people with its lies. Its fascist totalitarianism leaves no room for such other channels of information as those owned by the Roceses, Lopezes, Locsins and the like though these have never gone beyond legal criticism of the obvious excesses of the US-Marcos clique and have as a matter of fact given utmost space to Malacañang press releases. In the meantime, it is only those channels of information that are owned by the fascist government (like Radio Philippines Network; Philippine Broadcasting System and the like); those that are owned directly or indirectly by fascist dictator Marcos (like Kanlaon Broadcasting System, Daily Express, Liwayway, Bannawag, Hiligaynon, Bisaya, and the like); and those owned by foreign imperialist entities, especially US, (Philippines Herald, Radio Mindanao Network, Interisland Broadcasting System and the like) that are allowed to operate.

This new development is what Marcos calls fighting “subversion” with “sophistication.” This is what we call the crudeness of fascism, the complete unmasking of the ugly face of a fascist dictatorship. Unwittingly, the US-Marcos dictatorship has only convinced the broad masses of the people of the necessity and urgency of putting out and distributing underground publications and resorting to other forms of mass communications (including secret meetings in urban areas and mass meetings in the rural areas). It must also be pointed out that it is impossible for the fascist authorities to guard all medium and small printing presses in the country, not to mention some small presses securely kept in the underground.

Gone berserk in its attempt to suppress every kind of opposition to its unjust rule, the US-Marcos dictatorship has as one of its initial acts suspended classes at all levels. Though the initial suspension of classes is only for one week, this has been extended indefinitely at the high school, college and graduate levels. School teachers in primary and elementary schools are now under threat of being dismissed if they disobey strict orders to wage a hysterical campaign of anticommunist indoctrination and propaganda for the fascist dictatorship.

Progressive teachers and students, including officers of student governments, are being apprehended or threatened with detention. Such fascist tactics have only served to increase the number of men and women who are very articulate in denouncing the US-Marcos dictatorship. The indefinite closure of all private high schools and colleges have angered all the teachers whose livelihood has been unduly disrupted and the students' parents who are acutely concerned about the time and living expenses of their children going to waste.

General Order No. 6 and General Order No. 7 are both intended to consolidate control by the US-Marcos dictatorship of firearms and ammunitions in the hands of the reactionary armed forces and police forces and also those in the hands of security agencies and warlords. The first order prohibits the carrying of firearms by private persons and orders the arrest of all persons doing so unless they are authorized by the dictatorship. Marcos himself has declared in his "background" speech that carrying of firearms outside the residence, even if covered by license but without permission of the reactionary armed forces, is punishable by death. The second order requires that all high-powered firearms in the hands of private security agencies, public or private corporations (including gun stores) and private individuals, and those under temporary custody of the Bureau of Customs, Bureau of Posts and clerks of courts (apart from those in pending court cases) be turned over immediately to the firearms and explosives units of the Philippine Constabulary.

To camouflage its real intention of controlling arms for its fascist purposes, the US-Marcos dictatorship has raved mad about "peace and order" and has even pretended to arrest and confiscate token numbers of arms from notorious warlords who are close to it, like Ablan, Bocalan, Crisologo and the like. But the warlords and crime gangs are actually not surrendering their arms. Only some police forces, private corporations and individuals opposed to the US-Marcos dictatorship are being forced to turn over their registered arms to the Philippine Constabulary. As a result, these entities are being rendered helpless before the fascist gangsters, warlords and ordinary armed criminals.

Letter of Instruction No. 2 orders the Secretary of National Defense to "take over" the management, control and operation of the Manila Electric Company (MERALCO), the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company (PLDT), the National Waterworks and Sewerage Authority (NAWASA), the Philippine National Railways (PNR), the Philippine Air Lines (PAL), Air Manila, Filipinas Orient Airways, and other public utilities. Once more, the US-Marcos

dictatorship deliberately refuses even only to mention the US oil companies and other US-owned public utility firms in the Philippines.

The “takeover” of public utilities is neither to achieve nationalization nor to crush an armed opposition in the premises. The NAWASA and PNR are government corporations long under trusted military appointees of Marcos. The PLDT and Air Manila are private corporations controlled and owned by Marcos himself through dummies. The PAL and Filipinas Orient Airways continue to be private corporations under the ownership and control of Marcos’ big bourgeois confreres. The real target for spite of the US-Marcos dictatorship is MERALCO and the Lopezes who are owners of controlling stocks. The military-takeover management here really makes it a point to boss around, go over the company accounts and meddle in operations. Though Marcos himself is a noncontrolling co-owner of this public utility firm, he wants to once more tighten the screw against the Lopezes whom he wants to support his dictatorship completely, especially with the use of the Lopez-owned Manila Chronicle and ABS-CBN radio-television network.

Letter of Instruction No. 3 orders the Secretary of National Defense to take over the possession, control and operation of all privately owned aircraft and watercraft of Philippine registry and also to control the movement of nonmilitary foreign-owned and foreign-registered aircraft and watercraft of whatever make. The avowed intention of the US-Marcos dictatorship in this regard is to prevent the escape of his reactionary rivals for power either by sea or by air in their private yachts or private planes. Letters of Instruction Nos. 4, 5, 6, and 7 to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, the Secretary of Justice, the Secretary of Finance and the Governor of the Central Bank, respectively, are also openly intended to prevent the “escape from the country” of the enemies of the US-Marcos dictatorship. But, of course, the instructions, from Instruction No. 3 to Instruction No. 7, are all meant to curtail the free flow of information regarding the despicableness by which the US-Marcos dictatorship has come about. Only after assuring itself of complete control of the mass media and also the detention of a sweeping range of critics has the dictatorship allowed, under guard of troops, spies and censors, the transmission of messages via international and domestic carriers and communication firms.

In a vain attempt to deceive the peasant masses, the big landlord and landgrabber Marcos has announced that he has issued Presidential Decree No. 2 proclaiming the whole country as a “land reform area.” This is plain drivel of a demagogue.

Since the law to be applied is basically the old Agricultural Land Reform Code, which is reactionary by both origin and amendments, nothing will come out of the decree except that it will serve to worsen the plight of the peasant masses as has been proven in previous “land reform areas.” The code is essentially nothing more than a set of instructions for the landlord class to exploit the peasantry further. In making his decree, Marcos even fails to conceal his malice as he sternly warns the tenant peasants to “respect” and be “fair and just” to the landlords. The dictatorship is hellbent on preventing the peasant masses from forming their own associations and is busier than ever in criminally assaulting and rounding up those who have their own militant associations. The reactionary armed forces are now frenziedly attacking the peasant masses and accusing them of being guerrilla fighters of the New People’s Army. Thus, the US-Marcos dictatorship has become isolated not only in the urban areas but also in the countryside where the flames of people’s war are rapidly spreading.

The “show window of democracy in Asia” which was much touted by US imperialism and its puppets in the past has completely proven to be mere soap bubble. It is now completely gone. Because of its boundless greed for power and wealth, the US-Marcos dictatorship has forced on everyone in the Philippines the choice between armed revolution and armed counterrevolution. The people’s revolutionary struggle for national freedom and democracy has become ever more vigorous and fiercer. In this regard, it is worth taking up CIA agent Melchor’s description of his criminal accomplice Marcos, as one who has put his head on the block. This description is very apt. The Filipino people are going to literally chop off Marcos’ head in due time, unless his US imperialist masters will first do so in the manner that they did to the abominable Ngo Dinh Diem. At any rate, the Filipino people will continue to maintain their armed strength and fight on even as some other dog would be groomed as one more puppet dictator by US imperialism. In the face of the present fascist tyranny, the broad masses of the Filipino people know how to fight for their freedom.

The fabrication of the “state of national emergency”

An actual state of martial law has long existed in many parts of the country, especially in Central Luzon, Northern Luzon, Southern Luzon and Mindanao, even before the formal declaration of martial law covering the entire country. The fascist minions of the US-Marcos clique under the black banners of military task forces have long operated as the supreme wielders of political authority, abusing and blackmailing the people; robbing and extorting from them; rounding

them up and incarcerating them indefinitely on false charges; barging into homes and even burning them; committing kidnappings, murder and massacres; and raping the womenfolk with impunity.

These are the concrete manifestations, especially in the countryside, of the trend of militarization and fascization so well condemned by the people throughout the land. These are the bitter results of the more than five-fold increase of the official military budget from 1966 to 1972; the system of conspiracy between the commander-in-chief and his favorites in the reactionary armed forces; the rapid increase in troops and equipment; the fielding of so many “task forces” and “paramilitary units” (BSDUs and “Monkees”); the vicious employment of the Anti-Subversion Law; the intensification of fascist training in “home defense” centers; the militarist intrusion into civilian offices and functions either under the signboard of “civic action” or “accommodation of retirees from the military service”; the secret but widescale issuance of military rank to civilian officials; the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus; the unremitting “psywar” campaigns for the acceptance of martial law; the adoption of “contingency plans”; committing crimes of bloody intrigue for the purpose of pitting one group against another; and so many others.

The real situation in certain parts of the country is now being turned into a nationwide situation through the formal declaration of martial law. The US-Marcos dictatorship is bent on committing all kinds of fascist crimes against the broad masses of the people in order to suppress their clamor for national freedom and democracy, province by province and island by island. The fascist dictatorship has the illusion that it can freely do so as long as it has the absolute power over the entire reactionary government and monopoly of the legal channels of communications such as those rendered in the Manila-Rizal region and other urban areas. Thus, aside from trying to hunt down the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People’s Army, it has to terrorize the democratic mass organizations, the mass media, the Liberal Party, sections of the Nacionalista Party, sections of the constitutional convention and all patriotic and democratic personages. This is to serve notice to all who can disseminate information and opinions widely to keep silent about fascist crimes that are aimed at protecting the interests of US imperialism and at the same time perpetuating the Marcos puppet gang in power. To achieve its vile scheme, the US-Marcos clique has had to resort to a number of tricks resting mainly on the myth of “urban terrorism.” A series of a few bombings is made in the urban areas, blamed on communists and all other democratic forces, turned into an

argument for “contingency plans” and, presto, there is a “state of national emergency” which is used as a pretext for doing away with all channels of mass communications except those of the commander-in-chief and his dictatorship.

The dry run for the big trick that is the current “state of national emergency” was the Plaza Miranda massacre on August 21, 1971 and the subsequent suspension of the writ of habeas corpus until January of this year. In the massacre caused by two grenades, nine were killed and more than a hundred people were seriously wounded including almost all the top leaders of the Liberal Party. Within two hours after the incident, the US-Marcos clique was already on radio blaming the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People’s Army and democratic mass organizations for the dastardly crime. Then, less than three hours after the massacre, the US-Marcos clique issued only to the reactionary armed forces and without public knowledge until August 23, the presidential proclamation suspending the writ of habeas corpus and ordering the mass arrest of prominent democratic personages and activists of democratic mass organizations. Immediately after the massacre, there also followed a series of nine petty bombings which had no other motive but to buttress the false public claims of the US-Marcos clique and which could have been committed in certain well-guarded places, like the Manila City Hall and the residence of Rep. Cojuangco, only by a conspiracy in which Marcos himself was involved.

What gave away the bloody hands of the US-Marcos clique with regard to the Plaza Miranda massacre was that Marcos and his lieutenant Enrile readily blamed so many people, including a college president and a prominent radio commentator, and entire mass organizations for a crime which was essentially a conspiracy and, therefore, could have involved only a handful of persons in both planning and execution. The broad masses of the people and the survivors of the massacre themselves pointed the finger of blame on the US-Marcos clique, which had been responsible for so many previous massacres. The false accusations of the US-Marcos clique became more ludicrous and incredible when the leaders of the Liberal Party were finally accused of trying to kill themselves in order to get public sympathy and win the elections. The suspension of the writ of habeas corpus was “lifted” only after the US-Marcos clique appeared satisfied with something, like the Supreme Court decision acclaiming the presidential privilege to suspend the writ, giving credence to a piece of fabrication like the “July-August Plan” and above all noting the existence of a state of rebellion and likewise of a declaration of war from the Communist Party of the Philippines. Then, in a complete turnabout from its

previous propaganda of anticommunist lies, the US-Marcos clique charged in court for the Plaza Miranda massacre not some communists but some living-out prisoners of the national penitentiary, which is run by a trusted agent of the US-Marcos clique.

The fascist tricks of the US-Marcos clique did not end with the Plaza Miranda massacre, however. The clique merely took a breather for a few months from its November 1971 electoral defeat. Soon came another series of petty bombings, a total of 16 minor detonations (from March 15 to September 18, 1972) most of which caused only some petty damage on some government and privately owned buildings and three of which were the most serious, causing one death and injuries to more than twenty people. In addition, there were “discoveries” of bombs at Congress and the Department of Foreign Affairs and two patently fake casualtyless ambushes, one supposedly on a Metrocom car and another on Defense Secretary Enrile himself. Most of the bombings and other incidents were made during the months of August and September 1972 immediately prior to Proclamation No. 1081.

It was during the months of August and September, when thirteen of the abovesited incidents were made, that the US-Marcos clique took the posture of raving mad about “urban terrorism” and “urban guerrilla warfare.” Within seconds after every incident, Marcos and his fascist minions would rail against the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People’s Army and democratic mass organizations and threaten to adopt some “contingency plans.” Every day the front pages of the Manila newspapers would scream and the radio would blare with the quick allegations of the US-Marcos clique. During this period, the Communist Party of the Philippines issued through Ang Bayan two statements refuting the false accusations of the fascist clique; some quotations from these statements found their way into Manila newspapers. As during the white terror that followed the Plaza Miranda massacre, the Party reaffirmed its adherence to the theory of people’s war and the strategic line of encircling the cities from the countryside and strongly condemned terrorist acts where the most likely victims are the people and likewise the stupid “psywar” campaign unleashed by the enemy to cause a mammoth-sized hysteria from a few petty incidents.

A few of the bombings before June 1972 had been claimed by the Lava revisionist renegades in their anticommunist publications as their own doing. And in three bombings, where there were casualties, evidence clearly pointed to the US-Marcos clique as the mastermind and culprit. A PC sergeant belonging to

the PC firearms and explosives unit was actually caught by the Manila Police and confessed to being on a “special mission” in connection with the most serious bombing, that at Joe’s Department Store. Two AFP plainclothesmen taking a ride in a jeep marked “for official use only” were seen by eyewitnesses in connection with the bombing at the Manila City Hall. Three PC men in uniform were also seen in the process of bomb emplacement and getaway in a PC truck by three delegates of the constitutional convention in connection with the bombing at the Quezon City Hall.

Despite all evidences and clues gathered, the US-Marcos clique did not only continue to insist on its false anticommunist charges but also maneuvered to suppress evidence pointing to its own criminal responsibility. The maneuvers of the clique were so crudely evident that eventually the leaders of the Liberal Party and journalists of the Manila newspapers stood up to raise questions of doubt and also to denounce certain actuations of the powers that be. Then came the public exposure of “Operation Sagittarius” which unmasked the plans of the US-Marcos clique to declare martial law under the guise of taking “contingency plans” to follow up the terrorist incidents made by the clique itself. This operational plan had been leaked out to a member of the Senate by a top-ranking military officer. It was at this point, covering a period of about two weeks prior to Proclamation No. 1081, that the US-Marcos clique intensified its efforts to terrorize all its critics by telling them that they could be kidnapped or assassinated. As if it could deceive the people by a mere repetition of lies, Proclamation No. 1081 continues to treat the incidents, which were mostly bombings in urban areas, as the key factor in declaring a “state of national emergency.” On the other hand, this proclamation has completely unmasked the US-Marcos clique as a totally fascist criminal gang and a bunch of incorrigible liars. How many times did these scoundrels deny scheming to impose martial law? There is not only martial law now but also a full-blown fascist dictatorship to boot. The flimsy basis for what is now called a “state of national emergency” or “an actual state of war” is a series of twenty relatively minor incidents which, as now confirmed by the very promulgation of Proclamation No. 1081, have all along been the calculated doing of the US-Marcos clique to fabricate grounds for a fascist dictatorship all over the country.

The basis for the “state of national emergency” becomes even more flimsy and ludicrous when a textual examination is made of the “Regional Program of Action 1972,” previously referred to variably as the “Tarinsing Papers,” the “July-August Plan” or “September-October Plan” by the US-Marcos clique. It is

incorporated in Proclamation No. 1081; now it can be publicly checked and scrutinized. This “regional program of action” is completely a piece of deception, a fabrication pure and simple. It is supposed to be a regional program of action and yet its scope is national and the name of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines is spuriously tacked on it. It was supposed to have been captured by Task Force “Saranay” in Barrio Tarinsing, Cordon, Isabela on June 18, 1972 and it lists down a number of specific bombing targets for September and October 1972 in the Manila-Rizal region. Despite the supposed advantage of being forewarned by several months, the reactionary armed forces did not thwart the bombing of the listed targets or capture any bomber. Then, consider how the “regional plan” is conceived, put into outline and written according to outline. It is completely childish. To write an instruction like “Create regional chaos and disorder...” is utterly counterrevolutionary and outside of revolutionary thinking and style. This is Marcosian gibberish, a sloppy attempt at forgery.

Before Proclamation No. 1081, there could not have been any “actual state of war” in the Manila-Rizal region. On the very day that Marcos was supposed to have signed this proclamation in utmost secrecy, people’s marches from several assembly points in the Manila-Rizal region and a massive rally of several tens of thousands of people at Plaza Miranda were peacefully conducted under the auspices of the Movement of Concerned Citizens for Civil Liberties and with the participation of more than sixty democratic mass organizations. In the entire stretch of the day, the factories, offices, schools and business shops were in normal operation. Congress, the courts, various government offices, the constitutional convention, the restaurants, coffee shops and nightclubs were also in normal operation. The “actual state of war” in the Manila-Rizal region was nothing more than the fantasy of the madman Marcos, otherwise notoriously known as the mad bomber.

The wide-ranging “whereases” of Proclamation No. 1081 contradict each other and serve mainly to show how much of a fumbling liar the dictator Marcos is. He makes one claim that the strength of the New People’s Army has rapidly increased, but also makes the opposite claim that it has suffered a disastrously increasing number of casualties and therefore, an increasing loss of arms, from year to year. Besides, he deflates the number of military actions launched against and the number of casualties inflicted on the reactionary armed forces by the New People’s Army in the countryside. He makes one claim that the number of regular Red fighters has increased from 560 as of January 1, 1972 to 1,028

regular fighters as of July 31, 1972, but he also makes the opposite claim that the New People's Army got 3,500 M-14 rifles from the Karagatan during the month of July. Possession of 3,500 M-14 rifles should mean a great deal more of regular troop increase for the people's army. He makes one claim that some 3,000 high school and college students have dropped out to join fighting units of the New People's Army, but makes the opposite claim that the same people's army has only 1,028 regular fighters and 1,500 combat support. The truth is that at least 90 percent of the regular mobile and guerrilla units of the people's army are peasants; this makes Marcos' claim regarding school dropouts an outright lie even as his own figures fail to tally with each other. Finally, it may be asked, why is it that Marcos is terrified by what he claims is a little over 1,000 Red fighters while at the same time he never fails to brag about the overbearing strength of his military personnel of 65,000? Has he not always been prating that he is "on top of the situation"?

Although in its very first "whereas" it makes the attempt to show that only the Communist Party is the "conspiracy" out to overthrow the present reactionary state, Proclamation No. 1081, together with its corresponding general orders and letters of instruction, ends up accusing a wide range of people of being in one and the same "conspiracy" that is supposed to be responsible for a "reign of terror" and "wanton acts of destruction on life and property" in both the rural and urban areas. The dictator Marcos arbitrarily changes the meaning of terms. Obviously, he has already extended his dictatorial power into the realm of the lexicon. Normally, conspiracy is defined as the act of a handful of persons secretly plotting to commit a crime according to a single plan. In the novel meaning now given by the dictator to the term, it is supposed to be the open and mass activity of the most diverse organizations and individuals acting "consciously" and "unconsciously" to oppose such a real conspiracy as that one which has brought about the present fascist dictatorship.

The US-Marcos dictatorship actually insists that the Communist Party of the Philippines is in "conspiracy" with the Lava revisionist renegades and crime syndicates. This is a vicious slander on the Party. But the fascist dictatorship unwittingly exposes its hopeless isolation by linking in word and deed the Communist Party of the Philippines with the democratic mass organizations (of workers, peasants, youth and others), the mass media, the Liberal Party, certain sections of the Nacionalista Party, certain members of the constitutional convention, the poor settlers, the national minorities and the Mindanao Independence Movement. It is utterly silly, however, for the fascist dictatorship

to accuse the Communist Party, together with these, of crimes against the people. If that were the case, there would be no more need for the “extraordinary measures” of the US-Marcos dictatorship, for it would be us who would be isolated and not this despicable dictatorship.

Proclamation No. 1081 takes great stock in citing a decision of the Supreme Court (on the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus last year) stating that there has been a state of rebellion since several decades ago and that the program of the Communist Party of the Philippines amounts to a declaration of war. On the basis of this citation, the US-Marcos clique claims to have the right to declare martial law under any condition and anytime it pleases. It further argues that it has already resorted to the use of military task forces and subsequently the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus but that it has failed each time to suppress the armed revolutionary movement which has always succeeded in becoming even stronger despite these measures. So, it concludes that it has to declare martial law. It further concludes that it is entirely up to the president in his capacity as commander-in-chief of the armed forces to make anything out of martial law since the term “martial law” is supposedly not qualified in Article VII, Section 10, Paragraph 2 of the reactionary constitution. Thus, the commander-in-chief has finally decided to install himself as a fascist dictator under the cover of an “unlimited form of martial law.”

The term “martial law” appears in the context of a constitutional provision, which refers to certain other factors and elements and which even refers to degrees and alternatives. It is not true that the term is absolutely not qualified and that it can be interpreted by the president in any way he wants. The term “place under martial law” implies merely execution or implementation of a national policy determined and declared by Congress. The provision carrying the term appears in the context of the entire constitution which also carries Article VI, Section 26. In times of war or other national emergency, it is Congress that is vested with the authority to decide the national policy and that authorizes by law the president, for a limited period of time and subject to such restrictions as it may prescribe, to promulgate rules and regulations to carry out a declared national policy.

Notwithstanding the existence of a state of rebellion, the formal declaration of martial law was never resorted to in the Philippines or any part thereof in the time prior to the present by Marcos’ predecessors and Marcos himself. Yet the reasons given now by Marcos for the formal declaration of martial law have not

only been in fact too blatantly contrived but have also been extremely questionable even among the reactionaries. The broad masses of the people easily see through the legal pretenses of the dictator Marcos. These are extremely flimsy embellishments on the new terrorist incidents plotted to bring about a “state of national emergency,” the fabrication of which rests on the US-Marcos dictatorship.

“New society” means nothing but the worsening of the old society

The US-Marcos dictatorship is not satisfied with pretending “to save the republic” in attacking the national and democratic rights of the sovereign people. It wants to remain in power for as long as it can through sheer armed force by pretending “to form a new society.” The “new society” means the perpetuation of the fascist dictatorship. It means nothing but the worsening of the old society. The old basic evils that are US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism shall continue to afflict semicolonial and semifeudal Philippines and shall aggravate the political and economic crisis of the ruling system and likewise the suffering of the broad masses of the people through the unmitigated puppetry, bankruptcy, brutality, corruption and mendacity of the Marcos fascist puppet dictatorship.

As confirmed by the statement of the US State Department soon after Proclamation No. 1081, the installment of the fascist dictatorship in the Philippines does not conflict with the interests of US imperialism. In fact, US imperialism is confidently behind the Marcos puppet dictatorship at the moment. The direct conspirators in the setting up of the fascist dictatorship have been the US “country team” (which includes the US ambassador, the CIA chief of station, the AID director, the USIA director and the JUSMAG chief) and the board of directors and other top members of the US Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines on the master side and the “internal security council” composed of Marcos, Melchor, Enrile and Generals Espino and Ramos of the general staff of the reactionary armed forces and a few others.

The US-Marcos dictatorship is the product of the vicious exploitation and oppression of the Filipino people by US imperialism and its local running dogs for the last seven decades. It is the result of the rapid process of militarization and fascization directed by US imperialism during the Marcos puppet regime to preserve and enlarge its political and economic interests in the country. By trying to draw more superprofits and make up for the losses that they have incurred

elsewhere in the world, the US imperialist masters of the Marcos puppet gang have only exacerbated the suffering of the broad masses of the people and have thereby engendered popular resistance and a strong revolutionary mass movement. So powerful has the anti-imperialist and antipuppet movement become that such a desperate measure as the installment of a fascist dictatorship is resorted to. US imperialism has always had the illusion that such fascist dictatorships as those of the Thieu regime in south Vietnam, Lon Nol regime in Cambodia, Suharto regime in Indonesia, Chiang regime in Taiwan and Park regime in south Korea are more reliable and stable tools of imperialist rule.

The US-Marcos dictatorship falls in with the “Nixon doctrine” that the Philippines must be kept no matter at what cost as a stronghold of counterrevolution in the determined bid of US imperialism to remain a “Pacific power.” From such an imperialist viewpoint, the most despicable measures must be taken in order to keep this archipelago in the Pacific a vassal state. A fascist gang like that of Marcos would just be too willing to implement these measures in exchange for an indefinite tenure of power in order to pile up more loot for itself. The fascist dictatorship is basically a desperate effort of US imperialism to protect \$2.0 billion US investments (in anticipation of the end of “parity rights”) and to maintain the Philippines as a strategic post in Asia.

US imperialism is today extremely unsettled by the people’s outcry for the confiscation of US-owned lands including the improvements thereon (like buildings, factories, equipment and other installations) and also for the immediate dismantling of US military bases which occupy large tracts of public lands. Even in the realm of the legal anti-imperialist struggle, US imperialism has lately suffered so many big reverses that it has decided to resort to the use of extraordinary measures with the use of the Marcos fascist gang. Just before Proclamation No. 1081, it was very clear that the bombing incidents and the corresponding “psywar” campaign were being staged by the US-Marcos clique in order to distract public attention from the strong legal grounds for demanding the immediate end of US imperialist domination. It dawned upon the US imperialists that even in the realm of the legal anti-imperialist struggle they were being hopelessly isolated. They had to hurry making use of the Marcos fascist gang which prated about “fairness” and “justice” for them against the popular demands for national emancipation.

The puppetry of the Marcos fascist gang is well proven. This gang has adopted and implemented to the letter every “recommendation” made by US imperialism

through such direct agents as the components of the US “country team” and such other agents as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, US monopoly firms, Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation and the like. The dictates of US imperialism have always become the basic policies and projects of the Marcos fascist puppet regime. Some of the most notorious policies and projects are the “floating rate” or the unabated rapid devaluation of the peso in relation to the US dollar; sham negotiations on the unequal US-RP treaties to achieve mere “adjustments”; “national treatment”, “joint ventures” and “incentives” — special privileges for US investments (nonexpropriation, investment insurance, unlimited dollar remittances, tax exemptions, driving up local credit sources, etc.); heavy foreign borrowings from the US and “consortium” banks for nonproductive projects; increasing taxation to raise counterpart funds for foreign loans and to support a military buildup; fascist training of the reactionary troops and police; the five-year program for a “self-reliant defense posture”; special privileges for US oil firms in oil exploration and in price-hiking; the “car manufacturing” scheme; free trade zones; and the reorganization plan of the Presidential Committee for the Survey of Philippine Education (PCSPE) for the educational system.

Enjoying absolute powers vis-à-vis the Filipino people, the Marcos fascist gang knows no bounds for its puppetry. It will throw the door wider open for US imperialism and other imperialist powers, especially Japanese militarism and Soviet social-imperialism. The substance of old unequal treaties with the United States will stay either through retention, minor revision or drafting of new ones. The Philippines will continue to suffer violation of national sovereignty and territorial integrity and will remain a victim of superprofit remittances by the imperialist firms and banks. Because a civil war of a national scale is now on hand and the US-Marcos dictatorship will subsequently resort to the use of US aggressor troops, despite the hypocritical claim of the “Nixon doctrine” about supplying war materiel rather than US manpower, the colonial domination of the Philippines will become more direct and conspicuous in the years to come unless other drastically different conditions arise.

Because it has seized absolute power without so much pretenses about having the support of a broad range of political groups, the US-Marcos dictatorship is exceptionally isolated at the moment and has to rely completely on its fascist troops. This extreme reliance on a parasitic and nonproductive military is bound to deepen the bankruptcy of the reactionary government. The present number of military personnel and equipment is not enough to maintain the fascist

dictatorship for very long. Only from 32,000 to 34,500 men or only about half of the present total of military personnel are combat effectives. Therefore, it is expected that it will increase military expenditures in order to increase the number of military personnel and equipment. The official 1972-73 military budget of P1.2 billion has already been superseded. Even at the present troop level, military expenditures have already increased tremendously since the US-Marcos dictatorship has started to bribe the military personnel, from the rank of private first class upwards, with salary increases and allowances. The fascist dictatorship will certainly create more inflation through huge military expenditures. It will also have to increase taxes and its foreign debts by leaps and bounds. To satisfy its greed and bloodthirstiness, the US-Marcos dictatorship will become even more rabid in suppressing the democratic rights of the people. The workers will not only be prevented from launching strikes and maintaining their unions to raise their depressed real incomes and to assure themselves of job security but they will also have to suffer the unjust accusation that they are the cause of spiraling prices. The peasant masses will continue to be subjected to the most brutal military operations ostensibly against the armed revolutionaries and will be forced to accept the dictates of the big landlord class of which fascist puppet chieftain Marcos is the outstanding representative. The students and their parents will be commanded to accept the rising cost of education and cost of living; student movements will continue to be the target of hysterical anticommunist propaganda, as in the case of trade unions and peasant associations. Teachers and other professionals will have to pay more taxes and will have to suffer more indignities in the hands of the military overlords who dictate on them what opinion to take on issues. Higher government taxes and special extortions from the military will bedevil all businessmen that are not in the good graces of the dictatorship. These are only some of the concrete evils that will plague the country as a result of Proclamation No. 1081.

With absolute power in the hands of the US-Marcos dictatorship and its military minions, unbridled corruption and brutality will go hand in hand to exacerbate the people's suffering. The dictator Marcos himself has long set the example of enriching himself in office more than any other puppet president and of exculpating his agents from the most heinous crimes, including massacres of workers, peasants, students, national minorities and even religious groups. With the suppression of democratic rights, every person and every group is now under blackmail by the fascist dictatorship and its agents. The dictatorship has not only seized every major legal channel of communications and suppressed democratic organizations but it has even outlawed the ordinary conversations of people

regarding the present situation and has branded these as “rumormongering.”

At present, the US-Marcos dictatorship and its military minions can simply accuse anyone of being a “subversive,” “conspirator” or “rumormonger” and extort anything from him at gunpoint. Through sheer coercion, the dictator Marcos will be able to acquire more stockholdings and landholdings. At every level of the reactionary government, his fascist minions will continue to do their own grabbing with more impunity. In the streets, the fascist troops will exact tribute more than in the past to the great annoyance of the local police whose most crooked members exact much less. In the campaign to seek out those who oppose the dictatorship, the most brutal measures will be taken such as those which long made the US-Marcos clique notorious. Kidnapping, torture, murder, arson and massacre have long been the political style of the Marcos fascist puppet gang. These can be committed by the fascist troops with more impunity, in both cities and countryside under Proclamation No. 1081.

The propaganda of the US-Marcos dictatorship keeps on harping about the sudden “peace and order” and “elimination of crime” as a result of Proclamation No. 1081. The truth is that fascist dictatorship is the biggest crime and cause of disorder. In the present “new society,” people are massacred or arrested and detained indefinitely on false charges and manufactured evidence. There is no more safety in one’s own home. Anytime, the fascist troops can barge in anywhere to dispose of persons and property in any manner they wish for their criminal ends. These minions of the dictatorship, together with their criminal associates (gangsters, informers, BSDUs and “Monkees”) arrogantly engage in extortion, robbery, torture, rape and other vicious crimes. And these do not get into the police blotter, simply because the victims do not want to become the accused before their abusers. By official record, there appears to be “peace and order” and “elimination of crime.” But crime and disorder, products of an exploitative and oppressive society, do not cease to exist just because the fascist-controlled mass media do not wish to report them.

Despite all attempts of the US-Marcos dictatorship to suppress the truth, the facts of fascist abuse are so widespread and so blatant. The fascist dictatorship will become even more hopelessly isolated by the stench of its lies. The broad masses of the people will only be further angered by mendacious propaganda prettifying the fascist dictatorship as having eliminated crime, lowered the prices of basic commodities, busted graft and corruption and rid the country of filth and pollution, whereas the contrary is the truth.

Deceptions even among a few people do not last long. The “new society” of the US-Marcos dictatorship is nothing but a phrase that will go the way of all previous slogans of deception spewed out by the US-Marcos clique. So long as the basic sources of evil in Philippine society are not eliminated, the manifestations of evil will always crop up. Marcos is nothing but the general representative of the big bourgeoisie and the big landlord class. What makes him even more distinctively so is that he has chosen to become a fascist dictator, a vicious running dog of US imperialism, under conditions when the political and economic crisis of the ruling system is getting more and more acute every day. In the “new society,” the basic sources of evil that are US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism will persist but will increasingly be under powerful assaults by the broad masses of the people. With a target as easy to hit as the US-Marcos dictatorship, the Filipino people will rapidly become even aware of their revolutionary strength, use it to destroy their enemies one by one and aim for a new Philippines that is genuinely and completely independent, democratic, united, just and prosperous.

Tasks of the Communist Party of the Philippines in the new situation

The setting up of the US-Marcos dictatorship through the declaration of an “unlimited form of martial law” and under the fascist principle that “all power can be given to the military” has brought about a new situation. Through the crude employment of armed coercion, dictator Marcos as commander-in-chief has arrogated unto himself and concentrated in his hands all executive, legislative and judicial powers. All of these powers are used not only against the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People’s Army but also against the broad masses of the people and all opposition to the perpetuation of a fascist dictatorship. Upon the setting up of this fascist dictatorship, the objective conditions for a civil war of a national scale have arisen. The entire Filipino people vehemently condemn the US-Marcos dictatorship as antinational, antirepublican, antidemocratic and decadent and are more determined than ever before to struggle for national democracy and, therefore, for a genuine republic that belongs to them.

It has long been pointed out and stressed to the US-Marcos clique that people’s war is the answer to martial law. Now that martial law is here, large masses of revolutionary militants and allied leaders of various forces all over the country have gone underground or have gone to the countryside from cities and towns and are resolutely taking every possible and necessary step to overthrow the US-

Marcos dictatorship. Many times more than the previous suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, the setting up of the fascist dictatorship has resulted in an increase of men and women eager and ready to do their share of fighting in the battlefield. With every national and democratic right suppressed, the broad masses of the people have more deeply realized the need to support or participate in people's war. The revolutionary stand of the Communist Party of the Philippines that armed struggle is the principal form of struggle at the present national democratic stage of the Philippine revolution has never before been clearer than now.

In the new situation, there are three things that stand out. First, the Communist Party of the Philippines is the most prepared to lead the revolutionary struggle that calls for the armed overthrow of the fascist government. Second, the Party has the strongest and most experienced revolutionary army, the New People's Army. Third, the ranks of the revolutionary movement have greatly expanded and fighting cadres as well as allies are all over the archipelago determined to conduct people's war. These things would not have stood out as clearly as now were it not for the fascist viciousness of the US-Marcos dictatorship.

The Communist Party of the Philippines is the party most prepared to lead the revolutionary struggle because it is the most prepared to do so ideologically, politically and organizationally. By virtue of its adherence to and practice of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, it can be relied upon to fight steadfastly in a protracted people's war and to deal with the problems of the Philippine revolution in the most comprehensive and correct manner. By virtue of its revolutionary politics, it can be relied upon to serve the toiling masses of workers and peasants, respect the legitimate interests of the petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie and mobilize the biggest mass force to overthrow the tyrannical regime. By virtue of its organizational strength, it has emerged practically unscathed from the vicious blows so far made by the enemy under Proclamation No. 1081. In so many years, the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army have been the target of all kinds of enemy operations and task forces and yet they have not only managed to preserve themselves and destroy the enemy part by part but have become even stronger through revolutionary struggle. To ensure the growth and development of people's war as a mass undertaking, the Party has indefatigably created Party branches and groups, organs of political power, mass organizations, people's organizing committees and various forms of fighting units such as the militia, the local guerrillas and the regular mobile (or several guerrilla units concentrated at

appropriate times for big operations or a campaign of several battles). In the countryside, the Party is at the core of the New People's Army and is also in the localities and has gained wide support from the peasant masses and inhabitants of towns, provincial capitals and small cities. In the cities, the Party has carefully developed an underground for the worst of emergencies and has at the same time developed unbreakable links with the workers, the urban petty bourgeois and others. While we consider the present situation far more favorable to the revolutionary movement than ever before, we should not relax in the false belief that the objective conditions are enough to carry us forward. We have to build up the revolutionary forces courageously, not only by waging the principal form of struggle which is armed struggle in the countryside but also by employing effective underground methods in the cities and towns and by using every possible means, legal and otherwise, to facilitate coordination of efforts, propaganda work, intelligence and internal communications as well as communications with allies throughout the archipelago. We should avoid rashness in our actions because the fascist dictatorship carries with it the license to do the worst possible harm against the Party, people's army and the people. We should advance carefully and steadily. The Communist Party of the Philippines is determined to join hands with all those who are opposed to the US-Marcos dictatorship. All those who are interested in achieving national freedom and democracy are welcome in joining with the Party in a broad national democratic front. Those who may participate in this united front are the democratic classes and strata, parties, groups and individuals. Independence and initiative are enjoyed by participants in this united front. But the single common objective of all is to overthrow the US-Marcos dictatorship and institute a truly national and democratic regime. The success of the national democratic front can pave the way for a national coalition government where the working class, peasantry, urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie are fairly and justly represented. The Party's Program for a People's Democratic Revolution and also the ten-point guide drafted by the Party in connection with the drawing up of the program of the National Democratic Front should be referred to as guide for forming a national alliance or local alliances of revolutionary forces. In addition, we are hereby making a pledge to ourselves, to all our allies and to all our countrymen in the context of our program for a people's democratic revolution:

1. To join up with all forces that are opposed to the fascist dictatorship of the US-Marcos clique and conduct a firm revolutionary struggle to overthrow it;

2. To strengthen the New People's Army, boldly organize guerrilla units all over the archipelago and draw all possible cooperation from everyone opposed to the US-Marcos dictatorship;
3. To help reestablish the democratic rights of all antifascist forces including individuals, political parties, trade unions, mass organizations, mass media, religious organizations and all other people, and to take all steps towards a democratic coalition government;
4. To fight for the nullification of all acts of the fascist dictatorship that favor US imperialism and the Marcos fascist clique, and to make possible the abrogation of all unequal treaties and agreements with the United States, especially those pertaining to direct investments, military bases, military assistance, military aggression and cultural aggression;
5. To pave the way for the arrest, trial before a people's court and punishment of the dictator Marcos and his diehard accomplices for the setting up of a fascist dictatorship, bloody crimes against the people and enrichment in office, and make possible the confiscation of all ill-gotten wealth (capital holdings and landholdings) of the Marcos fascist clique and likewise those of all US imperialist firms and agencies collaborating with it; and
6. To welcome to the revolutionary ranks those officers and men of the reactionary armed forces who turn at any time against the US-Marcos dictatorship, provided they are not a mere faction of the military directed by US imperialism to groom another puppet dictator.

Hereunder are a number of guidelines for developing or dealing with the various forces opposed to the US-Marcos dictatorship:

1. The Party should vigorously fulfill its 1972 organizational and educational plan. Despite what appears to be the tightening of the situation due to the US-Marcos dictatorship, the fact is that the entire country has been made far more fertile than before for revolutionary seeding and growth. There is a great need for cadres and their nationwide deployment. So, the Central Committee is seeing to it that cadres are dispatched from certain regions to other regions. The correct relationship between expansion and consolidation and between the number of cadres in urban areas and that in the rural areas must be settled from time to time by regional Party committees in their respective territories. They must take more

initiative in building the Party, the New People's Army and the united front. Stress must be laid on mass work. The gauge of achievement is the quantity and quality of Party branches and groups, fighting units of the New People's Army, organs of political power, people's organizing committees and mass organizations of workers, peasants, youth, women and cultural activists. Due to the emergence of the US-Marcos dictatorship, special attention must be paid to improving underground methods, especially in cities and towns, and in maintaining links over extensive areas.

2. The Party should assign more cadres of worker as well as petty-bourgeois background to the New People's Army. Those who can no longer conduct legal work or underground work in cities and towns should be dispatched to the people's army is the Party's principal form of organization and should be built as such. Party branches should be established at the company or platoon level as the case may be and Party groups at the squad level and, in addition, Party branches should be established in localities. The main objective of the fascist dictatorship in the countryside today is the suppression of the Party, the New People's Army and the revolutionary masses. We should be good at preserving ourselves by destroying the enemy (fascist troops, spies, local tyrants and bad elements) on the wider scale of the countryside. The New People's Army is based mainly on the peasant masses, the majority class in Philippine society. Special attention should therefore be paid to realizing a genuine land reform program among them. Nothing will ever come out of the decree of the US-Marcos dictatorship proclaiming the implementation of the reactionary "land reform code" all over the country, except intensified feudal and semifeudal exploitation and oppression and, therefore, intensified resistance by the peasant masses. Whenever possible, land should be distributed free to the tillers who do not own land or who do not have enough. The nonpayment of land rent and other related measures can easily be effected when the peasant masses have been sufficiently aroused, organized and mobilized on a wide scale. This also the best way of creating stable base areas. Wherever the guerrilla units of the New People's Army are, the least that should be done for the welfare of the peasant masses is to reduce land rent, eliminate usury and initiate mutual aid and exchange of labor. Peasant associations, with poor and lower middle peasants prevailing, should be established. Local militia units and guerrilla units should also be raised from the peasant ranks so as to defend their democratic gains. From the ranks of the guerrilla units, we draw the Red fighters for the regular mobile forces of the New People's Army.

3. The Party should continue to build revolutionary trade unions and other suitable organizations (including open associations and secret workers' organizing committees) among the workers in workplaces and communities, despite the fascist ban on mass organizations and strikes. However, care must always be taken to prevent the enemy from identifying Party cadres. The more the fascist dictatorship madly goes after all kinds of workers' organizations, the more it will aggravate its already isolated position. The longer the workers' rights are suppressed, the more will the workers become fearless of the US-Marcos dictatorship. Their wages are buying less and less. They are also under greater threat of unemployment. The fascist dictatorship is mad enough to prevent the workers indefinitely from demanding through their unions and through strikes better working and living conditions. The violent suppression of workers' unions and strikes can only yield more determined fighters for the revolutionary cause, provided the Party does well its duty of arousing and mobilizing the workers. The Party should organize the workers in factories, mines, haciendas and other areas and raise their political consciousness in the light of the current political and economic crisis. Workers are quick in grasping the Marxist-Leninist ideology, provided this is properly communicated to them by Party cadres. The Party should accelerate its efforts to build Party branches in the workers' places of work and communities. Trade union work should always be combined with ideological and political work.

4. The Party should vigorously arouse and mobilize the student masses against the US-Marcos dictatorship. Although the democratic cultural revolution has already brought out a high degree of militancy among them, the student masses should be further guided by the Party in the new situation so that they can link up with the broad masses of the people and deliver the most effective blows against the fascist dictatorship. If it were not for the fear of the US-Marcos dictatorship of the student masses, the schools should have been opened on the Monday following Proclamation No. 1081. But the closure of schools for some time cannot stop the student masses from recognizing what is wrong and acting against it. The longer the schools are closed, the more ready are the student masses for mass actions. First, the probing mass actions and other propaganda activities; then increasingly bigger mass actions. Various forms of open student organizations and underground coordinating committees can be set up to defy the fascist ban on basic democratic rights. In the case of quite a number of student leaders and other youth leaders, who are blacklisted and who will only be immobilized upon arrest, it is the Party's policy to dispatch them to the countryside or the underground, so long as they are already Party members or

are willing to become Red fighters even if they are not yet Party members or even candidate-members. Party groups which are in the midst of the student masses should systematically deploy groups of students to various provinces and towns to condemn the fascist dictatorship and arouse the people.

5. The Party should encourage not only the student masses but also all other sections of the intelligentsia to assert their national and democratic rights and speak out their views against the US-Marcos dictatorship. It is antinational to allow foreign-owned mass media like those owned by the Sorianos to make propaganda in support of the US-Marcos dictatorship and at the same time prevent the Filipino people from speaking out their minds. It is antidemocratic to have only those reports and views supporting a fascist dictatorship disseminated. Teachers at all levels should be persuaded to propagate the national and democratic line among their co-teachers, students and the people and not to make anticommunist propaganda which would only serve to prolong the life of fascist dictatorship in the country. Special efforts should be exerted to get the active support of public school teachers. All government civilian employees should resist attempts of the US-Marcos dictatorship to shift public funds to the military from their departments, disregard their civil service eligibilities or turn over their functions to military personnel. Like the teachers and ordinary government civilian employees, all professionals (doctors, nurses, engineers, journalists, lawyers and others) should be won over to the antifascist united front. If positive and progressive, their political influence on many other people is of great value to the revolution. Their direct services and material contribution to the revolution are much needed. The most progressive elements in the ranks of the intelligentsia can become Party members.

6. The Party should, aside from the intelligentsia, win over other sections of the petty bourgeoisie. In many various ways, they can extend practical support to the revolutionary cause. They can help spread the correct political line against the US-Marcos dictatorship and they can also extend material support to the revolutionary movement. They are hard-pressed by the political and economic crisis worsening under the fascist dictatorship. The Party should consider the entire petty bourgeoisie as a basic motive force in the national democratic revolution and win it over in order to tilt the balance securely in favor of the revolutionary side.

7. The Party should win over members of the national bourgeoisie, in the cities and in the countryside, to give political and material support to the revolutionary

movement. Since they themselves cannot be expected to bear arms against the enemy, they can extend to the revolutionary movement support in cash or kind or allow use of their facilities. The Party should protect their legitimate interests against the wanton assaults of US imperialism and the puppet dictatorship. The national bourgeoisie can join the anti-imperialist and antifascist united front and it will be amply represented in the national coalition government to be set up in the future.

8. The Party should support the struggle for self-determination or autonomy and also for democracy among the national minorities, especially those of Mindanao who have taken up arms. The armed struggle of the Maguindanaos, Maranaos, Tausugs and others is very significant. Efforts should be exerted in developing revolutionary forces in various parts of Mindanao, especially those outside of the “Muslim” areas; and unity between the national minorities and the poor settlers everywhere should be aimed for in accordance with the general line of the national democratic revolution. The armed struggle in Mindanao can be so coordinated with the revolutionary armed struggle in Luzon and the Visayas that the US-Marcos dictatorship would become exhausted from running to and fro, from far south to far north of the archipelago and vice versa. It should be the general policy of the Party all over the country to welcome all national minorities into the ranks of the revolutionary movement and to develop Party cadres and Red fighters among them.

9. The Party should seek and develop an antifascist united front at every possible level with the Liberal Party, with certain sections of the Nacionalista Party and various political groups and figures who are opposed to the US-Marcos dictatorship. The attempt of the Marcos fascist puppet clique to monopolize power in the country has seriously harmed or put a serious threat to the interests of other reactionaries. The violent split developing among the reactionaries has been obvious since the emergence of the “private armies” and especially since the second Plaza Miranda massacre. Although the US-Marcos dictatorship will try to create the myth of “bipartisan” support for the “Marcos party,” the political and economic contradictions among the reactionaries cannot be erased. There are various ways of cooperating with other political groups and figures. Since the US-Marcos dictatorship is bent on disarming them at any cost, they might as well contribute or merely lend their arms to the New People’s Army. They can also advise their following to cooperate with the people’s army and they can give other kinds of material support. In return, such legitimate interests of theirs as those which do not harm the people can be protected. In cases where there are

already armed groups fighting or determined to fight the fascist dictatorship, the New People's Army should be willing to reorganize them or integrate them into its ranks or simply coordinate with them as the case may be.

10. The Party should seek and develop an anti-imperialist and antifascist united front with religious and semireligious groups that are opposed to the US-Marcos dictatorship. It is noteworthy that there are a considerable number of patriotic and progressive priests and ministers who have merited being in the fascist blacklist. It must be always borne in mind that there are religious people who do not agree with the Party's ideology but who readily and completely agree with the Party's political program and line.

11. The Party should draw all possible support from Filipinos abroad, especially the half a million Filipino immigrant workers, professionals and students in the United States. Together with their US and other foreign friends, they can form committees and associations, engage in mass actions and raise funds for their own propaganda activities all in support of the revolutionary struggle of the Filipino people against the US-Marcos dictatorship. Eventually, they will be able to channel their material support to the revolutionary forces in the Philippines. Revolutionary friends of the Filipino people all over the world should also be encouraged to initiate committees and associations in support of the Filipino revolutionary struggle. The Filipino people should get all possible international support in the same spirit and manner as other peoples have done for their own revolutionary struggles. The peoples of the world are profoundly interested in the victory of the Philippine revolution against US imperialism and its running dogs. The Party should be guided by the lofty principle of proletarian internationalism in this regard.

12. The Party should perseveringly conduct by various means revolutionary propaganda among the officers and troops of the reactionary armed forces. Quite a number of them are opposed to the US-Marcos dictatorship. As a matter of fact, there are three definite trends in the reactionary armed forces: the first one consists of those who support the US-Marcos dictatorship and who are gloating at the chance to abuse the people; the second one consists of those who oppose the Marcos fascist gang but who wish to have it replaced by coup d'etat with another reactionary regime which they consider "democratic"; and the third one consists of those who oppose the US-Marcos dictatorship and who agree with the principles of the Corpus-Tagamolila Movement. The second trend can be subdivided into two: one is biding its time for the near-collapse of the Marcos

fascist clique and will move only with assurances from US imperialism; the other has various notions of anti-imperialism. Enemy officers and troops who are opposed to the US-Marcos dictatorship should be encouraged to take the people's side and take the anti-imperialist, antifeudal and antifascist line. They can bring over their arms and join the New People's Army or temporarily establish and lead guerrilla units until such time that they can establish relations with the people's army. The Party should also see to it that the policy of leniency is taken on captive enemy officers and men in order to disintegrate the reactionary armed forces. As the US-Marcos dictatorship conscripts more troops and the people's suffering becomes even more unbearable, there will be more enemy officers and men who will recognize what is right and what is wrong and will gladly turn their arms against the people's exploiters and oppressors.

The Communist Party of the Philippines, together with the New People's Army which it leads, declares that conditions for revolutionary armed struggle in the countryside have been tremendously enhanced by the emergence of the US-Marcos dictatorship. Whereas before Proclamation No. 1081 only certain limited parts of the country were battlefields, these can now be boldly expanded throughout the archipelago. Furthermore, whereas before this proclamation it was not yet timely to launch certain limited forms of military operations in urban areas, these can now be done with due consideration given to the strategic line that the revolutionary forces will seize the cities from rural base areas.

The broad masses of the people know how to deal with a mad bull like the US-Marcos dictatorship and they are determined to encircle it with the flames of people's war. The day will surely come when the US-Marcos dictatorship is turned into ashes and is finally consigned to the garbage heap of history. By that time, the comprehensive revolutionary movement against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism shall have become a gigantic force capable of carrying the Philippine revolution through to the end.

Marcos Land Reform — A Big Hoax

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The land reform touted by the US-Marcos dictatorship as the “cornerstone” of or chief pretext for its unjust and indefinite rule is a big hoax. The fascist dictatorship is in fact violently opposed to the fulfillment of the peasant demand for land, which is the main content of the people’s democratic revolution.

Under Proclamation No. 1081, the peasant masses are prohibited from having their own militant associations and from asserting their democratic rights. Under conditions of martial rule, the reactionary armed forces have the license to commit all kinds of barbarities against the peasant masses. In areas where the peasant masses have valiantly stood up to oppose landlord oppression and exploitation, the fascist troops are concentrated by the US-Marcos dictatorship in order to suppress them and protect the landlord class.

The political and economic crisis, spawned by US imperialism and domestic feudalism, has been aggravated by the greed and barbarism of the fascist dictatorship. The suffering of the peasant masses has been exacerbated by the rampaging fascist troops who inflict direct mass evacuation, zoning, looting, kidnapping, assassination, abuse of women, blackmail and extortion at checkpoints are being perpetrated with impunity mainly against the peasant masses, who even before martial rule could not seek redress for their grievances.

As the resistance of the peasant masses rises, the US-Marcos dictatorship shifts public funds to the reactionary armed forces in order to increase their numbers, equipment and antipopular operations. As a result, the reactionary government no longer has as much funds as before disposable for “land reform” and can no longer pretend as much as before to be for “land reform” by purchasing a few

excessively overpriced estates from the landlord class and offering these for resale to tenants at prohibitive prices.

Presidential Decree No. 2 dated September 25, 1972 and Presidential Decree No. 27 dated October 21, 1972, two documents which the dictator Marcos boasts of as his masterpieces on “land reform,” are consistent with the antidemocratic and counterrevolutionary character of Proclamation No. 1081. They are also consistent with the most obnoxious anti-peasant and pro-landlord provisions of the old Agricultural Land Reform Code (Rep. Act 3844) as well as of its latest modified version, the Code of Agrarian Reforms (embodying Rep. Act 6389).

The two presidential decrees do not get out of the old rut of all previous reactionary legislation on “land reform” which runs thus: if a tenant wants to get emancipated, he must pay for the landlord’s land at “fair market value” or at the government’s over-price; or he can start calling himself a “leaseholder” and pay to the landlord a yearly crop of three normal crop years, provided he shoulders all agricultural expenses and takes all risks, including those due to natural calamities and crop epidemics.

The land retention limit of seven hectares set on the landlords by Presidential Decree No. 27 is as pretended and false as any of the land retention limits set by previous legislation because in fact the tenant masses are required to buy out the landlords at “fair market value” or pay for the high redistribution price set by the reactionary government. In the first place, this government, which promises to expropriate landed estates for redistribution and resale to the tenant masses is a political instrument of the landlords and has extremely limited cash and bonds for buying lands at the “fair market value” it has set as its own limit and burden in making expropriation.

It is utterly stupid of the dictator Marcos to boast that his presidential decrees are historically outstanding as they are original. It is redundant of Presidential Decree No. 2 to “proclaim the whole country as a land reform area.” The Code of Agrarian Reforms did so in 1971 by declaring share tenancy throughout the country as contrary to public policy and by calling for its automatic conversion to agricultural leasehold.

And has Marcos easily forgotten that some years ago he heard the same pious generalities in Presidential Decree No. 27 about “the emancipation of the tenant from the bondage of the soil” and “transferring to them the ownership of the land

they till and providing the instruments and mechanism therefor,” from another demagogue? In 1963, Marcos as Senate president was at the side of Macapagal when the latter signed into law the Agricultural Land Reform Code and proclaimed the “emancipation” of the tenant masses and “abolition of tenancy.”

The demagoguery of the dictator Marcos is definitely stale. But what is now most striking is the fact that his presidential Decree No. 27 has artificially increased land prices and has further put the tenant masses in a position of ridicule under reactionary laws. This decree dictates a higher cost for acquiring land and in effect twists the tenant masses with the fact that they cannot afford to buy land from the landlords.

Also, the dictator Marcos by his speech of October 21, 1972 has pronounced the policy that any transfer of land between landlord and tenant shall be strictly a transaction between the two and that the reactionary government shall be out of it. In other words, the reactionary government shall avoid engaging in the buy-and-sell of a few landed estates between landlord and tenant. It is to be expected that it would rather shift funds to the fascist military.

Presidential Decree No. 27 orders that the value of land shall be equivalent to 2-1/2 times the average harvest of 3 normal crop years immediately preceding the promulgation of the decree. In addition, the decree orders that the total cost of the land, including interest at the rate of 6 percent per annum, shall be paid by the tenant in 15 years of 15 equal annual amortizations. The entire formula set by the fascist dictator for the acquisition of lands from the landlords is simply ridiculous.

Let us translate what appears to be small numbers in the presidential decree into their real dimensions. Assume that the tenanted land is three hectares, irrigated and two-cropped and that the average yield is 50 cavans of rice per hectare per crop. The total annual yield of the entire tenanted land is, therefore, 300 cavans of rice. Assume that the agreed price of a cavan of rice is 25, which is the current floor price set by the National Grains Authority. The figure that comes out is 7,500; it is the money equivalent of the average annual crop. Multiply this by 2.5. The figure that comes out next is 8,750.

This is supposed to be the cost of the three-hectare land, if only the tenant could pay in cash immediately. At the unqualified interest rate of 6 percent per annum, the total interest charges on 8,750 in 15 years can range from 9,000 to 16,875.

The final total cost of the entire land would therefore range from 27,750 to 35,625. Divide these figures by 15 in order to arrive at the 15 equal annual amortizations. The figures range from 1,850 to 2,375. The per-hectare land value, without interest charges, is 6,250. This is far higher than the 4,149 per-hectare value of land.

To get emancipated, the landless peasant must pay for the landlord's land at "fair market value" or at the government's overprice; or he can start calling himself a "leaseholder" and pay to the landlord a yearly crop of three normal crop years, provided he shoulders all agricultural expenses and takes all risks, including those due to natural calamities and crop epidemics.

The land retention limit of seven hectares set on the landlords by Presidential Decree No. 27 is as pretended and false as any of the land retention limits set by previous legislation because in fact the tenant masses are required to buy out the landlords at "fair market value" or pay for the high redistribution price set by the reactionary government. In the first place, this government which promises to expropriate landed estates for redistribution and resale to the tenant masses is a political instrument of the landlords and has extremely limited cash and bonds for buying lands at the "fair market value" it has set as its own limit and burden in making expropriation.

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And has Marcos easily forgotten that some years ago he heard the same pious generalities in Presidential Decree No. 27 about "the emancipation of the tenant from the bondage of the soil" and "transferring to them the ownership of the land they till and providing the instruments and mechanism therefor," from another demagogue? In 1963, Marcos as Senate president was at the side of Macapagal when the latter signed into law the Agricultural Land Reform Code and proclaimed the "emancipation" of the tenant masses and "abolition of tenancy."

The demagoguery of the dictator Marcos is definitely stale. But what is now most striking is the fact that his presidential Decree No. 27 has artificially

increased land prices and has further put the tenant masses in a position of ridicule under reactionary laws. This decree dictates a higher cost for acquiring land and in effect twits the tenant masses with the fact that they cannot afford to buy land from the landlords. Also, the dictator Marcos by his speech of October 21, 1972 has pronounced the policy that any transfer of land between landlord and tenant shall be strictly a transaction between the two and that the reactionary government shall be out of it. In other words, the reactionary government shall avoid engaging in the buy-and-sell of a few landed estates between landlord and tenant. It is to be expected that it would rather shift funds to the fascist military.

Presidential Decree No. 27 orders that the value of land shall be equivalent to 2.5 times the average harvest of 3 normal crop years immediately preceding the promulgation of the decree. In addition, the decree orders that the total cost of the land, including interest at the rate of 6 percent per annum, shall be paid by the tenant in 15 years of 15 equal annual amortizations. The entire formula set by the fascist dictator for the acquisition of lands from the landlords is simply ridiculous.

Let us translate what appears to be small numbers in the presidential decree into their real dimensions. Assume that the tenanted land is three hectares, irrigated and two-cropped and that the average yield is 50 cavans of rice per hectare per crop. The total annual yield of the entire tenanted land is, therefore, 300 cavans of rice. Assume that the agreed price of a cavan of rice is 25, which is the current floor price set by the National Grains Authority. The figure that comes out is 7,500; it is the money equivalent of the average annual crop. Multiply this by 2.5. The figure that comes out next is 8,750. This is supposed to be the cost of the three-hectare land, if only the tenant could pay in cash immediately.

At the unqualified interest rate of 6 percent per annum, the total interest charges on 8,750 in 15 years can range from 9,000 to 16,875. The final total cost of the entire land would therefore range from 27,750 to 35,625. Divide these figures by 15 in order to arrive at the 15 equal annual amortizations. The figures range from 1,850 to 2,375.

The per-hectare value of the land, without interest charges, is 6,250. This is far higher than the 4,149 per-hectare value of land (including a few urban estates) bought by the Land Bank from 1966 to 1971 under the Agricultural Land Reform Code. It may be argued that land prices have gone up since then. But it may be riposted that the value of 4,149 per hectare even includes a few higher-

valued urban estates and, of course, the overpricing that ordinarily goes into transactions between the reactionary government and the landlords.

The best thing to do in order to show how exorbitant a price is 6,250 is to go around and observe comparable lands and their current prices. If interest charges ranging from 3,000 to 5,625 per hectare are added to the principal cost of the land, then the total cost per hectare ranges from 9,250 to 11,875. In most areas, the land that we speak of can be bought at a price below 4,000 per hectare. Presidential Decree No. 27, therefore, gives more than ever a better deal to the landlords and a worse deal to anyone who is baited into believing the bogus land reform of the fascist dictatorship.

Going back to the question of equal annual amortizations, let us now ask if a tenant on a three-hectare, irrigated and two-cropped land can really have and put up an amount ranging from 1,850 to 2,375 every year for fifteen years. The answer can be gotten from the masses themselves. Under conditions of increasing inflation under the US-Marcos dictatorship, the tenant family has to pay more for basic commodities (other than grain and vegetables in the backyard) for its subsistence. It has to pay more for fertilizers; pesticides; irrigation fees; hauling; and other agricultural costs requiring cash outlays. Then, there are other agricultural costs in the main involving grain outlays, as in seeding, planting, weeding, harvesting, threshing and milling. If the tenant has no work animals or implements, he has to rent them from the landlords or the rich peasants. At the end of every year, there is not much grain or cash left for any tenant family to ever hope that he can buy out the landlord.

Under conditions of want and hard toil, every tenant family is usually beset within fifteen years by a number of major illnesses, involving heavy medical expenditures or even temporary disability or death of the principal tiller. Within the same long period, calamities like floods, drought, crop infestation and the like are likely to occur. All these can disrupt the timetable of amortizations. If for one year he is in default of payments, the prospective owner-cultivator will never be able to recover financially and will have to suffer complete loss of the land he has hoped to own.

The risks involved in the attempt to buy land from the landlord are exceedingly great for a tenant. Obviously, it is for this reason that Presidential Decree No. 27 requires him to join a “cooperative” first before being allowed to get into the act of trying to buy the land on which he is a tenant. This “cooperative,” an

underling of the landlords' rural banks or the landlord dominated government, is supposed to guarantee amortizations to the landlord and at the same time stands guard to take over the land lest the land buyer goes in default. Ultimately, the tenant goes back to being a tenant after his futile effort to conform to the bogus land reform or, in other words, the laws of the landlord. The land that he has hoped to own also reverts to the landlord class through a bogus cooperative or the reactionary government.

Not a single poor share-tenant has been or can ever be emancipated by Presidential Decree No. 2 and Presidential Decree No. 27. Yet, as if a few glittering phases would suffice to obscure the truth, the propaganda machinery of the US-Marcos dictatorship has been endlessly claiming that the presidential decrees have already emancipated 715,000 tenants on 1.5 million hectares and distributed to each of them either 3 hectares of irrigated land or 5 hectares of unirrigated land. Anyone with the simplest knowledge of arithmetic will immediately see the Marcos propaganda as a cheap lie. Out of 1.5 million hectares, there can only be 2.1 hectares for every one of 715,000 tenants. Furthermore, the number of tenants in the Philippines is not as small as 715,000 and also the extent of landlords' holdings devoted to rice and corn is not as small as 1.5 million hectares.

One more myth spewed out by the propaganda machinery of the US-Marcos dictatorship is that land reform is being conducted by the reactionary government in Cagayan Valley. The truth is that the reactionary armed forces are trying by all-out brute force to suppress the revolutionary peasant masses and protect the landlord class. The big landlord Marcos himself is rabidly trying to keep his landed estate of more than 22,000 hectares in the face of the surging revolutionary movement. This landed estate extending from Cordon, Isabela to Diffun, Nueva Vizcaya is the biggest of its kind north of Manila and is the most conspicuous land mark of feudalism in Cagayan Valley. It is also the most scandalous example of land grabbed from poor tenants and settlers.

The Tabacalera Estate of 11,000 hectares has long been offered for sale to the reactionary government by its foreign owners who are terribly afraid of the genuine land reform program of the revolutionary movement. They want to sell the land at an overprice and at the same time contract the reactionary government to deliver tobacco and other agricultural products to them. They want the reactionary government to secure the land from the revolutionary peasant masses and not really to make the land the object of any land reform.

Should the US-Marcos dictatorship finally buy the land, it would be at an overprice and the landless tillers would not be able to afford the redistribution price.

With regard to the problems of land reform, nothing new can be expected from the US-Marcos dictatorship except the worsening of the plight of the peasant masses. The Department of Agrarian Reforms created by the Code of Agrarian Reforms has been assigned by the fascist dictator to work out the details of his “land reform” decrees. This department will go the way of its predecessors, such as the National Land Reform Council, the Land Authority and the like. It will be nothing more than a bureaucratic setup for protecting the landlord class and demanding payments for land expropriated at an overprice from a few landlords. The emancipation of the tenant masses and the abolition of the “system of sharecrop and lease-tenancy” have become more gigantic impossibilities under the US-Marcos dictatorship by virtue of Proclamation No. 27 setting the price of land even above “fair market value.” What does it profit a poor peasant anyway even if the Land Bank exhausts its funds in buying only a few landed estates. He will still have to pay the heavy price of redistribution.

From 1965 to 1971, the long period during which the Agricultural Land Reform Code was in effect until it was relabeled Code of Agrarian Reforms, the reactionary government “appropriated” 1.3 billion and actually released a total of 399.24 million to the various “land reform” agencies. Out of the large amount actually released, only the measly amount of 36.32 million was released specifically to the Land Bank, which in turn spent only 16,002,900 to purchase 32 landed estates having the total size of only 3,876 to a measly portion of one Marcos hacienda. Now, we ask whether a single poor peasant, lower middle peasant or farm worker ever succeeded during the last 7 years in becoming a full owner of a family-size plot from any of these expropriated estates. Not a single one. Most of the 2,268 tenants of these estates have gone in default of their amortizations as in all cases of expropriation and redistribution before 1965. It is only the rich peasants and upper middle peasants who can keep up with the schedule of amortizations because in the first place they have some amount of surplus lands or have more than enough work animals as well as better farm implements.

There is nothing in the past and there is also nothing in the present to show or indicate that the reactionary government, especially as it is now under a fascist dictatorship, can implement a genuine land reform program. It is important to

expose and condemn the past record of the US-Marcos regime on the land problem and likewise the present hoax about land reform being drummed up by the Marcos propaganda machinery. And it is even more important to demonstrate by word and deed that the agrarian revolution being carried out by the peasant masses and the New People's Army under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines is the true solution to the problem of feudalism and semifeudalism. All revolutionaries should propagate and implement the Revolutionary Guide for Land Reform under the banner of the people's democratic revolution.

Our land reform program has a minimum goal and a maximum goal. The minimum goal is to reduce land rent to at least 10 percent of the net crop, eliminate usury completely and develop multipurpose cooperation among the poor peasants, lower middle peasants and farm workers. The maximum goal is to confiscate the lands of the landlords and distribute them free to the poor peasants, lower middle peasants, farm workers and all other impoverished people who are willing to till the soil but who have no land. The achievement of these goals is interconnected with the comprehensive achievement of the people's democratic revolution.

As they come to fully grasp our land reform program on a national scale, the millions of oppressed and exploited peasants will stir up a great storm to sweep away the US-Marcos dictatorship. They will bring about their own total emancipation. At the same time, they will constantly provide the strongest and biggest possible mass support for the people democratic revolution.

**The “New Constitution” Is a License
of the US-Marcos Dictatorship
to Further Oppress and Exploit the Filipino People**

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Taking full advantage of its martial rule, the US-Marcos dictatorship has been able by armed force, bribery and deceit to ram through the 1971-1972 reactionary constitutional convention a “new constitution” which endorses Proclamation No. 1081, allows the fascist dictator Marcos to remain in power for as long as he can beyond 1973 and perpetuates the vile interests of US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. Attention needs to be focused on Article XVII entitled “Transitory Provisions” and on Article XIV entitled “The National Economy and the Patrimony of the Nation” in order to expose and condemn the antinational and antidemocratic character of the “new constitution”. Let us annotate the most counterrevolutionary provisions under these articles.

On Article XVII. “Transitory Provisions”

Section 1. There shall be an interim National Assembly which shall exist immediately upon the ratification of this Constitution and shall continue until the members of the regular National Assembly shall have been elected and shall have assumed office following an election called for the purpose by the interim

National Assembly. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution, the interim National Assembly shall have the same powers and its members shall have the same functions, responsibilities, rights, privileges and disqualifications as the regular National Assembly and the members thereof.

There is no definite time limit for the existence of this interim national assembly. It all depends on the pleasure of this interim national assembly or even more precisely on the fascist dictator Marcos as to when an election shall be called to elect the regular members of the national assembly.

It is self-serving enough for delegates of the big bourgeoisie and the landlord class in the Convention to include themselves as members of this interim national assembly. Together with the cohorts of the US-Marcos dictatorship, they shall always misinterpret their selfish interests as public interests and prolong their enjoyment of the powers and privileges of members of the regular national assembly. These scoundrels in the 1971-1972 reactionary constitutional convention have not made any kind of protest regarding the gross violations of their supposed parliamentary immunity, the forcible camp detention and house arrest of several convention delegates who have stood against the dictates of the US-Marcos clique. Instead, they have been bribed into approving the “new constitution” that is actually the handiwork of Malacañang. Among the privileges that each delegate stands to gain as member of the interim national assembly are annual salaries and allowances amounting to at least P200,000, aside from a still bigger income derivable from other nefarious activities related to “parliamentary work”. As a whole, the interim national assembly shall be an extremely expensive affair, with no less than 400 members drawing huge salaries and allowances. This shall be far more expensive than the outgoing Congress which has far less members and personnel.

Section 2. The members of the interim National Assembly shall be the incumbent President and Vice-President of the Philippines, those who served as President of the nineteen hundred and seventy-one Constitutional Convention, those members of the Senate and the House of Representatives who shall express in writing to the Commission on Elections within thirty days after the ratification of this constitution their option to serve therein, and those delegates to the nineteen hundred and seventy-one Constitutional Convention who have opted to serve therein by voting affirmatively for this article. They may take their oath of office before any officer authorized to administer oath and qualify thereto, after the ratification of this constitution.

This section seeks to cover up the illegality and unconstitutionality of General Order No. 1 and certain presidential decrees (like Presidential Decree No. 1 and the like) by which the fascist dictator has asserted his absolute authority over all branches of the government and usurped the legislative authority of the Senate and the House of Representatives. General Order No. 1 renders Congress inutile and even nonexistent, despite the elective status of these members. Presidential Decree No. 1 and similar decrees arrogantly declare certain bills still pending in Congress as “part of the law of the land”.

What is exceedingly callous about the section above is that only three persons, especially the person who stands to gain most, the fascist dictator Marcos himself, are automatically members of the interim national assembly while all members of the Senate and the House of Representatives and all delegates of the reactionary constitutional convention are not automatically so. It is obvious that this section is intended to force and at the same time cajole the members of Congress and the convention delegates whom the fascist dictator Marcos has put under camp detention, house arrest and death threat. When the voting was held on the “transitory provisions” last October 26, convention delegates had to secure “safe-conduct passes” from the Marcos hatchetman Enrile in order to be allowed into the convention hall. By virtue of Section 3 (2) hereunder, several senators and congressmen opposed to the fascist dictatorship will not as a matter of principle be able to express in writing to the Commission on Elections their option to join the interim national assembly.

Section 3. (1) The incumbent President of the Philippines shall initially convene the interim National Assembly and shall preside over its sessions until the interim Speaker shall have been elected. He shall continue to exercise his powers and prerogatives under the 1935 constitution and the powers in the President and the Prime Minister under the constitution until he calls upon the interim National Assembly to elect the interim President and the interim Prime Minister who shall then exercise their respective powers vested by this constitution. (2) All proclamations, orders, decrees, instructions, and acts promulgated, issued, or done by the incumbent President shall be part of the law of the land, and shall remain valid, legal, binding, and effective even after the lifting of martial law or the ratification of this constitution, unless modified, revoked, or suspended by subsequent proclamations, orders, decrees, instructions or other acts of the incumbent President, or unless expressly and explicitly modified or repealed by the regular National Assembly.

This section with its two paragraphs, is the core of all the “transitory provisions” and even of the entire “new constitution”. The fascist dictator Marcos shall continue to concentrate all powers in his hands in his three and contradictory capacities as president under the 1935 constitution and as president and prime minister under the “new constitution”. He shall exercise the powers and prerogatives of the president under the 1935 constitution and yet shall not necessarily be bound by the obligation set by the same constitution that he shall have to step down from the presidency in 1973, after he shall have served eight consecutive years as president. His powers and prerogatives shall be absolute and unlimited as ever. Upon the “ratification” of the “new constitution”, all his proclamations, orders, decrees and instructions and acts shall be “part of the law of the land” (and the supreme part at that) and shall remain valid, legal, binding and effective even after the formal lifting of martial law. In other words, a fascist dictatorship shall exist.

The first paragraph shows that the fascist dictator Marcos does not have full trust in the interim national assembly though this assemblage shall surely at the beginning be composed of members who are prevalently his agents. Thus, it is not the interim national assembly but it is explicitly he alone who shall decide when the interim national assembly shall elect the interim national president and interim prime minister. Going by his self-interest, Marcos shall be able to keep himself in power for as long as he can and shall prevent for as long as he can the election of the interim president and interim prime minister. Outside and inside the interim national assembly, he has the powers and prerogatives to suppress any demand for such an election within the interim national assembly. However, he shall also be able to call for such an election and assure himself of being elected interim prime minister. He may do so, especially in face of the fact that after 1973 he shall be vulnerable to questions involving the provision in the 1935 constitution that a president cannot retain his office for more than eight consecutive years.

The second paragraph makes the fascist dictator more powerful than the entire interim national assembly. While the interim national assembly is in office, he shall have the supreme power of enforcing his old proclamations, orders, decrees, instructions and acts and also promulgating new ones above and beyond the interim national assembly. Thus, this interim national assembly shall in principle and practice be inferior to one person and shall have mere decorative value for the fascist dictatorship. If only the incumbent president or the regular national assembly, but not the interim national assembly, shall have the power to

modify, revoke or supersede the proclamations, orders, decrees, instructions and acts of the incumbent president, then what is the point in the aforementioned section (second sentence) stating that the interim national assembly shall have the same powers as the regular national assembly? Under the above Section 3 (1) and (2), the interim national assembly shall merely be the rubber stamp of the fascist dictator. In effect, the provisional or interim government shall not have the least shred of the parliamentary form. It shall have a super-presidential, dictatorial and fascist form reflective of what makes the present regime entirely anomalous.

Section 5. The interim National Assembly shall give priority measures for the orderly transition from the presidential to the parliamentary system, the reorganization of the Government, the eradication of graft and corruption, the effective maintenance of peace and order, the implementation of declared agrarian reforms, the standardization of compensation of government employees and such other measures as shall bridge the gap between the rich and the poor.

It is obvious by this section that the interim national assembly and the fascist dictator Marcos intend to keep themselves in office for as long as they can. Their declared intention is to perform not the functions of a transitional government that may last for one year or so but those of a long-term government that may last for several more years. The preposterous slogan of “save the republic and build a new society” expresses the US-Marcos dictatorship’s pipe dream of suppressing the people and reigning forever.

At any rate, the US-Marcos dictatorship talks of government reorganization and standardization of compensation of government employees only to tighten its control over all branches of the government by armed intimidation, build up and shift funds to the fascist military, lay off a great number of civilian government employees, disregard elective and civil service status of lesser officials, promote sycophants and increase their salaries at the expense of middle and low-ranking employees. It talks of eradicating graft and corruption but the fascist dictator Marcos and his cronies have been for so many years the biggest and blackest perpetrators of malfeasance in the reactionary government. Marcos himself is the most notoriously undesirable character in the reactionary government. He has enriched himself in office in a manner that would make all previous presidents petty thieves. He has had a big cut in every major government contract or major business deal where government permission or guarantees are required. His large stockholdings and landholdings mostly under the names of dummies (Benedicto,

Montelibano, Cojuangco, Zobel, Menzi, Elizalde, Silverio and others) have been acquired through abuse of political authority.

The US-Marcos dictatorship talks of peace and order only to unleash the most vicious fascist crimes against the great masses of peasants, workers, students, teachers, professionals, women, small and medium businessmen, national minorities and even against the legal oppositionists in the Liberal Party and Nacionalista Party. Behind the drive to collect high-powered firearms is the scheme of the fascist dictatorship to monopolize firearms and suppress the people and all possible opposition. Wanting to impose a “peace and order” for the benefit of the exploiting classes, the fascist dictatorship has on its part intensified counterrevolutionary violence and made it necessary for the people on their part to intensify revolutionary violence. The Marcos mass media may monopolize all legal news channels and impose a news blackout on the people’s resistance but the fact is that revolutionary armed struggle has spread more rapidly from the northern end to the southern end of the Philippines since Proclamation No. 1081.

It is simply incongruous for the US-Marcos dictatorship to talk about bridging the gap between the rich and poor. The truth is that it has taken every step to aggravate the exploitation of the broad masses of the people. The “new constitution” revolves around the term “just compensation” to preserve the interests of the big bourgeoisie (foreign monopolies and big compradors) and the landlord class. Presidential Decree No. 27 has served only to artificially raise the price of the landlord’s land and taunt the tenant masses that they cannot really buy out the landlords. We shall further discuss the intensification of imperialist, big comprador, landlord and bureaucrat exploitation under the fascist dictatorship.

Section 9. All officials and employees in the existing Government of the Republic of the Philippines shall continue in office until otherwise provided by law or decreed by the incumbent President of the Philippines, but all officials whose appointments are by this Constitution vested in the Prime Minister shall vacate their respective offices upon the appointment and qualification of their successors.

Section 10. The incumbent members of the Judiciary may continue in office until they reach the age of seventy years, unless sooner replaced in accordance with the preceding section thereof.

It is clear by these two sections that those in the service of the reactionary government shall continue to be completely at the mercy of the fascist dictatorship as under General Order No. 11, General Order No. 3 and Presidential Decree No. 1. But what interests the fascist Marcos most in these two sections is that he can change the present composition of the Supreme Court as he pleases and also make all the courts consistent instruments of his antinational and antidemocratic executive fiats.

Under Section 4 of Article X entitled the “Judiciary”, which provides that the members of the Supreme Court and judges of inferior courts shall be appointed by the prime minister, and under Section 1 (1) of the same article, which provides that the Supreme Court shall be composed of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and fourteen associate justices, the fascist dictator Marcos shall be able to continue threatening the present justices of the Supreme Court with replacement and shall also be able to simply add four more justices of his own choosing to the present eleven justices in order to make the Supreme Court a thoroughly rabid instrument of the fascist dictatorship.

The US-Marcos dictatorship hopes to ensure that the Supreme Court shall continue to act in favor of the dictatorship in all cases involving Proclamation No. 1081. Even now, the present Supreme Court composed mostly of Marcos appointees has allowed the cases of political detainees to be overtaken by the “new constitution”. It is this same court which previously swallowed hook, line and sinker the tale of the Marcos fascist gang about the “July-August Plan” in 1971. Like the “judicial” appendage of any antipopular dictatorship, it has been an accomplice in the commission of fascist crimes.

Section 11. The rights and privileges granted to citizens of the United States or to corporations or associations owned or controlled by such citizens under the Ordinance appended to the nineteen hundred and thirty-five Constitution shall automatically terminate on the third day of July nineteen hundred and seventy-four. Titles to private lands acquired by such persons before such date shall be valid as against other private persons only.

Section 12. All treaties, executive agreements, and contracts entered into by the Government or any subdivision, agency, or instrumentalities thereof, including government-owned or controlled operations, are hereby recognized as legal, valid and binding. When the national interest so requires, the incumbent President of the Republic or the interim Prime Minister may review all contracts,

concessions, permits, or other forms of privileges for the exploration, development, exploitation, or utilization of natural resources entered into, granted, issued or acquired before the ratification of the Constitution.

The first sentence of Section 11 above appears to be progressive in the sense that it provides for the termination of the rights and privileges of US business entities under the Parity Amendment on July 3, 1974. But in fact the second sentence negates what the first sentence provides. The second sentence protects US entities and assures them of continued enjoyment of the lands (and improvement thereon) which they have unconstitutionally and illegally acquired. Elsewhere, the “new constitution” also requires “just compensation” for the takeover by the state of any private property. These constitute the complete negation or reversal of the recent Supreme Court decision on the Quasha case. The “new constitution” can be used to oppose the principle that US entities have no right to own private lands in the Philippines and that the lands and improvements thereon (including structures and other investments) which have been illegally required are subject either to retrieval by previous private owners or confiscation by the state.

In this regard, the fascist dictator Marcos has been most vociferous in calling on US business entities to create interlocking dummy corporations (where US entities may own as much as 40 percent of equity) to serve as “owners” of the lands and also in assuring them of “just compensation” with regard to the dim possibility that the state may decide and act to expropriate these lands from them. All these serve to keep US business entities in undiminished ownership and control of Philippine lands. They are all calculated to defeat the people’s clamor for confiscation of the illegal US landholdings, including the structures and investments thereon.

Section 12 throws away the provision under the 1935 constitution (Section 7, Article VII) that treaties entered into by the president need the concurrence or final ratification of the Philippine Senate in order to become binding and effective. Under the “new constitution” it shall suffice for the fascist dictator Marcos and his executive agents to enter into treaties, executive agreements and contracts with other countries and foreign entities and these shall immediately be recognized as legal, valid and binding. US imperialism is certainly anxious now to arrange with their chief Filipino puppet a “treaty of friendship, commerce and navigation” in order to carry over the worst features of the Laurel-Langley Agreement that is to terminate soon. Also the Japanese zaibatsus must be more

hopeful now than before that the Japan-Philippine “treaty of amity, commerce and navigation” will be ratified by the fascist dictator; this will be far better for them than individual business licenses for “liaison offices” which Marcos used previously to circumvent the nonratification of the aforementioned draft treaty.

As an autocratic head of state, the incumbent president Marcos also reviews all contracts, concessions, permits or other forms of privileges for the exploration, development, exploitation or utilization of natural resources entered into, granted, issued or acquired even before the ratification of the “new constitution”. This means to say that he shall have absolute power to deal with US imperialism and other foreign monopolies any way that he shall be in a position to amass wealth even more viciously than when he was supposed to have enjoyed less power in the days before Proclamation No. 1081.

It is absolutely clear that the fascist dictator Marcos has been propped up precisely to protect and step up the oppressive and exploitative interests of US imperialism and other related forces. In the succeeding discussions on certain provisions of Article XIV, we shall be able to see even more clearly that US imperialism together with its most rabid local running dogs, is behind the fascist dictatorship and the “new constitution”. The most extraordinary measures are taken by the most rabid local reactionaries whenever the interests of US imperialism are at stake and whenever the dominance of these need renewal and expansion. The forcible making of the fascist dictatorship and the “new constitution” is directly related to the termination of the Parity Amendment and the Laurel-Langley Agreement. It is an event exceedingly comparable to the forcible making of the fascistic Roxas regime and the adoption of the Parity Amendment and the Bell Trade Act.

On Article XIV. The National Economy and the Patrimony of the Nation

Section 1. The National Assembly shall establish a National Economic and Development Authority, to be headed by the Prime Minister, which shall recommend to the National Assembly, after consultation with the private sector, local government units, and other appropriate public agencies, continuing, coordinated, and fully integrated social and economic plans and programs.

Section 3. The National Assembly shall, upon recommendation of the National Economic and Development Authority, reserve to citizens of the Philippines or to corporations or associations wholly owned by such citizens, certain traditional

areas of investments when the national interest so dictates.

The National Economic and Development Authority will be the cloak for the US-Marcos dictatorship in plundering the social wealth of the country. It will be no better than all or any such agencies as the National Economic Council, the Presidential Economic Staff, the Board of Investments and the like. It shall continue to extend foreign investors and big local compradors such special privileges and incentives as those carried by the Investment Incentive Act, Export Incentive Act and the like.

As the head of the National Economic and Development Authority, the fascist dictator Marcos shall be able to relay to the national assembly “recommendations” of US imperialism which are usually first passed on to him and his “technocrats” by the US imperialist agents in such agencies as the Agency for International Development (AID), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and leading US corporations, banks and foundations. By having the most decisive say on treaties, loan agreements, franchises, concessions, licenses and business contracts, he shall be able to further enlarge upon his personal wealth which is now superior in position and magnitude even to that of the Ayala, Soriano and Zobel group. Indeed, bureaucrat capitalism has its rewards for Marcos and his cohorts—the top oligarchs in the country.

Like the 1935 Constitution, the “new constitution” allows US and other foreign investors to own and control even to the extent of 100 percent of corporate equity in most areas of investments. More than 50 percent of the \$2 to \$3 billion of US investments are now in these unrestricted areas of investments. Even in such areas as the operation of public utilities and exploitation of land and natural resources, foreign investors can comply with the requirement of at least 60 percent Filipino equity but they can control Philippine corporations in various ways to an extent far beyond what their formal ownership of 40 percent equity or even less may seem to indicate. They can exercise this control through interlocking corporations and “service contracts”. This control allows them to draw superprofits as if there were no restrictions on the extent of the foreign equity.

It is very striking that Article XIV is now completely silent on what specifically are the “traditional areas of investments” that shall be reserved to citizens of the Philippines or to corporations wholly owned by such citizens. In previous drafts of the “new constitution”, there were references to retail, indent, import and

wholesale as areas where 100 percent Filipino equity is required. But now even these secondary areas of the economy are open prey to “recommendations” of the fascist dictator. By its obvious silence, Section 3 tends to nullify even the Retail Trade Nationalization Act.

Section 5. No franchise, certificate, or any other form of authorization for the operation of a public utility shall be granted except to citizens of the Philippines or to corporations or associations organized under the laws of the Philippines at least sixty percent of the capital of which is owned by such citizens, nor shall such franchise, certificate, or authorization be exclusive in character or for a longer period than fifty years. Neither shall any such franchise or right be granted except under the condition that it shall be subject to amendment, alteration, or repeal by the National Assembly when the public interest so requires. The State shall encourage equity participation in public utilities by the general public. The participation of foreign investors in the governing body of any public utility enterprise shall be limited to their proportionate share in the capital thereof.

Section 9. The disposition, exploration, development, or utilization of any of the natural resources of the Philippines shall be limited to the citizens of the Philippines, or to corporations or associations at least sixty percent of the capital of which is owned by such citizens. The National Assembly, in the national interest, may allow such citizens, corporations, or associations to enter into service contracts for financial, technical, management, or other forms of assistance with any foreign person or entity for the exploration, development, exploitation, or utilization of any of the natural resources. Existing valid and binding service contracts for financial, technical, management, or other forms of assistance are hereby recognized as such.

Section 5 above is quite similar to and as reactionary as Section 8 of Article XIV of the 1935 constitution by allowing the grant of a franchise, certificate or some other form of authorization for the operation for a period of fifty years of a public utility to the citizens of the Philippines and to Philippine corporations or associations in which foreign equity is not more than 40 percent. What makes this section utterly worse than its predecessor is that it explicitly allows participation of foreign investors in the governing body of a public utility, throws away the recent Supreme Court decision on the Lustevenco case disallowing foreigners to be employed in local businesses and assures the foreign personnel of local US oil and transportation firms of continued privilege. This section also

encourages the “general public” to buy stocks so that these could be manipulated by a few big capitalists who control a solid bloc of stocks. A solid bloc of stocks even if amounting only to 40 percent equity or even less can easily control the diffused stocks of the “general public” even if this amount to 60 percent equity or more in a corporation.

Section 9 is also similar to and as reactionary as Section 1 of Article XIII of the 1935 constitution by allowing the disposition, exploration, development, exploitation or utilization of all public lands and all natural resources by citizens of the Philippines and to Philippine corporations or associations in which foreign equity is not more than 40 percent. What is new in this section is that it approves one more method of circumventing the formal requirement of 40 percent foreign equity in Philippine corporations, ensuring foreign control of Philippine business entities and, of course, enlarging the profits normally earned by 40 percent equity in Philippine corporations. This method consists of allowing citizens of the Philippines and corporations and associations to enter into “service contracts” for financial, technical, management, or other forms of “assistance” with any foreign person or entity for the exploration, development, exploitation, or utilization of any of the natural resources and public lands. The arguments used by the US-Marcos dictatorship for the adoption of this method are standard colonial and puppet arguments like the Philippines and the Filipinos having no capital, technology and experience.

Even before the “ratification” of the “new constitution”, Marcos threw the country wide open for oil exploration by foreign oil firms, mostly US and Japanese, by virtue of Presidential Decree No. 8 making the pending Senate Bill No. 531 (entitled an Act to Promote the Discovery and Production of Indigenous Petroleum and Appropriating Funds Therefor) a “part of the law of the land”. Presidential Decree No. 8 sets the pattern for “service contracts”—a pattern for assuring foreign investors control over the public lands and natural resources, tax exemptions and high profits far beyond what 40 percent foreign equity would yield. This kind of decree is considered valid and binding by Section 9.

Section 11. The National Assembly, taking into account conservation, ecological, and development requirements of the natural resources, shall determine by law the size of lands of the public domain which may be developed, held or acquired by, or leased to, any qualified individual, corporation or association, and the conditions therefor. No private corporation or association may hold alienable lands of the public domain except by lease not to exceed one thousand hectares

in area; nor may any citizen hold such purchase or homestead in excess of five hundred hectares or acquire by purchase or homestead in excess of twenty-four hectares. No private corporation or association may hold by lease, concession, license, or permit, timber or forest lands and other timber or forest resources in excess of one hundred thousand hectares; however, such area may be increased by the National Assembly upon the recommendation of the National Economic and Development Authority.

Though certain limits are set on the size of public lands to be disposed to individuals, corporations or associations, such limits are still extremely large and harmful to public interest and furthermore, will not stop the big bourgeoisie and the big landlords from holding unlimited areas of public lands under the various individual names and corporate names. Going by precedents, the reactionary government will certainly lease out individually to private corporations public lands far in excess of 1,000 hectares and also individually to private persons far in excess of 500 hectares. It will still allow private persons to acquire by purchase or “homestead” public lands far in excess of twenty-four hectares.

In fact, big landgrabbers in frontier areas have always insisted that vast tracts of cultivated lands are public lands only to proceed to holding these by lease, concession, license or permit and later on securing titles to these lands as their own private lands by claiming to have developed them. In the process, the landgrabbers dispossess the poor settlers and the national minorities through armed force and deceit with the active support of the reactionary government which has always encouraged the comprador-landlords to expand their landholdings by grabbing public lands and has repeatedly declared as part of its sham land reform program that they can get public lands in exchange for their lands that may be expropriated elsewhere.

Also, the reactionary government has encouraged US corporations, especially those in agriculture, mining and logging, to hold hundreds of thousands of hectares of public lands. Corporations of the reactionary government have been most instrumental in letting foreign plantation interests take hold of wide tracts of public lands in Mindanao and elsewhere under the cover of the “growers’ agreements”. And, of course, the entire “new constitution” is silent about the fact that US military bases and stations sit on about 200,000 hectares of public lands. This occupation of public lands by a foreign military power is properly prohibited by the definition of territory by a truly sovereign state.

The last two sentences of Section 11 above is utterly ridiculous. In one sentence, it is made to appear that no private corporation or association may hold by lease, concession, license or permit timber and forest lands and other timber or forest resources in excess of 100,000 hectares. In the subsequent sentence, it is provided that such area may be increased by the national assembly upon the recommendation of the National Economic and Development Authority. Indeed, bureaucrat capitalism can always cook up situations and reasons for disposing unlimited amounts of public lands.

Section 6. The State may, in the interest of national welfare or defense, establish and operate industries and means of transportation and communication, and, upon payment of just compensation, transfer to public ownership utilities and other private enterprises to be operated by the Government.

Section 7. In times of national emergency when the public interest so requires, the State may temporarily take over or direct the operation of any privately owned public utility or business affected with public interest.

The property and interests of the big bourgeoisie, including the foreign monopolies and the local big compradors, are well sanctified by the “new constitution”. Section 6 above, quite similar to and as reactionary as Section 6 of Article XIII of the 1935 constitution, categorically provides that public utilities and other private enterprises cannot be transferred to public ownership without “just compensation”. The Investment Incentives Act goes even as far as to guarantee the right of nonexpropriation to foreign investors. Consistent with this act, US imperialism has tied down the reactionary government to investment insurance schemes covering US investments so that the guarantees for the extraordinary privilege of nonexpropriation shall not only be in word but also in fact.

The basic requirement of “just compensation” guarantees that the property and interests of the big bourgeoisie are not to be dismissed but are even to be enlarged. How can a financially bankrupt government, with small revenues and huge internal and external debts, offer “just compensation” to its foreign masters? Even before the termination of the Parity Amendment and the Laurel-Langley Agreement, the fascist dictator Marcos has made it clear that US investors should not worry too much about reducing their equities to forty percent in corporations engaged in the areas of public utilities, land and natural resources for as long as neither the reactionary government nor private Filipino

businessmen can afford to buy them out. This is what Marcos calls “justice” and “fairness” to his imperialist masters. Furthermore, even if the US investors were to be bought out on their equity excesses, they are still free to shift their capital to so many other lucrative fields of investment in the country.

Without any mention of “just compensation”, Section 7 above provides that in times of “national emergency” the state may temporarily take over or direct the operation of any privately owned public utility or business. This section is specifically intended to preempt claims for damages that may be made by business enterprises maliciously shut down or taken over by the fascist dictator Marcos for his political and economic gain. Under Proclamation No. 1081, there has been a real and selective but temporary takeover of such enterprises as the MERALCO, ABS-CBN, ABC, Manila Times, Manila Chronicle, Free Press, IISMI and so many others. It has never been in accord with public interest for the fascist dictatorship to make such takeover. Such takeover is merely a part of the narrow scheme to suppress the opponents and critics of the US-Marcos dictatorship and also allow the private business interests of the fascist dictator to muscle in. The most conspicuous private business interests of Marcos that have been benefited by Proclamation No. 1081 are the Daily Express, KBS, RPN, Liwayway Publications Group, PLDT and ELISCO. With regard to the long-term implications of either Section 6 or 7 we state that a reactionary state can never truly stand for national welfare, defense or public interest.

Section 12. The State shall formulate and implement an agrarian reform program aimed at emancipating the tenant from the bondage of the soil and achieving the goals enunciated in this constitution.

Section 13. The National Assembly may authorize, upon payment of just compensation, the expropriation of private lands to be subdivided into small lots and conveyed at cost to deserving citizens.

Taken together, Sections 12 and 13 demonstrate the rank hypocrisy and demagoguery of the US-Marcos dictatorship. The first section repeating phrases from Marcos’ Presidential Decree No. 27 provides that there shall be an agrarian reform program. On the other hand, the second section echoing Section 4, Article XIII of the 1935 constitution demands that “just compensation” be paid to the landlords in cases of expropriation. In effect, the tenants can be emancipated only if they themselves can afford the prohibitive redistribution price (plus interest and tax payments) demanded by the reactionary government.

In other words, the “new constitution” actually sets a condition for preventing the poor peasants and lower-middle peasants from coming to own their share of land.

It must be pointed out that there has never been any poor peasant, farm worker nor lower-middle peasant who has been emancipated by trying to pay the landlord’s land under the “expropriation” program of the reactionary government. In the first place, the reactionary government is restricted by its own political character and financial limitations from expropriating even only 1 percent of the total landholdings of the landlord class. For instance, only 3,876 hectares were expropriated at the cost of P16,002,900 by the reactionary government during the entire life of the Agricultural Land Reform Code from 1963 to 1971. This area is equivalent only to a very small portion of the Marcos hacienda of 22,000 hectares in the Cagayan Valley.

Lately, the fascist dictator Marcos has made it even more obvious than ever before through Presidential Decree No. 27 that the poor peasants, farm workers and lower-middle peasants can never hope to give “just compensation” to the landlords or afford the redistribution price set by the reactionary government. The formula dictated by Presidential Decree No. 27 for determining the value of the landlord’s land, i.e., the average annual crop (based on the three normal crop years) multiplied by two and one-half (2 1/2) plus annual interest charges of 6 percent for fifteen years, has artificially increased the value of the landlord’s land far beyond its “fair market value”. Presidential Decree No. 27 is even more foolish than the Agricultural Land Reform Code of 1963 and its 1971 modified version, the Code of Agrarian Reforms. This decree has served only to expose further the counterrevolutionary character of the fascist dictatorship among the peasant masses and to stress the correct revolutionary program of distributing land to the poor peasants, farm workers and lower-middle peasants at no cost. The fascist dictatorship is simply daydreaming when it claims that Presidential Decree No. 27 has effectively counteracted the agrarian revolution being waged by the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People’s Army and the peasant masses.

Our attitude and policy on the “new constitution”

There is no fundamental difference between the 1935 constitution and the “new constitution” in the sense that US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism continue to be given the license to ride roughshod over the broad

masses of the people. The most striking difference that is in the “new constitution” is neither the adoption of the parliamentary form of government, the lowering of the age of suffrage nor anything else of the sort, as some may superficially think, but it is the rabidly counterrevolutionary endorsement of a fascist dictatorship out to preserve the old society even while calling it a “new society” against the ever rising tide of the revolutionary mass movement. This “new constitution” is essentially and completely repugnant to the national sovereignty and democratic rights of the Filipino people.

Now that the final draft of the “new constitution” is out, it is absolutely clear that the very idea of holding the 1971-1972 constitutional convention, without any prior fundamental change of the social order, has been part of a long-nurtured scheme of the US-Marcos clique to keep itself in power even beyond 1973 through a vicious rightist counterrevolutionary coup and a fascist dictatorship. The 1970 elections for delegates were fashioned in such a way or in such a manner as to bring the reactionary constitutional convention the biggest possible number of big comprador, big landlord and big bureaucrat delegates beholden to the political machinery of the US-Marcos clique.

Subsequently in the convention, the US-Marcos clique scandalously manipulated its minions against a broad range of progressive delegates determined to stop the obvious scheme to perpetuate Marcos in power. The Quintero expose showed up corrupt methods employed by this clique to keep its minions in tow. Then in one fell swoop upon the declaration of martial law, the full-fledged fascist dictatorship took every measure to suppress its opponents inside and outside the convention. Thus, it came to pass that the US-Marcos dictatorship succeeded in ramming through the convention the final draft of the “new constitution” now offered for “ratification” in one more farce sham plebiscite on January 15, 1973.

Only after the final signing of this “new constitution” by the farcical constitutional convention on November 30, 1972 has the fascist dictator Marcos decreed with the silly air of self-indulgence an order to his military minions to allow “free discussion and debate”. This he does while he continues to unleash the wildest and most futile kinds of onslaughts against the broad masses of workers, peasants, students, youth, women and the national minorities. This he does while he continues to suppress all open and legal organizations, mass media and other entities that are firmly opposed to his tyrannical rule. This he does while his spies continue to eavesdrop on the people’s ordinary conversations.

The fascist dictator Marcos now appears to believe that he has sufficiently intimidated the broad masses of the people and deceived them about his perverse record and ambitions. He has monopolized the use of armed force in urban areas and elsewhere, all instrumentalities of the reactionary government, the mass media, the schools and everything else which he can actually take over or threaten with armed force. He is going to boast that as military order was not lifted until sometime in the 1930s, the US colonial government issued and put into effect “fundamental laws” governing the Philippines as a colony.

Though he has several times boasted of his Proclamation No. 1081 as a “new and outstanding contribution to international jurisprudence”, the fascist dictator actually traces the antecedence of this proclamation to the general order of a barbaric foreign aggressor, US imperialism, which he continues to serve. What the US-Marcos dictatorship calls “martial law Philippine style” is also nothing but a cheap imitation of the tricks of such contemporary fascist dictators as Thieu, Pak Jung Hi, Lon Nol, Suharto, Chiang, Thanom, Papadopoulos and the like, and also of such bygone fascist dictators as Hitler, Mussolini, Batista, Ngo Dinh Diem and the like. All of those have had their own constitutions permitting them to rule indefinitely.

The confidence of the fascist dictator Marcos in allowing “free discussion and debate” on the “new constitution” arises from several facts. The period before January 15 is extremely short. The most possible legal means of communications spout only his counterrevolutionary propaganda. The printing and handling of ballots are under the full control of his rabid agents in the Commission on Elections and in the reactionary armed forces. The constitutional convention delegates eager to take their share of the loot are bound to do a lot of campaigning all over the country. Local officials of the reactionary government irrespective of their political parties are under duress and are under strict orders to support the “new constitution” under the pretext of “nonpartisanship”. Furthermore, the counting of votes or, more precisely, the misreporting of votes to the public shall finally be made by his rabid agents even as the honest school teachers shall have made a fair counting of votes. The fascist dictator has always stressed that there is no more turning back from his mad lurch. He is terrified by the prospect of having to pay with his life the many grave crimes of fascism, puppetry and corruption that he has perpetrated on the people. His stakes are now far higher than in any previous election when he at any rate resorted to fraud and terrorism. Likewise, the stakes of his imperialist masters are high. Thus, he would resort to every possible measure in the forthcoming “plebiscite”

in order to perpetuate himself in power and to give a semblance of the constitutionality and legality to his usurpation of absolute power. It is by the “ratification” of the “new constitution” that he hopes to be able to cling more tightly to US imperialism and rule indefinitely.

But the people will never respect a “constitution” that is the product and token of their enemy. Since the fascist dictator is fond of drawing parallelisms between the Philippines and south Vietnam, let us remind him that the late unlamented Ngo Dinh Diem was able to fabricate his own “constitution” against the people’s will while he boasted that he was preempting the revolution in south Vietnam. Such constitution and such boasting only damned Ngo and the Vietnamese revolution advanced even more vigorously. We are certain of two possibilities for the fascist dictator Marcos: either he shall be outmaneuvered by his fellow reactionaries in a relatively short time or he shall stay in power long enough to hear the New People’s Army approaching Malacañang. In any case, the people’s wrath shall have something to do with his fate.

The Communist Party of the Philippines is determined to expose and condemn the “new constitution” as a license for keeping the US-Marcos dictatorship indefinitely and for aggravating the oppression and exploitation of the broad masses of the people by foreign monopolists, the big compradors and the big landlords. We are determined to focus attention on the proimperialist and antidemocratic provisions which make the “new constitution” essentially and completely counterrevolutionary. Together with all our allies, we are determined to arouse and mobilize the entire nation and people to reject this filthy scrap of paper made in Malacañang. It is apt to call this the Marcos constitution in order to unmask its despicable author.

The US-Marcos dictatorship may be able to frustrate and make a mockery of the people’s will in a “plebiscite” that is under its control. But then in the end, will a filthy scrap of paper really save the fascist dictatorship from the wrath of the people? Mere hypocritical invocations of “constitutional rule” will not make the fascist dictatorship less than its abhorrent self. The longer the US-Marcos dictatorship reigns, the more determined are the broad masses of the Filipino people to overthrow it. They shall surely win under the leadership of the proletariat and the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Reject the Marcos Constitution! Expose the Sham Plebiscite!

Down with the Martial Rule of the US-Marcos Dictatorship!

Fight for National Freedom and Democracy!

Carry Forward the Revolutionary Armed Struggle!

Long Live the Filipino People!

Long Live the Philippine Revolution!

February 27 “Referendum” — Another Farce

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Under conditions of fascist martial rule, no honest referendum can be held. The truth of this statement has been amply proven by the fake referendum of January 10-15 and July 27-28 in 1973 when fascist dictatorship gave itself unbelievable number of votes amidst the overwhelming hatred of the people for its criminal arrogations and excesses. The “referendum” slated for February 27 cannot but be another farce, a travesty of democracy and an insult to the sovereign people.

The fascist dictator Marcos holds the people in complete contempt. His basic stand remains that he holds unlimited powers, like a monarchical autocrat and that he rigs up a “referendum” once in a while not really to let the sovereign people decide on questions that he alone frames but merely to “consult” them under rules and conditions that he unilaterally designs. The “referendum” is therefore nothing but an expensive propaganda gimmick of the fascist dictatorship.

Marcos has already repeatedly declared what uses the third fake referendum has for him. He wants a “vote of confidence” and a “fresh mandate”. He prates that there is a need to “consolidate the gains” of his extremely oppressive and exploitative “new society” and that more than ever there is a need for the continuance of his “crisis government” because the country is rocked by what is a daily worsening political and economic crisis.

The irony of it all is that a referendum is something that should prove there is no more cause for martial rule but instead a referendum is rigged repeatedly to prove that the present fascist martial rule should continue. The fascist puppet dictatorship is the fundamental internal cause for the rapid worsening of the

crisis in Philippine semicolonial and semifeudal society. And yet the fascist dictatorship seeks to perpetuate itself by invoking this worsening crisis.

There is no doubt left about Marcos giving himself an “overwhelming number of votes” on the question of whether there is approval for the mere manner of exercising the powers that he has usurped and also on the question of whether he should continue exercising the same powers. As in the two previous fake referendums, the results of the third “referendum” are already known by Malacañang fakir statisticians. Long before the people are made to go to the through the motion of voting. If ever there is going to be a new twist, this time, it would be for Marcos to appear getting less than 90 percent of the “votes” on every question.

In raising the two questions whether local officials should be appointed or elected, Marcos basically wishes to give himself an “assent” to what he asserts: namely, that everything proceeds from his usurpation of power. Whatever is made to appear as the prevalent answer to the questions, the mere act of “voting” would be taken by him to imply that there is “assent” to his complete control of all local officials. Thus, he is very much concerned about getting a big turn-out of “voters” in the “referendum,” apart from his wanting to show some semblance of democracy by allowing debate within the narrow confines of whether governors and mayor-councils should be appointed or elected.

The third fake referendum is therefore a method for Marcos to expand his powers and effect a rigid control of local executive offices that were previously elective. The vulture sees and takes the opportunity offered by the impending termination of the tenure of local elective officials on December 31, 1975. On top of gaining the “principle” that the tenure of local officials whether appointed or elected depends on him, he can have the most rigid fascist control over local officials should the “vote” be made to appear in favor of his power of appointment. However, he can still retain sufficient control over them even if the “vote” be made to appear that they need to be elected. That is because the when and the how of the elections will still depend on him.

There are blatant signs that the fascist dictatorship is interested in appointing a “manager-commission” and imposing it on Greater Manila (Manila-Rizal). The foundation for this has been laid by the integration of all police departments and other departments under the Metrocom. The fascist dictator wants to have the most rigid control over the center of wealth and communications. He wants to

monopolize the spoils here and give some crumbs to his favorite military minions. In fact, the Metrocom has already seized for itself all opportunities for graft, corruption and extortion from local elective officials in the area. Marcos is also afraid that were local officials in Greater Manila to remain elective it is certain that his candidates would lose or that he will have to resort to the most scandalous tricks to get them “elected.”

In the areas outside of Greater Manila, there is enough basis to expect that Marcos is interested in imposing his power of appointment. Police departments have been integrated under the Philippine Constabulary and have been wrested away from local elective officials. In many areas, especially those where local officials are antifascist or where there is armed antifascist resistance, governors and mayors have been replaced by military men openly and surreptitiously. The current view of the fascist dictatorship is that elections are “divisive” and tend to “loosen the tongue” of the people. There is also some basis to expect that either through the “referendum” or after it Marcos will come under such a heavy pressure from his foreign master, US imperialism, which is more clever in the ways of deception, that he will concede to elections of local officials outside of Greater Manila.

Anything that Marcos wants in his “referendum” Marcos gets. The Commission on Elections is completely in the hands of notorious Marcos hatchetmen. It cannot be any different from the Department of Local Government and Community Development that carried out the previous “referendums.” Even if this time the votes were really counted for show in the local “barangays,” especially those accessible to foreign press correspondents, the canvassing and tabulation of votes from the municipal or city level upwards will be made by Comelec personnel who are either beholden to or cowed by the fascist regime.

Apart from reminding the people that there are penalties (a jail term and fine) for failing to register and “vote,” “barangay leaders” are already making the rounds telling them that dire consequences would befall those who will not vote according to the wishes of the fascist dictatorship. These “barangay leaders” have been intimidated by the fascist military that should they fail to produce the desired results they are subject to various forms of harassment. The coercive effect of illegal detentions, forced evacuations, torture, murder and other forms of fascist abuse is being exerted on the people to the maximum.

Previous to the fascist martial rule, fraud and terrorism was the rule even when

the two reactionary parties, civic associations and the press of diverse reactionary tendencies could countercheck each other and watch electoral proceedings from the precinct level to the national level. But now that all political parties are dissolved, civic organizations are deterred from poll-watching and the press is completely in the hands of Marcos-Romualdez kins and dummies, the single ultrareactionary Marcos clique monopolizes the terrorism and the fraud in the entire “referendum” proceedings.

The Communist Party of the Philippines should take the initiative and take every opportunity to expose and oppose the forthcoming “referendum” as a farce and as a cheap trick intended by the fascist puppet dictatorship to cover up its extreme isolation from the people and to expand its powers to oppress and exploit the people. The people should be encouraged and urged to boycott the “referendum” and to hold US imperialism and the Marcos fascist puppet clique responsible for the present intolerably severe crisis engulfing the country today.

The fear that those who refuse to vote will be penalized should be dispelled by the convincing argument that the fascist dictatorship will not dare jail and fine millions upon millions of the people and further expose its isolation, unjustness and brutality. The fact should be cited that the fascist dictatorship has admitted that millions upon millions of people, comprising twenty-five percent of “registered voters,” did not vote during the second fake referendum. No one was jailed or fined for refusing to register or “vote.” Instead, the fascist dictatorship had to issue an “amnesty” proclamation to save face from the exposure of its empty threats. Punitive measures for such a supposed crime as abstention from a rigged referendum would only serve to rouse the people to fight even more militantly against the fascist puppet dictatorship.

The toiling masses of workers and peasants are impelled by the daily worsening crisis to condemn the “referendum” and all the rotten things it stands for. Antifascist sections of the Catholic Church, leading personalities in various professions, the student masses and a growing number of local government officials are openly working to break the climate of fear and are standing up on public platforms to denounce the “referendum.” More than ever before, there is a substantial basis for a policy of boycotting the “referendum.”

Public gatherings should be held under the guise of discussing the “referendum” questions in order to expose and oppose not only the “referendum” but also the entire fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique. Public opinion surveys

of varying scales should be promoted before, during and after the “referendum” so as to disprove the preordained results of this Marcos referendum. To achieve the utmost success in the antifascist campaign, Party cadres and members must cooperate and blend with our allies everywhere.

Expose and oppose the “referendum” as another farce, a travesty of democracy!

Boycott the fake referendum!

Condemn the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique!

Work well with our allies everywhere in the antifascist and anti-“referendum” campaign!

Long live the people’s democratic revolution!

Uphold the Leadership of the Proletariat in the Revolution and Go Deep Among the Masses of Workers

May Day Statement of the CPP Central Committee

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On May First, we celebrate the glorious sacrifices and triumphs of the working class in its long history of revolutionary struggle against the oppressors and exploiters throughout the world and in our own country. We uphold the leadership of the proletariat in the Philippine revolution and resolve to go deep among the masses of workers.

We, in the advanced detachment of the proletariat, perform our revolutionary tasks in our country not only for the sake of the broad masses of the Filipino people but also in the spirit of proletarian internationalism. We are determined to fulfil our share in the struggle of the world proletariat for the liberation of the people of the world from the scourge of imperialism, modern revisionism and all reaction.

The millions of workers in our country are suffering from extreme oppression and exploitation under this fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique. They are eager to defend their political and economic rights and join the ranks of resistance. They know that their liberation is impossible without the liberation of all the oppressed and exploited in the country.

The masses or workers are neither cowed nor deceived by the fascist regime but, fully aware of the viciousness of the US-Marcos dictatorship through their

concrete experience, they recognize that revolutionary militancy and consistent revolutionary work must be qualified by prudence and vigilance, especially in the cities and the enemy's main lines of communication.

Patient underground work is the general character of revolutionary work among the masses of workers today. To have well selected cadres working underground, to accumulate strength and bide our time, and to avoid rashness and exposure is the rule. It requires a great deal of revolutionary effort and struggle to reach and unite the workers in a series of workplaces and in entire industries.

Every open and legal manifestation of strength must presuppose an underground strength that is several times larger. We can never tire of working arduously and patiently for the revolutionary cause of the working class and the entire nation. We can measure our daily cumulative successes against the difficulties and even some setbacks that we encounter. If we look a few years back, we started with so little or nothing at all.

We have every reason to be confident of winning victory. The objective conditions for waging revolution are more excellent than ever before. The political and economic crisis of the Philippine ruling system is getting worse every day. The world crisis of the capitalist system is getting worse every day. The world is aglow with the victories of the people.

All that needs to be done is to steadily build up the subjective forces of the revolution. We expand and consolidate them in the course of revolutionary struggle. At the beginning of the fight, our forces are small and weak and the enemy's are big and strong. But the objective conditions show the way for us to grow big and strong step by step and defeat in the end an enemy that is now outwardly big and strong but is rotten to the core.

The plight of the Filipino workers

The fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique prides itself in suppressing the workers' political and economic rights, in "stabilizing" the political situation by brute force and pressing down workers' wages for the benefit of the US and other foreign monopoly capitalists and such arch reactionaries as the big compradors and big landlords.

The Labor Code of the Philippines, which has replaced the Industrial Peace Act, systematizes and incorporates all the antiworker orientation, content and effects

of Proclamation 1081, General Orders Nos. 1, 2, 2-A & 5 and Presidential Decrees Nos. 21, 133, 143 & 148, among others. There is nothing new about this handbook except that it conveniently sums up the antiworker character of the “new society”.

The masses of workers, including those in the government service, remain under the threat of arbitrary arrest, raid, murder, torture and indefinite detention by the fascist military. There is nothing that dispels the presupposition and effects of such consummated and still being consummated acts of the fascist regime in carrying out arbitrary dismissals of government workers, in raiding and looting the homes and offices of progressive workers and trade unions, in arresting and indefinitely detaining trade unionists and common workers and encouraging private employers to punish trade unionists and make the most profits out of their workers.

General Order No. 5, which scandalously deprives the masses of workers of their right to strike, reigns supreme. The subversion and nullification of the workers’ right to unionize and undertake mass actions is a continuing fact. The “labor code’s” recognition of the workers’ right to self-organization and right to concerted activities or its harping on the line of “one union, one industry” is senseless formality. Without the right to strike, trade unions whose collective bargaining agreements terminate face extinction and workers who have no trade union at all to start with face extreme difficulties in organizing one.

It is keeping to an old ritual for the Department of Labor to be talking about the “rationalization” of the trade union movement, even if such “rationalization” were merely aimed at putting all trade unions at the dictation and command of the fascist regime. What so far is the principal intention of the fascist regime has been to subvert and nullify all kinds of trade unions rather than carry out a reactionary syndicalist policy. A reactionary government becomes concerned about organizing its own kind of trade unions only when it is faced with a large trade union movement with a revolutionary character.

The employers, with the foreign monopolies on top, are far ahead in integrating their organizations. It is already evident that the fascist regime is more interested in such farces as “tripartite congresses”, with itself and the highly organized employers playing ball with a few handpicked labor aristocrats who pretend to represent all the disparate yellow trade unions and even the overwhelming majority of workers, who remain unorganized and are outside of either yellow or

genuine trade unions. The “labor code” retains every obnoxious feature of Presidential Decree No. 21. It adopts the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC), the same dog as the Court of Industrial Relations (CIR) with a new tag. Upon the never-ending increase of cases involving the workers and their employers, the shifted officials of the CIR and a bigger pack of arbitrators and lawyers continue to prey on the workers and take advantage of bureaucratic delays to carry on their corrupt work.

While there is pretense of protecting the workers from lockouts, dismissals and suspensions, employers are allowed to carry out “preventive suspensions”, “reassignments”, and “demotions” and are no longer considered criminally liable for unfair labor practices because cases involving these are now conceived to be mere administrative cases easily decided under the table or indefinitely delayed, if not outrightly dismissed, when the workers insist on their rights.

The workers are under a permanent and absolute injunction because they are deprived of their right to strike. And only in “limited cases” may the NLRC issue injunctions or restraining orders against employers. Since the trade unions are prohibited from collecting strike and defense funds, the workers are in the most difficult situation to pay for competent legal advice and make their way through the NLRC.

More cases than ever before do not reach the NLRC. Employers simply call on the fascist military and the integrated police to quell any just demand from the workers and punish their leaders. The workers and their leaders are simply charged with “economic sabotage”, “possession of deadly weapons”, “theft of company property” or any such fabrication. For “stealing” any material, spare part, product or article worth even only a few centavos, a worker can be imprisoned for six to twelve months under a fascist decree.

All the hard won economic gains made by the workers through decades of struggle have been drastically reduced or wiped out. Upon the repeal of the Blue Sunday Law, the employers are allowed to rearrange the work schedules of workers so as to permit them no slack period, avoid paying for overtime work and sabotage every attempt of workers or even only their leaders to meet on Sundays.

Female workers are discouraged from working in night-time productive enterprises but are encouraged to work in tourist-oriented enterprises like bars,

nightclubs, sauna baths and massage clinics. Maternity leave benefits of working mothers have been drastically reduced. The exploitation of child labor has been liberalized because work permits are no longer required for such. The sick and injured can no longer seek compensation under both the workmen's compensation and the Social Security System (SSS) schemes but instead they can do so only under one integrated scheme, with drastic reduction of benefits and with the workers required to pay premiums, unlike before.

The job security and wage conditions of all regular workers are grossly undermined with the approval and encouragement given by the "labor code" for employers to take in "apprentices" and "learners" at wages far below the minimum wage and farm out aspects of an enterprise to contractors who are not bound by the minimum wage law. Regular workers are being forced to resign or retire early only to be replaced by lower-paid workers. For exploiting "apprentices" and "learners", the big capitalists are even given tax deductions as incentives.

The big capitalists are maximizing their profits by taking advantage of the political and legal conditions set by the fascist regime, by enforcing speed-ups, by lengthening the working hours, setting excessively high production quotas on every worker and instituting arbitrary work regulations that are used to cause wage deductions. Of course, the semicolonial and semifeudal character of the economy has not only remained but has even deepened. The landlords are carrying out an enclosure movement but the depressed industries cannot absorb the displaced tenants and homesteaders. The army of reserve labor has rapidly increased and this is being deliberately used to depress wage levels.

Contrary to the claims of the fascist regime that it has reduced the unemployment rate to 4.1 percent — an obvious lie because in the present crisis-ridden capitalist world even the leading capitalist countries have high rates of unemployment — the rate of unemployment now in the country could be at least 35 percent. Every year, about a million youth reach working age without finding employment. Large masses of workers are being thrown off their jobs due to the economic crisis churning in the capitalist world.

In a semicolonial and semifeudal country like the Philippines, unemployment is usually camouflaged by the seeming absorption of those who reach working age into the ranks of farm workers. The percentage of farm workers who have daily work within the agricultural season is certainly flimsy and is fast thinning out in

all agricultural areas. To create a false picture, statisticians of the reactionary government beat themselves every year in manipulating figures on the unemployed and underemployed.

The vast majority of industrial and other nonagricultural wage-earners in the Philippines do not receive the minimum wage of eight pesos a day. They get coolie wages. Employers circumvent the minimum wage law by resorting to pakiao or piece work. It is also through this method that employers of farm workers circumvent the law requiring a minimum wage of 4.75 pesos for farm workers. The benefits from the Sugar Act of 1972, social security contributions and the “social amelioration bonus” for sugar workers are gobbled up by the sugar landlords themselves through various devices. Farm workers in rice, corn, coconut, banana and other areas have no defined rights whatsoever.

The fascist regime brazenly declares that there should be no fuss about minimum wage levels because it considers as more important “development”, the “generation of more jobs” and “strengthening the purchasing power of the peso”. But the truth is that the minimum wage levels set in 1970 have been left far behind by inflation and the continuous devaluation of the peso.

The open-door policy for foreign investments, the incurring of huge foreign and local debts, the unrestricted remittance of superprofits, the large foreign trade deficits, the expensive and graft-ridden infrastructure projects, the endless increase of the tax burden and the continuous devaluation of the peso have resulted in neither “development”, “generation of more jobs” nor “strengthening of the purchasing power of the peso”. They have merely served to squeeze the toiling masses and the entire nation dry.

Though the fascist regime claims to have cut down the rate of inflation from an already watered-down figure of 34 percent to a mere eight percent — another obvious lie—the rate of inflation is actually running high at over 35 percent and is mercilessly cutting down the real wages of workers. It is bad enough, even if we go by the understated figures of the reactionary government’s statisticians, that since 1970 the prices of basic goods and services purchased by the average household of six has been increasing at 20.64 percent yearly.

According to the May 1974 statistics of the reactionary government, a day’s supply of nutritious food costs 18.16 pesos — a far cry from the minimum wage. What about the other basic needs of workers such as clothing, decent shelter,

transport fare, medicine and medical care, some utilities as water and electricity and a certain educational level for members of their families? Only the most callous antiworker will insist that there should be no fuss over the minimum wage level. Since 1965, the minimum wage level has gone up from six to eight pesos or a mere 33.3 percent. But, during the same period, the value of the peso has gone down from 100 to 33 centavos (0.33 of the peso value in 1965) or a drop of 67 percent.

The plight of the workers calls for resolute revolutionary work. Their misery is intolerable. They are certainly ready as ever to develop within their ranks the organizations capable of asserting and advancing their class interests as well as the interests of the entire nation.

The Party and the workers

It is in keeping with our firm Marxist-Leninist principle that the working is the leading class in the Philippine revolution that we must go deep among the masses of workers. We must arouse and organize them on the basis of their needs and demands and draw from their ranks the best elements into their own party, the Communist Party of the Philippines. We should shun the notion or tendency to keep the Party a preserve of members who are of petty-bourgeois origin.

We should be seriously concerned with the ever-pressing task of drawing into the ranks of the Party those who come from the toiling masses of workers and peasants. The Party can become strong only if it succeeds in drawing into its ranks members of worker and peasant class background, letting them be the majority of the Party membership and developing cadres among them.

Once clarified simply, relevantly and step-by-step, Marxism-Leninism is easily and profoundly grasped by the workers, more so than by the petty bourgeois. It is after all the theory that touches the essence of the workers' daily experience, that shows the leading role of their class in the Philippine revolution and that is drawn from the revolutionary experience of the world proletariat.

The reorganization of the Party organization in the Manila-Rizal region that has recently taken place is in the correct direction. The principal feature in strengthening the Party branches and Party groups at the base of the regional Party organization should be going deep among the masses of the workers. It is

necessary to make more cadres available for work in the factory areas and workers' communities. After all, the largest and strongest possible mass force in the region is the working class.

The urban committees of other regional Party organizations should look up to the example of the Manila-Rizal regional Party organization in going deep among the masses of workers, without neglecting other sections of the urban population. It is also obvious that in guerrilla bases and zones the Party in the New People's Army should not fail to pay attention to the workers even as principal attention is paid to going deep among the peasant masses and in carrying out a peasant war.

Inasmuch as the masses of workers are most concentrated in the Manila-Rizal region, we refer mainly to them in discussing the tasks and methods that should be undertaken with regard to going deep among the masses of workers.

We have more than enough cadres to start with in going deep among the masses of workers. Even before the Party was reestablished, we had done some modest amount of trade union work. The most important thing now is that we have a correct ideological and political line in approaching the workers and we know where to concentrate our efforts in order to make wise use of our limited personnel and resources even as we readily work where we most easily can, where we have some contact in one form or another with the workers or where one or more of our Party members are employed or are residing.

We cannot go far in arousing and mobilizing the workers without first doing social investigation. We can always start by making friends with some workers in a given factory or line of work and holding a series of talks with them, preferably in their homes, about their work and living conditions. The few friends that we start with have their own friends in the same workplace. So, it is always possible to expand our source of information whenever a previous round of talks seems insufficient.

A good knowledge of the reactionary laws pertaining to trade unions and workers is necessary. Actual work and living conditions of the masses of workers are so bad that certain provisions of these laws can be invoked and used to improve these conditions. We must be good at raising questions on trade union experience, job security, compliance with the minimum wage, wage and dental care, the system of promotions, the number of regular and nonregular

workers, the departments or sections of work, the profits made by the company, the need for a trade union truly concerned with the welfare of the workers and the like.

Though strikes are banned, there is no expressed ban against trade unions. Though the collection of strike and defense funds is banned, that of funds for education and seminars is not. Though employers have the prerogative of making “preventive suspensions”, the suspended workers can demand compensation for the period that they are suspended. The workers can always demand due cause for punitive measures against them. Of course, there are certain laws (like the minimum wage law, law on overtime pay, workmen’s compensation law, social insurance law and medicare law), which are supposed to be automatically applied for the benefit of the workers but are not, when the workers are not well organized and do not demand what is due them. All these and others can provide a legal basis for making petitions to the NLRC and organizing or maintaining trade unions.

We must be good at being pupils of the workers. A worker-cadre himself must always remember this in dealing with his coworkers. At the same time, we must not fail to inform the workers as to how they are being exploited and what they stand to gain by organizing a trade union and demanding compliance by the employers with provisions of the law that are beneficial to the workers. In the course of social investigation, we do not only accumulate data and firm up in the end a list of workers’ demands. But we also develop close relations with the interviewees and pick out among them those who can initiate organizational work.

As soon as a list of demands can be drawn up, we must be able to form a workers’ organizing committee of at least five members. Just as the social investigation is conducted without the employer’s knowledge, the workers’ organizing committee must be formed discreetly. The task of this committee is to draw in the masses of workers step-by-step so that in the end the majority are solidly behind the list of demands. The employer must not be made aware of such a campaign until the overwhelming majority of the workers have adopted a definite form of legal organization or course of legal action by which to pursue their demands and are thoroughly united to fight for what is due them.

Under conditions of fascist martial rule, it is foolhardy to expose the leadership of what could be a trade union before the majority, if not all, of the workers are

fully united to the point of being able to back up their petitions or demands, if need be, by carrying out slowdowns, making the products off-standard or unsaleable, trooping the offices, creating snags in the production line, simultaneous leaves of absences or any tactic in lieu of a strike. The closer the employer is to the fascists, the more prudent the workers should be and the more patient they should be in waiting for conditions to ripen.

To gain the support of the vast majority of the workers step-by-step in a given workplace is a worthy revolutionary struggle. To expose one's plans prematurely and expose a few people to an enemy crackdown is certainly "Left" in form but Right in essence because it brings the workers' movement nowhere but defeat. To accumulate strength secretly and wait for conditions to ripen involves a recognition of the fact that in so many other workplaces Party cadres are also busy arousing and mobilizing the workers for the development of a general situation beneficial to the workers in every workplace.

It is very possible that before we can organize trade unions in large droves or launch some general strike the Marcos fascist clique shall have been overthrown by a coup d'etat by other reactionaries, who are still supported by US imperialism but who may adopt some antifascist posture. Our underground efforts among the workers shall not have gone to waste because these can be carried out further to develop a revolutionary trade union movement on a scale larger than ever before and overthrow the labor aristocrats who are now licking the boots of the fascist dictatorship.

The workers' organizing committees as an underground force in the ranks of workers should not stop at pushing forward only economic demands. We must combat reformism and economism. After all, even only in fighting for the establishment or continued existence of a trade union, a high level of political consciousness is required to maintain the militant unity and firmness of the workers against the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique.

So, the workers' organizing committees must relate the economic struggle to the Party's general line of people's democratic revolution. It is through group discussions not only on trade unionism but also on the whole range of the Philippine revolution that a strong political unity can be forged among the workers. The workers' organizing committee and its possible subdivisions, like the subcommittees and groups or cells, should generate these group discussions.

Only by raising the political consciousness of the mass of workers both through their practice and study can we succeed in choosing the most advanced elements to recruit into the Party. As soon as there are three or more Party members in a factory or line of work, a Party branch can be established. The workers' organizing committee and its subdivisions can continue under the direction of the Party branch for so long as there is yet no legal organization that can openly work for the workers' demands.

Besides reaching the workers directly in a given factory or line of work, we can reach the workers who may belong to several workplaces by establishing community organizing committees and developing mass organizations of various types in workers' communities. Certainly, we can establish and develop the most intimate relations with the workers in workers' communities. After all, it is the appropriate style of a workers' organizing committee to hold its meetings in its members' homes rather than in the premises of a factory.

There is also the interaction between the workplace and the workers' community; between the workers' organizing committee and the community organizing committee, together with various mass organizations in the community; and between the Party branch based in the workplace and that based in the community. Workers in one factory belong to various communities and workers in one community belong to various workplaces. Thus, the possibility for expansion is limitless so long as we exert arduous efforts and we know how to rely on a never-ending chain of comrades and masses.

By going deep among the masses of workers, we intend to develop and strengthen further the subjective forces of the revolution, the organized workers and the revolutionary party of the proletariat, the Communist Party of the Philippines, among others. The proletarian revolutionary character of the Party would be greatly enhanced by increasing the number of Party cadres and members of working class origin who can either carry on the revolutionary struggle in the urban areas or be shifted to the countryside, especially to the New People's Army.

Conditions for waging the revolution

The most incontrovertible evidence that the reactionary classes in the Philippines can no longer rule in the old way is the setting up and continued operation of the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique. While the fascist dictator is fond of boasting that he thrives on crisis after crisis, because he has in the first place set up what he call a “crisis government”, the glaring fact is that this antinational and antidemocratic regime has not only failed to stem a continuing political and economic crisis but has even aggravated it and intensified the oppression and exploitation of the broad masses of the people.

The hatred of the broad masses of the people for the fascist puppet dictatorship is profound and it deepens with every day that passes. US imperialism and the big comprador-landlords on whose account the fascist dictator wishes to remain in power indefinitely are inevitably seen by the people as the malefactors behind the fascist counterrevolution. Each moment that the tyrannical regime stays is a favorable occasion for the subjective forces of the revolution to grow and develop.

The Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People’s Army and various revolutionary people’s organizations are growing and developing steadily. Having taken the correct road of armed revolution from the start, though from scratch, and applying the strategic principle of encircling the cities from the countryside, the Party and the New People’s Army have frustrated the attempts of the enemy to crush them and have become tempered in the course of fierce struggle. Also in the urban areas, the Party has proven to be resilient because of its underground character from the very start.

The Party and the New People’s Army have sown the seeds of a protracted people’s war in all regions of the country. Fierce fighting is going on without letup in several regions. There is no region in the country where the fascist enemy has not received a hard blow from the NPA. Small hard blows are being made to accumulate strength and rouse the people to a wider scale of armed resistance.

With the Party going deep among the peasant masses, the solid basis for the national united front is being laid. The organs of democratic political power (the barrio organizing committees and the barrio revolutionary committees) are

springing up in the countryside. Mass organizations for workers, peasants, youth, women, children and cultural activists enthusiastically support them. At levels above the barrio level, the Preparatory Commission of the National Democratic Front is actively working for cooperation between the Party and its antifascist allies.

The people of southwestern Mindanao, the Moro National Liberation Front and the Bangsa Moro Army are persistently fighting for national self-determination. They have extended considerable support to the NPA by tying down large enemy forces and inflicting heavy losses on them.

The Lopez group has started to stir after more than two years of being blackmailed since the declaration of the fascist martial rule. Fascist rule is bound to be shaken in the Visayas. Antifascist sentiments and currents are also building up within the Catholic Church, Iglesia ni Cristo and the Protestant sects. Thus, the fascist dictator is not getting anywhere in whipping up a "Christian-Muslim war".

The group potentially most capable of overthrowing the Marcos fascist clique by a coup d'etat remains to be seen. This group has some representatives openly making anti-Marcos propaganda in the United States and are working with significant sections of US policymakers. The fascist dictatorship is demanding more US military aid under the pretext of fighting the revolutionary people of southwestern Mindanao. But US imperialism is already concerned about Marcos' own determination to stay in power beyond his puppet usefulness and calculates that someday it must wash its hands of any accountability for keeping him in power.

However, by all indications, especially the third fake referendum which brusquely removed from the people the formal right to suffrage, it is clear that the fascist dictator has the illusion that he can stay in power on a stretch as long as that of Suharto, Pak or even Franco. There cannot be a more foolish illusion. He underestimates the broad masses of the people who cherish national independence and democracy. The civil war which he has instigated has barely started.

This is the worst time in the world for someone to undertake a fascist puppet dictatorship in the Philippines. A semicolonial and semifeudal country has its own chronic political and economic crisis that has its own worsening course.

Thus, this has led to a fascist puppet dictatorship. But consider that on top of this is an unprecedentedly grave crisis of the world capitalist system that is now occurring due to the accumulated defeats of US imperialism in the hands of the revolutionary peoples of the world and its endless struggle with Soviet social-imperialism for world hegemony and arms supremacy.

Trying to make up for its losses elsewhere, US imperialism is exacting a rate of profit that is higher than ever before on its direct investments and loans in the Philippines and is shifting here the ravages of its inflation and recession. This is on top of the unbridled corruption and profligacy of the Marcos fascist gang. The broad masses of the people are forced to suffer soaring prices, an increasing tax burden, a breakdown of local industries and even of agricultural production and an accelerated rate of unemployment. The end result cannot but be the expansion and intensification of revolutionary struggle.

At any rate, US imperialism is in a state of rapid decline in its homegrounds and throughout the world. It continues to suffer defeat and weaken in the hands of the revolutionary peoples of the world. At the same time, it cannot get out of its ever intensifying contention with the other superpower. There is no detente but war preparations between the two superpowers. Under these circumstances, the first world of the two superpowers is opposed by the second world of the lesser capitalist countries and even more militantly and thoroughly by the third world of developing countries.

The Philippines is now being tugged by the demands of puppetry to US imperialism and likewise by the demands of being part of the third world. The former still very much prevails over the latter. The increasingly contradictory stances taken by the fascist puppet dictatorship does not prove any cleverness on the part of the fascist dictator but merely reflects the actual contradictions in the Philippine situation and in the relations between the Philippines and other countries. These contradictions can no longer be handled in the old way either by the Marcos clique or any other clique of reactionaries no matter how strong is its wish to remain under the shadow of US imperialism.

The resounding defeat of US imperialism in Indochina clearly shows the inevitable doom of US imperialism in Asia. Even as in the Philippines a relative tightening of the US grip is to be expected, because this is in line with the US scheme of remaining a "Pacific power" and of holding back its general and absolute decline in Asia, Europe is inexorably becoming the focus of contention

between the two superpowers. The struggle between the two superpowers in the Middle East and the Mediterranean relates closely to their struggle in Europe.

We are still in the era of imperialism. The imperialist powers are becoming more desperate than ever before. The factors of both revolution and war are increasing. The people of the world must make revolution and be prepared against war more determinedly than ever before. As the two superpowers lurch on to a world war, the people should make revolution on an even wider scale and countries should assert national sovereignty and independence.

The broad masses of the Filipino people must carry out the Philippine revolution even more resolutely, vigorously and self-reliantly than before. The objective conditions inside and outside the country are extremely favorable for their revolutionary efforts.

— Central Committee Communist Party of the Philippines

May 1, 1975

Marcos' Bogus Land Reform Collapses

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“It’s a lot of noise!”

This is how the peasant masses describe the promise of land reform made by the fascist dictator Marcos at the beginning of his antidemocratic counterrevolution in 1972.

Five years of Marcos’ bogus land reform has not only failed to improve the lot of poor and lower-middle peasants who comprise the vast majority of the country’s peasantry. It has aggravated their plight.

There is no known case of a poor or lower-middle peasant acquiring land under the regime’s “land reform” for the simple reason that he cannot afford the price dictated by Marcos and his fellow landlords. In fact, the peasants who were deceived into accepting the scrap of paper that the fascist dictatorship calls a “land transfer certificate” (LTC) find themselves sinking ever deeper in debt, with no hope of eventually owning the land they are tilling.

A recent seminar of the University of the Philippines focused on a “land reform” barrio in Calumpit, Bulacan. Based on the data made available to the researchers, it would seem that production costs have risen by 30 percent, mainly because of the high cost of fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation services, taxes, etc. In contrast, the palay production increased by a mere 2.6 percent.

In the average farm in the barrio studied, an equivalent of 53 cavans was spent on production. Since the yield totaled only 64.71 cavans, the peasant was left with just a little over 11 cavans, or less than P600.

Clearly, with prices of all prime commodities skyrocketing, the peasant and his family could not live on that amount, much less meet amortization payments on the land.

Field reports by Party cadres show that actual production costs have risen many times more than 30 percent. On the other hand, palay production has been so unreliable and requires so much expense that many peasants are giving up the so-called “high yielding” varieties.

In Calumpit barrio, pesticides for which the peasants are required to pay prohibitive prices under the regime’s “Masagana 99” program were found to be dangerous to the peasant’s health and to the environment. The pesticide Folidol was banned in Japan years ago while another brand, Gustathion A, was never allowed for farming. Both brands have been killing off fish, frogs and snails that provide supplementary food for the peasants.

Confronted with this, the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) pointed to the Bureau of Plant Industry as the government agency responsible. On another occasion, the DAR had tried to shift the blame to the Bureau of Lands for the failure of “land reform”. Indeed, this bureaucratic trick of buck-passing has characterized the entire implementation of Marcos’ bogus land reform.

The program has been such a dismal flop that even the fascist dictatorship has lessened the volume of its propaganda on what it had pointed to as its “cornerstone”. Fascist propaganda now tends to evade or obscure the issue of land reform.

On the question of land ownership

What makes the Marcos “land reform” a sham from the beginning is the bourgeois reactionary idea that if the tenant masses in rice and corn lands want to own land they must buy it at the price dictated by their landlords.

Presidential Decree No. 27 stresses the point that land sale contracts must be essentially a private transaction between the landlords and tenants and even discourages the Land Bank from acting as the financial intermediary.

At any rate, whether the land sale contract be directly between the landlord and the tenant, or the Land Bank first purchases the land and then resells it to the tenant, PD No. 27 dictates a mode of land valuation and a mode of payment that

put the poor and lower-middle peasants in default of their obligations as “amortizing owners”.

The value of the land is arrived at by getting the average gross crop out of three “normal” crop years and then multiplying it by two-and-a-half times. To jack up the value of his land, the landlord picks out the “best” crop years or arbitrarily insists on outrightly false high production figures. In raising the figure for the average gross crop, the landlord is not really interested in selling his land. But it is useful for him for demanding a high fixed rent (25 percent of the average gross crop) in accordance with the “leasehold” system.

In proclaiming the whole country a “land reform” area, the Agrarian Reform Code of 1971 and then Presidential Decree No. 2 pushed many tenants to opt for the “leasehold” system on pain of losing their tenancy rights for failure to do so.

Even before PD No. 27, many landlords had already compelled their tenants to sign “leasehold” contracts wherein high averages of gross crops were invented for the purpose of raising the land rent. That is what Marcos calls “emancipation” of the tenants in his PD No. 2. Tenants who make the mistake of entering into land sale contracts under PD No. 27 are required to make 15 yearly equal payments. These payments would cover not only the basic price of the land but also interest at the rate of 6 percent a year.

Tenants who have become “amortizing owners” are also required to pay the land tax, now rapidly rising as a result of World Bank dictation. When the Land Bank acts as the financial intermediary, the “amortizing owners” are also required to pay administrative costs, not to mention the overpricing of the land as arranged by the landlord and the Land Bank officials.

PD No. 27 also requires the “amortizing owners” to become members of the “samahang nayon” (village association). This association is supposed to be their guarantor. Again they are subject to heavy financial obligations in this Marcos-imposed association.

Under PD No. 27, the poor peasants and even all middle peasants who are tenants have absolutely no chance to be able to meet all the expenses required each year in connection with the land sale contract.

The poor and lower-middle peasants are pinned down by an accumulation of debts and always end the year in debt. They have to sell their labor power to

supplement their income from their plots.

Certainly, they cannot gain anything from entering into any land sale contract. There is yet no known case of a poor or lower-middle peasant daring to enter into any direct land sale contract with his landlord under PD No. 27.

It is only in an extremely small number of cases, where the Land Bank acts as the financial intermediary that poor and lower-middle peasants are trapped together with the rich peasants in land sale contracts under the terms of PD No. 27. The records of the Land Bank show that the poor and lower-middle peasants are always in default of their payments. Failure to pay means the piling up of interests upon interest.

Even without having to pay for obligations under PD No. 27, the peasant masses are already pinned down by the rising costs of production and subsistence and are liable to be pinned down harder by illness in the family, natural calamities and the unreliability of the so-called “high yielding” varieties of seed.

Marcos’ “land reform” does not only amount to zero but worsens the lot of the poor and lower-middle peasants. It is too much to say, like some officials of the US Agency for International Development (AID), that this bogus land reform is “not even one percent fulfilled”. It is also gratuitous to say that it is “moving slowly” as if there were still some hope in it.

What is land reform if it is not for the masses of poor and lower-middle peasants? They are the tillers who need to own their plots but cannot afford to buy them.

Data from the DAR covering the period 1972-1976 show up the big lie that Marcos has dished out to the peasant masses.

Under the pompous signboard of “Operation Land Transfer”, the DAR distributed 321,700 LTCs, covering 398,458 hectares, to 229,341 tenants out of an acknowledged number of more than one million tenants on rice and corn lands.

These LTCs are mere scraps of paper informing the tenants that they can buy land from their landlords in accordance with PD No. 27 by either entering into a direct land sale contract with their landlords or having the Land Bank act as the financial intermediary.

Also under the deceptive catchphrase of “Operation Land Transfer”, the DAR is supposed to organize barrio committees on land production (BCLPs) to determine land prices on the basis of production figures, in line with the formula set by PD No. 27. According to the DAR, only 9,698 BCLPs were organized from 1972-1976.

The cards are stacked against tenants in transactions within the BCLP, whose composition is dominated by landlords and bureaucrats. In most cases, the landlords use the BCLP to falsify production figures upwards not only to set a prohibitive price on the land but also to demand higher rent. In other cases, the landlords simply boycott the BCLP after one token meeting.

Of the 5,671 BCLPs which submitted land valuations, the DAR cared to respond to only 3,271 with a mark of approval. But valuation of the land mainly by landlords is one thing and the tenants’ ability to pay for the land is another.

There are land sales through the Land Bank where the tenants belong to various peasant strata. The DAR claims that for the period 1972 to 1976 it effected land sale contracts involving 1,449 landlords; 30,109 tenants; 57,459 hectares; and a total land value of P403,159,322.54.

These figures actually include land sale negotiations and contracts made even before the fascist martial rule. Premartial law figures are included obviously to bloat the number of tenants and the hectarage and also to lessen the price per hectare involved in Land Bank-undertaken land sale contracts during the fascist regime.

The picture is ugly, notwithstanding the attempts to prettify it. It is no achievement to subject 30,109 tenants on only 57,459 hectares to an average price of P7,016 per hectare, excluding payments for interest, administrative costs and land tax.

The average farm size for the tenants is 1.87 hectares. Basic price is P13,120. By one reckoning, interest payments come up to P11,808, at the annual rate of 6 percent for 15 years. Thus, basic price plus interest charges add up to P24,928 for only 1.87 hectares.

Based on the government’s figures, the average gross crop from this average lot is valued at P5,248. This is incredible. Actually the yield is only about P3,000. The overpricing through connivance between the landlords and the Land Bank

officials is very obvious.

The average “amortizing owner” has to pay annually P1,661.81 for a period of 15 years for the basic land price and interest charges. In addition, it has to pay for administrative costs and land taxes which come to another large amount. What about obligations to the “samahang nayon”?

What about production expenses and living expenses, at a time when the crisis generated by US imperialism and the Marcos fascist regime is daily worsening? And what about such unexpected events as illness in the family or crop failure (ordinarily once every three years)?

In the period 1972-1976, the DAR issued a grand total of 983 “emancipation patents” to 576 tenants on 562 hectares. The recipients of these “patents” had started to pay the Land Bank for the land a long, long time before the fascist martial rule and even before the entire Marcos regime.

They are actually rich peasants or even up-and-coming small landlords or peasants and nonpeasants who draw income not only from the purchased land but also from other sources. They are the small number of people who could pay their way through previous land sale contracts arranged by the Land Bank.

The basic orientation on PD No. 27 is to keep the tenants at the mercy of the landlord class. In the main, the mode of valuation dictated by this decree has been used by the landlord class to impose higher land rent and intensify feudal and semifeudal exploitation.

Though greatly increased, the financial resources of the Land Bank are geared to supporting the more profitable agricultural and nonagricultural ventures of the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class.

Landgrabbing by the big bourgeoisie (including foreign firms), big landlords and big bureaucrats and the establishment of “corporate farms” are rampant. The “land reform” propaganda of the Marcos fascist regime has always tried to obscure these acts.

An increasing number of peasants and even poor settlers and national minorities are being displaced or dispossessed either under the Marcos program of encouraging modern plantations for export crops or under General Order No. 47 which pushes the big foreign and domestic corporations to engage in modern

rice and corn production and organize “compact farms”.

Moreover, military campaigns and infrastructure projects displace and dispossess so many peasants, including poor settlers and national minorities.

The Marcos fascist regime is antagonistic to the peasant masses who engage in self-organization and who demand merely the reduction of land rent and the elimination of usury.

In most areas of the country, the old feudal sharecropping arrangements are still in operation, despite the redundant proclamation in the Code of Agrarian Reform of 1971 and PD No. 2 that these be abandoned in favor of the “leasehold” system throughout the country.

Under the “leasehold” system, the tenants now called “leaseholders” are obliged to pay an exorbitant fixed land rent to the landlord.

The “leaseholders” shoulder all production expenses. They are obliged to pay the fixed rent whatever is the outcome of the crop. Oftentimes, this system of land rent is even worse than the traditional sharecropping arrangement where the landlord shares in production expenses and gets his crop share from actual production.

“Samahang nayon”, “Masagana 99” and other projects

“Samahang nayon”, “Masagana 99” and other projects are integral parts of the entire deception program of the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique on the land question. Tenants who wish to become “amortizing owners” under the terms of PD No. 27 or those, including nontenants, who wish to get loans under the “Masagana 99” program are obliged to join the “samahang nayon”.

Right from the start, the “samahang nayon” was projected as a precooperative association leading to a fulfilled cooperative and was pointed to as a guarantor for land sale contracts between landlords and tenants.

“Samahang nayon” has actually been an anti-cooperative association. It has been used as a pretext for the dissolution of privately initiated cooperatives and the repression of legitimate peasant associations.

It could not even pretend to take care of the marketing problems of the peasant masses. The National Grains Authority always sets the prices of grain at a level far below the price spiral of nonagricultural commodities needed by the peasants.

It is largely in connection with “Masagana 99” that peasants of all strata and nonpeasants, including landlords, have had to join the “samahang nayon”. Hundreds of thousands became members in a few tens of thousands of “samahang nayon” in 1973 to 1974 so as to acquire seeds, fertilizers and pesticides under the “Masagana 99” program.

The superfluity of “samahang nayon” as a possible “credit cooperative” became obvious when the rural banks turned them into mere guarantors for loans taken by people of all sorts.

At the peak of “Masagana 99” lending, the “samahang nayon” was a mix-up of landlords, rich peasants, middle peasants, poor peasants and even “ghost peasants” invented by the bureaucrats to be able to pocket funds for themselves.

“Samahang nayon” started to collapse, especially in 1975, when fertilizers and pesticides became available outside of the “Masagana 99” program and when “Masagana 99” borrowers refused to pay their debts and resented having to pay for all sorts of obligations in the “samahang nayon”.

“Samahang nayon” has always been regarded by the peasants as nothing more than a fund-collecting agency for the Department of Local Governments and Community Development. There is no benefit in return for the funds collected. The funds simply go up the bureaucratic ladder for misappropriation.

The peasant masses are resentful that for nothing in return, they have to pay to the “samahang nayon” entrance and annual membership dues, 5 percent of every loan that they get from government lending institutions for a so-called barrio “savings” fund, one cavan per hectare for a so-called barrio “guarantee” fund, fines for nonattendance or tardiness in meetings and so many others that may be arbitrarily decided by running dogs of the fascist regime.

The tenant masses are aware that should any of them commit the mistake of entering into any land sale contract under PD No. 27 or through the Land Bank and they are in default of payments, it is the “samahang nayon” that takes over the land and further imposes financial obligations on them.

“Masagana 99” is camouflaged usury. It is far worse even than the usury undertaken by private moneylenders. The peasant masses would not have gotten into it, were it not for the exclusive channeling of agricultural chemicals into this program.

The acknowledged interest rate on “Masagana 99” loans is 12 percent. But agricultural chemicals and seeds distributed to borrowers by the rural banks are greatly overpriced and are usually in excess and unsuitable to their lands.

Fertilizer is not only overpriced. In many cases it is substandard. “Bad order” or spoiled fertilizer is mixed with new stocks and sold to the peasants. At this writing, spoiled fertilizer is flooding Nueva Ecija and is certain to cut down rice production in that province.

Moreover, the borrowers are obliged to form or join the “samahang nayon”. As already pointed out, obligations under the “samahang nayon” come to a huge amount.

To be in good standing with the “barangay” or simply its captain who must endorse the loan application, a borrower also has to contribute to the “barangay fund” and pay some other fees concocted by the “barangay”.

There are also the work hours lost and the food and travel expenses in going to town repeatedly to follow up the loan application. And of course, there is the allotment for bribing the farm technicians who process the loans.

The peasants are also subjected to outright swindling, as in one recent case in Mindoro Oriental where they were victimized by a syndicate of rural bank officials and government farm technicians. The syndicate made off with at least P200,000.

The peasants were made to appear to have borrowed P4,500 to P5,000 each, but were given only P200 to P500. The obligations are so heavy that at least 70 percent of “Masagana 99” borrowers have not been able to pay their loans. These are mostly poor and lower-middle peasants.

In the Calumpit barrio cited earlier in this article, the “samahang nayon’s” membership of 143 decreased to only 57. Uncollected “Masagana 99” loans totaled P130,000. The record of “samahang nayon” and “Masagana 99” was even worse in the neighboring villages in eastern Bulacan.

Only the rich peasants and landlords seem to be able to pay up. But many even among them refuse to pay. Like the poor and middle peasants, they say that for one to pay would be to make a fool of oneself.

The poor and lower-middle peasants are refusing to pay any part of their “Masagana 99” loans, especially in areas where the New People’s Army and the peasant associations are campaigning for nonpayment. Token payments are made only to get new loans. In refusing to pay unjust debts which were forced on them in the first place, they are also denying revenue to the reactionary government. “Anyway, that money will be used against us,” the peasants say.

The Marcos fascist regime has failed to make the peasant masses pay up even as it has repeatedly threatened them with mass arrest and imprisonment. They know that there are not enough jails to keep them and not enough funds to feed them should they be taken away from their farms. Besides, indebtedness is no legal ground for imprisonment.

“If they jail all of us peasants,” the barrio people also say, “who will grow palay for the rest of the country? Surely not Marcos or the rich people with him.” And the women add: “If they imprison our men, we and our children will insist upon being jailed with them.”

The loans made available for rice and corn production under “Masagana 99” are small compared to loans for such export crops as sugar, coconut and bananas. In the case of export crops, the big bourgeoisie (including foreign firms) and the landlord class monopolize the loans.

Though a great number of peasants of various strata were able to get small loans under “Masagana 99”, the lion’s share of the loans went to the landlord class and farming corporations.

“Masagana 99” has been supported mainly by the AID-instituted Agricultural Loan Guarantee Fund in line with the US imperialist policy of promoting the “green revolution”, selling agricultural chemicals and equipment from US firms and, of course, fake land reform like that of the fascist dictatorship.

On his own, the fascist dictator Marcos devised “Masagana 99” so that his Planters Products, a corporation acting as agent of its US principals, could make a killing. This corporation has monopolized the market for agricultural chemicals and jacked up the prices of these chemicals through “Masagana 99”.

Upon their inability to fulfill their financial obligations under “Masagana 99” and the “samahang nayon”, the poor and lower-middle peasants cannot enter into any land sale contract directly with their landlords or through the Land Bank.

The Marcos fascist regime keeps on getting huge foreign loans for infrastructure projects among other purposes. Roads and bridges and irrigation facilities are pointed to as a support to agricultural production and the peasant masses.

The fact is that it is the imperialist banks and contractors, the fascist dictator and his henchmen and the big bourgeoisie and landlord class that are benefited. They amass profits on the projects and engage in land speculation.

The people are made answerable for the huge foreign loans in so many ways. One way is taxation. The World Bank is pushing hard for increasing the tax burden. It is unthinkable how the general run of “amortizing owners” can assume responsibility for land taxes.

The peasant masses are already groaning under the weight of rising irrigation fees. Irrigation facilities have been turned by the Marcos fascist dictatorship into facilities for further blood-sucking on the peasant masses.

In areas irrigated by the Upper Pampanga River Development Project (Pantabangan dam), for instance, the peasant masses have to suffer rapidly increasing irrigation fees. In the first year of operation of this irrigation system in 1975, irrigation fees were raised by 700 percent.

Irrigation pumps bought through loans from the Development Bank of the Philippines are overpriced. Wherever these pumps are owned and controlled by private individuals or organizations controlled by landlords or rich peasants, they are used to squeeze the peasant masses dry.

At this time of unrelenting economic crisis, generated both by the world capitalist system and the fascist dictatorship, the peasant masses are suffering even more.

Taking advantage of the plight of the peasant masses, the Marcos fascist dictatorship has been trying to inveigle them into “compact farms” and “corporate farming” contracts with large foreign and domestic corporations.

Those inveigled to agree to these “compact farms” and corporate farms have had

a very sad experience. They are displaced from the farm. Only some are employed and paid low wages. Most tenants are simply driven away and even owner-cultivators do not get their share as the capitalists manipulate the accounts.

“Palayang Bayan” and “Maisang Bayan”, which are rice and corn-planting projects of the fascist dictatorship on so-called public lands, have been used to drive away poor settlers and national minorities. These projects collapsed as soon as the people resisted by harvesting the crop for themselves. Rice and corn fields are the most difficult to guard after all.

Under the conditions and terms of the bogus land reform of the Marcos fascist dictatorship, the masses of poor and middle peasants can only suffer further oppression and exploitation if they do not take matters into their own hands on the line of the national democratic revolution set by a proletarian leadership.

The Party's current antifeudal policy

The Communist Party of the Philippines calls for agrarian revolution as the main content of the national democratic revolution. The ultimate goal of this revolution is the confiscation of land from the landlords and the free distribution of this to the landless tillers. On the basis of the growth of the revolutionary forces, the current policy being carried out is to reduce land rent, eliminate usury and increase production.

The Party's minimum program of land reform is being firmly carried out where the people's army is operating and the peasant masses are aroused, organized and mobilized. Usually, land rent and interest rates are cut down by 50 percent at the earliest possible time under the program. Exchange of labor, mutual aid and some cooperatives are promoted.

Farm workers who are but an extension of the poor and lower-middle peasantry are also aroused, organized and mobilized. Better wages for them are arranged through the peasant associations of which they are members. Where they have their trade unions, especially in haciendas, they demand better working and living conditions and struggle against landlord and capitalist exploitation.

More and more small and medium landlords are accepting that they cannot and should not resist the Party's minimum program of land reform, especially in the guerrilla zones. Those who follow the policies of the Party may be categorized as enlightened landlords. This is particularly true of small and medium landlords who have also become members of the national bourgeoisie or upper petty bourgeoisie, and on the basis of their class stand support the Party's anti-imperialist and antifascist line. In varying degrees, they recognize that they must make common cause with the peasant masses and the broad revolutionary movement against the US-Marcos dictatorship.

The landlords who oppose the policies of the Party, the people's army and the peasant movement and act to sabotage them or bring harm to the revolutionary forces are counterrevolutionary despots who are subject to punishment. Their running dogs are also liable to be punished if they do not change their ways.

In a certain sense, the peasant masses in demanding the reduction of land rent have an advantage over the urban workers in demanding higher wages. The former have immediate access to the crop while the latter do not have immediate

access to the funds held by their employers in bank accounts.

As the peasant masses struggle against the bogus land reform of the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique throughout the country, the Party, the people's army and the mass organizations and all the revolutionary forces can advance vigorously. The peasant movement is developing rapidly as the main force of the revolutionary movement.

On the so-called Fourth Republic

July 15, 1981

In world history, there has been a fundamental progressive shift from the principle of autocracy in feudal times to the principle of republicanism in modern times. This is the result of the political defeat of the feudalists or their reduction to a subordinate position by the bourgeoisie. The absolute monarchy is finished, except as a ceremonial vestige of the past or as a camouflaged revival by the most reactionary section of the bourgeoisie.

In any definition of the modern republic, bourgeois-liberal or Marxist, there are certain essential elements such as that the people are sovereign and enjoy national independence; they are the source of political authority and officials are merely their representatives and servants; an elected representative assembly rather than a single individual makes the laws according to the sovereign will of the people; and this popular will is determined through suffrage and other democratic means.

Both the bourgeois-liberal and the Marxist agree that armed revolution is the sovereign right of the people and is justified and necessary in order to establish, defend or reestablish the modern republic against tyranny and its armed counterrevolution. The modern republic could not have arisen without the people fighting battles against monarchies and colonial tyrannies. The Marcos idea in his *Today's Revolution: Democracy* that the Philippine revolution of 1896 was Jacobin and therefore antiliberal because it was violent is complete nonsense. The Katipunan and its armed successors were like the Jacobins of the French revolution in taking the decisive step for an armed revolution against tyranny and for the liberal-democratic cause. The bourgeois-liberal and the Marxist differ basically in class standpoint, in their order of appearance on the stage of world

history and in their historic missions. But both affirm the democratic principle of people's sovereignty and the representative form of government. Both ideological and political trends are categorically and uncompromisingly against autocracy, of whatever label —“constitutional authoritarianism,” “enlightened/benevolent despotism,” etc.

The Philippine republic and pseudorepublics

In Philippine history, a Philippine republic has been proclaimed five times; namely, in 1897, 1899, 1943, 1946 and 1981. The first proclamation was done at Biak-na-Bato during the armed revolution against Spanish colonialism. The second was done in Malolos after the defeat of Spanish colonialism and on the eve of the revolutionary war against US imperialism. The third was done under the sponsorship of the Japanese fascists. The fourth was also done under the sponsorship of a foreign power, the US. And so, the proclamation of the so-called fourth republic is actually the fifth one.

In all instances, the proclamation makes an avowal of adherence to both the principles of national sovereignty and people's sovereignty. Because of the background of the Philippines as a colony or its current circumstance as a semicolony, anyone who makes a proclamation of the Philippine republic is obliged to assert the aforesaid principles. A genuine republic cannot be formed without the people being integrally sovereign and without them being free from colonial or imperialist domination. But it is one thing to make a proclamation and another thing to mean the existence of the republic.

There is no doubt that in the 1897 proclamation of the Philippine republic the revolutionary government was truly assertive of national independence in word and in deed. Notwithstanding the weaknesses of the Aguinaldo leadership, the proclamation summed up the national and democratic aspirations of the people who were up in arms against Spanish colonialism and were calling for separation. At its best moments, the revolutionary government tried to have as representative a form as was possible and sponsored the framing of a constitution along the lines of a bourgeois-democratic republic (this constitution though was almost a verbatim copy of the Cuban constitution of Jimaguayu). The capitulationist pact of Biak-na-Bato put an end to the republic.

The 1899 proclamation marked the inauguration of a Philippine republic that had a fuller and wider existence than the prior Biak-na-Bato republic of 1897. Many

historians have accorded this republic proclaimed at Malolos the dignity of being the first Philippine republic. It can also be considered as the only genuine republic so far in Philippine history if the Biak-na-Bato republic is discounted as a mere prototype.

At the proclamation of the Philippine republic at Malolos, the revolutionary government had established a nationwide system of political power, taking over control and administration from the Spanish colonialists, except in a few places. It succeeded in putting together a constituent assembly which framed a constitution once more along the lines of a bourgeois-democratic republic before the outbreak of the Filipino-US war. It was able to put up a formidable organized resistance against US aggression. But the military superiority of the US aggressors and the internal weaknesses of the Aguinaldo leadership, especially the capitulationism of the most reactionary sections of the bourgeoisie, led to the end of the republic and the onset of direct US colonial rule.

The 1943 proclamation marked the inauguration of what is sometimes called the second Philippine republic. This was in fact the first of the pseudorepublics or puppet republics in Philippine history. The Japanese fascist invaders pretended to grant independence to the Philippines and sponsored the proclamation. The “republic” proclaimed was patently puppet because Japan could not disguise its colonial and military presence and could entrust the sham only to a narrow clique of big comprador-landlord politicians in the face of widespread patriotic resistance and wartime difficulties. The pseudorepublic disintegrated upon the retreat of the Japanese occupation forces from Manila.

In 1946 the US granted nominal independence to the Philippines and sponsored the proclamation and establishment of the so-called third republic of the Philippines. Serious encumbrances and limitations were placed on Philippine sovereignty so that the country remained semicolonial. To secure this status for the country, the 1935 constitution was amended to accommodate the Parity Amendment and various unequal treaties were imposed. However, the full range of Philippine reactionary classes accepted the puppet republic, and popular resistance led by the Communist Party was suppressed. A Filipino government with three coequal and coordinate branches — executive, legislative and judicial — developed. The tokens of representative government and the formal processes of bourgeois democracy subservient to US imperialism operated.

Until 1972, the “third republic” or rather the second pseudorepublic seemed to

create successfully the illusion of a representative form of government and a people enjoying basic democratic rights under a liberal-democratic but pro-imperialist constitution. The people were always limited to a range of choices determined by the ruling reactionary classes that controlled the government, the two major political parties, the mass media and so on. But sometimes and to some extent, the needs and demands of the people could be ventilated due to rivalries within the ruling system and the growth of democratic movements.

The Marcos coup and autocracy

Thanks to Mr. Marcos, the incumbent president nearly on his way out of office, the “third republic” was destroyed under the pretext of saving it. Marcos carried out a counterrevolutionary coup d’etat starting on September 21, 1972 on the flimsy grounds of some explosions of his own making and fabrications against the revolutionary movement. And he grabbed all the powers of government, suppressed all real and potential opposition, and foisted upon the people an undisguised autocracy as he declared martial law, chiefly against the Communist Party of the Philippines and the revolutionary movement.

In issuing Proclamation 1081, general orders and decrees to formalize his assumption of absolute powers and repression of the people, Marcos overstretched and abused the commander-in-chief or martial law provision (section 10, paragraph 2 of Article VII) of the 1935 constitution to the point of violating the most fundamental principle, that of a republican state, in the same constitution. He substituted the retrogressive and counterrevolutionary principle of autocracy for the principle of republicanism. He practically declared, “L’etat c’est moi” (I am the state).

All executive powers were arrogated by the single person of Mr. Marcos. All government officials in and out of the executive branch, including those elected and those with constitutionally guaranteed tenures, were required to file letters of resignation and could stay in office only at his pleasure. Congress, the elected representative assembly, was dissolved and all its powers taken over by a one-man legislature. Moreover, this autocratic legislator could legislate far beyond the powers of the legislature he had disbanded and even beyond the limits of the 1935 constitution.

The Supreme Court and all lower courts became captive entities and were castrated of authority with regard to cases pertaining to the powers and

repressive issuances of the autocracy. They were obliged to obey the autocracy or else suffer such consequences as disbandment, reconstitution or further reduction of authority. At its first occasion to make a ruling on questions involving acts of the autocracy, the Supreme Court would admit that these were political and therefore nonjusticiable questions and that even as the Marcos constitution was not validly ratified there could be no judicial obstacle to its enforcement.

Indeed, in the final analysis, the state as the coercive instrument of the ruling class has the courts and the legislature as components that are inferior to the army and police. The Marcos appointees and agents in the Supreme Court can be derided as cowards and ignoramuses who cannot recognize autocracy when they see one. But they can as well be thanked for unwittingly reminding the people that it is not litigation but revolution that can deal properly with a coup d'etat and an autocracy. Lest too much writ is attributed to these robed placemen and acolytes of Marcos, the people should also remember that the Supreme Court had stupidly encouraged Marcos to violate the constitution when the same court opined previously in 1971 that Marcos could suspend the writ of habeas corpus any time on the basis of his mere say-so.

While padlocking and disbanding Congress which by the way had also its own prerogative to inquire into and decide on questions of national emergency and war under the 1935 constitution, Marcos directed the constitutional convention at gunpoint to put out a constitution favorable to the autocracy and the imperialist and antidemocratic interests behind it. Then contrary to his own claims of widespread disorder, requiring martial law, Marcos would also claim that his constitution of 1973 was freely ratified by "citizens' assemblies."

Marcos had two reasons for putting out his own constitution at the cost of self-contradiction. First, he wanted to assure the US imperialists that they could retain and enlarge their commanding interests and privileges in the country so long as they supported his autocratic interests. Second, Marcos himself was aware that the commander-in-chief provision of the 1935 constitution did not legally allow him to assume autocratic powers and so aside from carrying over into the "new constitution" the commander-in-chief provision, he introduced into its transitory provisions the provision, specifically section 3, paragraph 2, which explicitly allows his one-man legislation both retroactively and prospectively.

This provision outrightly blessing the unlimited legislative power of his

autocracy once more completely negates and reduces to a mere embellishment the principle of republicanism which the Marcos constitution avows above all in its basic statement of principles. This contradiction in that constitution spells its hypocrisy. Another scandalous and shameless provision is that one in its bill of rights allowing arbitrary arrests and searches without any judicial warrant. This provision jibes with the entire phenomenon of despotism and fascism.

Further entrenchment of the Marcos autocracy

As the Marcos constitution provides, an interim national assembly was supposed to exist immediately upon ratification in 1973. But Marcos was never interested in convening this assembly because he was insecure about its composition which would include the vice president, the members of Congress and the Constitutional Convention. The prospect of convening the assembly was merely a plan to induce the members of the constitutional convention to sign the draft constitution prepared by Malacañang. They never got their promised reward. Marcos never convened the assembly but instead in 1976 he introduced amendments to his constitution, among which involved the replacement of the interim national assembly by the so-called interim *batasang pambansa* to be formed completely on his own autocratic terms.

Still not satisfied with section 3, paragraph 2 of the transitory provisions, he also introduced in 1976 an amendment to the “new constitution” allowing him to make laws whenever he thinks that there is a “grave emergency or imminent danger thereof” and whenever he wishes to disregard the interim *batasang pambansa* or regular national assembly, whatever are the reasons. This is the infamous Amendment 6, which places his autocratic legislative power over and above the representative assembly without any time limit. It is clear that the interim *batasang pambansa* or the prospective regular national assembly is nothing but an embellishment on the autocracy. In journalese, it is the rubberstamp of one-man rule.

It is appropriate at this point to stress that modern constitutionalism, whether bourgeois-liberal or socialist, condemns the principle of one-man legislation. To adopt this reactionary principle is to cast away all that has been learned from the historic struggles of the Filipino people for their sovereignty and freedom against foreign and local tyranny. As it was conscious of the evils of autocracy, that of the Spanish king or the colonial governor-general, the Malolos constitution (Article 4 of Title II) made an explicit injunction against entrusting

legislative power to a single individual. This was part of clarifying the meaning of the republican state.

The Marcos autocracy is not merely a violation of the republican tradition of the US or the West but a vicious betrayal of a sacred legacy of the Philippine revolution which subsequent Philippine constitutions have not disregarded even if only as a glittering generality. Even among the fascist regimes, the Marcos regime is unique for holding itself up as an undisguised autocracy for so long. Marcos would drag his feet towards holding sham elections and putting up a rubberstamp parliament. Such is a measure of his greed and contempt for the sovereign people.

The arrogations of Marcos in law are clear. So are their material manifestations and effects. These include the Marcos monopoly of the civil and military instruments of power, ownership and/or control of all major mass media, unrestricted accumulation of private wealth through political power, unceasing persecution and dispossession of his rivals within the ruling system and, worst of all, violation of the people's basic democratic rights and acts of terrorism such as massacres, arbitrary arrests and searches, mass evacuations, indefinite detention, torture, extortion and so on.

Because of the persistence of the autocracy and its abusive and terrorist acts, the so-called elections of the interim *batasang pambansa* in 1978, of the local officials in 1980 and of the president in 1981 cannot be considered as genuine steps towards a representative form of government. These are all rigged exercises and farces through and through. These are all travesties of democracy and its processes. These are as false as the so-called plebiscites and referenda from 1973 to 1981.

The electoral laws and the Commission on Elections are all stacked in favor of the fascist party, the *Kilusang Bagong Lipunan*, and against the legal opposition parties. The latter have been given only token and marginal concessions even while they are expected to help whitewash the continuing fascist dictatorship. Not only are the legal oppositionists deprived of facilities to express their views freely but their most effective candidates are banned and harassed. Worst of all, the figures for voter turnout and vote count are prefabricated.

The sham election of Marcos in 1981 is the most absurd. With the major legal opposition parties refusing to be made fools of anymore and deciding to boycott

the election, Marcos was compelled to handpick his own opponent from the ranks of his subordinates. As in all previous voting exercises staged by the autocracy, the prefabricated results included an unbelievable voter turnout and number of votes for the autocrat, notwithstanding his notoriety and the evident success of the boycott movement.

The supposed repeal of Proclamation 1081 or lifting of martial law prior to the fake presidential elections is basically a farce. While their proclamation is formally repealed, all its important concrete contents and effects are actually perpetuated in the exceptions of repeal Proclamation 2045, in the Marcos constitution and in other laws. Without critical analysis and exposure, the fake repeal of Proclamation 1081 or lifting of martial law is even more dangerous than the fascist martial law without disguise.

The basic democratic rights, including free assembly, speech, press and so on, remain curtailed in so many ways. The autocratic provisions of the Marcos constitution remain undiminished. Arbitrary arrests and detentions without judicial warrant are still allowed by the same constitution. The suspension of the writ of habeas corpus continues against those apprehended on charges of subversion, rebellion and other political offenses. Military commissions are still in operation.

The Anti-Subversion Law continues as a catch-all, loot-all and repress-all weapon. Proofs for incrimination have been made easier and penalties have been made heavier for political offenses. All the repressive decrees have been perpetuated in the form of the National Security Code and the Public Safety Act. Military campaigns by the Armed Forces of the Philippines have been stepped up against the people and the revolutionary movement.

Just as Marcos had pressured the Supreme Court in 1971 to rule in favor of his power to suspend the writ of habeas corpus solely on the basis of his own claims in exchange for the lifting of his suspension order, he once more pressured the same court to rule in his favor on pending cases regarding the authority of the military to try civilians, in exchange for the fake lifting of martial law. The next time Marcos formally declares martial law, he will be free to put the military commissions on a rampage against civilians.

By the 1981 fake plebiscite, Marcos has also introduced an amendment into his constitution giving immunity to himself and his subordinates against the long-

established principle of public accountability of government officials. He knows that his immunity is as good for him and his fascist ilk as they are in power. This is assurance for themselves that they can commit acts of fascist terror and plunder with impunity so long as they are in power.

Under a so-called process of normalization, Marcos pretends to make a few small or false concessions. But in fact he entrenches further the abnormality that is the fascist dictatorship and tries to whitewash its monstrous crimes. In law and in fact, he can backtrack anytime and erase in one fell swoop all the small and false concessions he has made.

Real character of the “fourth republic”

The real character of the Marcos proclamation of a “fourth republic” in conjunction with his inauguration as its first president is utterly clear. It is a piece of falsity misrepresenting a continuing autocracy, a fascist dictatorship as a republic. The ceremonial lip service made to national liberation is also nothing but a flimsy attempt to conceal the utter subservience of the autocracy to US imperialism.

As soon as the proclamation ceremonies were over, Marcos was shamelessly declaring allegiance and loyalty to the US and boasting of US support for his fascist regime. On his part, the US representative Vice President Bush made reassurances of US support. After all, the events that led to the proclamation of the “new republic” and inauguration of the first president had been arranged by Mrs. Marcos with Reagan aides last December.

The proclamation of the Marcos “new republic” is diametrically opposed in character to that of the Philippine republic either in 1897 or 1899. The first Philippine republic, including its prototype, was the fruit of the Philippine revolution against colonial domination and for national independence and democracy. But the “fourth republic” is the bitter fruit of a fascist puppet counterrevolution.

The proclamation of the “fourth republic” is actually the third of its kind, after such puppet republics as those sponsored by Japan in 1943 and by the US in 1946. It is also the second fascist republic after the pseudorepublic sponsored by the Japanese fascists in 1943. Moreover, it is the first “republic” of a homegrown autocracy and fascist clique. In this respect, it is definitely new.

The “fourth republic” stands for a Philippine government that is so far the most subservient to US interests and is run by the most brutal and most rapacious clique of big comprador-landlord bureaucrats headed by an autocrat. One important point that should not be missed about the proclamation of the “fourth republic” is that it is an open confession of Marcos that he destroyed rather than saved the “third republic.” In the latter puppet republic, there was yet no full-blown autocracy and fascism in complete control of the state and there was far more leeway for the people to express themselves legally.

The great Lenin teaches us in his study of state and revolution that we must not be confused by the political form that a reactionary government claims to have. The point is to examine the concrete historical conditions and make class analysis in order to determine the real character of that government. A fascist dictatorship like that of Marcos is a bourgeois autocracy and an open rule of terror in the service of imperialist, bureaucrat capitalist and feudal interests in a semifeudal and semicolonial setting.

On the basis of the going reality, it is idle to expect that Marcos will ever voluntarily give up his fascist dictatorship. This tyranny drives itself to persist and accumulate more power and loot not only for the self-satisfaction of the tyrant but also out of fear of the people who are being abused and who are determined to settle accounts. The end of such tyranny is brought about by its own greed and by the rise of the revolutionary masses.

The despotism of Marcos will eventually prove to be its own undoing and be a blessing in disguise. The people are driven to fight for a new democratic republic. The revolutionary struggle of the broad antifascist united front of progressive and patriotic classes, organizations and personages is steadily developing and is bound to result someday in a democratic coalition government or a provisional revolutionary government. This government will pave the way for the proclamation of a new democratic republic.

By its constitution and practice, this new democratic republic will accomplish the struggle for national independence and democracy and raise it to a new and higher level of development under the leadership of the proletariat and on the foundation of the worker-peasant alliance embracing the overwhelming majority of the people. The republic will not only uphold the republican character of the state and make explicit safeguards against autocracy and the abuse of martial law but will also make sure that the workers, peasants, urban petty bourgeoisie and

national bourgeoisie are properly and significantly represented in the government. The basic democratic rights of the people shall be amply protected and promoted.

Statement on Presidential Decree Nos. 1875-1877

August 11, 1983

The abolition of the presidential commitment order is being trumpeted. But Presidential Decree 1877 supposedly doing away with it clearly states that the President may order the further detention of suspects for insurrection or rebellion, subversion and the like beyond and possibly even several times beyond the one-year maximum limit of “preventive detention action.” The decree also affirms the continued suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus.

Even if the one-year limit of the preventive detention action (PDA) is followed in certain cases, the ground for military abuses and atrocities is wide as ever. It takes far less than a year for the fascists to perpetrate and remove the trace of torture and murder of captives; and to frustrate the attempts of their relatives, lawyers and friends to determine their whereabouts or seek remedies. It takes no more than three weeks for the physical wounds of torture victims to heal. When water or electrodes are used for torture, traces of torture on the victim disappear in even lesser time.

The PDA is the same abomination as the PCO. At the root of the problem is the autocratic power of Marcos to order or authorize the arbitrary arrest and detention of people without judicial process and without respect for the right to have prompt access to legal counsel. There can be no end to decrees changing the name of the same dog so long as the autocratic executive, legislative and judicial powers of the despot Marcos remain in his kind of constitution and so long as the people are still in the process of building up their strength to remove this despotism.

The decrees supposedly repealing the Public Order Act and the National Security Code are no more than mere propaganda tricks. The content of these fascist laws are already incorporated in the Code of Crimes which is about to be rubber-stamped by the Batasang Pambansa. Marcos is therefore not giving away anything to anyone.

PD Nos. 1875, 1876 and 1877 all belong to the same category as Proclamation 2045. The latter issuance pretends to repeal Proclamation 1081 and lift martial law but all the gains of fascist dictatorship remain intact and undiminished. The Marcos constitution remains autocratic, antinational and antidemocratic. And Marcos proceeds further to issue despotic fiats that are even worse than those issued under Proclamation 1081.

We should not be misled by the razzle-dazzle of decrees that pretend to ease the situation. To Marcos, normalization means the further entrenchment and institutionalization of the abnormal — the fascist dictatorship. And this he has been doing consistently since his coup d'état in 1972. There is absolutely no reason for us to think that he will ever stop selling rotten goods with glittering wrappings.

The only way for the Filipino people to establish democracy is to fight for it in every possible way. The escalation of fascist atrocities and the intolerable economic suffering of the people are more than ever accelerating the growth of every form of popular resistance on a nationwide scale. With Marcos' foreign master, US imperialism, being increasingly preoccupied at home and the world over with so many troubles of its own making, there never has been a better opportunity for the Filipino people to push forward and complete the struggle for national democracy.

As soon as gigantic mass actions and a new level of armed resistance arise, it is likely that even US imperialism will start to think of junking Marcos. For all his subservience to US economic dictates through the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, Marcos is already increasingly being blamed for corruption and economic mismanagement by influential US circles. By the time that the US goes through the motion of rejecting him as a failed political agent, the national democratic forces shall have strengthened themselves as to find their way toward some transitional democratic movement or a definitely more stable democratic coalition government.

Message to the Kongreso ng Mamamayang Pilipino (KOMPIL)

January 8, 1984

I am honored and grateful for the opportunity to express my warmest greetings to the delegates of this assembly — Ang Kongreso ng Mamamayang Pilipino.

You cannot imagine how much I want to be with you today and participate in your deliberations. But you can be sure that in spirit and common purpose, I am completely with you — in firm solidarity with you in all your patriotic efforts.

Although I am in solitary confinement, I do not think and feel that I am alone. I am with you in our militant struggle and try to do the best I can to help advance this struggle for freedom, justice and democracy.

The mass actions since August 21 have been unprecedented in magnitude, scope and intensity. These have been exceedingly enlightening and inspiring and have given me the confidence that in person I will be with you in the near future unless the fascist brutes do something foul, as they did in the case of Ninoy Aquino and so many others of our compatriots.

However, I consider lightly whatever will happen to me in my imprisonment under maximum security conditions. The most important thing is that the broad masses of the Filipino people are marching forward and will certainly win victory against tyranny and reestablish democracy at a higher level than any time before the 1972 Marcos coup. Great victories can be won only with a certain amount of suffering and sacrifice. Among this is the death of patriots and heroes like Ninoy Aquino and so many others.

I congratulate all of you for having successfully worked for the powerful upsurge of the people's democratic struggle during the last few months and for holding this congress in order to consolidate the gains of the struggle, to raise our resolute efforts to a new and higher level, and to win still greater victories.

Our common purpose and minimum basis of unity is to assert the people's sovereignty and their democratic rights, and to fight the Marcos fascist dictatorship until total victory is won. This despotism which we must defeat is the most brutal and most corrupt in our history, but it is, also, a creature of a foreign power, US imperialism. This power persists in propping up the dictatorship.

I hope that Kompil can define the broadest possible parameters of unity for the entire Filipino people to advance the cause of national freedom and democracy. Kompil must adopt principles, policies and tasks that reflect the essential needs and aspirations of all patriotic and progressive classes, parties, groups and individuals in the country.

Our united front should include the workers, peasants, farm workers, fishermen, national minorities, students and all the youth, women, teachers, lawyers, engineers, scientists, artists and writers, other professionals, businessmen, enlightened gentry, religious, and civic and political leaders. Differences in ideology, religious beliefs and party affiliations should not prevent common understanding and united action against tyranny.

Against the ultrarightist Marcos puppet clique, there can be a broad combination of the forces of the Left, Center and Right. Within this broad united front, the independence and initiative of all participating entities, in sharp contrast to the rigid antidemocratic monopoly of political power by the fascist gangsters, can be maintained.

In developing the united front, we must draw the largest mass support from the toiling masses of workers and peasants, link them with the urban petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie, and utilize to the people's advantage the conflicts among the big compradors and landlords in order to isolate and defeat the US-backed Marcos clique.

Three urgent questions

I understand from your primer that Kompil seeks to address three urgent

questions. I take this opportunity to give my opinion on these questions. Thus, I am practically participating in this congress like a delegate among you.

Should the Marcos-resign movement continue? This question can be considered wisely if the point is to replace the demand for resignation with the call for the ouster of the fascist dictator and his entire clique. This would be quite an advance because many people think that the demand for resignation carries certain implications, such as recognizing the legitimacy of the fascist regime and its constitution and depending on the volition of the tyrant for a change of government.

However, if there are still some of us who prefer to demand resignation, I believe that they are entitled to do so and still be in the united front, provided that resignation is explicitly meant to lead to the immediate dissolution of the fascist dictatorship and rejection of its constitution. After all, Marcos and company will not resign from their de facto rule unless they are effectively forced by the people to do so. The resignation of this fascist clique will depend on the effective power of the people to oust the despot.

The demand for resignation is less assertive than the call for ouster but is certainly far more assertive than the proposal for the dictator to form and head a national reconciliation council. Those proposing such a council must take care that it does not become an endorsement of tyranny. Any call for national reconciliation is positive only to the extent that it exposes the facts of tyranny, strengthens the will of the people to overcome this tyranny, and causes the removal from power of those who rule in the service of evil interests.

All the various forms of peaceful and militant mass actions already undertaken by the “Marcos resign” movement must continue. What needs to be done is to expand and intensify them, develop new forms of struggle and involve greater masses of the people in the struggle. Our unchanging aim is to arouse, organize and mobilize the people in their tens of millions.

We should be able to drown out the dictatorship’s campaigns of deception and vilification in the forthcoming sham plebiscite and elections. There should be more and larger indoor and outdoor rallies. There should be more and longer marches. Repeatedly, we can hold people’s marches from barrios to town centers, from towns to provincial and regional centers; and from Central and Southern Luzon to Metro Manila. The sitdown strikes dubbed “United for the

President's Ouster" or UPO will be more effective if connected with gigantic marches and rallies.

Peaceful but militant mass actions are absolutely necessary to assert and develop the democratic power of the people. These mass actions do not only prepare for, but also support, the most effective actions that destroy the capability of the dictatorship to use its armed forces against the people.

Who can replace Marcos as alternative leader or leaders of government? The myth that Marcos is indispensable is an insult that the people have suffered for too long. This insult to the people's intelligence compounds the rigors of the political tyranny and economic catastrophe that the people have had to endure.

Not only is Marcos replaceable. He and his entire clique of puppets, incompetents, killers and swindlers must be removed from power immediately. They have trampled on the people's sovereignty and democratic rights; they have inflicted the most barbaric forms of cruelty on the people. In connivance with the imperialist banks and multinational firms, this clique of new oligarchs has mortgaged our country and its people — us — and continues to auction us off.

I agree with Kompil that a council of leaders be chosen not only to demonstrate that there are many Filipino leaders who can individually and collectively replace Marcos and provide better leadership, but also to take initiatives in carrying forward the people's democratic struggle. In the course of this struggle, the people have nurtured so many leaders at various levels — leaders with the correct democratic orientation and with outstanding competence.

The assassination of Ninoy Aquino was calculated by the fascists to decapitate the legal opposition. But this treacherous blow has only outraged the entire people and moved them to fight ever more determinedly for their freedom. The rapidly growing democratic movement has pushed more leaders to the forefront. I propose that the choice of your designated number of national leaders be made on the basis of commitment to the national and democratic interests of the people; competence in political and organizational work; representation of major class and sectoral interests; accommodation of various ideological and political trends; and consideration of regional distribution.

I am confident that good leaders will be chosen to compose the council of

leaders. After all, Kampil is a patriotic and democratic assembly which rejects the treasonous and antidemocratic brand of leadership that Marcos and his top henchmen stand for.

What are the mechanisms after Marcos? I appreciate the optimism and sense of confidence in this question. But I think that it should be preceded by the question on how to win. While it is true that the organized strength of the people is rapidly growing and the Marcos puppet regime is declining, it is also true that we are still engaged in an uphill struggle.

We are confronted with an enemy that still enjoys the support of US imperialism and is hellbent on using all forms of terror and deception in order to stay in power. While the treacherous murder of Ninoy Aquino has galvanized the people into conducting gigantic mass protest actions, we should recognize that this dastardly act marks a new level in the escalation of fascist terrorism.

We must prepare ourselves against more barbaric attacks from the enemy. We must conduct political education and organize ourselves better for more effective struggle. I believe that from stage to stage in the progress of our struggle, the mechanisms for uniting the people, administering their affairs and winning greater victories are created and developed. Upon the total victory of our people, all that we shall have to do will be to consolidate those tested mechanisms for winning and form a truly democratic government of the entire nation.

You are of course aware that even as there are parties, mass organizations and alliances that are legally and peacefully fighting the fascist puppet regime, there are also the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army, the National Democratic Front, organs of democratic power and mass organizations that do not have a legal status and are waging a people's war. Other illegal organizations such as the Moro National Liberation Front, the Bangsa Moro Army, Christians for National Liberation, Nagkakaisang Partidong Demokratikong Sosyalista ng Pilipinas (NPDSP), and the Movement for a Free Philippines are also to be taken into account.

On the eve of total victory or upon the final victory, there can be a people's consultative assembly to arrange the working unity of all patriotic and progressive classes, parties and organizations and facilitate the formation of a coalition government based on a truly democratic system of representation.

I would like to think that Kompil and its council of leaders as well as other united front organizations like the Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy, the Justice for Aquino, Justice for All Movement, KAAKBAY, the Unido, the National Union for Liberation, the Liberal Party, and the PDP-Laban are major contributors on the side of the legal democratic forces to the future emergence of a democratic coalition government.

The US and the Marcos regime

Let me dwell at some length on the tremendous odds that we still face. The point is not to discourage anyone among us. By being more aware of the odds, we get to know more clearly what it takes to win. We become even more resolute in striving for, and achieving, more than we have already achieved.

Even Raul Manglapus of the Movement for a Free Philippines, in a recent statement, has come to realize that Marcos has managed to establish an autocratic regime and to prolong it by using and manipulating the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and by being supported and maintained by US power.

When Marcos mocks the legal opposition, calling it fragmented and weak supposedly due to ineptness and conflicting selfish interests, he is obscuring the fact that he has used brute force in suppressing the people's sovereignty and democratic rights —keeping the legal opposition parties down for so many years, and upon their resurgence keeping them within the bounds of his despotic power.

The real party of Marcos is not the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL) but the Armed Forces of the Philippines, dominated as it is by a small clique of military officers who would do anything immoral or criminal to keep the Marcos autocracy in power. Ninoy had the high potential of leading and uniting the legal opposition parties. This is precisely why he was murdered in the most dastardly manner.

Behind deceptions such as referenda, plebiscites and elections of the fascist regime is the use of the armed forces to violate the freedom of the people and to bloodily suppress any serious resistance to the autocracy. The apparatuses of coercion are dependent on the US for indoctrination, strategic planning and intelligence, equipment and logistics, and high-level officer training.

It is the US that gives the most decisive kind of support to the Marcos fascist

regime. So long as the US gets more and more extraordinary political, military, economic and other privileges, it will continue to give bilateral economic and military assistance, and facilitate foreign loans to the regime in its determination to plunder the human and material resources of our country.

In the wake of Ninoy's assassination, there have developed illusions that Marcos will back down because of the gigantic demonstrations of public outrage and protest, the exacerbation of the economic and financial crisis, and the expressions of displeasure, not so much by the Reagan administration as by the US press, the foreign creditors and the Lower House of the US Congress.

Marcos has in truth viciously reacted in words and deeds to the proposal for national reconciliation, the demand for resignation and the call for ouster. The basis for his arrogance and intransigence is not some fictitious covenant with the people but his control of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, as well as the open and covert assurances of US support from the Reagan administration.

The US calls for an "impartial and thorough investigation of the Aquino assassination by Philippine authorities" — a clever attempt to exculpate Marcos because he is endorsed as the authority to form the investigative body, despite the fact that he is the prime suspect in the crime. The formation by Marcos of the board of inquiry is meant to counter the move to form a board of inquiry under the auspices of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, the International Commission of Jurists, or some other respected international organization.

While Marcos is in power, an international board of inquiry enjoying the confidence of the aggrieved Aquino family and the entire Filipino people as well as the witnesses and experts, both Filipino and foreign, who have not come out to testify for fear of their safety, is definitely preferable to a board created by Marcos. The majority members of such an international board of inquiry may be eminent Filipinos in order to respect Philippine sovereignty, which is something different from the monarchic sovereignty actually presumed by Marcos.

The call for a "single-man successor" to Marcos is also a clever attempt to obscure the fundamental issue of autocracy or fascist dictatorship, and to divert attention from the mounting demand of the people for the restoration of democracy and the scrapping of the Marcos constitution. The Executive Committee is in fact now being replaced by something worse through a farcical plebiscite.

In case of the President's death or incapacity, the speaker of the Batasang Pambansa is supposed to become the acting president with explicit limitations of power. But he, or she, or they who control the armed forces can presume to automatically succeed to the continuing unlimited powers of the autocrat. They can do so as they please for 45 to 60 days, including holding a sham plebiscite that suits them.

The call for "clean and honest elections" is a clever attempt to trap the legal opposition parties into accepting rigged elections for a sham parliament, thus legitimizing the autocracy. Under the signboard of nonpartisanship, Marcos monopolizes control of the Commission on Elections and all phases of the sham electoral process. In the very offices of the Comelec at any level, ghost precincts and any number of votes can be fabricated. (Even now, Marcos already knows, and has announced, that the legal opposition parties will not get more than 20 percent of the votes.)

The boycott position of former Senators Tañada, Diokno and Salonga is basically correct. This position is shared by the Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy, and by practically all organizations under the Justice for Aquino, Justice for All Movement. Such a position reflects the boycott trend among the people, as confirmed by the recent survey of the Concepcion group, the National Movement for Free Elections.

I am aware that Unido and other allies might choose to field candidates, especially in places where they calculate they can win. I suppose that their main objective is to continue hitting the target, the fascist dictatorship. If that is so, they are not thus completely cutting off their ties with the antifascist united front. We can only wish that they continue to firm up their antifascist position as time passes and that they remain open to the development of the most effective means of bringing about genuine democracy.

My estimate is that the US will dump Marcos for sure only when the New People's Army led by the Communist Party of the Philippines shall have reached the stage of strategic stalemate, a significant segment of the middle forces shall have joined or launched armed resistance, and discontent within the Armed Forces of the Philippines shall have become conspicuous. All these are possible within a few years because of the rapid worsening of the political and economic crisis and the upsurge of legal mass actions and the armed struggle.

Only then will the US launch its operation to dislodge its ineffective puppet. I think that the present credit squeeze is mainly the result of the Marcos regime's own excesses in foreign borrowing; it is not a move intended specifically to weaken and dislodge Marcos. The US is merely making it appear that the credit squeeze has been undertaken to discipline the Marcos regime. The fact is that there is really a world capitalist financial crisis under which the Marcos regime has been squeezed because of its excessive subservience, corruption and ineptness.

The economic disaster was coming down hard on the Philippines even before the Aquino assassination. After this brazen crime, which is a dramatization of the state of oppression in the country, the US has found it convenient to make it appear that both the economic and political crises are the sole responsibility of the Marcos clique. The US wants to impress the naive that its kind of political demands, which are in fact still supportive of Marcos, will solve the rapidly worsening political and economic crises and give the technocrats a freer hand in carrying out economic dictation from the US, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Already, the US wants to spread the lie that it has nothing to do with the economic disaster and political terrorism of the Marcos regime. While it proclaims that the issue is political, the US actually wants to retain the autocratic regime for so long as it continues to carry out the policies of the US, the IMF and the World Bank and it gives away more extraordinary privileges to the US. Thus, such measures as drastic devaluations, import liberalization, disregard for the nationality requirement in equity and landholding, the cheap sale of citizenship rights, the conversion of foreign loans and supplies to takeover equity, and so on, have run far ahead of cosmetic changes in the political sphere during the ongoing foreign credit squeeze.

We should not have any illusions that, for the sake of democracy, or for the sake of the victims of repression as dramatized by Ninoy's treacherous slaying, the US will junk Marcos through the credit squeeze and some pretended political pressures, which are in fact pressures on Marcos to make mere cosmetic changes. The US, for example, is not even obliging Marcos to allow political exiles in the US to return home under conditions that will assure their safety and freedom in the country. The major political exiles in the US, in fact, still face the same dangers and risks that Ninoy faced in returning home.

The problem in the Philippines is both political and economic, but there is also the moral bankruptcy of the fascist regime. Both the US and the Marcos clique are responsible for the problem and are still colluding in oppressing and exploiting the Filipino people. The US will be forced to drop Marcos only if it is also effectively held accountable; and this is possible only if all forms of struggle have reached the level of development that I have already indicated earlier.

We can all agree on concentrating our fire on the Marcos fascist dictatorship. But we should not think that we can improve our chances of winning by being blind to the evil of US imperialism and following its political initiative, which in fact endorses the Marcos autocracy. We should rely on the development of our own united front and on all forms of struggle under the united front.

Bright prospects of our struggle

Despite the odds, however, the prospect of our struggle for democracy is bright. The political and economic crisis of the ruling system is rapidly worsening. The fascist dictatorship has only served to deepen and aggravate the crisis. The broad masses of the people have found their oppression and exploitation intolerable and have risen to fight for national liberation and democracy.

All over the country, in both urban and rural areas, the people are rapidly being organized and are engaging in various forms of struggle against the fascist tyranny. The revolutionary movement is rapidly growing in strength.

The US-Marcos clique is extremely isolated as it has never been before and is in rapid decline. It has been weakened by its own puppetry, brutality, corruption and profligacy. It can no longer obtain foreign funds as easily as it could in the 1970s and is increasingly weighed down by a huge accumulated debt. The economy is still dependent on raw-material exports but the international market for these continues to be depressed. The Marcos regime's solution to the economic crisis is to worsen it by begging for more foreign loans at more onerous terms and wasting these loans on unproductive projects and on high consumption.

Even if the US wants to keep the Marcos autocracy in power, the US is constrained by the worsening crisis of the world capitalist system. It cannot exempt the Marcos regime from the workings of the world capitalist market, the high interest on loans, the tighter restrictions on foreign lending by US

commercial banks, and so on.

Even at this time, it is already possible to concentrate at least two million people in a mass action on Malacañang. In the years to come, our capability to mobilize millions of people will increase. But our main line in urban areas is to conduct legal and peaceful mass actions.

There is no doubt about our mass strength. To depose the Marcos regime, the only missing element is the effective counter to his armed minions. Manglapus suggests that democratic-minded AFP officers can be encouraged to take action. But their action should not be towards a military takeover but should serve the broad-based movement for the restoration of democracy in our country.

The realization of this suggestion can be effective in advancing the democratic cause only if the Filipino people themselves carry out the various forms of struggle and have in their own hands all the necessary means for winning victory.

So long as the fascist dictatorship persists and uses its armed forces to attack and coerce the people, it will lose, whether it maintains or raises the level of its troop and armed strength. The economic crisis is worsening so fast that the mere maintenance of the present troop strength is already a heavy drain on the economy. Yet this troop strength has been incapable of quelling the growing revolutionary forces.

Even now, political and economic discontent is already brewing among lower officers and enlisted men in the AFP because funds go mainly to overpriced equipment and hardware as well as corruption. On top of these, inflation has eaten away their salaries and allowances. An increase in troop strength will only result in the further worsening of the economic disaster which is now grievously victimizing the troops and their families.

The armed power of the fascist dictatorship is not really awesome. It is self-destructive even as, or precisely because, it is destructive of our national and democratic interests. As the political and economic crisis worsens, the rotten core of tyranny is further exposed.

We are confident of winning victory against the fascist dictatorship. This despotism will be consigned to the dungheap in a few years' time. Let us rely on the strength of our own people and not on the US or on lupus!

Long live Kompil and its council of leaders!

Down with the fascist dictatorship of the US-Marcos clique!

Carry forward the people's struggle for independence and democracy!

Justice for Aquino, Justice for All!

Long live the Filipino people!

On the Rationale of the Boycott

Interview with Philippine News and Features, February 28, 1984

PNF: Are you in favor of boycott or participation in the May 14 elections? What is your view on the outcome of the February 14 deadline on the six-point call for meaningful elections?

JMS: I am in favor of boycott. This means that neither will I run for the farcical regular assembly nor vote for anyone in the farcical elections.

The failure of Mr. Marcos to heed the six-point call for meaningful elections exposes his refusal to give up his autocracy and adopt any significant democratic reform.

In making the call the signatories were bending backward from their Marcos-resign position and were implying that they would recognize the present regime and the 1973 constitution if both were shorn of their most obnoxious antidemocratic features.

But Mr. Marcos is obdurate. The opposition leaders have once more succeeded in underscoring that he wants to maintain his tyrannical rule.

PNF: The legal opposition appears to be split now over the issue of boycott or participation. Will not this split or cleavage weaken the opposition and strengthen the KBL strategically as well as specifically in the elections?

JMS: In general, the boycott campaign will help strengthen the foundation of the democratic movement against the US-Marcos clique. In one respect, those who are for participation tend to undermine this foundation by helping the US and Marcos create the illusion of democracy through elections that are mainly and

essentially fraudulent.

In another respect, the pro-participation oppositionists can still help strengthen the democratic movement if they concentrate their fire on the antinational and antidemocratic character of the Marcos regime. Thus, the split within the legal opposition becomes merely a temporary split on methods of fighting the common enemy.

After they learn one more bitter lesson from Mr. Marcos, the pro-participation oppositionists can always rejoin the opposition mainstream. The cards are stacked against them. They may be allowed to win in a few areas but they will be made to lose on a nationwide scale in the sham elections.

Instead of making snide remarks against the boycott campaign, they can concentrate on attacking the Marcos regime for being tyrannical and for refusing to heed the call for meaningful elections. The few concessions on minor procedural matters are not enough to ensure clean and honest elections.

I see that the boycott campaign is concentrating its fire on the Marcos regime — discrediting KBL candidates — and therefore would indirectly be supporting opposition candidates who take up issues against the Marcos dictatorship. So, if there is honest counting of votes, these opposition candidates stand a good chance of being elected by those who believe in the merits of participation.

The problem of would-be opposition candidates is not the boycott movement but the rigging of the elections by those in power. Marcos will use a KBL “independent slate,” the Roy Nacionalistas and some “instant” political parties to create a merry circus and then say that these parties took votes away from candidates of the opposition so as to justify an overwhelming KBL “victory.”

PNF: How do you weigh the boycott campaign in the oppositions' overall struggle for democracy?

JMS: The rigged elections in May are a thing of the Marcos regime. It is merely a short-term circus. It will not make or break the opposition. The boycott campaign is the correct tit-for-tat response. We see a Captain Boycott in Mr. Marcos and the people must come together in refusing to deal with him.

It is obvious that the boycott campaign is only one of several campaigns of the national democratic movement within a given period of time — a few months. It

is subordinate to the general line of seeking to dismantle the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique and establish a new democratic form of government.

In carrying out the boycott, the campaigners and the people are positively and vigorously taking up the full scope of issues for national liberation and democracy against the US-Marcos clique in the political, economic, cultural and foreign policy spheres.

As a matter of fact, the main battlecry is: “Unite and fight for democracy against the US-Marcos fascist dictatorship! Boycott its sham elections for a sham parliament!” That puts the boycott campaign in the proper context. It is proper to stress the call for boycott in many mass actions up to May.

PNF: What do you think will be the measure of success for the boycott campaign?

JMS: The advocates of participation say that there will be a lot more voter participation in May than in the January plebiscite because of the contest of personalities and parties? The measure of success for the boycott campaign will not be the fictitious figures on voter turnout and election results to be issued by the Comelec. It will be the great number of people aroused, organized and mobilized by the boycott campaign through mass actions all over the country.

I am sure that this campaign will be drawing a far greater number of people through various forms of mass actions than either the KBL or any of the opposition parties that would be fielding candidates.

The cause-oriented rallies clearly have a large voluntary mass following. Generally, the parties fielding candidates will be able to get large crowds by spending a lot of money through the hakot system. But by taking up the people’s cause and vigorously speaking out against the regime, some candidates will become big crowd drawers.

PNF: Why will you not consider Comelec-issued results as a good measure for the success or failure of the boycott movement?

JMS: The figures that would be handled and released by the Comelec will not be a good basis for gauging the success of the boycott campaign because the new voters’ registration as well as the electoral process are still securely controlled

and subject to manipulation by the Marcos dictatorship.

The barangay councils are subjects to pressures and manipulation by local KBL big shots. The majority of teachers are not yet up to the level of consciousness and activism of members of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers and teachers in Metro Manila and San Fernando, Pampanga. Most of them are still subject to pressures by local KBL big shots.

The opposition candidates, their parties and NAMFREL cannot go into the secret rooms of Malacañang, the Ministry of Local Government, the Comelec and the local big shots of the regime to stop the manipulators from conjuring ghost precincts and preparing election results ahead of election day.

By the law of uneven development though, there would be places where the regime will not be able to fabricate or manipulate the lists of voters and precincts. In such places, the strength of the boycott campaign and the pro-participation opposition may be accurately reflected in official results. Laurel is probably correct when he says that UNIDO will win 60 to 70 percent of assembly seats if elections are clean and honest. But elections will be rigged.

PNF: There is a view that boycott is negative and difficult to campaign for among the people. Participation is supposed to be positive and attractive to the people. Unlike in a plebiscite, the clash of personalities in the May elections will generate wider participation. What do you think?

JMS: The boycott campaign as it is being waged by its proponents cannot but be positive because it rallies the people to the national democratic program. It would be a different story altogether if the boycott proponents do not explain the reasons for the boycott. Not only are the issues concerning national liberation and democracy being projected but so are the parties, alliances, mass organizations and personalities in support of these.

Under the circumstances, one cannot be positive without combating the evil of tyranny and puppetry. I think that the pro-participation parties will simply have to be positive and negative in this sense if they wish to save themselves from utter obsequiousness to the US-Marcos regime.

Participants in a sham elections will try to generate a lot of hoopla. But I think that the real voter turnout will be small. There will be more people drawn by mass actions of the boycott campaign.

PNF: Both the KBL leaders and the pro-participation opposition say that boycott is running away from a fright and that participation is macho. What do you say?

JMS: Participation is submission to the electoral farce of an illegitimate and terrorist regime; it is matsunurin, not macho. Boycott consistently and forthrightly fights for the fundamentals of democracy against the autocracy. You are already witness to the sustained and spreading militant mass actions. Are these not positively macho? You know too that boycott is not the monopoly of the legal organizations, alliances and unarmed people. If you consider the boycott stand of the armed revolutionary organizations, what is more macho than what they are capable of doing?

PNF: What do you think of the view that President Marcos actually wants the real opposition to boycott the elections? That is supposed to be the reason why he ignored the six-point call for meaningful elections. He is also reported to be preparing to field a KBL “independent” slate and/or tap the Roy Nacionalistas to compete with the KBL.

JMS: The Reagan administration wants Mr. Marcos to stage an electoral exercise that is not so flagrantly fraudulent so that Mr. Reagan can tell the US people, the US press, the US Congress and the rest of the world that his boy in the Philippines is not so bad after all and is “democratic.” Thus, credible opposition candidates and parties are needed for the exercise.

To keep the concessions that he has to give to UNIDO as small and negligible as possible, Marcos acts as if he can run a circus pleasing to the US by having a KBL “independent” slate or the Roy Nacionalistas as electoral opponents of the KBL.

Mr. Marcos is a puppet of the US but he has his extraordinary appetite for power. He is an autocrat in the mold of a Ngo Dinh Diem, a Shah Pahlavi and a Somoza. He thinks that if he still controls the reactionary armed forces and civil organs of government, the United States and various international agencies will have no choice but to deal with him.

He is compelling more and more people to opt for armed resistance. It is very likely that he will not know when he is already overtaken by developments.

PNF: Do you think the boycott campaign will actively denounce the opposition

parties participating in the elections as capitulationists and helpers of the Marcos regime in prettifying itself?

JMS: I think that the boycott campaign should unerringly concentrate its fire on the US-Marcos clique and avoid dissipating its strength by berating the oppositionists who participate in the sham elections.

There are venues for the boycott and participation sides to be on talking terms. Both sides were able to agree on the six-point call for meaningful elections. Of course, some of the signatories are more faithful to their signatures than the others.

On previous occasions, there were some spontaneous booing directed against a few political leaders advocating participation. That was because there were imprudent remarks and they wanted to seize the initiative in the same big gatherings.

When the boycott and participation sides of the opposition hold their respective rallies, there will be less or even no occasions for both sides to compete for support from the same gathering. However, this does not mean an absolute division between the two sides, especially after May.

PNF: What will be your attitude to participating opposition parties and their winning candidates after what you call sham elections for a sham parliament?

JMS: As I have already said, those for participation and those for boycott can always close ranks along the line of opposing the US-Marcos dictatorship and fighting for democracy.

Opposition candidates who win seats in the sham parliament can continue to fight for democracy inside and outside that assembly. But that assembly will still be a thing of the autocracy.

As the armed resistance advances, it will be interesting to see how the US will react to the Marcos puppet clique. The Reagan administrative definitely wants to prolong the Marcos regime. But the US will always place US interests above those of Marcos.

PNF: Suppose President Marcos heeds the six-point call for meaningful elections any time before the May elections, do you think the boycott side would

decide to participate in the elections?

JMS: It would be some kind of a miracle if Mr. Marcos heeds that call. I am not inclined to think that he would ever do that. He is deadset on retaining a monopoly of political power.

The Reagan administration is still committed to propping up the Marcos regime. That is why Mr. Marcos is intransigent and arrogant. The US will decide to ease or kick Marcos out probably when the armed resistance reaches a certain point. At any rate, the Filipino people are fighting resolutely for national liberation and democracy.

PNF: If I may insist, in case President Marcos heeds the six-point call, including the release of all political prisoners and general amnesty, what will you do? Will you run for office or participate in the electoral campaign?

JMS: I would rather concentrate on teaching, research and writing right away. I can best serve my country and people that way.

But according to reliable sources, Mr. Marcos has vowed never to let me out of prison. So, I continue to place my hopes of freedom on the advance of the national democratic movement. The Aquino assassination is an indication that the regime might even send me to the firing squad or use other foul means to kill me for the purpose of exemplary terror.

The Filipino political exiles in the United States, who face trumped-up political charges of subversion, rebellion and the like, cannot even return home with guarantees that they will not be persecuted or murdered like Ninoy Aquino. Their condition is an indication of how much the US supports the Marcos regime.

Jose Ma. Sison on the Mode of Production in the Philippines

by Julieta L. Sison

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Soon after I was out on temporary release from detention on March 30, 1982, many friends and acquaintances in the academe asked me for the views of my husband on many questions they were debating concerning the dominant character of the mode of production in the Philippines.

The main issue raised may be expressed in the following manner: Has the US-Marcos regime pursued a policy of industrialization and thereby changed the backward semifeudal character of the economy?

I propounded this and other related questions to my husband. We engaged in lengthy discussions during my weekly visits to him. I also provided him with the latest available economic data as well as analyses and articles from various viewpoints.

I took mental note of his answers. Every time I got home from his prison cell, I would commit these to writing. He gave me the leeway to write freely on condition that I would be faithful to his ideas.

Due to our many years of intellectual intercourse and research partnership (since 1959), I felt confident in putting this question-and-answer article into shape. However, due to many absorbing obligations including childcare and public engagements on behalf of political prisoners, I was able to finish the final draft only last July 1983.

The typescript of the final draft became a discussion paper of several friends, most of whom are brilliant economists and political scientists. They subsequently gave comments and suggestions which my husband and I further discussed and took into account in finalizing the article in its present form.

This article is an effort to make a comprehensive and deepgoing study of the mode of production on the current ruinous economic crisis.

1. Will you describe the forces of production in the Philippines? As much as you can, present the level of development of the means of production and the mass of actual producers.

The forces of production in the Philippines are still mainly agrarian and nonindustrial. They are backward or underdeveloped.

The means of production lacks a backbone in capital goods industries. There are no heavy and basic industries, no machine-tool industry, no basic metal and chemical industries, no engineering industries beyond the superficial handling or slight processing of components that have been basically processed abroad.

Even hand tools are imported to the extent of 85 percent, according to economist Alejandro Lichauco. The rest of our hand tools are fabricated locally from imported metals. Whatever modern industrial equipment the country has is imported and paid for by earnings from export of raw materials (mainly agricultural: sugar, coconut, logs, etc.) and increasingly by foreign loans.

The US imperialists and their big comprador agents have so far been quite successful in preventing the country from acquiring the kind of equipment that would industrialize it in a profound and comprehensive way. They have allowed only some light manufacturing heavily dependent on imported equipment, semimanufactures and raw materials. The situation is tragic because we have a comprehensive and abundant natural resource base for heavy and basic industries to work on.

Under the present regime, even the light manufacturing that serves the domestic market is being crushed. The so-called import-substitution industries of the 1950s and 1960s are being undermined by direct importation of finished products. An embellishment on this scheme is the promotion of the so-called export-oriented industries that are even more import-dependent and are actually involved in mere fringe processing and packaging for local market penetration,

tariff circumvention and reexport.

The promise of Marcos in 1979 to put up eleven major industrial projects has not materialized. Since the beginning, it has been clear that these projects were merely tokens of industrialization. Even as such, these projects are strongly opposed by the very foreign monopoly interests whose investments Marcos wants for funding these projects. After four years, the result is one overpriced copper smelter with a capacity limited to 30 percent of ore production in the country. This copper smelter is under the control and manipulation of Japanese interests which have their own copper smelters to protect in Japan.

Despite its slogan of "economic development," the fascist dictatorship has not put the economy into extensive processing of the raw materials that it has long been producing for export. The bulk of Philippine exports continues to be raw sugar, copra, coconut oil, logs, metal ores and concentrates, and so on. Primary products account for practically all actual earnings on exported goods, with agricultural exports accounting for at least 80 percent.

Government technocrats claim that we earn a lot from the reexport of garments, electronics and the like. This is not true. We lose a lot on these so-called manufactured exports because of the high cost of imported equipment and "raw" materials, tariff circumvention, transfer pricing, profit remittances, capital repatriation, debt service, royalties, and the infrastructure and special facilities put up for them.

Agricultural land — totaling 12 million hectares in 1980 — is still the principal means of production in the country. It produces the food staples for the people and some amount of raw materials for local light manufacturing and handicrafts; as well as the overwhelming bulk of surplus products for export.

The use of modern technology (primarily imported) is negligible. It is still peasant brawn, hand tools, plow and draft animals working the land devoted to food crops (chiefly rice and corn) and to coconuts, all of which comprises 64.6 percent and 25.8 percent, respectively, of total agricultural land. Modern technology in the Philippine context means the promotion of costly imported farm inputs (chemicals, equipment and irrigation facilities) involving — during the 1970s — only a few hundreds of thousands hectares.

Reliance on sheer brawn and traditional peasant tools is still widespread even on

land devoted to sugarcane, banana, pineapple and other new crops for export. It is on land devoted to these crops, comprising no more than seven percent of total agricultural land, where there is a relatively more impressive use of tractors and chemicals, sugar land, which comprises only 3.5 percent of total agricultural land is still worked mainly by peasants and farm workers using hand tools rather than by workers operating harvester combines and other farm machinery.

No more than four percent (480,000 hectares) of total agricultural land is worked by tractors. Harvester combines are still a rarity and are a socially explosive proposition amidst the abundance of cheap farm labor that cannot be absorbed elsewhere. As of this year (1983), only a few landlords on a few thousands of hectares (less than 10,000) have turned to harvester combines. In this decade, the steeply rising cost of imported inputs and the falling price of agricultural exports hold back the adoption of modern technology even by landlords producing export crops.

What comprises the mass of actual producers? According to NEDA figures, there were supposed to be nine million peasants and farm workers accounting for 52 percent of employment; 2.5 million industrial workers, 14 percent; and 6 million service workers, 34 percent in 1979.

Let us take these figures at face value and reinterpret them. Note however, that 1979 was a far better year for nonagricultural employment than any of the succeeding years of the 1980s.

Of the direct producers of goods, peasants and farm workers comprise 78 percent and industrial workers 22 percent. There are four peasants for every industrial worker. If the category of service workers is disaggregated, the great majority would be found to be direct adjuncts and immediate spillovers of agriculture and the peasantry. Even in construction, mining and provincial "manufacturing," many nonregular workers are sidelining peasants.

Most peasants (poor and middle peasants) have the following means of supplementary livelihood: farm work for others, fishing, forestry and animal husbandry, handicrafts, construction or carpentry, hauling and petty peddling. Seasonal farm work for others though is the most common sideline occupation and is the main recourse for surplus labor in the countryside.

The proportion of industrial workers (in manufacturing, mining and quarrying,

construction and utilities) is even more unimpressive. Only 74 percent of these are in so called manufacturing; and in turn, 70 percent of workers in manufacturing are employed in small fabrication and repair shops, each employing less than ten workers and therefore hardly qualifying as truly manufacturing enterprises.

Only a minority of so-called service workers (in transport, communications and storage, trading and banking and other services, including government, entertainment, etc.) possibly not more than 30 percent are regular wage earners. In the main, these regular wage earners are employed by the government (some one million are civilian and military employees) and by the multinational, big comprador and middle bourgeois firms. Most so-called service workers are actually underemployed or have no regular employment or are even unemployed but are misrepresented as fully employed by NEDA statistics. Many are superfluous helpers of their own families, house servants, street peddlers, shop attendants, porters, scavengers, prostitutes and the like who do not receive regular wages.

During the 1970s, the proportion of both industrial and agricultural employment shrank. Industrial employment stood at 17.6 percent in 1970 and went down to 14 percent in 1979. Agricultural employment stood at 59 percent in 1970 and went down to 52 percent in 1979. Employment in the service sector, meanwhile, is made to appear as having risen from 23.5 percent in 1970 to 34 percent in 1979, supposedly absorbing the decrease in employment in both industry and agriculture.

Since 1980, unemployment has been increasing by leaps and bounds, especially in the industrial and service sectors. The unemployment rate is now running at more than 50 percent, at least 25 percent above the chronic rate of 25 percent (established from the Bell Mission Report up to the Ranis Report), especially if we take into account all out-of-school youth ten years and above and women. A worsening state of depression and unemployment afflicts the entire economy.

Some people say that the Philippine economy is already industrial rather than agrarian because, for instance, the 1979 GNP figures show that agriculture accounts for only 27.3 percent of gross national product and is outstripped by industry at 33.1 percent and services at 39.7 percent.

These figures are misleading. We must take into account the high imported

content of the product of both industry and service sectors and the consumption orientation of such imports, and the lack of industrial development. The gross output value of the service sector is bloated; this sector is also the most import-dependent sector of the economy although it does not produce goods. The gross output value of agriculture tends to be undervalued because most of the agricultural product remains with the peasants for their subsistence and needs and does not reach the market.

For purposes of transfer-pricing, foreign TNC's and the big compradors grossly overvalue their imports and undervalue their exports and reexports.

In their attempt to sustain the illusion of industrial development, government technocrats constantly overestimate the entire GNP, overvaluing the gross output of both industrial and the service sectors. Even the IMF was scandalized by the NEDA (National Economic Development Authority) claim of 4.9 percent growth rate for 1982 and ordered it to scale down the figure to something less incredible. The figure was finally lowered to 2.6 percent. Even this is highly questionable in many respects.

The Philippine GNP is supposed to be dependent on foreign exchange to the extent of 40 percent, according to Prime Minister Virata. So GNP must shrink as primary export receipts, foreign loans and other foreign exchange receipts decrease. Whether the GNP grows bigger or smaller, its content does not mean any development of the industrial base of the country

To a great extent, it reflects rising expenditures for imported manufactures, decreasing primary export income and rising debt burden.

2. Will you describe the relations of production? As much as you can, present the socioeconomic classes as determined by the ownership of the means of production, position in the organization of production, and the methods of appropriating the product. Will you point out the single most dominant class that dictates on the entire relations of production? I assume that you can apply on the entire mode of production the term that you use to refer to the dominant character of the relations of production. Is it feudal, semifeudal, semicapitalist, in transition to capitalism or already capitalist? Explain why you do not use the terms other than your choice?

Under the auspices of US imperialism, the comprador big bourgeoisie has

become the single most dominant class in the Philippines. It is the standard bearer of the dominant semifeudal production relations. In collaboration with the foreign monopolies, it is in command of a commodity system that is mainly and essentially determined by the unequal exchange of raw material exports and manufactured imports; and that gives the most strategic importance to the production of raw materials for export.

The comprador big bourgeoisie has replaced the landlord class as the No. 1 exploiting class in 20th century Philippines. And certainly, the dominant production relations can no longer be called feudal; although feudalism is still a large and widespread fact. In a certain sense, we can speak of foreign and feudal domination. But we use the term semifeudal both to describe the general and basic character of the relations of production and focus on the strategic role of the comprador big bourgeoisie.

We cannot call the dominant production relations capitalist because it is a comprador big bourgeoisie rather than a national industrial bourgeoisie that has hegemony over them. As a matter of fact, the semifeudal trading big bourgeoisie in combination with US imperialism and feudalism prevents industrial capitalist development under the national bourgeoisie.

But why use the term semifeudal, instead of semicapitalist or in transition to capitalism? The term semifeudal stresses the fact that as far as the local productive system is concerned, the comprador big bourgeoisie is linked more to feudalism historically and currently than to industrial capitalist development, which is blocked so long as the economy is an appendage of US imperialism and remains within the orbit of world capitalist system.

Semifeudalism can be used in two senses: (1) to sum up the economy that is shackled by two moribund forces — imperialism and feudalism; and (2) to refer to the dominance of the comprador big bourgeoisie and the kind of production it promotes (primarily raw-material production for export).

Such terms as "semicapitalist" or "in transition to capitalism" obscure the persistence of feudalism and the commanding position of semifeudalism, as well as the fundamental anti-imperialist and antifeudal tasks of the national democratic revolution in the era of modern imperialism and proletarian revolution. The Philippines is not at all on the way to becoming fully capitalist. No wrong impression should be created about this. The national bourgeoisie is

shackled by US imperialism, and by the comprador big bourgeoisie and landlord class. It can be liberated only together with the basic masses of the people.

Let us look more closely at the comprador big bourgeoisie. It is the principal trading and financial agent of the US and other transnational corporations. Among the local exploiting classes, it owns and controls the largest and most important trading, financial and other facilities in the so-called service sector which are not direct subsidiaries of foreign corporations. According to a study made by Doherty, about sixty big comprador families control the majority of big banks and the so-called investment houses. All these are essentially merchant banks.

Through import-export transactions and lending operations, the comprador big bourgeoisie amasses wealth in the form of commercial profit and interest, and draws to itself the highest concentration of capital from the surplus product of the country. Together with the multinational firms, the big comprador firms give the highest salaries to their white collar employees. But the profits are very high and the rate of exploitation is actually the highest. The profits are drawn not only from the productivity of the employees but from the entire production and distribution system in the country.

The export-import operations of the comprador big bourgeoisie including the sale of imported inputs to small merchants, is a semifeudal rather than a capitalist phenomenon: it is mercantile rather than an industrial phenomenon.

The comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class are close allies. Many big compradors are also big landlords. Thus, it is apt to speak alternately of the big comprador-landlord class. This class owns big plantations. These are after all the main source of raw-material exports. The big compradors thus assure themselves of a reliable supply base and a source of foreign exchange. They have been responsible for the semifeudal practice of hiring farm workers at peon wages in sugar and coconut plantations. But they also have some lands wherein they exploit a large number of tenants by collecting land rent.

Of course, the big compradors have large interests in sugar centrals and coconut mills, and in such other major sources of exports as mining and logging. They also own certain light manufacturing enterprises which are the largest and most profitable. But most characteristically, they follow the foreign monopolies in opposing national industrialization and the development of a well-balanced

economy.

Only as a result of strong popular and national bourgeois demand for national industrialization do they grudgingly concede at certain times to the establishment of more light manufacturing industries which are import-dependent. And they control the imported inputs and the most profitable enterprises. They give a semifeudal character even to the industrial sector of the economy by preventing the establishment of heavy and basic industries in a comprehensive manner.

Because of their advantageous position, they can give higher wages to their workers than the national bourgeoisie. But the rate of exploitation is far higher in their firms because the profits are very high in relation to the wages. However, in relation to workers in capitalist countries, their workers' wages are far lower. The surrounding feudal backwardness breeds a large reserve army of labor, the source of cheap manpower for the big comprador firms.

More than any other exploiting class, the big compradors control and use the state as a source of economic privilege and as a large client. High government officials also use their public office to cut into big comprador operations. These big bureaucrat capitalists are essentially big compradors. With the protection of the fascist state, they tend to monopolize the big contracts and accumulate land rapidly. But they stay within the bounds of the big comprador class and the semifeudal system.

It is right to concentrate fire on the US multinationals but wrong to overlook the big compradors, especially the fascist compradors. Most import and export transactions pass through the big compradors. Even Westinghouse had to pass through the mediation of Disini and Marcos for it to sell a nuclear plant to the Philippine government. It is standard practice for US multinational firms to use local big comprador firms. Filipino exporters and importers of whatever size make use of the big comprador banks.

The landlord class is still the dominant class in the Philippine countryside. It is the standard bearer of the persistent feudal relations of production. In the most obvious manner, it owns vast tracts of land and collects rent from the great mass of tenants on assigned plots. To further enlarge the surplus product it extracts, it uses other methods of exploitation, such as the hiring of farm workers, usury, merchant operations, renting out of farm equipment and draft animals and the like which may be called semifeudal forms of exploitation.

The scope of landlord exploitation includes not only the tenants but also the poor and middle owner cultivators and the farm workers. Thus, the economic contradiction is not simply one between landlord and tenants but between landlords (both old-style and new-style) on one side and the peasants (i.e., poor and middle) and farm workers on the other. Semifeudal methods of exploitation proceed from and augment feudal ownership and methods of exploitation. There is a circular relationship between the feudal and semifeudal, in the absence of capitalist or socialist industrial development.

Old style landlords who collect rent from the tenants are far more numerous and own far more land than the new style landlords who hire farm workers. Feudalism is an indubitable fact even if we conservatively estimate that 40 percent of all Philippine farms are tenanted.

In the absence of genuine land reform, apart from the current rent reduction and anti-usury campaign of the revolutionary movement, claims that the tenancy rate went down from 39 percent in 1971 is completely unbelievable. There has been no development whatsoever to reduce the estimated 52 percent in 1964. This should be much higher now, because the few token sales of land to the tenants since then have been far outstripped by the accumulation of land by the landlords, especially under the fascist dictatorship — not withstanding its bigger claims of land reform. A study by Ernesto M. Valencia points out that estimates of the tenancy rate by researchers range from 40 percent of all farms in 1979 (Aguirre) to 90 percent on the basis of a sample of 14 provinces in 1972 (Ferguson).

The landlord class including the old style landlords (not all are big compradors) initially collect the largest amount of surplus from the entire country. Subsequently, because the landlords are extremely dependent on imported manufactures, a great part of the surplus product is handed over to the comprador big bourgeoisie and becomes a highly concentrated form of capital for import-export operations. Still further, the imperialists take away their own part of the surplus product. In this pattern, the landlords are subordinated to the comprador big bourgeoisie.

Such semifeudal elements as the new style landlords, the rich peasant (rural bourgeoisie), the merchant usurers and those who rent out farm machineries are still circumscribed by feudal conditions in the rural areas. They are inclined to use their surplus income for acquiring more land and they are not averse to

having tenants. Opportunities for nonagricultural investments are extremely limited. Thus, new landlord families replace the old disintegrating ones more than sufficiently.

Most new style landlords are feudal inheritors of land. Quite a number are also landgrabbers in frontier areas at the expense of poor settlers. The sheer ownership of land (even the worst land) commands absolute ground rent and only after this feudal fact is there consideration of differential rent. No landlord allows the use of his land without the payment of rent. The exaction of absolute ground rent is a matter of feudal right based on the landlord monopoly of land.

The rich peasants or the rural bourgeoisie do not advance in a large way along a capitalist course of development. They remain as such or grow to be landlords replacing old landlord families whose heirs fragment and/or sell away their land.

Farm workers are on the increase because landlord accumulation of land outstrips the expansion of agricultural land and because the commodity system destroys the traditional labor exchange and mutual aid systems among peasants. Agricultural capitalism and farm mechanization are still minor factors. On the whole, the country is not yet at that stage of development wherein the farm capitalists in quick succession convert peasants into farm workers and then wipe them out or reduce their role through farm mechanization.

Most farm workers are still poor peasants. They come from poor tenant or owner-cultivator families which make up for their deficits by selling their labor power. In most cases, those who hire farm workers require them to bring their own hand implements. However, the increasing number of farm workers compete for less farm jobs and for less income, especially because of the depression of export crops and the prohibitive costs and risks of resettlement. Landlord and foreign agro-corporations are rapidly dispossessing the poor settlers in frontier areas.

There are at least three categories of farm workers: (1) those who are still poor peasants and lower middle peasants owning or tenanting small plots, who own some simple farm implements but who sell part of their labor power as seasonal farm workers; (2) those who have been dispossessed of both land and implements and who fully, or in the main, sell their labor power; and (3) those who are in transition to full unemployment and the worst form of pauperization and who may subsequently migrate to urban areas to do odd jobs.

The third category has increased tremendously under the US-Marcos regime. Unlike in Europe of the 15th and 16th centuries when the manufacturing phase of capitalism moved ahead to absorb surplus labor and transform this into surplus value, manufacturing in the Philippines has even fallen since 1970 and failed to absorb the increasing surplus labor. The increase of landless rural workers is leading to revolution and vagabondage rather than to full capitalist development.

If the Philippines were on the path of industrial capitalist development, the national bourgeoisie would be the standard bearer. But the fact is that it is subordinate both to the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class in the semifeudal economy; most of the surplus product goes into the hands of these two classes.

Today middle entrepreneurs are at the core of the national bourgeoisie. They own and manage light manufacturing enterprises. Some of these enterprises in the main process local raw materials and are the stable basis of the class. Other enterprises are dependent on imported inputs and are more vulnerable to foreign monopoly measures.

The national bourgeoisie is, in varying degrees dependent on imported equipment, manufactured and semimanufactured inputs as well as raw materials especially fuel. Such enterprises as those promoted during the 1950s have come under severe attack due to the pseudodevelopment scheme of "export-oriented development," import liberalization (i.e., reduction and removal of tariff and other restrictions on manufactured and semimanufactured imports), devaluation, heavy taxation and such other policies dictated by the foreign monopolies and the fascist big compradors.

As a matter of course, local manufacturers already manufacturing certain products tend to protect these products. The most progressive or ambitious among them want fullscale national industrialization. But it takes more than entrepreneurship to protect local products and advance local industrialization. Doing away with the entire semifeudal production relations involves the nationalization of political power.

The national bourgeoisie draws its profits from extracting surplus value from the mass of its workers. There is a contradiction between the two classes. But they can unite to oppose foreign monopoly capitalism. The national bourgeoisie can

be in alliance with workers, peasants and urban petty bourgeoisie to end foreign and feudal domination and achieve a national democratic revolution.

The fact that peasants together with the farm workers continue to be the majority of direct producers and that the industrial workers has been a shrinking minority goes to show that the Philippine economy is far from capitalist. If the national bourgeoisie rather than the comprador big bourgeoisie were the ruling class, the modern industrial proletariat would be growing and become the majority of the direct producers. It should then be aiming for a socialist revolution rather than a national democratic revolution. At any rate, the modern industrial proletariat is the most advanced productive force and carries the ideology that is correctly guiding the Philippine revolution.

Only in a broad and loose sense can we speak of a large working class by lumping together all wage-earners, like the industrial, service and farm workers. In trade union work, for instance, we do not limit ourselves to the industrial workers. But they are certainly the core of the entire trade union movement. In the analysis of the mode of production, we should distinguish the modern industrial proletariat from the rest of the wage earners if we are to correctly measure the extent of capitalist development.

So far, it is only the urban petty bourgeoisie that we have not discussed. The urban petty bourgeoisie includes the small entrepreneurs, the small merchants and the general run of independent or salaried professionals and technicians. Most of them are employed by the reactionary government and the imperialist, big comprador and middle bourgeois firms.

The urban petty bourgeoisie is the lowest stratum of the bourgeoisie. In general, it receives a higher income and enjoys a more comfortable life than the toiling masses. It can send its children to school to receive professional and technical training under a pro-imperialist and big comprador ideology. But in the worsening crisis of the semifeudal economy, it finds itself increasingly exploited and becomes drawn to the revolutionary movement of the toiling masses.

Among the reactionary economists, it is standard practice to divide the GNP by the population and speak of a per capita income. This is a mere abstraction that obscures the fact that only a few grab the surplus product of society and the rest receive subsistence incomes. The GNP includes the superprofits of the multinational firms; the profits and interest income of the comprador big

bourgeoisie and the rent collection of the landlord class. Normally, only some eight percent of the local population receive salaries, fees and profit large enough to make them enjoy a comfortable life. What is left for some 90 percent of the people to divide in the form of wages and crop share is so small that they must suffer a life of want and misery.

3. What is the so-called development scheme of the US-Marcos regime? Does it have anything to do with industrialization? Some individuals insist that the US has been industrializing the Philippines since 1970 or even earlier. Please comment.

Development is a term much abused by the imperialists and local reactionaries. It needs clarification. Economic Development properly means industrial development for a country that is underdeveloped, agrarian and semifeudal.

Industrialization is the engine and leading factor of economic development. It must be accompanied by genuine land reform or agrarian revolution to clear the ground of feudal and semifeudal obstacles, to release the surplus product appropriated by the landlords and big compradors, develop agriculture as the source of food and raw materials and create a large domestic market mainly among the peasants and the growing working class. There has to be a comprehensive and balanced development of heavy industries, light industries and agriculture.

In this light, the US imperialists do not have a development scheme for the Philippines. What it has is a pseudodevelopment scheme which opposes industrialization and genuine land reform and aggravates the underdevelopment of the Philippine economy. The main thrust of US policy has been to overload the country with foreign loans and to directly invest in it so as to facilitate sale by the US of its finished products at increasing prices and its purchase of raw materials at decreasing prices.

If we review US economic policy as transmitted through the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank reports and recommendations since the early 1960s (when the United States decided to put the US Agency Export-Import Bank and US economic missions on low profile as channels of economic policy dictation), we will discover that the main line imposed on the Philippine government has always been "export-oriented development" and countering the demand for national industrialization.

"Export-oriented development" has meant first of all, promoting raw-material production-for-export and providing this with infrastructures, more milling equipment, transport, storage and other facilities. To supplement this, food production has also been promoted. And raising agricultural productivity through imported agricultural inputs is deemed far more important than land reform. The United States, Japan and other capitalist countries provide supplies for production and manufactured goods for consumption.

The early 1960s was a time for the United States to turn back the Filipino-owned light manufacturing industries and the demand of the national bourgeoisie and the people for industrialization. The import and foreign exchange controls that had favored and stimulated the growth for light manufacturing industries during the 1950s were dismantled. Decontrol was the key move for cutting down what the US imperialists considered overpresumptuousness of Filipino-Firsters.

The early 1960s was also a time for the United States to make some accommodations for Japan and other capitalist countries in the Philippine and other Asian markets. Thus, to oversee the sharing of the market, the World Bank became more active in this part of the world and the Asian Development Bank was established. The capitalist countries devastated in World War II had started to brim over with their industrial production. It was thought that the Philippine market for foreign manufactures would expand as the country would go on programs of infrastructure-building and of expanding capacity for raw-material production.

The expectation was that the import-dependent industries established would wither on the vine and that tariff protection would be gradually reduced and then removed. The imported manufactures would sweep away the so-called import-substitution industries or these industries would be absorbed by joint ventures controlled by the multinational firms. However, the national bourgeoisie through its Patriotic spokesmen in Congress and the Press proved for some time to be resilient not only in resisting complete economic annihilation but also in preventing the enactment of a foreign investment law satisfactory to the US.

Although President Macapagal had done the US a good turn by giving way to full decontrol in 1962, he would subsequently be junked for failing to produce a foreign investment law. At that time, the US was anxious to head off by a full decade the termination of the Parity Amendment and the Laurel-Langley Agreement in 1974. Thus, Marcos would be anointed as the replacement. And in

the latter half of the 1960s he was able to deliver the laws on investment incentives and export processing zones.

A review of the type of investments made by the US and other foreign firms since any point in the 1960s up to the present would show that these have been in trading, banking, import-dependent manufacturing, mining, oil exploration and agriculture. There have been no heavy and basic industries established to significantly advance local industrialization. Even the Iligan Integrated Steel Mill project of Macapagal has been sabotaged by Japanese foreign creditors, especially the steel interests, and by the present administration.

“Export-oriented industries” were projected in the late 1960s with the plan to put up the Bataan Export Processing Zone (BEPZ) and the Progressive Car Manufacturing Program (PCMP) or the car assembly program. The PCMP was the centerpiece of this supposed industrialization thrust.

With the glaring failure of the car assembly program in the late 1970s, it became the turn of garment-and-electronic end-processing to be pushed into prominence.

Since the late 1960s, the so-called export-oriented manufacturing has been ballyhooed as the spearhead of industrialization. Export-oriented manufacturing is a tricky term. It suggests that the Philippines is manufacturing surpluses for export. And Marcos and his technocrats dare claim that manufactured exports are becoming the main export-earners. But, in fact, as earlier pointed out, these are reexports that actually yield no dollar earnings for the country if the high cost of imported raw materials and equipment, transfer pricing, profit remittances, tariff exemptions and the high cost of building the infrastructures for the export processing zones are taken into account.

The “car manufacturing” program is about the worst of “export-oriented manufacturing.” This has simply been a scheme to import knockdowns and completely built cars to circumvent the tariff walls, sell cars entirely to the country mainly to government offices and private firms to which foreign loans have flowed as well as to the military which has been getting the lion’s share of government appropriations and siphon off a large part of the foreign loans pumped into the country.

“Export-oriented industries” are extremely dependent on imported equipment, finished components, semimanufactures and raw materials and are merely a part

of the perpetuated basic pattern of exchanging Philippine raw materials with foreign manufactures. A huge portion of the products of these pseudo-manufacturing enterprises are actually sold in the Philippine market far beyond limits set by official regulations.

The Philippines has been consistently dependent on raw-material exports whose prices have been increasingly depressed while the prices of imported manufactures have been soaring. It has gone into heavy borrowing (from \$2.0 billion in 1972 to \$25 billion in 1983) in order to be able to continue importing consumption goods and some supplies for light manufacturing; and to support a program of wanton public spending for nonindustrial purposes: roads, bridges, ports and dams, military build-up, nuclear, geothermal and hydroelectric plants; the cultural center complex, five-star hotels and other tourist facilities, etc.

It was the neo-Keynesian notion of the World Bank under McNamara that loans to the developing and underdeveloped countries like the Philippines would pump prime the capitalist countries in recession.

Indeed, these countries have been able to sell a lot of construction equipment and structural steel; energy plants; cars, ships and planes; computers and other office equipment; home appliances; farm equipment and chemicals; armaments; etc. And the multinational firms, the bureaucrat capitalists and the rest of the big compradors have made a killing. But the Philippines is reeling from inflation and the depression of its exports. It cannot pay its foreign debts except by incurring more debts.

What has happened to “export-oriented development”? The country has become ever more dependent on imported manufactures. The foreign trade deficits of the Philippines have kept on growing. The trade deficit for 1982 was \$2.8 billion, the balance of payment deficit, \$1.135 billion. The underdevelopment of the Philippine economy has only been aggravated. The trade deficit for 1983 is \$1.736 billion and the balance of payments is \$2.734 billion. From 1972 to 1983 the Philippines has accumulated \$16 billion total trade deficit.

In 1979, Marcos threatened to launch 11 major industrial projects and acknowledged the lack of industrialization under his rule. After four years, he has put up only one—the copper smelter—which is of limited capacity, overpriced through the usual corrupt mediation of bureaucrat capitalism and worst of all, controlled by Japanese interests that have their own copper smelters

back home to protect. The copper smelter is a token industrial project that cannot change the character of the economy and will most likely suffer the same fate as that of Macapagal's Iligan steel mill project in the 1960s.

At any rate, the IMF-World Bank combine has already told Marcos to stop talking about major industrial projects and to stick to "rural development" gimmick like the KKK. There have always been funds for capital intensive infrastructure and energy projects but no funds for industrial projects. Lack of capital is the argument against industrialization and at the same time for letting foreign investors into high and quick-profit areas of the economy.

The reactionaries do not carry out genuine land reform that could expand the domestic market but they use the limited domestic market as an argument against industrialization. They deliver speeches about the need for technology transfer but only to justify the foreign investors' privilege of owning enterprises in the country on the ground that they own the technology (including the most commonplace technology and even mere packaging of trademark).

There is also a lot of speechifying against protectionism in accordance with US textbooks. But the purpose is to make import liberalization acceptable even while Philippine exports are subjected to protectionist measures in the US and other capitalist countries. Marcos and the technocrats are capable of saying anything in forums or negotiations, short of asserting the economic sovereignty and determination of the Filipino people to achieve industrial development.

After so much talk about "universal banking" being geared to industrialization, it turns out that this is merely a device for crony corporations to further raid state and private banks and then for them to turn themselves in for receivership. Together with the Philippine National Bank and the Development Bank of the Philippines, the National Development Corporation which is supposed to be in charge of industrial projects is overloaded with many bankrupt crony corporations.

The Philippines can get more foreign loans only at more and more onerous terms and can only sink deeper into the debt trap. The basic ills of the economy are thereby becoming more and more exposed. The Philippines is obliged to exercise fiscal restraints, liberalize the importation of manufactures, devalue the peso, etc. The crisis of overproduction in the world capitalist system has increasingly exposed the consistent US line of anti-industrialization for the

Philippines.

4. What is the score on land reform? To what extent has it touched the land problem?

Ibon Facts and Figures (No. 75) states that only 1,684 tenants on 1,538 hectares of rice and corn lands have fully paid for their land and gained land titles under the Marcos “land reform” as of the end of 1980. The number of tenants becoming owner-cultivators is only 0.04 percent of the estimated total number of tenants of all crop lands and 0.05 percent of all tenants within the scope of the so-called Operation Land Transfer (OLT). This insignificant number of successful amortizing owners consist mainly of those who are not even full-time tenants or have sources of income other than their tenancy, such as foreign or urban employment of some members of the family.

The joke is that it will take two millennia for Marcos to emancipate all the intended OLT beneficiaries in rice and corn lands. And yet the land problem in the rest of the country will have become bigger. Of course, the joke overlooks the fact that there is a growing revolutionary peasant movement all over the country.

As of 1980, there were 113,704 tenants on 184,189 hectares of rice and corn lands that were supposed to have become “amortizing owners”; i.e., they have started to pay for the land according to a 15year installment plan. These tenants are a measly two percent of the tenants of all crop-land; and 28 percent of all tenants slated for conversion into “amortizing owners.” The land being amortized is 1.5 percent of all crop lands, 2.7 percent of all rice and corn lands, and 25 percent of all tenanted rice and corn lands slated for expropriation by the Land Bank.

As of 1980, also, more than 80 percent of “amortizing owners” defaulted on 80 percent of total payments due. Defaults are due to the high price of land (which is not any lesser than the going market price and often based on inflated production figures), past and current debts, various exactions such as those under the Samahang Nasyon and Masagana 99, crop failures, the rising costs of production and subsistence; and the government policy of pressing down the price of farm products. Tenants, including “amortizing owners,” are now selling their tenancy rights because of indebtedness to usurers.

One way of weighing how colossal is the “achievement” of Marcos in land reform is to compare the 1,684 tenants of 1,538 hectares (0.9 hectares per tenant, a far cry from 3 hectares if irrigated and 5 hectares if unirrigated as promised by PD 27) to the 267 corporate farms of agroservice corporations which have acquired 86,017 hectares within the same period under General Order 47.

The number of hectares acquired by the successful “amortizing owners” is far smaller in comparison to the amount of land transferred to the fascists from landlords out of power, owner-cultivators, settlers and minorities. The “infrastructure” program, the threat of expropriation under the “land reform” program and control of the banks have enabled the fascists to amass land. The fascists buy land cheaply from landlords out of power and grab land from settlers and minorities on untitled lands.

The illusion of land reform is also conjured by the formal conversion of a few hundreds of thousands of rice and corn tenants into so-called leaseholders who remain tenants in areas where there is yet no armed peasant movement. These leaseholders are obliged to pay a fixed rent of 25 percent of the annual average crop of three “normal” (best) crop years prior to the leasehold agreement. The tenants are simply obliged to deliver the fixed rent, irrespective of actual crop. The system has been devised as a counterinsurgency measure. But this has been defeated in a number of ways by revolutionary peasants. In the old tenancy system, the commonplace 50-50 sharing was based on the actual crop certified to by overseers or by the resident landlord himself.

The landlords ensure the exaction of a higher rent from the tenant under the fixed rent system by dictating falsified high production figures as the basis for the leasehold agreement. They are driven to do so for fear that their land would come under expropriation and the annual average crop yield would be used as the basis of the land price.

The fixed rent system is so biased against the tenants that when crop failure occurs (which does occur at least once every three years) they ask the landlords to revert to the old sharecropping system. The fixed rent system has been devised as a countermeasure to the tenants’ harvesting part of the crop without the knowledge of the landlord. The tenants are simply obliged to deliver the fixed rent.

All rice and corn peasants of poor and middle status are severely victimized by

the policy of the fascist dictatorship to press down the prices of their products while the cost of production and subsistence are made to rise rapidly. There has been an increase in rice production but the income of the peasants has been cut down by the rising cost of imported inputs. Small and medium owner-cultivators have been forced deeper into indebtedness and bankruptcy. They are preyed on by the state no less and by the big compradors, the landlords, the rich peasants and merchant usurers. Some peasants seemed to have benefited from Masagana 99 in the 1970s only because they avoided paying back the loans. The loans were actually usurious; despite its supposed below-market rate of interest. Aside from interest and service charges there were also the large overprice of supplies, samahang nasyon fees, grease money for follow-up expenses, etc. When these were withdrawn or when payments were demanded, the peasant borrowers who tried to pay their loans found themselves in financial trouble.

Under the shadow of the imperialist banks and multinational suppliers, the fascist compradors have been the biggest local predators. They have overpriced the construction of irrigation facilities and other infrastructure to enlarge their cut. And so, irrigation fees and taxes have risen fast. They have hooked the peasants to the miracle rice varieties and imported chemicals, the local trading of which they monopolize. The prices of these inputs have been jacked up without letup. And yet buying price of rice and corn is pressed down by fascist decree.

Agricorporations have inveigled some rice and corn peasants to go into corporate farming with them. These peasants have been reduced to the status of farm workers and cheated in the accounting of income and expenses. Excessive charges are made for loans, management, machines, chemicals, irrigation, etc. The peasants find themselves falling more and more into debt and losing tenancy and ownership rights to the agricorporations.

The peasants and farm workers in export-oriented agriculture have suffered terribly from the depressed prices of their crops. The tenants here are outside the scope of the official pretense of land reform and are often prevented from planting rice or corn. The farm workers are the most victimized by conditions of unemployment and underemployment. Owner-cultivators go bankrupt. Even the landlords who are out of power and who have difficulties in getting crop loans or paying them back are compelled to sell their land to the landlords in power at various levels of the fascist hierarchy.

In frontier areas, old style and new style landlords (Filipino and foreign) are

forcing settlers and national minorities to become either contract growers, tenants or farm workers or to simply leave their land at gunpoint. Pasture lease, “palayang bayan,” corporate farming, compact farming, “agro-industrial development” and counterinsurgency campaigns are the pretexts and devices for landlord acquisition of tilled and untilled land in the frontier areas. Spontaneous resettlement and swidden agriculture are already being blocked by landlordism as major alternative means of livelihood for the landless tillers.

The land problem has become worse under the fascist dictatorship. From 1970 to 1980, agricultural land still expanded from 8.9 million to 12 million hectares. The 3.5 percent annual rate of agricultural land expansion outstrips the 2.6 percent population growth rate from 1975 to 1980. But the rate of land accumulation by the landlords continues to outpace the rate of agricultural land expansion.

It can be expected, however, that the regime will drastically reduce the tenancy rate on paper. If it could do so for the period 1960-1970, there is no reason why it will not do so again for the period 1970-1980, because its claims on the success of the entire “land reform” program have been far more preposterous. At any rate, the aggravation of the land problem has made the ground far more fertile for revolution in the countryside. Bogus land reform has only exacerbated rather than reduced the land problem.

5. Is “export-oriented manufacturing” industrializing the country and making it depart from the colonial exchange of raw materials and foreign manufactures? There are those who hold the notion that it has done so. How do the so-called export-oriented industries compare with the import-substitution industries of the 1950s?

If the country is to industrialize, it will have to establish heavy and basic industries. “Export-oriented manufacturing”—e.g. “car manufacturing,” garments and electronics—involves the slight and fringe processing or mere assembly of imported components.

You can call this pseudomanufacturing. The workers are limited to doing handicraft, not even manufacturing. Sewing and embroidery, screwing finished components together, making upholstery, shoemaking and the like are old handicraft skills in the country.

Only a few tens of thousands of workers are factory employed. More jobs are farmed out to and spread thinly among urban and rural poor women who work in their individual homes. The factory workers are paid extremely low wages. Those who work in their own villages are paid by the piece at an even lower rate. The peasant women use their spare time from farm work to do their “manufacturing.” They receive small amounts of cash and make no accounting of how much in rent, plant facilities, light insurance, interest, etc. they save the multinational firms and the big compradors from paying in addition to the expenditure of labor power that is too cheaply paid.

There is a misconception that the “export-oriented industries” are a medium of technology transfer and therefore promote industrialization. But, precisely, basic and core processes are kept away from the country. It is not “export-oriented industries” that prompt the World Bank to call such places as Taiwan, South Korea and Brazil “new industrializing countries” but it is some tokens of heavy and basic industries.

The US through the IMF-World Bank combine has repeatedly made it clear that the Philippines has to concentrate on “rural development” and not on “major industrial projects” even if these are mere tokens of industrialization and controlled by the multinationals as proposed by Marcos. The crisis of the world capitalist system is such that no funds can be had for these. Why should the US and other major capitalist countries industrialize the Philippines while they all want to sell industrial products abroad, revive idle capacity and reemploy their unemployed?

Marcos will not go far beyond his Japanese-controlled copper smelter of limited capacity. Even the “export-oriented industries” are tightly squeezed by protectionist measures in capitalist countries. And the “import-substitution industries” are in even worse situation.

The “export-oriented industries” cannot industrialize the Philippines nor make it depart from the colonial exchange of domestic raw materials and foreign manufactures. These industries facilitate the entry of manufactures into the Philippines and help perpetuate the country’s overdependence on raw-material production-for-export. The “export-oriented industries” are a device not only for exploiting cheap Filipino labor in labor-intensive processes but also for circumventing tariff walls and penetrating the local market. A great portion of the “manufactures” is sold in the local market. The so-called car manufacturing

program is simply an excuse for avoiding high tariff duties on cars by importing certain proportions of knockdowns and completely assembled cars. Assembly of knockdowns is passed off as manufacturing. All these cars are sold in the local market at higher prices than those abroad on the ground that local “manufacturing” is more costly.

Now let us compare the “import-substitution industries” to the “export-oriented industries.” Both are dependent on importation of equipment, manufactured components and raw materials, and cannot lead to industrialization. “Export-oriented industries” are far more import-dependent and therefore cannot possibly promote local industrialization. These also involve a smaller range of product lines whereas the “import-substitution industries” have involved a wider range of product lines and more processing, and could easily be integrated with heavy and basic industries were these to be established.

The “export-oriented industries” only appear to provide a lot of employment. Actually, they provide regular factory employment only to a few. In comparison, the “import-substitution industries,” which cover a wide span of light manufacturing for domestic market, have generated a lot of regular factory employment and have been responsible for the Philippines being rated as No. 1 in degrees of development in Southeast Asia in the 1950s and 1960s. With the official bias against light manufacturing for the domestic market taking its toll, the Philippines together with Indonesia is now at the bottom of the list of economic sluggards in Southeast Asia.

“Export-oriented industries” are a far bigger drain on foreign exchange. The import costs of equipment and raw materials range from 60 to 92 percent of the value of the garment and electronics for reexport. There is a lot of transfer-pricing aside from the open remittance of profits, capital repatriation, debt repayments, management fees, royalties, etc. The government has been obliged to give tariff exemption and has spent a great amount of borrowed funds to build the export processing zones.

The Philippines makes no foreign exchange earning but incurs huge losses on the reexport of garments and electronics, contrary to the claims of Marcos and his technocrats that these are major export earners. They are merely looking one-sidedly and uncritically at the income side of the foreign trade sheet with regard to these reexports. By far, the traditional raw materials exports are still the main export earners.

In 1981, electronic reexports was \$313 million but import cost of materials and accessories was \$287.7 million. Thus, only \$25 million was gained. The import cost was 92 percent of export value. This, however, is not yet the foreign exchange gained because out of this will have to be taken the profit to be remitted, interest for loans, capital to be repatriated, etc., by the foreign multinationals.

In 1982, the garments manufacturers are said to have exported \$450 million worth of garments but the import cost of raw materials alone that had been converted into garments is \$350 million. Hence, only \$100 million or 22 percent constitute the foreign exchange earnings, without yet discounting the depreciation cost of imported equipment, repatriated profit of foreign owners of garment factories, etc.

The “export-oriented industries” or reexport enterprises are now shrinking in the face of decreasing quotas and other protectionist measures imposed by the capitalist countries. They easily fold up without much loss. Their plants and equipment are flimsy and overvalued for purposes of transfer-pricing. The world over, they are notoriously known as “gypsy industries” because they can come and go easily without being held back by any real substantial capital investment.

However, light manufacturing industries for the domestic market are in even more serious trouble. These are being cut down by import liberalization, devaluation, outright deprivation of foreign loans, etc. Since 1979, the front for imperialist trade offensives has widened rapidly.

In the 1970s, many of the import-substitution industries managed to survive while a lot of foreign loans flowed in and the multinational corporations concentrated on selling construction equipment, structural steel, motor vehicles, energy plants, computers, appliances and the like. But in the 1980s, the economic and financial crisis of the world capitalist system is such that the foreign loan creditors and the multinational corporations have become even more intolerant of the so-called “import-substitution industries.”

6. Is there any truth to the insistence of certain quarters that the US and the Marcos regime are seriously carrying out neocolonial industrialization and land reform in order to make the country a modern industrial neocolony and to dissipate social unrest? It is claimed that "export-oriented manufacturing" is turning the country into a manufacturing base of the US and other multinational

firms. Some say that the Philippines is already a "newly industrializing country." Others say that it is already capitalist. What are the implications of such claims as far as the revolutionary movement is concerned?

The US and the Marcos regime are carrying out a policy of anti-industrialization as borne out by facts already cited. What has been going on is not neocolonial industrialization but neocolonial anti-industrialization.

One cannot ignore the main fact that the imperialist creditors (IMF, World Bank, Asian Development Bank and private banks) and the US and other multinational firms have been pushing the importation of manufactures into the country and making it more dependent on raw-material production for export. Thus, the Philippines finds itself extremely over-burdened with foreign loans wasted on consumption-oriented and nonindustrial projects.

The wastage of huge financial resources has drawn the country further away from establishing heavy and basic industries and aggravated its underdevelopment. The funds that have been poured into overpriced and substandard roads; bridges and ports; five-star-hotels, private palaces and offices and office buildings; fancy office equipment and fleets of vehicles for government offices; the enlargement of the parasitic central bureaucracy and the military; etc. could have profoundly and comprehensively industrialized the country. But instead, these are burdens on the back of the people within the framework of underdevelopment.

The imperialist export of surplus capital (direct investments and loans) has revolved around the export of surplus manufactures of so many sorts, except the equipment that would enable us to produce our own industrial equipment (i.e. capital goods). The so-called export-oriented manufacturing is nothing but sham manufacturing of limited scope and as already said cannot industrialize the country. Aside from taking advantage of cheap local labor to some limited extent for minor but labor-intensive processes, the purpose of the transnational corporations in establishing these types of enterprises is to go around tariff barriers and exploit the local market.

The so-called export-oriented manufacturing has also been used for some time as propaganda device to create the illusion of industrialization. Until recent years, "export-oriented manufacturing" together with construction-related manufacturing (cement, metal fabrication, wood processing, etc.) used to bloat

the figures for manufacturing in the GNP. With the tightening of foreign credit, the share of manufacturing and of industry as a whole has shrunk.

Under the regime, manufacturing and industry as a whole have actually shrunk in terms of real net output and employment.

As regards industrial projects which have been proposed by Marcos seriously or not since 1979 and by the ASEAN since 1975, the World Bank and the US and Japanese transnational corporations have consistently resisted them. Despite the come-on for foreign monopolies to invest in these projects and to control them, they have consistently insisted that the local market is too small and that they can more than adequately supply it from their existing plants elsewhere, mainly in their home countries.

Even if all the proposed eleven industrial projects had been put up, these would have been no more than mere tokens of industrialization to deviously qualify the Philippines as a "newly industrializing country." But the most forceful argument used against these now by the creditors and TNC's is that the Philippines cannot afford them and cannot get foreign investment and loans for them.

Regarding land reform, the US-Marcos regime itself admits that it has not solved the land problem although it boasts that it has accomplished more than any previous regime. It should be pointed out that this current regime has aggravated the land problem. Certainly, it has made bigger promises and claims and relatively bigger tokens of land reform than any previous regime. But all these are overshadowed by the most unbridled and most massive transfer of land to a new set of landlords in power.

The nationwide expansion and intensification of people's war based mainly on the peasant masses is the clearcut proof of the intolerable aggravation of the land problem. If genuine land reform has been undertaken by the regime, the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army would not have found the ground so fertile for armed revolution.

There is no industrialization and land reform going on to dissipate social unrest as claimed by certain pseudorevolutionaries. There is in fact the intensification of fascist, foreign and feudal exploitation and oppression. The national democratic revolution of the broad masses of the people is moving forward.

It was in the late 1960s when Lavaite patriarchs actively espoused the line that

US imperialism has been seriously taking steps to effect industrialization and land reform since the 1950s. They adopted this line to explain that "US-inspired economic reforms" rather than Lavaite misleadership had caused the defeat of the armed revolutionary movement in the 1950s; and to oppose the revolutionary line which was being drawn up in the late 1960s.

Subsequently, the patriarchs found a gullible mouthpiece that proceeded to publicize the line that armed struggle would be even more futile in the late 1960s and onward because the US and the Marcos regime were supposedly even more determined to industrialize the Philippines and carry out land reform. Since then, this mouthpiece has never tired of harping on the line and muddleheadedly mixing pseudo-Marxist premises with the absurd claims of the World Bank, the TNC's and the technocrats about "economic restructuring" in the Philippines.

Since their open surrender to the US-Marcos regime in 1974, the Lavaites have become so immersed in their collaboration with the fascists that they have become even more blind to such obvious facts as the US-Marcos opposition to local industrialization and land reform and the nationwide cumulative growth of the revolutionary mass movement.

The Lavaites pretend that the Philippines is already industrializing and at the same time protest that the MNC's are the owners and controllers of the enterprises and employers of an increasing mass of Filipino workers. And then the Lavaites console each other that the growing proletariat would eventually fall on their lap and that they would some day put one over the US and Marcos by suddenly turning the proletariat against them in the fashion of an urban uprising as in the Russian revolution in 1917. They forget that in the experience of the Bolsheviks and the Russian people, the fighting proceeded to the countryside for an extended period.

The same Lavaite quarters overrate "export-oriented manufacturing" and the bogus land reform as having advanced and increased the magnitude of the modern industrial proletariat. Thus, even without the token heavy and basic industries as in Taiwan and South Korea, a Lavaite mouthpiece has gone on to claim even ahead of the World Bank that the Philippines is a "newly industrializing country."

There are those who assert that the Philippines is already capitalist because the working class is supposed to be in the majority already. They lump together all

those categorized as industrial, service and farm workers and obscure the important distinctions among them. They do not see that even the industrial workers in the Philippines are attached mainly to import-dependent light manufacturing, there being no heavy and basic industries.

The consistent line of the Lavaites is that a protracted people's war based mainly on the peasantry is out of the question. They thus pin their hopes on a working class that is supposed to be expanding fast in an imaginary process of industrialization. But unfortunately for them, the Lavaites are shunned by the masses of workers for collaborating with the regime.

All attempts of the Lavaites to justify their continuing failures and, worse, their collaboration with the fascist regime have proven to be utterly futile. Even the Soviet theorists have been uneasy and disturbed about the Lavaite's conceding that the US and the Marcos regime are carrying out industrialization in the country as this preempts a Soviet offer of "noncapitalist development" to the regime.

7. It is supposed that "neocolonial industrialization" is unstoppable and that it is supposed to have been determined by a "new international division of labor" (NIDL) and "internationalization of capital" under which the capitalist countries concentrates on capital-intensive high-technology industries and shift labor-intensive industries to developing countries such that these countries can become industrialized and depart from the colonial exchange of raw-material exports and manufactured imports. How does this relate to Lenin's theory of modern imperialism and the going facts in the world capitalist system now?

There is a limit to the transfer of labor-intensive processes to the developing countries. The capitalist countries do not on their own initiative transfer labor-intensive processes or industries to the developing countries to the point of industrializing these countries and depriving themselves of captive markets for their surplus manufactures as well as sources of cheap raw materials.

In the United States and other capitalist countries, there is the objective process of rapid constant capital build-up. The labor-intensive processes are being automated. At the same time, it is the subjective wish of the political and economic leadership of the capitalist countries to cope with their unemployment. Thus the transfer of labor-intensive processes to developing or underdeveloped countries is extremely limited and cannot by any stretch of the imagination lead

to the industrial development of these countries.

Were the capitalist countries to allow developing countries to industrialize, the capitalist crisis of overproduction would worsen at a far more accelerated pace. The usual practice of the monopoly capitalists in the face of losses or a rapidly decreasing rate of profit is to cut down production or discard their inferior plants in favor of more efficient ones rather than allow the underdeveloped or developing countries to acquire their own industrial capacity.

The foreign monopoly capitalists constantly fear and oppose any permanent reduction of their overseas market, especially because their high-technology industries employ a very limited number of people.

Let us take, as an example, the steel industry which is so important in the process of industrialization. The United States would rather keep idle or melt down so many of its steel plants than have these transferred to developing or underdeveloped countries. These steel plants conceded to a few entities like Taiwan, South Korea and Brazil are mere tokens of limited capacity, and their economies are hogtied by the continuing need to be supplied with so many types of basic and special steel products from the capitalists countries in a wide range of construction projects.

A few token industrial projects have been conceded by the United States and other capitalist countries to a very few developing countries only because of the strong demand of the latter and not because of voluntariness on the part of the former. As much as they can, the capitalist countries maneuver to limit the industrial projects and tie them down for the purpose of extracting more advantages for their home industries.

The Philippines is a good example of an underdeveloped country that is held down to having no more than import-dependent light manufacturing. And it has even been obliged to retreat from a wide range of light manufacturing that serves local needs and to opt for the flimsier processing of a few items for reexport, the dominant TNC's want to supply entirely finished products to the Philippine market. This point seems not to be grasped by those who claim neocolonial industrialization for the country.

Modern imperialism would cease to be what it is if it were bent on industrializing the developing countries. The main and essential scheme of the

imperialists is still to supply the underdeveloped and developing countries with manufactured products in exchange for cheap raw materials. The export of surplus capital in the form of direct and indirect investments serve the unequal exchange of manufactured surpluses of the capitalist countries and raw materials of the developing countries.

The imperialists draw their superprofits from unequal trade and from the investments and loans attendant to this trade. If this trade is called colonial, it is because it originates from colonial times; it does not mean that its importance is dissolved under modern imperialism. One who uses the term neocolonialism as a synonym for imperialism should not be misled into thinking that the colonial pattern of trade has been replaced by something like "neocolonial industrialization."

The facts in their entirety and decisive detail do not show that the capitalist countries have taken the initiative to form a "new international division of labor" and allowed the developing countries to industrialize and depart from their dependence on raw material production for export and importation of finished products. One simply has to look into the facts behind the struggle of the third world for a new international economic order. North-South dialogues and confrontation are becoming more and more bitter.

And here comes the Lavaites claiming that everything has been settled on the initiative of the imperialists who through the TNC's have supposedly decided to industrialize developing countries with a small number of runaway shops from the capitalist countries. The book *Development Debacle* by Walden Bello, et al, exposes completely the falsity and failure of the promised industrialization of the Philippines through "export-oriented manufacturing."

As the capitalist crisis of overproduction worsens, the capitalist countries and their TNC's directly and through their banks, dictate on developing countries to desist from proposing industrial projects, bring down tariff barriers, borrow at more onerous terms, devalue their currencies, etc. The capitalist countries push their respective trade offensives at the expense chiefly of the underdeveloped or developing countries. At the same time, the former impose quotas and other protectionist measures against exports and reexports of underdeveloped or developing countries.

The Lavaites eclectically pick up all sorts of false ideas and give credence even

to false claims of the World Bank and the TNCs to support their line that the US imperialists and the Marcos regime are industrializing the country. In the process, they unwittingly cast away the Soviet theory of "noncapitalist development" in favor of a theory of industrialization by the TNCs. In this regard, the only thing that the Soviet Union can be happy about the Lavaites is their trying to obscure the third world demand for a new international economic order.

The Lavaites are so opposed to the national democratic revolution and so attached to the regime that they have degenerated to the point of crediting US imperialism with an imagined industrialization of the country. Industrialization will take place when the country and the people are freed from foreign and feudal domination.

The notion that the developing countries can be industrialized by the transfer of labor-intensive industries from the capitalist countries is supposed to have originated from the work entitled *The New International Division of Labor* by West German scholars Volker Froebel, Jurgen Heinrich and Otto Kreye, of the Max Planck Institute. Since then, some apologists for the TNCs have used this notion to overrate TNC role in the so-called industrialization of the developing countries. Then, the Lavaites adopted the notion, called it neocolonial industrialization and flaunted it as if it were an improvement on Lenin's theory on modern imperialism.

The notion is not really new. Kautsky and his disciples in the Second International hailed the domination of the imperialists over the colonies and semicolonies on the ground that this would achieve a civilizing mission and the peaceful development of the dominated countries into capitalism. In exchange for their raw materials, they were supposed to acquire industrial productive capacity and become capitalist. But, then as now, the imperialists with the collaboration of the local reactionaries have persistently tried with all their might to keep the dominated countries as a cheap source of raw materials and a lucrative market for their manufactures.

We are still in the era of modern imperialism and proletarian revolution. The essentials of Lenin's theory on modern imperialism are still valid today. The basic conditions from which he drew basic principles have continued. He has correctly presented imperialism as the highest and final stage of capitalism. It is moribund capitalism, the eve of social revolution in both capitalist and

underdeveloped and developing countries. The term neocolonialism is a mere variant of the term imperialism and does not mean industrialization of underdeveloped countries by foreign monopolies or TNCs because in fact no such industrialization is taking place.

8. What can one say about the notion that together with the "land reform" program of the US-Marcos regime such measures of rural development as the miracle rice program, increased use of imported farm inputs, the fixed rent systems, the rapid increase of farm workers, corporate farming and compact farming, crop diversification, animal breeding programs, putting-out jobs to villagers and the Kilusang Kabuhayan at Kaunlaran (KKK) have resulted in a significant advance from feudalism towards capitalism?

In the absence of genuine land reform which breaks up feudal and semifeudal social relations, these measures of "rural development" can only benefit the big compradors and big landlords at the expense of the peasants and farm workers. Some crumbs fall to the rich peasants and merchant usurers. These measures cannot by themselves effect any significant advance from feudalism and semifeudalism or from the overall semifeudal character of the economy.

The miracle rice program has increased the productivity of peasants over a few hundreds of thousands of hectares of land and expanded the market for US agricultural chemicals. But the peasants have had to suffer the higher cost of production, especially the imported inputs (fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation facilities, etc.). These have cut down their share of the crop and forced them into debt and further penury. The semifeudal big compradors headed by the fascist ruling clique have collected the biggest commercial profits on importation of the inputs. The peasants have been further squeezed by the fixed rent arrangement and by the price control on their products.

The peasants in Central Luzon and elsewhere who did not pay or made only token payments for the Masagana 99 loans, which were in fact extremely usurious, appeared to have gained much from the miracle rice program. But when Masagana 99 was terminated, they found themselves in deep trouble. Since then owner-cultivators have been selling away their lands; and tenants, their tenancy rights because of increasing debts they cannot pay. Both poor peasants and farm workers have been bogged down more deeply in the mire of feudalism and semifeudalism.

The fixed rent arrangement between the landlord and the so-called leaseholder is still very much within the embrace of feudalism. Generally, the fixed rent is paid in grain because the landlords want to take advantage of the higher prices during the lean months, thus, there is the *quedan* system. At any rate, land rent paid in the form of labor, crop share or cash (in this historical sequence) by tenants is feudal.

The rapid increase of farm workers is a semifeudal phenomenon rather than full capitalist phenomenon; precisely because there is no industrial capitalist development to absorb dispossessed peasants even as the rate of land accumulation by the landlords is running faster than the expansion of tillable land. The increase of farm workers in Central Luzon and other old settlements is dramatic because the frontier area for resettlement all over the country has closed.

It is said that farm workers are now 55 percent of the farm population and are bigger in number than the peasants with definite plots to till. We are not sure of the accuracy of this figure. It is difficult to make a national survey distinguishing the farm workers who depend mainly or wholly on their wages and the poor and middle peasants who augment their income as farm workers. But assuming that the figure is correct, it does not mean any significant advance into capitalism away from semifeudalism. On the other hand, it means that the semifeudal economy is bursting at the seams with surplus labor that it cannot employ. The direction is more towards a new type of democratic revolution than towards capitalism.

Land concentration mainly by landlords and semifeudal rich peasants continues. Foreign and local farm capitalists still have to deal with local owners of land. However, the new-type landlords take the initiative of employing capitalist processes such as getting crop loans, using imported agricultural inputs, hiring farm workers, etc.

On its own track, modern corporate farming is expanding rapidly and has had a violent impact on the poor peasants, settlers and national minorities, who continue to be displaced, especially in Mindanao. But it still covers only an insignificant part of the total agricultural land. It is far more productive and profitable though than farming that uses only the cheap labor of farm workers and does not use modern machinery and equipment. Compact farming so-called is still negligible: it covers only a few showpiece areas of the Ministry of

Agrarian Reform.

The foreign agrcorporations are expanding the land they control by going into "growers' agreements" with the National Development Corporation, landlords and owner-cultivators. These corporations take the initiative of promoting new crops for export, like banana, pineapple, rubber, palm oil, soybeans in Mindanao. The cultivation of more types of crops for the benefit of foreign agrcorporations and local landlords reinforces feudalism and semifeudalism. Legions of owner-cultivators for example, have been dispossessed of their land and turned into tenants and farm workers as a result of rapid land accumulation by the fascists, landlords and the foreign agrcorporations.

The sale of imported agricultural inputs by big compradors to small merchants is a semifeudal rather than a capitalist phenomenon. It is mercantile rather than an industrial phenomenon because the inputs come from outside the economy and are not produced by local industries.

The animal breeding programs of the reactionary government are also big comprador operations. Foreign breeds are imported at a great overprice and at public expense. These are farmed out mainly to the landlords. However, these are still a mere drop in the sea of backyard animal breeding. But even if big animal farms do arise, the big comprador and landlords will still own them.

Incidentally, there is now a back-to-the-carabao campaign together with the back-to-organic-fertilizers (especially composting and azolla) campaign as a result of dwindling foreign exchange for importing farm equipment and chemicals.

Farm-out jobs in the garments and electronics enterprises are decreasing. Contrary to the claims of the Lavaites, these have not caused a bit of industrialization in the barrios. In general, these have been sidelines of peasant women during their slack periods, the compensation per piece being small. It is not true that entire farming villages have given up farming in order to rely entirely or mainly on these farm-out jobs. It is also an exaggeration to say that the garments enterprises at their peak in the 1970s created 500,000 jobs in the barrios compared to only 15,000 in factories.

Like the assembly of cars, trucks and motorcycles and the garments and electronics enterprises, the KKK has also been overrated by the Lavaites as a

major component of what they call neocolonial industrialization, especially because there is so much Marcos propaganda about tie-ups with the US chain department stores. Some KKK products (especially handicrafts) may indeed be exported. But these do not mean any degree of industrialization.

The KKK is essentially a propaganda gimmick in the face of the worsening economic crisis. It has been used to deflect attention from the rapacity of the fascist dictator and his cronies; and the bankruptcy of the regime — all of which are being mercilessly exposed by soaring inflation and massive unemployment.

The KKK was cooked up when the crony corporations were making a raid on so-called rehabilitation funds. An extremely high proportion of KKK funds is spent on propaganda and superfluous administrative personnel and consultants superimposed on preestablished projects of "rural development" under ministries and other offices other than the Ministry of Human Settlements.

The project headings of the KKK are: agro-forestry, marine culture, waste utilization, cottage and "light industries" (quotes are ours); shelter and shelter components, and services. Old projects are simply being given the KKK signboard. Worse, the bureaucrats and the military are cutting more and more into KKK funds for themselves. But they get only chicken shit in comparison to what the fascist dictator gets.

9. What are your views of the following notions: a) that Spanish colonialism being mercantile capitalist and applying bourgeois jurisprudence converted Philippine agriculture into capitalist property by overruling clan communalism as early as the 16th century; b) that capitalist countries in trading heavily with the Philippine colony developed capitalist agriculture and turned the entire colony capitalist as early as the 19th century; and c) that the Philippine is capitalist because the surplus products go through the market but is a dependent one because the surplus products end up with the imperialists? Each of these notions comes from different quarters.

There is some logic in putting all three notions together in one question. They have one thing in common. They fly away from a primary consideration of the forces and relations of production in the Philippines. The fundamental difference between Marxist and bourgeois economics is that the former is not carried away by appearances of the market but starts with and focuses on the productive system.

Let us take up the first notion and review both European and Philippine economic history as well as the interaction of Europe and the Philippine colony as well as the result of such interaction.

Indeed, manufacturing and mercantile capitalism were the driving forces behind Spanish colonialism. But this colonialism did not have to apply any bourgeois jurisprudence to put Philippine agriculture under its control. The Philippines was taken by force and conquest; the conquerors subsequently imposed the encomienda system for administrative and tribute collecting purposes. This system is a military-feudal device with historical roots reaching down to the time of slavery. This talk on bourgeois jurisprudence being applied on Philippine agriculture in the 16th century to make it capitalist property is utter nonsense.

It should be pointed out that to this day, bourgeois jurisprudence in the Philippines affirms and protects feudal rights, especially in land. The ownership of land by landlords is a base that continues in the Philippine economy. But the feudal property rights of landlords are upheld by the bourgeoisie for fear that an attack on it might impugn the entire concept of private property.

In the 16th century, clan communalism was not pervasive in the Philippines. The overwhelming majority of the natives had already developed a certain degree of civilization far beyond the savage condition of clan communalism and basically advanced from the barbaric condition of tribalism. Tribal features were merely vestigial. Among the elements of civilization were literacy, use of metals and the existence of classes.

To the extent of at least 80 percent, the natives lived in local communities with populations ranging from 300 to 20,000 along the seacoasts, big rivers and lakes. They had wet rice agriculture and dry rice agriculture. They had well-developed handicrafts that included metal craft, cotton and hemp weaving and the making of large boats capable of carrying fifty (caracoa) to 300 persons (joanga). The caracoa was a commonplace craft for trade and war.

The ruling families and sections of the freemen privately owned most of the metal tools, wet rice lands and slaves; appropriated the entire product of the slaves; received rent from serfs or partial slaves; and controlled the use of communal lands. The surplus products of society was large enough to stimulate intercommunity and interisland trade as well as trade with neighboring lands, China and those of Southeast Asia.

Trade with China is the most revealing. The natives traded rice, cotton, beeswax, hardwood, tortoise shells, pearl and gold in exchange for iron, lead, bronze, fishing nets, silk and porcelain.

The self-contained barangay paradigm of previous historians is extremely misleading. We have been disabused of this by a careful reading of the Spanish chronicles and evaluation of archaeological, anthropological and prehistoric evidences. We should not confuse the civilized natives with those who had not gone beyond clan communalism (Aetas) and tribal communalism (most upland communities). These were in the minority even in the 16th century.

In the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, military-feudal methods of exploitation, like tribute collection, requisition, labor and military conscription were applied in the main to extract surplus product for the colonizers. It was sheer plunder.

Even as the friars, some lay conquistadores and the native chieftains altogether steadily developed such feudal practices as private land accumulation, collection of rent, trade monopolies, levies on merchants, religious fees, etc., slavery also persisted and grew until it really went down. It must be stated though that slavery never reached the proportions that it did in the Americas. There, Africans were traded to be turned into slaves for the plantations.

Slaves in the Philippines during the first two centuries of Spanish colonial rule included those who had slave status in precolonial times, those who were taken captive in military expeditions against the Moros and upland tribes, and those imprisoned for running away from labor and military conscription. The slaves were used as rowers of galleons and military boats or even as permanent workers in public works, as well as house and field servants.

In the entirety of Spanish colonial rule, feudalism provided the great bulk of the surplus product that went to the colonizers and their native taskmasters. In the 19th century, feudalism became fully developed and matured under the stimulus of foreign trade with the capitalist countries that needed an increasing amount of commercial-industrial crops.

We can proceed to the second notion. It is wrong to say that Philippine agriculture became capitalist and that the whole Philippine economy likewise became capitalist in the 19th century simply because of the external stimulus provided by commerce with capitalist countries. Feudalism, on the contrary,

flourished as never before in the whole country.

The increasing sale of agricultural crops to the capitalist countries pushed the local production of these crops as well as crop specialization and domestic trade. The general effect was to drive the friar landlords and the widespread native and mestizo landlords to accumulate land and collect higher rent from the tenants. In the whole country, the maturing feudal relations were still dominant over such semifeudal elements as the commodity system and the big compradors.

Whether they leased land to native sublandlords or hired foreign managers as they later did, the friars went on a rampage of arbitrarily grabbing land and increasing land rent. The encouragement given by foreign trade to feudal exploitation pushed the people to revolution. It is obvious why the revolution burst out most fiercely in the areas where the friar estates existed.

Let us turn to the third notion. In presenting the mode of production, one does not start with the market. Otherwise, one is liable to get misled and insist that there never has been any mode of production other than capitalism.

For instance, even in a slave mode of production the product of slaves as well as the slaves themselves are traded, i.e., go through the market. In a feudal society, the landlords also deal with the merchants. The key question is not how the surplus product is distributed but how it is produced and exacted from the real producers. The mode of production called slavery is so called because the main portion of the surplus product is produced by slaves rather than by serfs or other classes in society.

Not all surplus product of the present semifeudal economy goes to the imperialists. The landlords, big compradors and the imperialists get their respective shares. The imperialists derive their superprofits through unequal trade, direct investment and loans; and hold the levers to suit the pattern of production and trade to their advantage.

The Philippine mode of production is in the orbit of world capitalism and is dependent on it. But in its distinct or particular mode of existence, it is semifeudal and not capitalist. The term dependent capitalism can lead to more confusion than clarity.

10. In what sense is feudalism the social base of imperialism? There are those who insist that feudalism is not and has never been the social base of

imperialism in the country. They say that imperialism is so strong that it does not need feudalism. They confuse the destruction of feudalism by capitalism in the development of the capitalist countries and the use of feudalism by modern imperialism to the latter's advantage in the colonies and semicolonies.

In the Philippines, US imperialism has relied on feudalism historically and currently in various social spheres: economic, political and cultural. It is not out of weakness that US imperialism uses feudalism but out of cleverness and strength. The main interest of US imperialism is not to develop and industrialize the Philippines and turn it into one more capitalist competitor but to retain it as a supplier of raw materials and as a market for US manufactures through the instrumentality of the landlords and the big compradors who in the main are also big landlords.

In the economy, the landlords are in charge of the production of crops needed by the imperialists and which form the bulk of exports. All landlords in the production of staples and export crops grab the biggest amount of surplus value and use this to get the US manufactured goods for consumption. They waste what would have been investible resources and prevent Philippine industrialization. They hog the land and assure Philippine backwardness and vulnerability to imperialist domination.

In politics, the reactionary political leaders, from the level of municipal mayors to that of the president, are in general landlords. It would certainly be foolish for US politicians to come and take over the function of their local taskmasters. There certainly is no danger of that happening in the Philippines.

This is also true in the economy. It would be foolish for Americans to supplant the landlords from well-established feudal and semifeudal areas. US agrcorporations have always preferred moving into frontier areas at the expense of settlers and national minorities. Now, they also prefer to go into "growers' agreements" with the state, the landlords and owner-cultivators. So far, the landlord class in the Philippines has held its ground all over the country, and has certainly not given way to local capitalists.

In culture, US bourgeois and imperialist culture is an overlay on the feudal culture spawned by Spanish colonialism and the Catholic Church. US imperialism does not dare eradicate and replace the feudal culture that still persists in a big way. It would rather ride on it and use it just as it does with the

landlord economy.

It was Lenin who pointed out that modern imperialism allies itself with feudalism in the colonies and semicolonies. The modern industrial bourgeoisie which destroyed the feudal economy in capitalist countries is not to be confused with foreign monopoly capitalism impinging on the backward economies of the colonies and semicolonies. US imperialism has pushed the growth of semifeudalism and the comprador big bourgeoisie but not to the point of making the Philippines a modern industrialized neocolony or an industrial capitalist country.

It is also inappropriate to quote Marx and Lenin regarding the modern industrial bourgeoisie in 19th century England and early 20th century Russia and suggest that such a bourgeoisie is already directly in command of the Philippine economy. The ruling bourgeoisie is the comprador big bourgeoisie. And the element of the modern industrial bourgeoisie in the Philippines is still subordinate to the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class; and does not yet have a local base in heavy and basic industries for the light manufacturing it is engaged in.

The Lavaites are a source of confusion. Sometimes they admit the obvious imperialist domination in the country. At other times, they assert that a modern industrial bourgeoisie is already ruling the country when they wish to call the country capitalist.

The first to publicly attack the formulation, "feudalism is the social base of imperialism in the Philippines" was Dr. Jesus Lava, Sr. in 1970. He enumerated a series of US-directed and US-financed activities and called these the social base of US imperialism in the Philippines.

Even enlightened neoclassical economists understand that foreign monopoly and the feudal bottleneck in the economy are obstacles to the growth of capitalism in the country. Proletarian revolutionaries know that if they defeat the landlord class in the countryside, imperialism and the big compradors would have nothing to stand on in the country except a few city enclaves where they would not be able to stand for long.

There are those who join the Lavaites in saying the formulation "feudalism is the social base of imperialism" is inapplicable to the Philippines simply because it is

drawn (or "derived" — a pejorative term to original geniuses) from Mao. They do not know even Mao cannot claim originality for the basic principle involved.

Modern imperialism has been experienced and observed in common by so many people in colonies and semicolonies. Why should not entire peoples or their thinkers and leaders arrive at certain common formulations? What would be sad is if these formulations are not supported by facts and analysis.

Will Marxists now stop being Marxists because they draw basic guiding principles from Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao and Ho? No theoretical advance can be made without the illumination and further testing of priorly given ideas as one engages in the concrete analysis of concrete conditions. The formulation in question affirms a general similarity of semicolonial and semifeudal conditions between pre-socialist China and the Philippines today. The Philippines, of course, has many particularities different from those of old China.

11. Will you discuss further the class character of the Marcos ruling clique? Some Lavaites claim it represents "the ascendancy of the reformist national bourgeoisie over the feudal lords and the compradors." Some other people say that this clique has pushed capitalism and industrial development by using the state to pool unprecedentedly large financial resources to reinvest. Are these claims true? What more can we expect from this clique? Is there any chance that it would take the Patriotic bourgeois alternative?

The claim that the Marcos ruling clique is representative of a national bourgeoisie ascendant over the big compradors and big landlords does not accord with the facts. The Marcos ruling clique is the extreme section of the big compradors and big landlords and grabs the lion's share of the wealth of these classes by virtue of its autocratic power.

Marcos conspired with US imperialism to set up the fascist dictatorship in 1972 precisely to attack with unbridled force the rising anti-imperialist movement of the people and to reverse the patriotic decisions of the Supreme Court then on the Quasha and Luzteveco cases. Even before the declaration of Martial Law in 1972, the Marcos ruling clique had pushed investment laws to enable the US to head off the termination of the Parity Agreement and the Laurel-Langley Agreement so as to perpetuate "parity rights" through "national treatment" of foreign investments.

Marcos has led his clique in utilizing his autocratic powers to take over entire lines of big comprador businesses and major enterprises. He and his clique have become the ascendant section of the comprador big bourgeoisie. Within the framework of subservience to US imperialism, this ruling section has become the wealthiest and most reactionary section of the comprador big bourgeoisie.

By engaging in heavy foreign borrowing for nonproductive and nonindustrial purposes and thus having large amounts of funds to manipulate, this fascist elite has rapidly become the Number One financial and trading agent of the US and other transnational corporations. Among the big compradors, the crony corporations have benefited the most from state loans and loan guarantees for the importation of goods for immediate consumption and consumption-oriented infrastructure, energy, tourism and similar programs.

The crony corporations or groups of companies headed by the Benedictos, Disinis, Silverios, Cuencas, Cojuangcos, Romualdezes, Tans, Dees and other Filipino and Kuomintang dummies are essentially big comprador entities acting as agents of the US and other multinational firms. They engage in a dizzying variety of businesses, but none of these are in heavy and basic industries.

Their businesses include banks, investment houses, insurance, trading, agricultural mills, construction, real estate, hotels, mining, logging, plantations, import-dependent light manufacturing, garments, electronics, car assembly, fertilizers, shipping, electricity, telephone, mass media, gambling joints (jai-alai and casinos) and so on. The edge of the cronies over their big comprador competitors is provided by the power of the autocratic overlord.

All kinds of tricks of bureaucrat capitalism at its worst have been used in favor of the new oligarchy. Loans and loan guarantees have been made with little or no loan collateral. Secret decrees and informal orders have been made to grant special privileges. Special levies are imposed on the people only to be treated as private funds. Customers of utility firms are required to buy shares and pay ever-increasing special charges. Permanent private toll gates are allowed. Goods are monopolized and overpriced and then the people are told that they enjoy "subsidized" or "socialized" prices.

Such belated token industrial projects as the copper smelter and the coco-chemical plant (after seventeen years of Marcos rule) do not change the anti-industrial character of the fascist big compradors. These projects are mere tokens

and have been undermined from the beginning by bureaucratic corruption and by the control exercised by foreign lenders and investors. The tokenism involved in these projects is no different from that in the bogus land reform.

Economic and financial policies and activities in the country are more than ever dictated by imperialist banks and the US multinational corporations. Marcos is now prohibited from even pretending to be for industrialization. He is told to concentrate on "rural development" and to further press down the national bourgeoisie and the entire people through increased taxation, devaluation, import liberalization, inflation and so on.

Aside from having become the biggest compradors in the country, the fascists have become the biggest landlords. They have accumulated huge estates and mills for sugarcane, coconut, bananas, rice, corn and other major agricultural products for export. They have used the banks to take over the land of landlords out of power and even that of owner-cultivators. They have used various pretexts — such as agro-industrial estates, export processing zones, tree farming, counterinsurgency, pasture leases, — to grab lands from poor settlers and minority communities.

As the economic crisis is worsening at home and abroad and getting foreign loans is becoming more difficult and onerous, many of the crony corporations have collapsed and state and financial institutions are made to answer for the huge unpaid loans of these bankrupt firms. Have the fascists incurred private losses in the process? No! To make their pyramids of bubbles, they have gotten loans with little or no collateral, have overpriced the goods and services paid for by the firms and have engaged in sheer "creative accounting."

The fascists have contributed nothing to Philippine industrialization. Instead, they have aggravated the underdevelopment of the economy. They have mortgaged the country away and auctioned it off. Together with the imperialists, they have plundered it and brought out tremendous amounts of social wealth. The top fascists stash their loot abroad in the form of secret bank accounts, choice real estate, blue-chip stocks, trust funds, gold bullions, jewelry and art collections.

Is there any chance that the fascist gang of big comprador-landlords would take the bourgeois Patriotic alternative? There is no indication that they will change their character. Sometimes Marcos pretends to complain of "politically

unpalatable" economic dictates from his imperialist master. But he does so only to raise his standing as a puppet. He has been consistent in assuring US imperialism that he will go on serving US interests and repressing the people.

There have been instances in semifeudal countries when some bureaucrat capitalists swung from a big comprador to a bourgeois Patriotic posture. But so far, Marcos has not shown any desire or ability to do so. Time is running fast against him. The political and economic crisis is worsening so fast that he will soon be consigned to the place where he is awaited by Chiang Kaishek, Ngo Dinh Diem, Lon Nol, the Shah of Iran and Somoza.

The Lavaites have become so degenerate in their collaboration with the fascists that they arbitrarily separate Marcos from US imperialism and misrepresent him as national bourgeois. They therefore get entangled in the most confused and self-contradictory statements and claims.

In a vain attempt to further confuse the people, the Lavaites claim that the revolutionaries are attacking Marcos exclusively. They have been saying this since the late 1960s. They must be literally deaf and blind; or they must be so self-deluded that they can ignore the identification of the US-Marcos combine as the enemy as well as the promotion of the national democratic line against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

12. Will you discuss the economic crisis in the Philippines? Are the forces of production outgrowing the semifeudal relations? How is the class struggle developing in the mode of production as well as in the superstructure? Bring the discussion to the prospects of revolutionary change?

The semifeudal mode of production in the Philippines is in constant or chronic crisis. It carries over from the 19th century the crisis of an overripe feudalism, which was not solved by the old democratic revolution because of US imperialist intervention and conquest.

US imperialism seemed to be breaking feudalism up during the first decade of the century as the friar estates were purchased, public lands were opened for settlement and the 1903 census showed that the tenancy rate plummeted from its 19th century peak to only 18 percent. But the friar estates eventually came under the ownership of landlords and not of peasants. Also, the settlers were always overtaken by the landlords. From decade to decade, the tenancy rate rose.

US monopoly capitalism has retained and superimposed itself on feudalism, smashing local handicrafts and hindering the development of comprehensive local manufacturing. It has subordinated feudalism to the unequal exchange of manufacture imports and raw-material exports which have made the comprador big bourgeoisie more dominant than the landlord class in the resultant semifeudal economy.

This mode of production is afflicted protractedly not only with the old unresolved crisis of feudalism but also with that of the world capitalist system, particularly imperialism which is moribund capitalism and which is ever in crisis. The Filipino people, especially the workers and the peasants, constantly strain under the yoke of foreign and feudal exploitation.

The chronic economic crisis has been plunging from one level to another due to internal and external factors. The forces of production have been growing in a lopsided manner. And the foreign monopoly firms together with the local exploiting classes have been robbing the toiling masses of the surplus products and keeping them at worsening levels of subsistence and impoverishment.

The rate of agricultural land expansion has exceeded the rate of population growth from decade to decade, mainly because of spontaneous peasant resettlement and opening of new land. But the rate of land accumulation by landlords has run faster. Now, the frontier areas have practically become closed to further resettlement. Peasant settlers and even minority nationalities are being deprived of their homesteads and ancestral lands.

In old and new settlements, the peasants are being proletarianized (dispossessed of land and tools) and yet there is no industrialization to absorb this growing surplus labor. Too many people are competing for seasonal farm work and they are spilling over into the cities to compete for odd jobs. Unemployment is rampant.

The land problem has become more acute than ever before. Thus, the agrarian revolution of the peasants and farm workers against the landlord class is breaking out on a national scale. Going along in the strength of the armed peasant army and other people's organizations, the current general campaign for rent reduction and elimination of usury is bound to rise to the level of land confiscation from the landlords and free distribution of land to the tillers.

Feudalism is still the main socioeconomic problem. It involves the vast peasant majority of the people. The largest amount of surplus product is drawn from this class and is divided among the exploiters. Together with foreign monopoly capitalists, feudalism must be done away with in order to liberate the forces of production in the country.

By way of "industrial development," US imperialism has promoted agricultural milling, extractive enterprises, slight processing of local raw-materials, the import-dependent "import-substitution" manufacturing for domestic consumption of the 1950s and more recently the far more import-dependent "export-oriented manufacturing" for reexport and domestic market penetration.

Actually, financial resources have flowed mostly and in a rapid manner into construction, utilities, transport and communications, tourist facilities, the military, the least useful parts of the bureaucracy and so on. All these have high import requirements and have drawn away resources from the genuine development of the country's productive capacity.

As the US imperialist and the regime prate about "export-oriented development," the Philippine economy has moved further away from industrialization and has become more dependent on the unequal exchange of raw-material exports and manufactured imports. The proportion of industrial employment, especially manufacturing, to total employment has gone down.

The problem of unemployment and underemployment has become very severe in both rural and urban areas. Unemployment has kept on rising above the chronic rate of 25 percent. The export of cheap skilled and unskilled labor and the emigration of professionals and highly trained technicians are a manifestation of the inability of the economy to absorb the growing manpower.

The foreign debt has increased by leaps and bounds to support nonproductive projects and activities, to cover the rapidly widening trade deficits and the servicing of accumulated foreign debts. This debt is being used to tighten the stranglehold of imperialist banks and firms on the Philippine economy.

The Philippines is now being required to extend more privileges to foreign investors against long-standing nationality requirements, further liberalize imports, make drastic devaluation of the peso, increase the tax burden of the people, etc.

For the multinational firms to expand their ownership of enterprises, they do not have to make new investments. They can choose to simply convert the foreign loans and supplies that cannot be paid by local businessmen into takeover equity.

The imperialist scheme of things is however, self-contradictory and self-defeating. The US and other transnational corporations want to perpetuate the Philippines as a source of cheap raw materials, a market for their manufactures and a field of direct and indirect investments for nonindustrial purposes. They keep on extracting superprofits. Their plunder goads the people to rebel.

The worsening of foreign and feudal exploitation is such that it now tightly squeezes not only the toiling masses and peasants but also, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie and goads them all to rise up. Even among the big compradors and landlords, there is a sharpening conflict as the clique in power seeks to grab all economic and financial advantages.

The struggle between the exploiting and exploited classes within the mode of production is reflected and concentrated in the superstructure. The state is used by the ruling class, or specifically the ruling clique, to oppress the people and enforce the continuance of their economic exploitation. In turn, the people have stood up to fight for their rights and interests.

As the most progressive force, the working class builds its revolutionary party, a people's army based among the peasants and a united front that embraces all patriotic and progressive classes, including the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie.

The revolutionary party of the proletariat applies the universal theory of Marxism-Leninism on concrete Philippine conditions and seeks to lead and unite with the entire people. The program of national democratic revolution is laid down and carried out to rid the country of foreign and feudal domination.

The class struggle is undertaken not only in the economic sphere at the base of the Philippine semifeudal society but also in the political and cultural spheres of the superstructure. It is in the political sphere that the most decisive battles are fought. As the ruling class employs armed counterrevolution to preserve the relations of production, the working class, the peasants and the rest of the people wage armed revolution to destroy the existing relations of production and liberate the forces of production.

It is when US imperialism escalates intervention and launches aggression that the national character of the struggle appears to submerge the class character of the struggle. But the two are inseparable. Even when the national struggle is more prominent, the class struggle underlies it.

In the national democratic revolution, the aspect of national liberation is waged against US imperialism; and the aspect of democracy is waged against the fascist dictatorship and feudalism. Agrarian revolution is the most effective means of achieving democracy and mobilizing the strongest popular force to defeat US imperialism and fascist dictatorship.

New Situation and New Tasks

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New situation

As a result of the combination of military revolt and people's uprising, the fascist dictatorship of Marcos has been overthrown. It was the people's uprising more than the military revolt that proved decisive in overthrowing the autocrat Marcos. The people's uprising was the culmination of the protracted struggle of the people to rid the country of the Marcos dictatorship. While the dictatorship has been done away with, there is still work to do in order to complete the process of dismantling the structures of fascist dictatorship and restoring democratic rights. Two months after Mrs. Aquino ordered the release of all political prisoners, hundreds of people who were imprisoned by Marcos for opposing his regime are still languishing in prison.

There is the urgent need to carry forward the anti-imperialist and antifeudal aspects of the national democratic movement. The fascist dictatorship of Marcos was the outgrowth of such evils as imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

The threat of a fascist comeback comes from three sources. The Marcos forces are still around, waiting for the right moment to make a comeback. They possess tremendous political, financial and military assets to mobilize against the Aquino

regime. There are Marcos loyalists within the armed forces.

Next, a militarist clique is likely to grab power in case of serious failures by the Aquino regime. Lastly, the Aquino regime itself might be tempted to retrogress towards fascism in order to cover up serious failures. The US continues to push hard an anticommunist crusade and the intensification of military campaigns of suppression against the revolutionary forces and the people. This kind of US pressure can induce the reemergence of fascist dictatorship.

The new regime is a combination of small parties, principally UNIDO, PDP-Laban and the Liberal Party. These parties have competing, if not conflicting, interests which are liable to become conspicuous with regard to appointments, the making of a new constitution, and the forthcoming local elections. Each party wants to maintain its own political and organizational integrity and enlarge its clout.

Each party is non-homogeneous in terms of the class character of its leaders and members. There are reactionaries from the upper classes as well as nationalistic and liberal democrats from the middle social strata within each party. Driven to oppose the US-Marcos regime for a long period of time, many leaders and members of the erstwhile opposition parties have learned to take a nationalist and liberal stand on issues.

For it to remain in power and achieve success in promoting the national and democratic interests of the people, the Aquino regime must continue to rely on people's power to be able to gain strength not only to dismantle the remaining structures of the Marcos dictatorship but also to combat US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. It is people's power that accounts for the democratic tendency of the Aquino regime at the moment.

The people's power which has been capable of overthrowing the fascist dictatorship must be raised to the level of being able to confront and defeat the foreign and feudal oppressors and exploiters of the people.

The economic and political crisis of the ruling system will continue to deepen unless the basic problems of US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism are resolved. There has been no social revolution; the joint class dictatorship of the comprador big bourgeoisie and landlord class continues.

No amount of US financial assistance can shore up the new regime against the

ever worsening crisis so long as the ruling system remains. The factional strife among factions of the ruling class has become more two-sided and fiercer unlike during the Marcos dictatorship. This is shown by the fact that the Marcos forces now are far stronger than those who are now in power when they were in opposition to Marcos.

The semicolonial and semifeudal system is a dying system; it is characteristic for all systems on the decline to become more and more oppressive and exploitative. Wisdom demands that the Aquino regime continue to attract the strongest possible support through the broadest possible united front for it to achieve success against the dying yet deadly forces that oppress and exploit the Filipino people.

New tasks

We must push forward the anti-imperialist and antifeudal demands of the people even as we encourage the democratic tendency of the Aquino government and push it to complete the process of dismantling the structures of fascist dictatorship. In this regard, we must ensure that the objectives set by the Aquino government for itself as contained in Proclamation No. 3 are implemented.

We must avail of civil liberties to eliminate the vestiges of the Marcos fascist dictatorship and give justice to the victims of fascist oppression.

Among the more pressing and immediate demands that we must make are the stop to militarization, the dismantling of the CHEF units, the recall of regular troops to the barracks and the return of the control of the police to mayors or civilians in charge. We must demand the reorientation and reorganization of the Armed Forces of the Philippines along a patriotic, democratic and pro-people orientation.

We must end the dependence of the military on US dictates and supplies. Military expenditures must be reduced so that what is saved can be channeled to economic development and essential public services.

The Bill of Rights which the Aquino government promises to uphold should be upheld in favor of the working class, peasantry, the national minorities, the middle social strata and the rest of the people. All issuances of the dictator Marcos which oppress the people must be repealed. All violators of human rights must be arrested, tried and punished.

We must work for a truly new democratic constitution which upholds the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Philippines. It must declare among others that no foreign military bases are to be allowed in the country.

We must make sure that there is a pluralistic political system; and that a multiparty system accommodating parties of the toiling masses and the middle social strata must replace the two-party system of the exploiting classes.

A party that enjoys the support of the toiling masses and the middle social strata and that takes the line of completing the struggle for national freedom and democracy will soon be established. It would be a wise policy for the regime to seek and gain the support of this party.

We must demand that ministers and other officials in charge of the economy should fight and work for national industrialization and genuine land reform. Otherwise, they should be replaced by officials who would fight for these.

At present, key positions such as the ministers of national defense and finance in the Aquino government are held by US-oriented representatives of the upper classes although there are also ministers who come from the middle social strata who stand for liberal democracy and are not yet corrupted by the evil of bureaucrat capitalism. If it so desires, the Aquino government can improve its character and expand its popular base by reconstituting itself and taking into major positions of responsibility more representatives of the toiling masses and the middle social strata.

There is no way to get out of the agrarian and semifeudal backwardness, poverty, unemployment and misery except through national industrialization and genuine land reform.

We must reject the ceaseless exploitation of the people by the foreign transnational corporations and by the domestic big compradors and landlords. We must reject US policy dictates through the IMF and World Bank such as the bias for agriculture without the benefit of land reform, anti-industrialization, import liberalization, wage restriction, higher tax burden, debt servicing and so on.

Foreign loans which have been illegally contracted and which have not been beneficial to the economy and the people must be repudiated. Better terms of credit should be worked out with the foreign creditors. If any further borrowing

is to be made, it should not merely sink the country deeper into the debt trap but should supplement domestic savings in building up the productive capacity of the economy.

Economic relations with the Third World, socialist and lesser capitalist countries must be expanded in order to counter and dilute US economic dominance in the country. Counter trade must be utilized in order to revive depressed exports and bring in productive equipment and other essential imports.

If certain properties are best sold to the private sector, these must preferably be sold to the employees who shall pay for their shares on an instalment basis and not with a portion of their wage income but with the yearly income of such shares.

The Aquino regime has assumed heavy burdens of responsibility and has aroused high expectations from itself in the people. The Aquino government will either try to solve the fundamental problems of the people with the cooperation of the revolutionary movement or if it fails to do so, concede all initiative to the revolutionary movement.

Contending Political Forces

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The fascist dictatorship of Marcos, which used to be the principal instrument of foreign and feudal domination, has been overthrown. But the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system remains. The principal contending political forces in the Philippines are still US imperialism and the local reactionary classes of big compradors and landlords on one side and the people composed of the working class, peasantry, urban petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie on the other side.

There has been no social revolution. There has been no radical transformation of the socioeconomic foundation. There has been no change in the class character of the state. The joint class dictatorship of the comprador big bourgeoisie and landlord class continues. The bureaucratic and military machinery of the state remains intact.

The fascist dictatorship fell as the result of the combination of military revolt and people's uprising. Marcos had to go because he lost the support of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. But more decisively, the people's uprising protected and supported the military revolt. The people's uprising was the culmination of the protracted struggle of the people to rid the country of the Marcos dictatorship.

So far, the Armed Forces of the Philippines has bowed to the sovereign will of the people, civilian supremacy and to Corazon C. Aquino as president and commander-in-chief. It might be said in clear terms that there has been a

successful political revolution within the ruling system, specifically against the Marcos autocracy, if the term revolution must be used. But underlying this is a semi-coup which has so far been restrained and prevailed upon by people's power.

It is valid to state that the fascist faction has been replaced by the antifascist faction of the same ruling classes. But this antifascist faction is buoyed up by people's power of a certain quality and capability sufficient to overthrow the Marcos autocracy.

This people's power has a momentum which carries the Aquino presidency in dismantling the structure of the fascist dictatorship and in restoring formal democratic rights. It accounts for the rise to power of Mrs. Aquino and for the democratic tendency of her regime at the moment. Although certain key positions in the Aquino cabinet are held by pro-US reactionary elements, there are also nationalists and liberal democrats holding important positions in the same cabinet.

So grave are the problems confronting this regime that these do not simply proceed from the peculiar devilry of Mr. Marcos but essentially from the oppressive and exploitative character of the ruling system. The more this system declines and dies, the more it becomes oppressive and exploitative.

The fascist dictatorship of Marcos was the outgrowth of such evils as US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. If these evils are not eradicated, fascism is likely to reemerge.

The Aquino regime is threatened first of all by the stay behind forces and comeback potential of the Marcos faction. Next, a military clique is likely to grab power in case of serious failures by the Aquino regime. Lastly, the Aquino regime might retrogress towards fascism in order to cover up serious failures.

The US appears to give way to the current democratic tendency of the Aquino regime. But at the same time, the US does not cease to push hard an anticommunist crusade and the intensification of military campaigns of suppression against the revolutionary forces and the people. This kind of US pressure can induce the reemergence of fascist dictatorship.

To remain in power and achieve success in promoting the national and democratic interests of the people, the Aquino regime must continue to rely on

people's power and allow this to gain strength not only for dismantling the remaining structures of the Marcos dictatorship but also for combating US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

The people's power which has been capable of overthrowing the fascist dictatorship must be raised to the level of being able to confront and defeat the foreign and feudal oppressors and exploiters of the people.

There are those who claim that the revolutionary movement of the toiling masses and the middle social strata have been set back by the relatively peaceful ascendance of the Aquino-Laurel tandem to power. There is a lot of wishful thinking in this regard.

Just as the ruling system and the Armed Forces of the Philippines remain intact, so do the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army and the National Democratic Front. The availability of civil rights is helpful to the growth of the legal forces of the national democratic movement. The people can voice out and raise their demands more strongly than ever before.

The ruling system continues to be wracked by an ever worsening political and economic crisis. Failure to solve this crisis is disastrous to the new regime. After the euphoria over the downfall of Marcos, everyone can recognize how heavy is the burden of responsibility assumed by the new regime and how high are the expectations of the people.

The US can never give enough financial and military assistance to shore up the regime so long as the ruling system remains. The Catholic Church has proven in the EDSA happening that it has considerable political clout in rousing its flock to help bring down the fascist dictatorship. But there are many religious leaders and lay people who will oppose the use of the church for pro-imperialist and reactionary ends.

The seemingly monolithic giant that was the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan has practically collapsed. But the new regime is actually a combination of small parties, principally the Unido, PDP-Laban and the Liberal Party. These parties have competing, if not conflicting, interests which are liable to become conspicuous with regard to appointments, the making of a new constitution, and the forthcoming elections. Each party wants to maintain its own political and organizational integrity and enlarge its own clout.

The Unido is the biggest and most conservative among the pro-Aquino parties. But the PDP-Laban seems to get the most blessings from the Aquino family and is positioned to enlarge itself rapidly. The Liberal Party is seeking to strengthen itself by carrying on a vigorous crusade for good government. Each party is non-homogeneous in terms of the class character of its leaders and members. There are reactionaries from the upper classes as well as nationalists and liberal democrats from the middle social strata within each party. Driven to oppose the US-Marcos regime for a long period of time, many leaders and members of the erstwhile opposition parties have learned to take a patriotic and liberal stand on issues.

The new regime or the new president still needs to take full command and control of the Armed Forces of the Philippines before the threat of a fascist comeback becomes more serious. The Enrile-Ramos group is on top of the heap in the AFP. It will tend to be more autonomous the more it becomes uncomfortable with the erstwhile opposition.

The Marcos forces still have tremendous political, financial and military assets to mobilize against the Aquino regime. They are far stronger than those who now are in power were in the long period that they were in the opposition. The ailing Marcos may no longer be able to make a comeback but his relatives and cronies are in a position to make trouble for the Aquino government.

To remain in power and act effectively, the Aquino regime must continue to rely on the broadest possible mass support. It must not limit itself to having the support of the Unido and Laban ng Bayan. It must seek and gain the support of BAYAN by pursuing anti-imperialist and antifeudal objectives.

There are moves to establish as soon as possible a party that enjoys the support of the toiling masses and the middle social strata. This party will be much larger and more potent than any party in the present alliance supporting the regime. It would be a wise policy of the regime to seek and gain the support of this party together with BAYAN.

As time passes, the Aquino regime cannot afford to lose the support of parties and organizations that take the line of completing the struggle for national freedom and democracy. Questions of national sovereignty and peasant emancipation are bound to be pressed hard on the regime.

Wisdom demands that the Aquino regime continue to attract the strongest possible popular support through the broadest possible united front if it is to succeed against the dying yet deadly forces which oppress and exploit the Filipino people.

The legal democratic movement and the armed revolutionary movement can be expected to intensify if the Aquino regime fails to solve the fundamental problems of the people, the forces of fascism try to make a comeback and the regime itself is troubled by rifts.

Semifeudalism in the Philippines: Myth or Reality?

Lecture delivered at a forum sponsored by REAPS

(Rural Enlightenment and Accretion in Philippine Society),

**a peasant service institution for agricultural and rural development, on
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I would like to show first the historical sequence of feudalism in the Philippines. Then I shall focus on the level of development of the productive forces and the dominant class in economic relations under semifeudalism.

In the 15th century, capitalism at the manufacturing stage had become a dominant force in Spain. Subsequently this would become the driving force behind Spanish mercantilism and colonialism.

At the beginning of Spanish colonial rule, most of the people in the Philippines lived in riverine and maritime societies which were in the main characterized by elements of both slavery of the patriarchal type and prefeudal serfdom.

The irrigated riceland and metal implements were privately owned by the slave owners and freemen. Not only was there wet rice agriculture but the people also engaged in handicrafts. There were no megalithic structures but boat building was developed to the point that trade and war ships of the caracoa type were commonplace. Each of these could accommodate as many as fifty to one hundred passengers.

In more than 300 years of colonial rule, starting with the imposition of such a feudal-military device as the encomienda system, Spain was able to push the development of a feudal economic system in the Philippines.

Upon the waning of the Manila-Acapulco galleon trade and the rise of industrial capitalism in Europe from the latter part of the 18th century onward, Spain pushed agricultural production for export in its Philippine colony. This had the effect of encouraging the rapid expansion of landed estates owned by the friars and the natives and mestizos.

The growth of feudalism peaked in the 19th century under the stimulus of foreign trade with the industrial capitalist countries. Just as feudalism matured, the commodity system grew markedly and the natural economy of self-sufficiency began to erode.

For several centuries, Spain had been a major contributor to the primitive accumulation of capital in Europe through colonialism but failed to advance from the manufacturing stage to the industrial stage of capitalism.

Because of the stagnation of Spain, the colonialists tended to intensify economic plunder, that is, extracting wealth without so much investment in the colony. Ever increasing colonial taxation, the rapid expansion of landed estates and arbitrary hiking of land rent by the friars resulted in social unrest and finally in the Philippine Revolution of 1896, which ended old-style colonialism in 1898.

But the intervention of the United States and its conquest of the Philippines meant the retention of feudalism. The US did not carry out land reform against the Filipino landlords although it expropriated most of the friar estates. These were meant to be redistributed to the peasants but would eventually fall into the hands of Filipino landlords.

Worse, the Filipino people came directly under the sway of US monopoly capitalism. They thus fell under two extremely exploitative systems: foreign imperialism and domestic feudalism that have given rise to what may be called semifeudalism. The Philippine economy in the 20th century is now more tightly in the orbit of the world capitalist system but remains basically an agrarian, preindustrial and semifeudal appendage of the capitalist countries, especially the US.

The commodity system has prevailed in the Philippines. But the kind of commodities produced by the economic system is merely raw material for the industries of capitalist countries. This includes agricultural and extractive commodities.

Departing from the old colonial style of outright plunder, the US has drawn from its surplus capital and brought investments into the Philippines to promote as never before a pattern of trade based on unequal exchange of Philippine raw materials and foreign finished products. When deficits occur in the unequal exchange, the Philippines incurs more foreign loans to cover these.

The foreign monopolies get superprofits on their direct investments and high interest rates on their indirect investments or loans.

Under the weight of US imperialism, the Philippines is extremely dependent on agriculture and lacks the fundamentals of a modern industrial economy such as productive enterprises in basic metals, basic chemicals, capital goods and the like. Definitely, ours is not an industrial capitalist economy.

What is referred to as the industrial sector of the Philippine economy consists of some light manufacturing, construction, public utility and mining enterprises which are dependent on imported equipment and raw materials paid for by the foreign exchange earnings of raw material exports plus foreign loans.

The health of the semifeudal economy is made or unmade by the state of production and export of raw-material products, mainly industrial. The prolonged depression of such exports as sugar and coconut is wreaking havoc on the Philippine economy.

It is not true that so-called industries, whether called import-substitution or export-oriented, have drawn the Philippines away from the well-entrenched basic pattern of exchanging raw materials for manufactured imports. These floating industries involve fringe processing and are usually put up to circumvent tariff walls and create the illusion of economic progress.

Under the present circumstances, when the crisis of the world capitalist system and the domestic semifeudal system is extreme, the reality of the latter is completely exposed.

In a feudal society, the landlord class is the dominant class. In a semifeudal society, the comprador big bourgeoisie is the dominant class and the landlord class runs second. However, the big compradors are often big landlords. Thus we often speak of the big comprador landlord class as the dominant class in the Philippines.

The comprador big bourgeoisie is the chief intermediary between US imperialism and domestic feudalism. It is the domestic force dominant in the service sector of the economy. It is the chief trading and financial agent of US imperialism.

Under US imperialism in the 20th century, the Filipino comprador big bourgeoisie has grown to become the dominant class in Philippine society. The growth of an industrial national bourgeoisie has been restricted by US imperialism and such local exploiting classes as the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class.

In a semifeudal society such as that of the Philippines, the comprador big bourgeoisie perpetuates on behalf of US imperialism the unequal exchange of raw material exports and manufactured imports.

In combination with US monopoly capitalism, the comprador big bourgeoisie prevents national industrialization, retains the agrarian character of the economy, owns plantations for export crops and allows the continuance of feudalism.

The most important feature of the semifeudal economy is the dominance of the comprador big bourgeoisie over all other economic classes. It is the class with the most concentrated capital that determines the pattern of economic production and distribution in the country.

I hope that with my explanation you can see more clearly that semifeudalism is a reality and not a myth. And I consider the term semifeudalism more accurate than any other in referring to the Philippine economy because it is closest to the fact that the Philippine productive system is basically agrarian and that Philippine agriculture is dominated by landlords.

Open Forum

Do you believe that President Aquino will actively pursue agrarian reform in our country?

I have been saying that Mrs. Aquino should, and she can pursue land reform if she wishes to, especially if she wishes to solve the two fundamental problems that brought about the Marcos fascist dictatorship. US imperialism, of course, and domestic feudalism had come to the point of killing the entire ruling system, and the system, in desperation, put forth fascist dictatorship for some time. Mr.

Marcos has been removed from power but the basic problems that I have referred to remain unsolved.

The danger of fascist dictatorship reemerging is still there, and if we really want democracy to prosper in this country, we must solve the main problem that pertains to land. Whether we are Marxist or liberal democrat, we must recognize that in the classic advance of modern democracy, land reform has to be carried out together with the promotion of national industrial capital.

Apparently the Cabinet of President Aquino is partly composed of landlords. How do we then expect President Aquino's administration to pursue a genuine land reform program?

It is true that some Cabinet ministers holding key positions have a pro-imperialist and prolandlord mentality. But the most progressive guarantee that we can get from within the Aquino Cabinet would be what we call the liberal democratic mind which is capable of appreciating genuine land reform.

The class basis of the liberal democratic mentality is middle class, and it does not have close links with the landlord class. The middle class would rather have the development of national industrial capital than retain landlordism. Even if the more conservative liberal democrats would have some misgivings about socialism, I think the progressive liberal democrats are not afraid even of that.

You see, land reform involves some amount of going against established norms of private ownership. The national bourgeoisie which is interested in national industrialization can see the wisdom of genuine land reform, but at the same time they fear that land reform involving expropriation would tend to impugn the right to private ownership of the means of production, including industrial means of production. I think the bourgeoisie would be the most conservative of the forces on the side of the people. But as regards the urban petty bourgeois, especially the intellectuals, they are willing to have genuine land reform. They know that they have their independent means, many of them are professionals, so there is really no need for them to own extensive areas of land.

How will you assess the present social condition and economic level of the Bangsa Moro, considering that you have not mentioned any Moro landlord or comprador bourgeois?

I think that if we have to generalize, we would tend to overlook the fact that

there are Moro landlords. I think that the Moro people are in such a bad situation now because Moro landlords have been cooperating with the Manila-based chauvinist government in suppressing the Moro nation. I do not think that the oppression and exploitation of the Moro people would have been possible without the cooperation of Moro landlords acting as puppets. But certainly, you are aware that if you generalize on the situation in Morolandia, the number one demand is still national self-determination, and then, following that, you take up the question of democracy.

One complaint I have heard about the programs of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and other Moro organizations is that there is an obscuring of the land problem. Of course it is true when they claim that it is the Manila-based government that permits the landgrabbers to take over the lands of the Moros, but it is yet unclear in the programs of Moro organizations that there has to be land reform not only against the landholdings of landgrabbers from the Visayas and Luzon but also against the long-standing phenomenon of Moro landlords. When you delve into the MNLF program, for instance, you get the feeling that it is only now that the Philippine Revolution of 1896 is being fought. You would see that theirs is the program of petty-bourgeois radicals or was the program of the revolutionary ilustrados of 1896.

You see, there was one weakness in the program of the Philippine Revolution of 1896. The Filipino revolutionaries of 1896 were very clear regarding their antifeudal stance against the friar estates, but they kept silent with regard to the native and mestizo landlords. And when the revolution moved out from the areas of the friar estates, patriotic landlords or members of the enlightened gentry were even able to get into positions of leadership in the revolution, and so the more reason was there not to totally face the problem of landlordism. And the Philippine Revolution failed when superior US military power was geared to put down the people's armed resistance. The peasants were not motivated enough to conduct a protracted armed resistance against the new colonial power — US imperialism. The peasants were swept into the Philippine Revolution by a patriotic force, but the leadership did not provide a clear program or a clear set of ideas regarding the problem of land, and so the peasants had no steady inspiration for pursuing the armed resistance against the US aggressors.

How do you view the stand of those who say that the Philippine society is dependent capitalist, that is, semicapitalist, or on the way to eroding feudalism and semifeudalism?

There are many ways of calling the Philippine economy. You can call it “free-enterprise economy,” if you want to stress the fact that it is a free-market type of economy. Bourgeois economists use that term very often, and these are economists who really have a superficial understanding of the nature of the Philippine productive and distributive system. Now if you wish to be less clear about the productive system in the Philippines, then you can use “dependent capitalism” and you would still be closer to the reality of the Philippine economy than those who claim it to be simply “free enterprise,” under US monopoly capitalism, of course. What is misleading, though, about describing the Philippines as a “capitalist” country is that under present circumstances, you could be implying that it is already an industrial capitalist country. Now what saves the term “capitalism” when you use it in the phrase “dependent capitalism” is that you qualify it with the adjective “dependent.” But the problem with the term “dependent capitalism,” especially as interpreted to mean an industrial productive system such as that of the US, is that it misrepresents the economic system peculiar to the dominant power as already being the specific character of the dependent Philippine economy.

During the time of Marcos when he was borrowing huge sums from abroad, he was putting up a lot of buildings that tended to impress the people. Actually he was wasting precious resources in putting up those buildings that are not fully occupied or hardly operational, if at all, at present. I’m speaking only of the construction of buildings. What about the roads and bridges? Let’s take the San Juanico Bridge, for instance. Do you think that the hundreds of billions of pesos put into that bridge will ever be recouped? What else did we see under the Marcos regime? What seemed to confuse some would be those which were called export-oriented industries. Garments and electronics were the perfect examples, and you know, the impression was created that the Philippines was already exporting manufactured surpluses. Marcos’ technocrats were making it appear that the Philippines already had an industrial economy. And there was the claim that the Philippines was no longer dependent on such export crops as sugar, coconut and copper concentrates.

Let us focus on garment manufacture. Considerable quantities of the cloth and the frills that you may put on the cloth, the yarns that you use, come from abroad. And if it was said that we needed high technology so we would have this export-oriented industry called garment manufacturing — well, the grandmother of my grandmother could already sew things together, with no high technology involved but only some equipment. What about electronics? The core processes

are done abroad and all that we do is just to put those components, which are already practically finished, together. And then, of course we know that the world market for garments and electronics has become depressed. In other countries, these are called the gypsy industries. The capitalists pull these out of our country when they don't like the labor policies, when they can no longer get cheap labor and when they lose the market for their products because of crisis. And the Philippines is left with an export-processing zone in Bataan or in Cebu practically empty.

If we were to view the whole Philippine society, it is semifeudal. There is no question about that. But if we were to look at the rice industry itself, specifically the different forces that are involved in the industry, it would appear that over the years the landlords have been replaced or displaced by the capitalists as represented by traders, mostly Chinese, and by rural bank agents. Therefore can we say that in the rice industry, the situation is capitalist more than semifeudal?

What is precise about the term “semifeudal” is that it stresses the connection of the dominant comprador big bourgeoisie to the domestic productive system. The comprador big bourgeoisie is commercially connected to landlordism. It is merely connected with the foreign productive system of monopoly capitalism commercially.

In the 19th century there were already big compradors in the country, but they were alien. You know, Intramuros was a commercial city. There were the Spanish compradors and there were the Chinese, too, with the latter occupying the second rank. In the 20th century, however, many of these alien big compradors became integrated into the economic body as Filipinized elements. There came about a drastically enlarged space for the expansion of the comprador big bourgeoisie, and up to now it occupies the most dominant position in Philippine economy.

Actually “semifeudal” is a gray term — there is the element of departing from strict feudalism, but there's still the connection. There's still a rope, so to speak, connecting these apparently bourgeois phenomena — the use, for example, of imported or modern inputs — to the more fundamental fact of feudalism. Feudalism is anchored on the private ownership of land by the exploiting class, the landlord class. That is the most basic element to start with.

Maybe we can elaborate more in theory. The rich peasant class is called the rural

bourgeoisie. But it is not a bourgeoisie that goes all the way up to the higher levels of the bourgeoisie, because there are limits to the rich peasants' use of capital. The rich peasant may be able to accumulate a great deal of surplus, in excess of his subsistence needs, not only from his land but also from usury operations. Usually, in the countryside it is the rich peasants who have the initiative in usury operations. But do you think that a rich peasant will invest the surplus that he accumulates in, let's say, putting up some industries? Do you think that the rich peasants would come together and form a corporation, let's say an industrial plant? The first thing that a rich peasant would do is to buy a rice mill or a threshing machine, or increase his stocks of fertilizers and pesticides and engage in trading operations. But most members of the rural bourgeoisie would have no wish of helping or directly participating in industrialization. You know what else a rich peasant will do? He will keep on buying land. If, let us say, he has earned so much and gone beyond the need of acquiring more modern implements and more inputs and putting his children to college, he will become a landlord.

There is another point that I would like to make clear. The surplus capital in this country that may be accumulated by certain classes is not converted into industrial capital. Also the surplus labor that arises is not converted into surplus capital. You see, in the capitalist development of the West, peasants are thrown out of the land, but the industries absorb them. Capitalism, let's say at the manufacturing stage during the time of primitive accumulation of capital, absorbed them. Although the displaced tenants were subjected to very harsh conditions, they were absorbed by manufacturing. So surplus labor was converted into industrial capital. But in the Philippines? People are being displaced from the land, and there is now a superabundance of farm workers relative to job opportunities on the land. Well, since there is no industrialization absorbing this excessive number of farm workers, they will be absorbed by the revolutionary movement. And that is precisely what is happening.

How do you propose to handle the problem of multinationals controlling our economy and how do we stop feudalism in the country?

How do we handle that? I think I can mention national industrialization and genuine land reform to do away with foreign and feudal domination. These two things — national industrialization and genuine land reform — are complementary. It's difficult to have national industrialization without land reform. Through genuine land reform, you release a lot of capital for industrial

development. You create a market. Because the peasants have their own piece of land, and the income is already distributed equitably, you are then able to create a self-sufficient economy free from foreign and feudal control.

Without genuine land reform, the surplus product that comes from the land first goes to the landlord who in turn uses this for acquiring those things that are imported luxury items for his pleasure. You know, the old pleasure of the landlord class was to build big stone houses. But now the landlords also buy items of high consumerism offered by the imperialists. So which is the class that next gets a portion of the surplus product from the land? The comprador big bourgeoisie which imports these items desired by the landlord class. Of course, automatically the imperialists make a killing through these importations.

It does not follow that if Philippine society is dependent capitalist, the Philippine struggle takes on a socialist character. The struggle for national sovereignty and democracy will still be primary in the agenda of the Philippine left. Could you comment on this?

Yes, I suppose the general line of the struggle is to complete the fight for national liberation and democracy under the conditions of modern imperialism and proletarian revolution. I suppose that as soon as we complete the national democratic revolution and the class leadership of the proletariat is secured, then we can immediately start the socialist revolution. But first, we must concentrate on dealing with the problem of foreign and feudal domination. If you are going to talk about socialism right away, then you are going to frighten two important strata of the bourgeoisie which remain patriotic and progressive. I'm referring to the urban petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie.

The size of the urban petty bourgeoisie is considerable and their influence is great. Most of us here come from the urban petty bourgeoisie, and if we swing to the Left or to the Right, the trend of events changes. If the urban petty bourgeoisie is not with the workers and peasants, the organized forces of the workers and peasants can easily be isolated. What about the middle bourgeoisie? They are even fewer than the urban petty bourgeois; they could just be a fraction of one percent. But you see, we recognize the validity of their demands and aspirations. And to the extent that they can move ahead economically and politically, US imperialism is actually weakened to the same extent.

Lectures on Philippine Crisis and Revolution

Crisis of the semifeudal economy

Second in a Series of Lectures on Philippine Crisis and Revolution

April 18, 1986

US monopoly capitalism has impacted on the Philippine economy to shape it into a semifeudal one, and put it firmly within the orbit of the world capitalist system. The commodity system has prevailed over the natural economy of self-sufficiency. But domestic feudalism has merely subordinated itself to an external industrial power.

The distinctness of the Philippine mode of production is due mainly to its deepseated prior feudal character in the 19th century, the persistence of feudalism and the evolvement of semifeudal relations that mediate US monopoly capitalism and domestic feudalism.

Let us describe first the current forces and relations of production that comprise the semifeudal mode of production in the Philippines. Then we can discuss the ever worsening economic crisis due to foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism, and bureaucratic corruption.

The productive forces

The forces of production are mainly agrarian and nonindustrial. They are generally of a low level of technology. They are backward or underdeveloped.

Agricultural land totaling 12 million hectares in 1980 is the principal means of production. It produces the food staples for domestic consumption; the

overwhelming bulk of surplus products for export and some amount of raw materials for local processing.

There is negligible use of modern farm technology beyond peasant brawn, hand tools, plow and work animals on lands devoted to rice, corn and coconut, all of which comprise 90.4 percent of total agricultural land. The promotion of costly imported farm inputs and equipment during the 70s affected only a few hundred thousands of hectares. Estimates range from 500,000 to 800,000 hectares.

Even on land devoted to sugarcane, banana, pineapple and other new crops for export, which comprises no more than seven percent of total agricultural land, and where there is relatively more impressive use of tractors and chemicals, reliance on sheer brawn and traditional peasant tools is still widespread. No more than four percent of total agricultural land is worked by tractors and other farm machinery.

Every piece of modern equipment in the agricultural, industrial and service sectors of the economy is imported. It is paid for with foreign exchange earned on raw material exports, mostly agricultural. Deficits incurred in foreign trade are covered by foreign loans and earnings on the export of labor.

Even hand tools are imported to the extent of 85 percent. And of course, the remaining 15 percent are fabricated locally from imported metals. There are no well-established industries which produce from the available local raw material basic metals, basic chemicals, capital goods and the like.

What is passed off as the industrial sector consists of mining and quarrying, construction, utilities and light manufacturing which are all dependent on imported equipment, basically processed materials, semi-processed materials and raw materials, especially fuel.

And of course, the service sector which consists of transport, communications and storage, trading and banking and other services, including government, entertainment and the like, is also dependent on imported equipment.

The people in production

According to NEDA figures, there were nine million peasants and farm workers, accounting for 52 percent of employment; 2.5 million industrial workers, 14 percent; and six million service workers, 34 percent, in 1979, which was a year

of economic growth still bloated by excessive foreign borrowing.

These figures indicate, therefore, that peasants and farm workers comprise 78 percent of the direct producers of goods and industrial workers 22 percent. There are four peasants for every industrial worker.

Most peasants (poor and middle peasants) have the following means of supplementary livelihood: farm work for others, fishing, forestry and animal husbandry, handicrafts, construction or carpentry, hauling and petty peddling. Seasonal farm work is the most common sideline occupation, and is the main recourse for surplus labor in the countryside.

Only 74 percent of industrial workers are in manufacturing; and in turn 70 percent of workers in manufacturing are employed in small fabricating and repair shops, each employing less than ten workers and therefore hardly qualifying as truly manufacturing enterprises.

The figure for employment in the service sector is bloated by decreases of employment in the agricultural and industrial sectors during the 70s. Agricultural employment went down from 59 percent in 1970 to 52 percent in 1979; and industrial employment from 17.6 percent in 1970 to 14 percent in 1979. The employment rate of the real producers of goods has decreased from year to year since 1979.

Only a minority of service workers — possibly not more than 30 percent — are regular wage earners. In the main, these regular wage earners are employed by the government and by the multinational, big comprador and middle bourgeois firms. Most of the so-called service workers are actually underemployed or have no regular employment or are even unemployed but are misrepresented by government statistics as fully employed.

Productive relations

The comprador big bourgeoisie is the dominant class in the relations of production. It determines the semifeudal character of the economy. As the chief trading and financial agent of US monopoly capitalism, it lords over the commodity system and decides the system of production and distribution.

The big compradors own the highest concentration of capital (merchant capital) involved in the unequal exchange of raw-materials exports and manufactured

imports. They amass commercial profits through import-export operations and domestic wholesale; and interest through banks and quasi-banks.

In most or many cases, they are big landlords because their landed estates are their reliable sources of export crops. They also invest heavily in mining and other extractive enterprises; service enterprises other than banking and trading and import-dependent enterprises.

Upon the behest of US monopoly capitalism and in accordance with their own class interest, the comprador big bourgeoisie opposes and prevents the comprehensive industrialization of the Philippines and shares with the landlord class the fear of land reform.

The landlord class remains a distinct class. It now runs second to the comprador big bourgeoisie as the exploiting class. It owns the largest tracts of land and amasses land rent from the tenants. It also engages in other forms of exploitation such as the hiring of farm workers, usury, unfair trading of crops and farm inputs, renting out of farm equipment and animals at excessive rates, and so on.

The landlord class is far more widespread than the comprador big bourgeoisie based in the cities. At the first instance, it collects the largest amount of surplus products in the country, not only from the tenants and farm workers, but from all the peasant masses.

From this surplus product, the landlord class yields to the comprador big bourgeoisie payments for imported goods for high consumption, as well as for the productive needs of agriculture. The foreign monopolies extract their superprofits through the big compradors or through direct subsidiaries.

The landlords own most of the best agricultural land and continue to accumulate land. They take away the surplus product not only from the greatest number of real producers, but also from the course of national industrialization.

The big bureaucrat capitalists are big compradors and big landlords who have stood out as such by using their public offices, privileges issued by the state, state banks and state enterprises to amass private capital and land. In Philippine history, the most outstanding example of bureaucrat capitalism would be that of the fallen Marcos regime.

Using his autocratic power, Marcos was able to manipulate government firms

and projects, foreign loans, export earnings, state funds and privileges to make his family and his cronies the wealthiest and most exploitative clique of big comprador and landlords, surpassing the long-established super-rich like the Roxases, Ayalas, Zobels and Sorianos. The problem now of the fallen Marcos clique is how to retain most of its assets in the face of the Commission of Good Government.

National entrepreneurs who are mainly in light manufacturing and own the means of production, belong to the middle bourgeoisie. They use local and imported components in varying degrees. They have a desire to push national industrialization forward and assume the prime position in the economy, but are pressed down by the foreign monopolies, the big compradors and the landlords.

The entrepreneurial middle bourgeoisie is directly engaged in the management of its productive enterprises. It engages in the exploitation of workers through the extraction of surplus value, and often gives wages that are lower than those given by foreign and big comprador firms. But these firms actually reap a higher rate of profit; and worse, they take out their superprofits from the country or divert these from the course of national industrialization.

The urban petty bourgeoisie in general undergoes increasing exploitation in time of ever worsening crisis, tends to side with the working class and peasantry, and influences the national bourgeoisie to oppose modern imperialism, domestic feudalism, and bureaucratic corruption.

The industrial proletariat is the most progressive productive force in the country today. It sells its labor power to the owners of capital. It suffers from low wage that are further eroded by the ever-soaring prices of prime commodities. Mass layoffs and lack of new job opportunities are always threatening the workers in the current crisis.

The industrial proletariat comprises some 15 percent of the people. It is desirous of national industrialization so as to enlarge its number and strength, and thus is exceedingly eager to struggle against foreign and feudal domination.

The peasantry is the most numerous and exploited class in the semifeudal economy. It consists of some 75 percent of the people. It suffers from feudal and semifeudal exactions, and struggles for land reform.

The peasantry is vehemently opposed to the rapid accumulation of land by

Filipino landlords and foreign agricorporations. The displacement of peasants from the land is rapidly increasing the ranks of farm workers and peasant revolutionaries.

Ever worsening economic crisis

Being an appendage of US monopoly capitalism, the Philippine agrarian semifeudal economy suffers from US trade and investment policies, which are dictated to Philippine authorities directly by US authorities, multinational firms and banks; and through multilateral agencies like the IMF and the World Bank.

The US does not wish the Philippines to undertake national industrialization and genuine land reform because it wants to perpetuate the unequal exchange of its surplus manufactured goods and cheap Philippine raw materials. It also wants to dump its surplus agricultural products on the Philippines.

The US is pushing import liberalization hard because it wants to pursue a trade offensive to reduce its huge trade deficits. Import liberalization will certainly smash the small number of Filipino industries, which are dependent on imported equipment, basically processed components, semi-processed components, and raw materials, especially fuel.

The US is always demanding the free flow of foreign direct investments into the country and the most excessive privileges for these, including the most blatant violation of economic sovereignty, tax exemption, accelerated depreciation allowances, unrestricted capital repatriation and profit remittances, and so on.

But in fact US direct investments have moved into the country unevenly and into quick profit areas. A small amount of investment fetches huge amounts of superprofits. The US has always made sure that it controls strategic lines of business but makes its investments in such a way that these do not result in the fundamental and comprehensive industrialization of the country and in a balanced economy.

The Philippine economy is now required to concentrate on agriculture after a period of being overloaded with foreign loans for infrastructure projects, agricultural and mining mills, five-star hotels and other grandiose tourist facilities, and other unproductive or remotely productive projects.

With agricultural exports as the mainstay for earning foreign exchange, the

Philippines suffered an accumulated total trade deficit of \$16 billion from 1972 to 1983. There is not any number of agricultural products which can earn enough foreign exchange, even only to reduce the foreign trade deficits. The method being used lately to reduce foreign trade deficits is to reduce imports, including the most essential goods for local industries. Thus, the entire economy is depressed both by a failure to sell Philippine raw-material exports in sufficient volume and at a good price and by the idling of Philippine industries.

The Philippines is overloaded with foreign loans that it can never really pay back from its agrarian economy. The accumulated foreign debt is now \$20 billion. The Philippines will continue to sink deeper into the debt trap. Even only to keep up with debt service payments, now about \$3 billion a year, the Philippines will have to incur new foreign debts. The Philippine foreign debt crisis will be further aggravated by the reduction of foreign exchange earnings for labor export.

The US wants to press down wages and increase the tax burden even as local industries and agriculture are depressed. And yet the inflation rate is high because of both demand-pull due to the scarcity of goods and cost-push due to the heavier tax burden, budgetary deficits, high interest rates and debt service payments.

US monopoly capitalism is objectively and unwittingly killing the Philippine economic system. This phenomenon of murder emerged clearly when the US pushed its pseudodevelopment and anti-industrialization program through the Marcos fascist dictatorship which was supported by an avalanche of foreign loans, encouraged to aggravate and deepen the agrarian and semifeudal character of the economy, and which was given all the leeway to undertake the most unbridled bureaucratic corruption and build up the coercive apparatuses of the state.

The political downfall of Marcos and his cronies does not necessarily solve the ever worsening economic crisis. A major portion of their assets in capital and land, which includes at least \$10 billion stashed away abroad, may be successfully confiscated by the state. But this will eventually fall into the hands of another faction of the same big comprador and landlord class.

An obvious fact is that the economy has been bled white. And a more violent struggle for economic and political power among factions of the exploiting classes is developing. At least two factions, the Aquino and Marcos factions, are

girding up and maneuvering for a battle royale under conditions of an ever worsening socioeconomic crisis.

The national bourgeoisie is agitated by the threat of being wiped out economically by import liberalization and other antinational and anti-industrial policies, and tends to make stronger demands for protection.

The urban petty bourgeoisie continues to suffer a worsening life of misery and want. It does not cease to swing towards the direction of revolutionary politics and conjoin with the toiling masses in a common struggle. The intelligentsia is most revolted by the fact that its professional and technical skills are ill-remunerated or are being wasted in a depressed semifeudal economy.

The working class is incensed by rampant unemployment, low wages and ceaseless inflation. This class is continuously turning the trade union movement into a school of revolution. Many of the disemployed workers have given up job-hunting and are turning in the direction of social revolution.

The continued thrust of the US and reactionary economic policy to promote plantation projects is absurd in the face of a depressed world market for agricultural commodities, and yet if it succeeds it is bound to exacerbate the land problem and incite further peasant unrest and armed revolution in the countryside.

It is the rapid accumulation of land by old and new-style landlords, sweeping over old settlements and overtaking new settlements in the frontier areas, which has made fertile the ground for a peasant-based and proletarian-led armed revolution in a semicolonial and semifeudal country bereft of an industrialization program to absorb displaced peasants.

Every major policy and course of action being undertaken within the parameters of the semifeudal economy is coming to a dead end. The contradictions within the mode of production are leading to social revolution.

Crisis of the Neocolonial State

Third in a Series of lectures on Philippine Crisis and Revolution

April 22, 1986

The US shifted from direct to indirect colonial rule over the Philippines in 1946. This latter rule may be called semicolonial or neocolonial. Due to the ceaseless demand of the Filipino people for national independence, US imperialism found it necessary to rule the country through such exploiting classes as the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class and their political representatives up to the national level of the state.

This state is the highest and largest political and social organization in the country. It encompasses the entire Philippine society — each and every Filipino citizen. It claims to carry and enforce the sovereign will of the Filipino people; transcend and mediate the differences and conflicts of individuals, groups and classes; and requires obedience from the people in the name of law and order within Philippine territory.

The illusion is fostered a priori that the state is above classes and for the national interest and general welfare. But in fact, it is the coercive instrument of exploiting classes against the exploited and, in the case of a semicolonial state, it is the instrument of an imperialist power.

The formal availability of civil liberties and the existence of suasive entities like a representative assembly, competing political parties, mass organizations, mass media and the like tend to obscure the class character of the state.

But in time of crisis and revolution, the character of the state as an instrument of class coercion becomes conspicuous. The state comes out naked as a set of coercive apparatuses like the army, the police, the courts and prisons in the service of US imperialism and the local ruling classes.

Continuance of US domination

Before yielding nominal independence to the Philippines, the US made sure as early as 1945 in an agreement with President Osmeña and in the 1946 Treaty of General Relations that it would retain US military bases in the Philippines in violation of the Tydings-McDuffie Law and the 1935 Constitution, which permitted only naval fueling stations.

Then the US-RP Military Bases Agreement was extracted from the Philippine neocolonial state in 1947. This agreement was ratified by the Philippine Senate but never by the US Senate.

And it has remained as an executive agreement between the US and Philippine presidents despite prolonged misrepresentation in the press as a treaty until a few years ago.

The US military bases have continued to violate the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Philippines; to exercise a coercive influence on every puppet regime in the country; to exact heavy social costs from the people; to tie the country to the imperialist schemes of the US in Asia and beyond; and to put the people under the threat of annihilation in case of a nuclear war.

The US military bases are a constant reminder of the US intervention and aggression starting in 1898, the humiliating and bloody conquest of the people, and several decades of direct US colonial rule. These bases are the landmark of perpetuated US aggression and domination.

The US military bases are tied in with US military assistance and the economic support fund to the Philippine government. Dependent on foreign exchange which is constantly being drained by trade payments, superprofit remittances and debt servicing, this government falls easily for a compensation package in connection with the US military bases.

The US has not only military bases of its own in the Philippines but also tight control of the main component of the Philippine neocolonial state, the Armed Forces of the Philippines. As early as 1935, through Commonwealth Act No. 1, called the National Defense Act, the US secured full control of the AFP in preparation for the conversion of the Philippine colony to a semicolony.

The US controls the AFP because the latter is dependent on it for antipeople and anticommunist indoctrination, strategic planning, strategic intelligence, officer training and military supplies. The Joint US Military Assistance Group exercises a far greater influence on the AFP officers than the top officialdom of the Philippine civil government does.

By their training and mentality, AFP officers are subservient to the US. But the US always recruits from among them intelligence assets of the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency. Thus, the fascist dictator Marcos could not do anything to reverse his downfall, despite his carefully built system of patronage within the AFP, when the US finally decided to withdraw support from him.

The tradition of hewing to the US line, which started with the first Filipino mercenaries used by the US to attack the Filipino revolutionaries in the Filipino-US War, is well entrenched in the AFP. The US has been responsible for building the AFP, from its original units to its current ones.

The AFP is the most dependable puppet organization of the US in the Philippines and the most antagonistic to the national and democratic aspirations of the Filipino people. These aspirations are always misconstrued as "communism" by the AFP. And "democracy" is made to mean pro-imperialism, anticommunism and service to the exploiting classes.

Big comprador-landlord dictatorship

Distinct from being a coercive instrument of US imperialism, the Philippine neocolonial state is a joint class dictatorship of the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class. So long as this state conforms to the demands of the US, the exploiting classes use it to protect and promote their interests in the mode of production and superstructure of the semicolonial and semifeudal society.

So long as the exploited classes of workers and peasants do not raise demands which openly conflict with the interests of the exploiting classes, the neocolonial state appears as a benign institution acting in the interest of the people.

But whenever the interest of the exploiting and exploited classes clash, even only in particular situations involving a workers' strike or a peasant demonstration, the fact easily emerges that the coercive apparatuses of the state are in the service of the exploiting classes. Under conditions of a crisis of a general character, the coercive class character of the state becomes far more conspicuous.

In coordination with or after failure of suasive means to deceive and calm down the aggrieved toiling masses, the exploiting classes can escalate the show and use of brute force from the level of private army and civilian armed gangs through the local police to any of the major services of the Armed Forces of the Philippines: first the constabulary and then the Army and other additional forces, like the navy and air force.

Because of built-in US control of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and conformity to US interests, the exploiting classes through their political representatives make sure that the Armed Forces of the Philippines is their

instrument by adopting their own policies and ensuring that appointments and promotions of officers are consonant with such policies.

There is, however, no indivisible unity among the reactionary classes of big compradors and landlords. There are bitter struggles for political supremacy and control of the state between factions of the same reactionary classes.

In any exploitative society, the state is not only a general protector of the exploiting classes, but is a specific shortcut of the ascendant clique or faction of exploiters to self-aggrandizement in the economy and entire society at the expense of other factions and the entire people.

Under relatively normal conditions, the contending factions of the ruling classes of big comprador-landlord politicians have peaceably competed for political power through a two-party system. The Nacionalista and Liberal parties were the two dominant parties up to 1972.

Under conditions of a much-worsened economic crisis, the political crisis of the ruling system also worsens to the point of armed conflict among factions of the ruling classes. The lessening of economic loot for the factions intensifies their political struggle.

The economic crisis results in widespread social unrest and in the rise of an armed revolutionary movement. The pressures of the armed revolution tend to crack up the neocolonial state and encourage the factions of the ruling classes to wage bitter struggles against each other.

The first grave test for the neocolonial state came in 1949 when amidst the serious economic crisis due to the depletion of foreign exchange, the Quirino and Laurel factions of the ruling Liberal Party and opposition Nacionalista Party intensified their political struggle almost to the point of a civil war.

At the same time, the revolutionary movement of the toiling masses led by the Communist Party of the Philippines was already waging armed struggle against the neocolonial state. Soon after the 1949 elections, characterized by fraud and terrorism, which kept Quirino in the presidency, the Laurel faction was so enraged that it agreed to ally itself in armed struggle with the people's army. This faction, however, subsequently backed out.

To shore up the ruling system, the US deliberately strengthened the armed forces

to fight the revolutionary forces, and built up the political image of Magsaysay to override the Quirino and Laurel factions. The newly beefed-up Armed Forces of the Philippines, with 36 new battalions, was directed by US agents to give support to Magsaysay in his drive for the presidency in 1953, even as he transferred from the Liberal Party to the Nacionalista Party.

It was not the gimmickry of Magsaysay and his CIA adviser Col. Landsdale that beat the armed revolutionary movement; it was mainly the self-defeating errors in ideology, politics, organization and military strategy of the Lavaite leadership of the revolutionary movement — errors which were taken advantage of by the newly beefed-up Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Further crisis of the neocolonial state

After the backbone of the Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan was broken from 1950 to 1952, the neocolonial state was able to revitalize and refurbish itself through a program of controlling imports and foreign exchange and favoring foreign-owned enterprises; and through a program of rapidly expanding the public school system.

The revolutionary movement could have preserved its strength and persevered in struggle. But the Lavaite leadership adopted one policy after another leading to the almost complete annihilation of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the revolutionary movement throughout the 1950s. By 1960, the remnants of the Hukbong Mapagpalaya were no longer in any fruitful contact with the Communist Party of the Philippines.

The establishment of Filipino-owned industries encouraged a wave of economic nationalism and there was increasing demand for comprehensive industrialization. The US decided to hit back by demanding full decontrol and also tried to extract a foreign investments law from then President Macapagal, to perpetuate parity rights under the new euphemism of "National treatment" in anticipation of the 1974 termination of the Laurel-Langley Agreement.

The moves of the US to counter the anti-imperialist trend in politics and the economy and the deleterious effects of full decontrol generated a much stronger anti-imperialist mass movement in the 60s. This movement included the workers, peasants, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie.

Both the working class and the national bourgeoisie were agitated by the

negative impact of full decontrol on local industries. The peasantry began to stir because of their increasing misery and demanded land reform, especially because the land frontier had been exhausted for spontaneous resettlement by the landless tillers towards the end of the 1960s.

The abrupt constriction of job opportunities for educated youth turned into a major problem for the ruling system in the early 1960s. The educational system continued to produce more and more professionals and technicians with no assurance of employment.

Throughout the 1960s, organizations and alliances of the working class, peasantry, youth, teachers, other professionals and businessmen, arose and grew in strength. They sought to arouse, organize and mobilize the people along the line of the national democratic revolution. The militant actions of the mass movement were often physically attacked by the forces of the State.

On December 26, 1968, the Communist Party of the Philippines was reestablished on the theoretical foundation of Marxism-Leninism, adopted the general line of the people's democratic revolution and declared armed struggle and the united front as its two main weapons. On March 29, 1969, the New People's Army was established under the CPP leadership to carry out armed struggle, agrarian reform, and mass base-building in the countryside.

The CPP declared that the crisis of the ruling system was already so grave that the ruling class could no longer rule in the old way, that the people were desirous of a revolutionary change of government and that the revolutionary party of the proletariat was being established in order to lead the people.

In the 1969 presidential elections, Marcos expended huge amounts of funds and perpetrated fraud and terrorism to get himself reelected. When he made his state-of-the-nation address before the Philippine Congress on January 25, 1970, a huge crowd of youth and workers and other urban poor massed in front of Congress to condemn his antinational and antidemocratic policies and his sham reelection.

The demonstration was physically attacked and dispersed by the police and the military. The demonstrators fought back. Thus started the First Quarter Storm of 1970. Malacañang was besieged by protesters on January 30, 1970 and the military minions again attacked them, killing six students in the process. More

demonstrations and marches followed. The forces of the state assaulted the demonstrators and marchers whenever they approached the US Embassy and Malacañang Palace.

The economic and financial crisis was admitted by the US-Marcos ruling clique as it undertook the devaluation of the peso and adopted the floating rate system in February 1970. The political crisis was dramatized by the ever-growing militant mass actions from 1970 to 1972; the armed struggle initiated by the CPP and NPA in Tarlac; anti-imperialist decisions of the Supreme Court on the Quasha and Luztevecos cases; and the articulate anti-imperialist voices in the Philippine Congress and Constitutional Convention.

The Constitutional Convention was offered by the regime as a way of allaying the violent contradictions in society. But in fact Marcos had intended to bribe and capture it; and use it for legitimizing a fascist dictatorship and prolonging his rule.

It is relevant to recall that when he assumed the presidency in 1966, Marcos appointed himself as secretary of national defense and started to have a tight hold on the Armed Forces of the Philippines by favoring, promoting and putting in command his relatives, friends, and confederates from his region. When he yielded the position as secretary of national defense to someone from his region, a system of personal loyalty to him ran through the entire Armed Forces of the Philippines.

In August 1971, he masterminded the bombing of Plaza Miranda, which almost wiped out the entire national leadership of the opposition Liberal Party. He blamed this on the CPP and NPA, and proclaimed the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus.

He would restore the writ of habeas corpus in January 1972, due to overwhelming public pressure and the landslide victory of the Liberal Party in the local and senatorial elections. But he had had his dress rehearsal for the declaration of martial law and the establishment of a full-blown fascist dictatorship under the banner of anticommunism.

The Marcos fascist dictatorship

To lay the basis for his power grab, Marcos had continued disrupting the legal democratic mass actions of the people and had engineered a series of petty bombing incidents. He and his closest military agents created all the trouble in order to blame the Communists and make them the pretext for declaring martial law.

The autocratic ambitions of Marcos and the rapacity of his bureaucrat capitalist clique coincided with the US schemes of hardening the Philippine neocolonial state in the face of US defeat in its war of aggression in Indochina and with the worsening of the political and economic crisis of the ruling system.

The full emergence of the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique through the declaration of martial law and the coup against the neocolonial republic on September 21, 1972 manifests beyond doubt that the semicolonial and semifeudal system was dying and that the ruling class of big comprador and landlords could no longer rule in the old way.

The bourgeois-democratic trappings of the joint class dictatorship of the big compradors and landlords were scrapped. An open rule of terror by a fascist autocracy was sprung on the people by the ruling big comprador-landlord clique.

Supreme executive, legislative and judicial authority was grabbed by Marcos. He interpreted the commander-in-chief provision in the 1935 Constitution as a license for limitless authority and autocratic law-making. He placed all elected local officials at his mercy, padlocked Congress, assumed all judicial authority over cases involving national security and public safety, dictated on the constitutional convention, dissolved all the legal political parties, took over the mass media, and did so many other things in order to monopolize political power.

He effected the mass arrest of all his opponents and critics in Congress, the constitutional convention, political parties, mass organizations, mass media, universities, and so on. He expanded and intensified bloody campaigns of suppression against the Moro peoples and other Filipinos in the countryside.

The most important instrument of the fascist dictatorship was, of course, the Armed Forces of the Philippines. It was rapidly beefed-up and was given the

lion's share in government expenditures. The police was integrated with the Philippine Constabulary, and paramilitary forces were organized at top speed all over the country.

Marcos was able to tighten his control over the Armed Forces of the Philippines by expanding the Presidential Security Command and the National Intelligence and Security Authority under his top hatchetman Gen. Fabian C. Ver, and by putting his close relations, friends and province-mates or region-mates in command of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The US encouraged Marcos to beef up, control and use the AFP for so long as he served the interests of US imperialism. He rationalized US domination by using the Red scare. He assured the US of perpetual and unhampered use of US military bases. He gave in to every demand of the US multinational firms and banks and the US-controlled multilateral agencies like the IMF and the World Bank.

In exchange, the US increased bilateral military and economic assistance and allowed the fascist regime to draw colossal amounts of foreign loans. These foreign loans were directly for pseudo-development projects like infrastructures, tourism facilities and others, but were also indirectly for allowing the release of more peso funds in the government budget for the rapid military buildup.

As if to provide a solution to the armed revolution and to defeat the people's army in the countryside, Marcos pretended to have a land reform program as the cornerstone of a new society. But in fact this did not mean the transfer of any significant amount of land to the landless tillers, but rather to his close relatives, business cronies, political associates, military officers, and to foreign agricorporations. There was a massive land dispossession of peasants, national minorities and even landlords who were his political opponents.

The direct social base of fascism is bureaucrat capitalism. The Marcos drive for absolute power vis-à-vis the Filipino people had always been motivated by the desire to acquire private assets in capital and land through the use of political power. And when his autocracy reigned, his pillage and plunder of the country knew no bounds.

Even as he did away with bourgeois-democratic rights, institutions and processes under the 1935 Constitution, Marcos held such rigged voting exercises as

citizens' assemblies, referenda, plebiscites and elections. In each exercise, he sought to further entrench himself in power, legitimize his fascist regime, and deceive the people.

The undoing of the Marcos fascist dictatorship was due to the increasing deterioration of the economy, characterized by the aggravation of its agrarian and semifeudal character, depression of raw material exports, excessive foreign borrowing and unbridled bureaucratic corruption; the advance and growth in strength of the armed revolutionary movement and the broad legal democratic mass movement; the outrageous perpetration of countless military atrocities and abuses, including the assassination of Benigno Aquino, which revolted the people and most of the reactionaries; and finally the junking done by the US and Catholic Church, the split in the ranks of the AFP, the dramatic breakaway of Enrile and Ramos, and the people's uprising from February 22 to 15, 1986.

The cost of the US-inspired fascist dictatorship to the Filipino people are extremely high. More than six million were displaced from their homes and land. Some 150,000 people were killed, and another 100,000 were injured in the course of AFP military operations. Many were subjected to torture and summary execution. At least 70,000 were arbitrarily detained for at least one month. Hundreds of thousands were subjected to the humiliation of taking an oath of allegiance to the regime and being misrepresented as NPA and MNLF surrenderers.

And the cost to the ruling system are extremely high. The political and economic crisis of the ruling system has become deeper, more difficult to relieve, and more fatal. The contradictions among the reactionaries are bound to become more violent and disintegrative of the system. The revolutionary movement has grown in strength and continues to advance. There is no way out of the deterioration of the agrarian and semifeudal economy and the foreign debt trap except through social revolution.

The post-Marcos situation

There is the illusion among the reactionaries that the ascendance of the Aquino regime has preempted the rise of the revolutionary movement. What is being obscured is the fact that the Aquino regime has assumed the burden of responsibility in coping with the grave problems left by Marcos and with the ever-worsening political and economic crisis of the ruling system due to foreign

and feudal domination.

Even the task of dismantling the structures of fascist dictatorship and reestablishing the formal democratic rights is not yet over. Moreover, the Marcos forces are not yet completely out of contention for power. These are far stronger than those who are now in power. These have large assets inside and outside of the country, armed followers inside and outside of the AFP, and political agents and followers at every level.

In a relatively short time, upon the failure of the Aquino regime to solve the problems besetting the country, the Marcos forces are bound to expand and intensify their opposition to the Aquino regime. The conflict between the Marcos and Aquino forces is now more two-sided than when Marcos used to monopolize political power and one-sidedly inflicted violence on his political rivals and the revolutionary forces.

A battle royale is in the offing between the Aquino and Marcos forces. This promises to be more violent and more disintegrative of the ruling system, and this provides conditions for the accelerated advance of the revolutionary movement. We assume that Aquino as president can build her own bloc within the AFP, and put it on top of the Enrile-Ramos-RAM bloc and the Marcos bloc.

The Marcos forces can utilize to their own advantage their own bloc within the AFP for maneuvering against the Aquino bloc and the Enrile-Ramos-RAM bloc, and playing off one bloc against the other. The three blocks are in for a dangerous game under conditions of an ever-worsening economic crisis.

Insofar, as it remains within the parameters of foreign and feudal domination, the Aquino regime is incapable of solving the economic crisis. The nonsolution of this crisis, the growing challenge of the Marcos forces, and the resistance of the Enrile-Ramos-RAM bloc to the rise of the Aquino bloc within the AFP, are likely to destabilize the Aquino regime.

The people's power that has been able to topple Marcos and install Aquino as president is of an antifascist quality. To be able to keep itself in power, the Aquino regime has to follow the development of a people's power that is comprehensively anti-imperialist, antifeudal, and antifascist, and link up with people's power which is in constant development whether the Aquino regime likes it or not.

Despite the fluctuation from an unabashed fascist tyranny to a new reactionary regime with a liberal-democratic tendency, the ruling system continues to be in the process of decline and disintegration, and the revolutionary movement continues to build and develop the people's democratic power.

VII. Economic Development

Seventh in a Series of Lectures on Philippine Crisis and Revolution

May 9, 1986

The Philippines has a rapidly growing labor force and a comprehensive and rich natural resource base, including fertile land, forests, waters, and most minerals essential to industrialization. There is no question that a modern industrial economy can be built on the basis of the raw materials available in the country.

The forces of production are already straining against the semifeudal relations of production. But, aside from using economic means to restrain the growth of the productive forces, US monopoly capitalism and the local reactionary classes of big compradors and landlords are employing the power of the neocolonial state to keep the people at the direst level of subsistence.

The economic development of the Philippines is impossible without the assertion and exercise of the sovereign will of the Filipino people against the US and local exploiting classes. Every crucial measure to remove the semicolonial and semifeudal fetters on the forces of production involves the exertion of that sovereign will.

By economic development, we mean the planned and well balanced development of industry and agriculture — with national industrialization as the leading factor and an agriculture benefited by genuine land reform as the basis of development.

Nationalization of the economy

The optimum condition for economic development is the nationalization of the economy. This involves the exercise of the political and economic sovereignty of the Filipino nation, and the liberation of the economy from the clutches of US monopoly capitalism.

Economic policy must no longer be dictated by the US agencies, transnational firms and banks, or through such US-controlled multilateral agencies as the IMF and the World Bank; but must be decided by the Filipino people themselves through their patriotic leaders and economic policymakers and planners.

Unequal agreements and laws extending extraordinary privileges to US investors must be abrogated. The national patrimony must be protected. The strategic industries, the major sources of raw materials and the major channels of distribution, must be controlled by the people's democratic state.

Filipino entrepreneurs must be given the necessary incentives and support in economic areas where private initiative is productive — through sole proprietorship, partnerships, cooperatives, private corporations and joint ventures with the state.

Free rein must be given to the economic effort of the state and Filipino entrepreneurs, instead of allowing foreign investors and their agents to control the domestic patterns of production and consumption and to take superprofits out of the country.

The dominance of US and other transnational firms and banks and the US-controlled multilateral financial agencies must be ended. In case of aggression or economic blockade by these, the assets of unfriendly corporations belonging to the aggressor country can be summarily nationalized or frozen. Otherwise, the terms of expropriation can be amicably settled through negotiations.

The assets of the bureaucrat capitalists and other traitors must be nationalized. However, big compradors who have no record of treason may be allowed to convert their merchant capital into industrial capital, but without allowing them to control the economic and financial system. The agricultural land of the landlord class is subject to land reform.

Nationalizing the assets of foreign and local exploiters means releasing the forces of production and developing both industry and agriculture. It must be recognized that the productive assets in a semifeudal economy are still backward and the people's democratic state must lead in laying the foundation of modern industry.

National industrialization

National industrialization is the main engine in genuine economic development. There can be no way out of the mire of agrarian backwardness and no way for absorbing the ever increasing surplus labor without national industrialization.

Raw material production must be expanded mainly for local processing in the country. Industries must be established to produce basic metals, basic chemicals, capital goods, precision instruments and the like.

Comprehensively, the primary, secondary and tertiary stages of industrial production must be carried out in the country. To limit production to primary commodities for export, like agricultural and mineral products, is to prevent the country from freeing itself from the status of a backward, agrarian and semifeudal economy.

Heavy industry is necessary. But overconcentration of investments in heavy industry must be avoided. Light industry or manufacturing for immediate consumption needs of the people must be expanded as rapidly as possible. This bridges the gap between heavy industry and agriculture.

The present import-dependent manufacturing enterprises, whether of import-substitution or export-oriented variety, can be made reliant on Philippine industries for capital equipment, semiprocessed components and raw materials as far as possible, and can be expanded as part of the development of light industry.

After taking into account the needs of the people and the economy, surpluses in agriculture, mineral and industrial production can be exported in exchange for capital goods and essential consumer goods that are not as yet produced or cannot be produced in the country. The main thrust is to acquire capital goods that enhance national industrialization.

To supplement domestic savings for industrial investments, loans for industrialization must be sought. New industrial plants can be paid for on a deferred payment plan, with a portion of the annual product or income as the payment.

All Filipino with managerial, scientific and technical skills must be encouraged to participate in national industrialization. Their ranks can be increased by expanding admission to scientific, engineering and vocational-technical schools.

Foreign experts can be admitted on an exchange basis, or hired in connection with the inflow of new equipment and technology. But Filipino experts must take over within the shortest possible time.

Genuine land reform

Genuine land reform ends feudal ownership of land and all feudal and semifeudal forms of exploitation. This emancipates the peasant majority of the people not only economically but also politically. This brings about the substance of democracy.

The key measure in genuine land reform is the free distribution of land to the landless tillers, including the poor and lower middle peasants. There is enough land to distribute and make every peasant household self-sufficient.

Tenanted land, land illegally acquired, land foreclosed by state banks, idle and excess portions of export-cropland, public land held under false pretenses (pasture lease, tree farming, etc.), and logged-over land suitable for agriculture can be distributed free to landless tillers.

Fragmentation of land ownership in land reform does not detract from large-scale production. There should be cooperativization in stages for the purpose of raising efficiency in production, marketing and the like.

Integral to the program of land distribution should be provisions for low-interest credit, technical assistance, irrigation and other agricultural facilities; organic and chemical fertilizers; low-priced farm equipment, feeder roads and the like. Peasant associations and cooperatives can help themselves and at the same time receive appropriate assistance from the state.

Land reform releases the surplus product from the clutches of the landlord class. With the peasant masses acquiring more purchasing power, the domestic market for national industry is greatly expanded. As national industrialization advances, the peasant masses raise agricultural production of the food and raw-material requirements of industry.

Genuine land reform and national industrialization are complementary and interactive. One is impossible without the other. Land reform without national industrialization cannot break out of the semifeudal economy. National industrialization without land reform is unattainable because it cannot

accumulate capital and is deprived of a wide domestic market.

Genuine land reform ends the flow of the surplus products from the peasants and farm workers through the parasitic landlord class to comprador big bourgeoisie and finally to the US transnational corporations; and begins the flow of the surplus product from the peasants to national industry.

In return, the national industry provides the peasants with goods for production and consumption; and absorbs the surplus labor in the countryside arising from the mechanization of agriculture and from population growth.

Economic Planning

Economic planning is needed to achieve rapid but well-proportioned and balanced development from the backward economic and technological level of a semifeudal economy. To depend on the blind forces of the market is not only to stunt and allow the lopsided growth of the economy, but also to remain vulnerable to the dictates of the US transnational corporations and the local exploiters.

Heavy industry is necessary to lay the foundation of national industrialization. But to make excessively rapid investments in heavy industry to the point of neglecting light industry is to fail in the simultaneous accumulation of capital and satisfaction of the immediate needs of the entire people, especially the peasant masses.

There has to be a well-proportioned development of heavy industry, light industry and agriculture. Only with economic planning can the proportions be properly determined.

There also has to be a planned development of the economy in the various regions. No single region should continue to monopolize the bounty of industrial development.

There has to be a fair economic correlation of industrial sites, sources of raw materials and market. The export bias must be replaced by an orientation to process and market the final products mainly in the country.

Certain areas of the economy are best designated for management and investments by the state, joint state-private ventures, private corporations,

cooperatives and individual petty commodity producers.

Foreign Economic Relations

The accumulated foreign debt of the Philippines has become so large that it can never be paid back nor even serviced, except by incurring new debts. It is probable that the heavy debtors in the Third World like the Philippines would someday cancel their foreign debts or simply fail to make interest payments.

In preparation for the debtors' voluntary strike of involuntary default, the Philippines should expand and develop its economic relations with socialist countries, within the Third World and with the lesser capitalist countries so that the US cannot effectively cut off supplies from the country and use other retaliatory measures.

Barter trade can be pursued so that the Philippines can dispose of its raw material exports and get in return capital goods and essential consumer goods.

Also, the Philippines can seek foreign loans for industrial development, especially from the socialist countries. The new industrial plants can be paid for with a portion of their annual product or income.

By the time that there shall be a people's democratic state resolutely carrying out a policy of national industrialization, the socialist countries and the relatively advanced Third World countries shall have achieved higher levels of development and shall be in a position to extend more accommodations in trade and industrial loans to the Philippines. But these of course shall merely supplement the Filipino people' self-reliant efforts at economic development.

Human Rights Advocacy Today: Tasks and Challenges

April 24, 1986

A few days after my release, I visited the offices of a human rights organization. I was a bit surprised when some staffers expressed the opinion that they would soon run out of work to do in view of the downfall of the fascist dictator and the release of political prisoners.

I could understand that those who expressed such an opinion had been carried away by the joy of seeing the release of political prisoners as the fruit of their work. My immediate reply was that their work would continue and would even become heavier and more challenging.

By this time, it should have become clearer than before that the downfall of the fascist dictator and Mrs. Aquino's assumption of office as president does not mean the end of human rights advocacy and of the work of human rights organizations.

Not all the structures of fascist dictatorship have been dismantled. The struggle to dismantle these structures continues. The causes, instruments and effects of oppression persist.

While we recognize that the Aquino government has taken significant steps toward dismantling the structures of fascist dictatorship and full restoration of civil liberties, we also know that such root causes of fascism as US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism continue to exist.

There has been no social revolution. The same semicolonial and semifeudal

ruling system remains. The same ruling classes of big compradors and big landlords are poised to further exploit and oppress the people. The same instruments of coercion and violence used by Mr. Marcos to terrorize the people remain intact and continue to have a pro-imperialist and antipeople orientation and to launch bloody campaigns of suppression.

The political and economic crisis of the ruling system continues to press on the ruling authorities to adopt and employ repressive measures. The US wants the Aquino government to wear the mask of liberal democracy but only to enable it to make more effective campaigns of suppression in the name of anticommunism.

Human rights advocates and their organizations must do everything possible and necessary to encourage the democratic tendency of the Aquino government. We must help this government insofar as it seeks to dismantle all the structures of fascist dictatorship, fully restore civil liberties and root out the causes of fascist tyranny.

The most dramatic and positive acts of the Aquino government have been to release a considerable number of political prisoners, restore the writ of habeas corpus, adopt a bill of rights and sign the international covenant on political and civil rights.

But quite a number of political prisoners are still in prison. Certain repressive decrees of the Marcos regime remain effective.

We must encourage Mrs. Aquino to avoid the pitfalls of rabid anticommunism, especially at this time that her government needs all progressive forces and the broadest possible support of the people in order to cope with the threat of the Marcos forces and the lack or insufficiency of her control over the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The biggest and most immediate threat to the Aquino government comes from the Marcos forces which still have the financial, military and political resources to make a serious effort at destabilizing it and return to power.

Mrs. Aquino still needs to assert her authority as president and commander-in-chief and assume full control over the Armed Forces of the Philippines so that she can give it a patriotic and democratic orientation; prevent it from persisting as a brutal instrument of oppression; reorganize it and neutralize the Marcos

loyalist forces and any other force with bureaucrat capitalist and militarist interests; and reduce it so that savings on military expenditures can be used for economic development and essential public services.

An excellent channel for cooperation between the human rights organizations and the Aquino government is the Commission on Human Rights headed by Jose W. Diokno.

The human rights organizations must work hard to support this commission. We can push this commission to do its job efficiently; help it to gather evidence on past and current atrocities and abuses of the military, police and paramilitary forces; augment its regular personnel with volunteer personnel; and mobilize public support for its work.

Together with the voluntary human rights organizations, the Commission on Human Rights can help the Aquino government clean up the Armed Forces of the Philippines and put it on a track that does not run counter to the national and democratic rights and interests of the people.

Certain powerful elements in the AFP want to stop the work of the commission; put the crimes of the powerful at par with acts of rebellion by the oppressed or even with mere allegations against revolutionaries; and propose what is called double amnesty.

But more officers and men of the AFP think that the AFP can never be reformed without ferreting out the violators of human rights. And they know that these criminals are trying to obscure the fact that the state has had more than enough resources to afford due process to suspects in so-called national security cases and yet these suspects are illegally subjected to illegal detention, torture and murder.

Far more important than seeking to reform the AFP, the Commission on Human Rights and the human rights organizations must enable the victims of human rights violations and their families to obtain justice and indemnification.

At whatever rate the Commission on Human Rights can perform its tasks, human rights advocates and organizations must continue their own work of upholding and defending human rights, documenting and gathering evidence of human rights violations and providing the victims and survivors with every possible kind of help — legal, financial and moral — so that they in the end can

obtain what is due them.

So long as the US and the local reactionaries are using the AFP, the police and paramilitary forces to attack the people, there will be no end to the work of human rights advocates and organizations.

People will continue to be arbitrarily arrested and detained, tortured and murdered, strafed and massacred, dispossessed of their homes and lands, forced to take oaths of allegiance and misrepresented as rebel surrenderers.

Before there can even be justice to victims of accumulated human rights violations under the Marcos regime, there are new waves of human rights violations perpetrated in the various regions of the country, especially in the course of offensive military campaigns of suppression.

Not all political prisoners of the US-Marcos regime have been released. And new ones are being added to their ranks. Not a single torturer or murderer of any political prisoner has yet been punished. And the torturers and murderers are riding high on an intensified campaign of counterinsurgency. Not all the displaced families and communities have been able to return to their homes and lands. Yet new ones are being displaced.

Obviously, there is plenty of work for human rights advocates and organizations. And their work is ever increasing.

Let me list down some tasks that still cry out to be done:

- 1) Carry forward the struggle to completely dismantle the structures of fascist dictatorship and defeat US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism which are the root causes of fascist dictatorship and human rights violations.
- 2) Intensify the campaign to educate the people on the root causes, instruments and effects of human rights violations.
- 3) Urge the Aquino government to restore full respect for human rights and to punish human rights violators and remove them from the AFP.
- 4) Help secure justice and indemnification for all the victims and survivors of human rights violations.

5) Demand the release of all political prisoners and give immediate help to those released so that they can stand on their feet and become productive members of society.

6) Give special attention to victims of torture, murder and massacres so that their survivors can obtain justice and indemnification.

7) Demand the return of displaced families and communities to their homes and lands and urge the government to give them immediate assistance and indemnification.

8) Support the work of the Commission on Human Rights.

9) Foster cooperation among all human rights advocates and organizations so as to achieve synergy in the defense and promotion of human rights.

10) Seek international support and assistance for the human rights struggle of the Filipino people and extend support and assistance for that of other peoples, especially those fighting against imperialism, colonialism, racism, apartheid and other systematic violations of human rights.

I hope that the list of tasks that I am suggesting to you can help you in formulating your tasks.

The Social Basis of a Fascist State

Lecture at the National Symposium on State Violence sponsored by the Philippine Social Science Center on May 9-10, 1986, May 9, 1986

I am deeply pleased to be invited by the Philippine Social Science Council to participate in this forum on state violence and to speak specifically on the social basis of a fascist state in the context of explaining the anatomy of state violence in the Philippine experience.

I share with you the hope that in this forum we, as social scientists, can shed light on the continuing trend of violence and formulate some guidelines by which the aspirations for national liberation, democracy, justice and prosperity can be realized. However, I have to concentrate on my assigned topic — my share in the structure of this forum.

I. Fascism as world phenomenon

As the great Lenin pointed out, in extending the Marxist critique of capitalism to a critique of modern imperialism, monopoly capitalism is the highest and final stage of capitalism. It is moribund capitalism.

By its own laws of motion, capitalism suffers from a recurrent and ever worsening crisis of overproduction. To preserve the exploitative relations of production, the monopoly capitalist class sheds off the trappings of bourgeois democracy, adopts an open rule of terror and launches wars of aggression to redivide the world. Interimperialist war leads to social revolution.

The first general crisis of capitalism in the 20th century resulted in World War I and the birth of the first socialist state in Russia. It was followed by the second

general crisis which would spawn a series of fascist states in Europe and Japan. These terrorist and aggressive states would cause the outbreak of World War II. This global war would further lead to the rise of several socialist states and the widespread national liberation movements in the colonies and semicolonies.

Since the establishment of the first fascist state in Italy in 1922, similar states subsequently emerging in Europe and Japan had come to be called fascist. Basic and essential similarities or features have made the general term “fascist state.”

The ruling clique headed by an autocrat, the grandiloquent leader figure, had risen to power or fortified its rule by taking a rabid anticommunist and chauvinist line and thereby getting the support of the big bourgeoisie and other reactionary forces, including the landlord class.

The coercive apparatuses of the state, often in collaboration with the armed gangs of the fascist party, were used to wipe out bourgeois democratic rights and to destroy the Communist Party, the communist-led trade unions and all other democratic forces.

To gain a mass following or create the illusion of having one, the fascist clique engaged in revolutionary phrasemongering and stealing phrases from the revolutionary movement while attacking and suppressing with brute force the communists, the working class and other democratic forces. When already in power, the clique completed the process of eliminating its opponents within the ruling class and among the people.

The big bourgeoisie was satisfied and happy with the fascist state for so long as the working class remained under discipline and repression; and public works and military-industrial contracts were highly profitable and the wars of aggression were still successful.

The fascist state was the outgrowth and narrowing of the monopoly bourgeois state. It was a manifestation of the inability of the ruling class to rule in the old way with embellishments of bourgeois democracy. It was a reaction to the growth of the proletarian revolutionary movement under conditions of grave political and economic crisis of the ruling system.

In the aftermath of World War II, the world capitalist system was sicker and weaker than at any time before but the US emerged as the No. 1 capitalist power and launched the anticommunist cold war against the socialist countries and

national liberation movements in colonies and semicolonies.

The world capitalist system has been on its most prolonged and deepgoing crisis. This is its third general crisis. But the US has so far avoided becoming an outright fascist state despite the recurrent and worsening economic crisis and wars of aggression. The US has been able to afford the trappings of democracy at home because it has continuously benefited from imperialist plunder at a rate never known by its capitalist predecessor, Great Britain.

But US monopoly capitalism has been instigating the establishment of fascist regimes in client-states or semicolonies under its sway in Asia, Africa and Latin America wherever it becomes mortally afraid of revolutionary mass movements surging forward under conditions of severe social crisis.

The ruling cliques in neocolonial and semifeudal fascist states enjoy the support and are tools of both the US monopoly bourgeoisie and the domestic comprador big bourgeoisie. As in Europe and Japan in the past, fascism in the third world today is the tyrannical rule of the big bourgeoisie.

The fascist ruling cliques are usually military cliques grabbing power either from elected civilian leaders or from their militarist predecessors. They use the slogans of rabid anticommunism to cover up their role as stooges of US imperialism.

The fascist ruling cliques are themselves bureaucrat capitalists who use their public office to amass assets in capital and land and climb the social ladder within the unchanged ruling system. Bureaucrat capitalists in a neocolonial and semifeudal society are a special section of the comprador big bourgeoisie. When they turn fascist, the bureaucrat capitalists are supreme both in exercising the political power of the comprador big bourgeoisie and in getting economic advantage for themselves.

The fascist ruling cliques usually adopt an autocratic form of government even as they present themselves as champions of democracy. They use the ideology of anticommunism and national security to eliminate their political opponents; repress the people, especially the toiling masses; and launch brutal campaigns of suppression against communists and the revolutionary mass movement.

II. The fascist state under Marcos

Marcos came from the middle class and climbed his way to the top in the neocolonial state through elections—from being a congressman through being a senator and the senate president to being the president of the Philippines.

In the process of political climbing, he also climbed socially through the trickery of bureaucrat capitalism. He used the public offices that he occupied to accumulate assets in capital and land by cutting into business transactions and facilitating the grant of business privileges to private entities. And he developed his links with the US and other transnational firms and with big compradors and landlords who were to finance his presidential campaign.

As soon as he became president, he himself became his own Secretary of National Defense for some time to make sure that the Armed Forces of the Philippines was firmly under his control and was to be run by his military favorites. He had cultivated the public image of having been a USAFFE military officer and a bemedaled hero of World War II.

Even as prefascist president for seven years, he had excelled as the top bureaucrat capitalist and did not hesitate to use openly lawful and discreetly unlawful means to enrich himself and his clique and to outmaneuver or bump off his political opponents.

When he got himself reelected through scandalously foul means in 1969, public outrage was high, the ruling system was going conspicuously into a new level of crisis and the revolutionary mass movement was on the upsurge.

Obviously, he had complete understanding of the Philippine state as a client of the United States and as a joint class dictatorship of the big compradors and landlords. As top bureaucrat capitalist, he considered himself superior to the superrich elite of big comprador and landlords and yet he found it unbearable to be on the way out of power and derided as the ignominiously most corrupt and brutal figure in the history of the neocolonial state.

He was still in power and had developed a strong grip on the armed forces. He could play on the anticommunist fears of the US and the local reactionary classes and could build up the armed forces. He could offer the false promise of reforms through a constitutional convention, which would be the very legalistic device to prolong his rule beyond the limits set by the 1935 Constitution and to deprive the people of their basic democratic rights.

He could physically attack the revolutionary movement as well as his intrasystemic opponents and critics and blame the communists for his own brutal acts. And he did everything to rationalize his proclamation of martial law and usurpation of absolute and supreme authority over the government and the people.

By carrying out his coup in 1972, he narrowed the joint class dictatorship of the big compradors and landlords into his personal dictatorship — an autocracy. He unleashed the armed forces against all active and potential opponents and against the people.

The US supported the Marcos fascist state completely and all the way in exchange for more imperialist privileges. The comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class also supported the fascist state for so long as it went on a rampage against the communists and the revolutionary mass movement and could get ever increasing amounts of foreign loans to cover deficits in balance of payments, foreign trade and government budget.

In pursuit of pseudodevelopment, the fascist regime went on a spending splurge on infrastructure projects, tourism facilities and other nonproductive or remotely productive projects. The foreign loans allowed an ever increasing portion of tax revenues to be used for military buildup and campaigns of suppression.

Then in the late 1970s, foreign loans could be gotten only at far higher interest and more onerous terms. Still further, in the early 1980s, foreign loans would become scarce even at the most stringent terms. The scarcity of foreign exchange and the resultant crisis made most of the big comprador-landlords resent the grabbing operations of Marcos and his cronies.

The economic and financial crisis in 1983 coincided with the outrageous assassination of Benigno S. Aquino, Jr. who had thought of coming home in time for the crisis to shake the fascist regime and for the electoral opposition to make a headway. The rapid interaction of political and economic crises resulted in a turbulent situation.

The US started to distance itself from the fascist puppet regime. Most sections of the comprador big bourgeoisie and landlord class drew away from the regime. The legal democratic mass movement surged forward at an unprecedented rate. In view of dramatic assaults by the people's army, Marcos himself was

compelled in 1985 to admit that the revolutionary armed struggle had grown in strength instead of being quelled by the fascist state.

The staging of the snap election in 1986 only served to shake the fascist regime from the foundation to the rafters. The electoral fraud and terrorism moved the people and all legal and illegal opposition organizations to conduct a converging offensive on the regime through gigantic mass actions.

The Catholic Church, previously critical of the most flagrant human rights violations but on the whole supportive of the fascist regime, advanced to a position of total rejection of this fascist regime through the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) pastoral letter issued after the snap election. Marcos himself bungled the contradictions between the Ver-Ramas and Enrile-Ramos factions within the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Thus was set the final stage for the overthrow of the fascist dictator Marcos on February 22 to 25. He was overthrown by a combination of military revolt and people's uprising. The US which had been proposing a series of compromise formulas between the Marcos and the Aquino forces, decided to do its own share of making Marcos fall.

III. The possible emergence of a fascist state

Marcos' propensity for puppetry, despotism and corruption coincided with and aggravated the objectively worsening socioeconomic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system.

This worsening crisis provided the objective basis for the autocratic initiative of Marcos and the rise and long duration of the fourteen-year fascist rule. The fascist dictatorship was the outgrowth of the US-dominated big comprador-landlord state in crisis.

The root causes of the fascist dictatorship are US monopoly capitalism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. So long as these remain, the reemergence of the fascist dictatorship is a strong possibility.

It is presumptuous and blind for the US imperialists and the local reactionaries to claim that the ascendance of Mrs. Aquino to the presidency had made a peaceful revolution and preempted the armed revolution of the people.

The ruling system remains in grave crisis. The same ruling classes ride roughshod over the people and the two major factions among them are in sharp contradiction. The same AFP which was the main oppressive instrument of the fallen Marcos regime remain intact and continues to oppress the people.

The legal forces of the national democratic movement and the armed revolutionary movement of the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army and the National Democratic Front and the entire Filipino people are intact and continue to grow in strength because of foreign and feudal domination.

The basic problems of the people cannot be solved by the Aquino government if it is the mere instrument of the US and such local reactionary classes as the big compradors and landlords.

The contradictions between the Marcos and the Aquino forces are still in the process of development and are liable to break out in violent incidents within one, two or three years.

Compared to the opposition in the past under the Marcos fascist dictatorship, the Marcos forces are far stronger today because of their financial assets within and outside the country, their armed followers within and outside the AFP and their political agents who are at every level of political activity.

In various ways, the Marcos forces are making a show of force all over the country. But they are likely to make their most serious moves in the future when the Aquino government can be discredited for failure to solve the basic problems of the people, the very problems left by Marcos.

Although it remains intact as a pro-US and reactionary force, the AFP is increasingly an arena of struggle for at least three blocs and the Aquino bloc. The AFP remains seriously divided.

If the Aquino government were to face up to the basic problems of the people and to solve them, it ought to encourage and participate in a broad democratic alliance of the people, including the revolutionary forces, instead of submitting to pressures of the US, the Enrile-Ramos bloc and the Marcos forces to take a rabidly anticommunist line or succumbing to the temptation of taking this line. The Aquino government ought to encourage and participate in a broad democratic alliance of the people — including the revolutionary forces — in

order to face up to the basic problems of the people and solve them.

The Aquino government can continue to get the support of the people only by completing the process of dismantling the structures of the fascist dictatorship and pursuing the anti-imperialist and antifeudal line towards national liberation and democracy in substance and form.

The reimposition of fascist dictatorship by any big comprador-landlord faction or militarist clique on the people will be lethal to the ruling system, not to the revolutionary movement. The problem of violence is not only something between the reactionary state and the people or the revolutionary movement but also within the state and the contending factions of the ruling classes.

The Nature and Probable Outcome of the Constitutional Commission

May 29, 1986

The best way to determine the nature of the Concom is to lay bare the class standpoint of the members. If we know the predominant class character of the Concom, we can forecast its probable outcome. And, of course, we should know what to do with the Concom.

Class nature of the Concom

The overwhelming majority of the Concom members (about thirty-three) stand for the class interests of the big compradors and landlords. They are bound to oppose and overwhelm any motion that aims to cut down the interests of the US and the local exploiting classes.

There are nine members who stand for the interests of the middle class. Five of these take the upper-middle class viewpoint and are inclined to follow the representatives of the upper classes. Four take the viewpoint of the lower-middle class and are inclined to pursue essentially the patriotic and progressive interests of the middle class.

There are another eight members who are strongly supportive of the basic interests of the toiling masses of workers and peasants as well as of the middle class. They are capable of being anti-imperialist, antifeudal and antifascist in a comprehensive and profound manner.

The member appointed as the lone representative of the working class is not a proletarian by socioeconomic status or political standpoint but is a labor aristocrat. He may be yellow but he is a KBL stalwart of long standing. The industrial workers who compose 15 percent of the population have practically no representative.

There is only one representative of the peasant masses. Certainly, one representative is not enough for a class comprising at least 75 percent of the population.

The overrepresentation of the oppressive and exploitative classes, comprising mere fractions of 1 percent of the population, offends the sense of justice not only of the toiling masses comprising at least 90 percent of the population but also of the urban middle class comprising at least 8 percent.

It is simply a case of overkill for Mrs. Aquino to draw 66 percent of the Concom from her own big comprador-landlord class. It is also scandalous that she has obviously submitted herself to the pressures of Washington and the so-called Council of Trent or Jesuit Mafia.

All the hullabaloo about a fair process of selecting the members of the Concom on a national, sectoral and regional basis by Mrs. Aquino and her coterie has proven to be dishonest and prejudicial to the interests of the toiling masses. As consistently pointed out by Senator Lorenzo M. Tañada, it would have been far better and more accommodating to the people had there been elections of delegates to a constitutional convention.

The provisional autocracy of Mrs. Aquino is potentially as dangerous and damaging to the interests of the people as the prolonged autocracy of Mr. Marcos because of vulnerability and submissiveness to the same dictates and pressures of the US and local reactionary interests.

The preponderance of the representatives of the big compradors and landlords determines the character and outcome of the Concom. It cannot be expected to become an instrument for solving the basic problems of the people which in the first place brought about the Marcos fascist dictatorship.

The 1986 constitution is bound to guarantee and promote the prerogatives and interests of the US and the local reactionary classes. It seeks to reflect and preserve the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system.

The probable outcome of the Concom

At best, the probable outcome of the Concom would be a recycling of the glittering generalities of a bourgeois democratic constitution and a modification or rejection of the provisions in the Marcos constitution blatantly permitting fascist autocracy.

It is highly probable that a majority of the Concom members would reaffirm the bill of rights and would put in safeguards against abuse of presidential authority as well as make loopholes permitting such abuse in an abstract counterpoise of state authority and individual rights.

Abstraction of individual rights and silence on the reality of national and class oppression and exploitation would allow in practice the US and the local reactionary classes to ride roughshod over the toiling masses and the middle social strata. There will be no rooting out the basic causes of fascist dictatorship although the new constitution is offered as a liberal democratic document.

As a matter of course, national sovereignty and territorial integrity would be formally asserted in the 1986 constitution. But there would be silence on and tolerance of the US military bases and all the unequal treaties, agreements and laws which spell US domination of the people and the country. The Concom is practically in the pocket of the United States.

There will be some general statements on the conservation of the national patrimony and the people's economic sovereignty. But there would be stipulations, ambiguities or silences to allow the ceaseless stranglehold of US transnational firms and banks over our resources and economy.

There will be some sweet-sounding references to economic development and social justice. But there would be no provisions requiring the immediate implementation of genuine land reform and national industrialization. There would be no provisions for effectively ending foreign and feudal domination.

A great deal of time and oratory would be spent on such formal questions as to whether to have a unitary or federal state; a presidential or parliamentary system; a two-party or multiparty system; a unicameral or bicameral legislature; and the like.

Most likely the two-party presidential system would be retained to counter the

possibility of a people's party or a proletarian party from becoming a major party in a multiparty system. Thus, the perpetuation of the joint class dictatorship of the big compradors and landlords is guaranteed.

Whether the Philippine state is unitary or federal, it will remain oppressive of the entire nation and the national minorities. Whether the legislature is unicameral or bicameral, it will be swamped by the political representatives of the exploiting classes subservient to the United States.

At least 30 percent of the Concom consists of religious leaders and Catholic lay militants. They are likely to introduce their own pious phrases in a torrent of platitudes as well as provisions violative of the principle of church and state separation, especially in the field of public education.

It is too late in history to consider medievalist retrogression as the catalyst of moral regeneration, especially after the institutional church has been a major participant in the oppression and exploitation of the people from the time of colonial theocracy to the time of prolonged support for the fascist dictatorship of the US-Marcos clique.

What to do with the Concom

Concom members who are not merely antifascist but are also anti-imperialist and antifeudal need to stay in the Concom in order to articulate their own proposals, expose and oppose the maneuvers of the pro-imperialists and reactionaries and demonstrate grievous acts of commission and omission by the reactionary majority in the making of the constitution. The most progressive members can unite with the left-of-center members and try to win over the right-of-center members in order to make a courageous though futile stand on crucial issues against the US and the reactionary classes of big compradors and landlords. As soon as the final counterrevolutionary sense and shape of the constitutional draft becomes clear, all members who are relatively progressive can dramatically repudiate the commission. By itself, the repudiation will be a big blow to the commission. There is also the possibility that the special detachment of eight Marcos agents (five of whom were appointed as opposition representatives) in the commission and others would quit the commission and cause its collapse. However, these KBL agents might be more interested in conforming to US advice than in building up their status as opposition. They have been appointed precisely to augment the main anticommunist, pro-

imperialist and antidemocratic current in the Concom.

National democratic organizations can launch mass campaigns to arouse, organize and mobilize the people on certain crucial issues; extend support to positive forces within the Concom; and condemn every pro-imperialist and reactionary move of the majority in the Concom.

The plan of a certain national democratic alliance to create a people's panel to press for a nationalist constitution is excellent. So is the plan for a convention of patriotic and progressive men and women to put out a draft of a people's democratic constitution superior to the output of the Concom.

The US and the local reactionaries will certainly ballyhoo the final constitutional draft as a masterpiece of democracy and the ensuing plebiscite as a contest between the US-Aquino regime and the revolutionary movement or, in the vulgar expression of US and reactionary propaganda, between "democracy" and "communism."

The national democratic movement should not be baited into making a choice between the terms boycott and participation, as if a single day of plebiscite would be enough to show that the constitutional draft is bad and unacceptable to the people.

One day of plebiscite is not enough to overcome the dominance of the regime over the mass media and other campaign facilities; the growing clerico-fascist combine of the unremolded clergy and the military; and the psychological predisposition of the large politically backward section of the people to write yes to a seemingly democratic constitution and to the wishes of an avowedly antifascist government, especially soon after the overthrow of the much-hated fascist dictatorship.

The process of rejecting a constitution and an entire ruling system takes more time and involves far more forms of struggle than voting yes or no in a plebiscite. Far more important than seeking to vote down a constitutional draft in a day is exposing and condemning the abhorrent provisions, ambiguities and silences; and launching mass actions and other militant forms of struggle during and after the Concom.

The Concom may be drummed up by the US and the local reactionaries as another "revolutionary" thing of the big comprador-landlord elite. But the

national democratic movement can actually drown out this circus by launching massive rallies and marches of the people for jobs and genuine land reform.

Political Report at the Founding Congress of Partido ng Bayan

**Report presented at the founding congress of Partido ng Bayan
on August 30, 1986**

We are engaged in a patriotic endeavor of historic significance. It is only now that we have been able to form the reliable legal party of the movement for national freedom and popular democracy and of the Filipino people.

This party is the fruit of the well-developed legal democratic movement which includes the mass organizations of the working class, peasantry, urban petty bourgeoisie and middle bourgeoisie, as well as the sectoral and multisectoral alliances of these mass organizations.

With a large mass base already aroused, organized and mobilized for national freedom and democracy, Partido ng Bayan has been able to immediately gather thousands of charter members. It thus emerges as one of the major legal political parties in the Philippines and as the only legal party committed to the struggle for national liberation and popular democracy against US imperialism and the local reactionary classes of big compradors and landlords.

Like all other organized forces of the mass movement for democracy and national freedom, this party aims to help complete the unfinished Philippine revolution. It is determined to fight for the national and social liberation of the people from foreign and feudal domination. This party relies on and draws its

membership and all-round strength from the toiling masses of workers and peasants and the middle social strata of urban petty bourgeois and middle bourgeois; and fights for their rights, interests and aspirations.

It is not true that the Partido ng Bayan is strictly a party of the left. It is a party of both the left and the middle. It is a party of all the oppressed and exploited people who are fighting for their own liberation, and all-round social progress.

This party has adopted and will carry out the program of upholding, promoting and defending national sovereignty and civil liberties; pushing forward economic development through genuine land reform and national industrialization; fostering a national, scientific and mass culture; and realizing an active, independent foreign policy.

This party is being established when all other major legal traditional parties are financed and controlled by factions of the same reactionary classes of big compradors and landlords, are susceptible or submissive to the dictates of US imperialism, and committed to the preservation of the semicolonial and semifeudal system.

The Partido ng Bayan is a response to the long crying need for a legal party that can strive to break the monopoly of the exploiting classes over the electoral process and serve as the instrument of the exploited classes.

With this party arising as the legal party of the people's movement for democracy and national freedom, gone are the days when in electoral contests the national mass organizations and alliances of the people could only tail after the parties which are in fact instruments of foreign and feudal domination.

In previous times, it was quite ironic that the people's democratic movement could so bitterly be divided over the question of electoral participation or boycott and yet surrender to the antifascist reactionaries the initiative to form legal parties and field candidates. Without its own legal party, the broad people's movement allowed its mass organizations and alliances to be the recruiting ground of the antifascist reactionary parties.

Now, the Partido ng Bayan can build its own strength on a nationwide scale and win political victories on its own account. The party can also engage in a new form of alliance — the interparty alliance — to extend the dimensions of its strength and defend itself against the most pro-imperialist and reactionary

parties.

Of course, we can also recall the time when in 1948 the movement for national freedom and popular democracy could win large electoral victories in Central Luzon but was subsequently wiped out in the fascist repression by the US-Roxas regime. Remembering this bitter experience should make us ever vigilant and should remind us that electoral struggle is not the sole or main form of struggle to achieve national freedom and popular democracy.

But it must be understood that for the people to finally change a moribund social system they must employ all forms of political organization and struggle. A progressive legal party engaged in electoral struggle may not be able to radically transform an oppressive and exploitative society. But it can make important, though secondary, contributions to the total effort to effect social revolution.

Objective conditions in the Philippines are exceedingly favorable for the growth in strength and advance of the Partido ng Bayan and other organized forces of the people's democratic movement.

The ruling system continues to decay. Its crisis continues to deepen and worsen. There is not a single party or combination of parties of the ruling classes that can offer a solution to the ever worsening political and economic crisis. Instead, factions of the same ruling classes are engaged in a bitter and deadly struggle for supremacy.

The policies being imposed on the Philippines by the US either through its direct agencies or through multilateral agencies like the IMF and World Bank are exacerbating the social crisis and intensifying social unrest.

The flagrant reign of fascist terror under the US-Marcos regime has failed to quell the armed revolutionary movement but has instead inflamed it. The overthrow of the Marcos fascist dictatorship and the ascendance of the Aquino presidency have not resulted in the solution of those fundamental problems which in the first place brought about the fascist dictatorship. The continuing nonsolution of these problems spells continuing polarization and armed conflict.

The threat of fascist restoration comes not only from the Marcos faction principally but also from the Enrile faction secondarily. The Aquino government itself is pulled by two contradictory trends. There is the principal trend represented by those rabidly pro-imperialist and reactionary elements who hold

key positions in the cabinet. And there is the secondary trend represented by those who describe themselves as liberal democrats and who hold secondary positions in the same cabinet.

The Marcos faction is strongly tempted to launch a coup before the ratification of a new constitution, especially if the Enrile faction can split the Aquino government. To create circumstances in which it can seize power for itself, the Enrile faction could also encourage a coup attempt by the Marcos faction. The two factions are using each other to promote their respective interests on the same ground of rabid pro-imperialism and anticommunism.

But a coup by either faction is being held back by certain factors. The US does not yet want to restore a Marcos-type situation so soon in the face of still substantial though decreasing popular support for the Aquino government, the continuing advance of the rural armed forces of the New People's Army and the possibility of armed insurrection.

The US is using a financial squeeze and the threat of a coup to pressure the Aquino presidency to make an early commitment on the retention of US military bases beyond 1991; to comply with the policy dictates of direct US agencies and US-controlled multilateral agencies; and to cut down the size and influence of liberal democrats in the cabinet.

While there is yet no go-signal from the US for a coup and the very fractiousness of the AFP deters the Marcos and Enrile factions from initiating any coup, the Aquino government seeks to further its relative stability by conspiring with the US, dishing out a new constitution and holding new elections. Despite the discontent of the UNIDO over the fact that it is merely the formal ruling party and that the PDP-LABAN is the really ascendant party, the Aquino presidency is bent on maintaining the alliance of the UNIDO, PDP-LABAN and the Liberal Party. The Enrile faction is likely to bolt or be eased out of the Aquino government, find shelter in the NP, and develop a coalition of the NP, KBL and the PNP.

The Partido ng Bayan must be ready for any eventuality. If there is going to be any fascist restoration, the time before it must be used to build the party on a nationwide scale and at the grassroots level. Whatever strength is built before the restoration of fascist rule occurs would be contributory to popular resistance. If no restoration occurs in the immediate future, the Partido ng Bayan must be able

to conduct electoral and other forms of legal struggle.

Because it is so far the only legal party which can offer fundamental solutions to such fundamental problems as US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, the Partido ng Bayan is bound to gain ever widening mass support and to strengthen itself as no legal party has ever done before.

In view of the multiplicity of political parties in the Philippines, whatever strength the Partido ng Bayan can gain will become decisive in the formation of an interparty alliance and in shifting the balance against the most pro-imperialist and most reactionary party or parties.

As matters stand, the parties supporting the Aquino government are still the less reactionary ones and they take a relatively democratic posture against the threat of fascist restoration. Because of the dual character of the Aquino government, the Partido ng Bayan has to adopt and carry out a policy of support and principled criticism. The party will gain mass support and political strength by encouraging and supporting the antifascist and liberal democratic tendency of the Aquino presidency and by exposing and opposing the intensifying US and local reactionary pressures on the Aquino government to violate the national and democratic interests of the people and escalate military campaigns against the people.

The party must also be ready for a realignment of forces in case the Aquino government completely capitulates to US imperialism and local reaction. The Constitutional Commission is turning out to be a big swindle. And President Aquino will soon go to the US to do some further bargaining.

As we establish Partido ng Bayan, we take upon ourselves heavy responsibilities. We must define our tasks and resolve to carry these out. Let me say a few words about the basic tasks of arousing, organizing and mobilizing the people.

The party must constantly undertake political education among its rank and file and among the masses outside the party.

The minimum requirement for the education of all party members is the basic seminar on the Program and Constitution of Partido ng Bayan. But there must be continuous study of the national democratic program and of current issues. Eventually, higher formal courses above the level of the basic seminar course

must be designed.

Extending political education to the masses outside the party is an important and necessary task. All kinds of methods must be used to raise the level of consciousness of the masses along the national democratic line. Otherwise the party cannot recruit new members and build the strength to achieve national liberation and popular democracy.

The party must immediately expand its organization. It can continue to draw in individual members from the mass organizations and alliances with a national democratic orientation. But the party as a distinct organization must work hard to recruit new members from the millions of people who are not as yet organized into any national democratic organization.

Immediately following our national congress, we must proceed to hold congresses at various levels — from the regional to the municipal. We must build active and stable chapters at the barangay level as the base of the entire party.

Aside from its having a firm anti-imperialist and antifeudal character, the party differentiates itself from all the other legal parties by complying with its constitutional rule that at least sixty percent but not more than seventy percent of the membership of all congresses and councils must come from the labor and peasant movement and the toiling masses. Thus, the pro-people character of the party and the development of leaders from the toiling masses are guaranteed.

The effectiveness of political education and organizational work is best manifested by the ever-increasing number of people that are mobilized on constant and current issues involving national and democratic rights, interests and aspirations. We must indefatigably launch campaigns on issues and mobilize the people so that we can advance in the struggle for national liberation and popular democracy.

If we lose militancy and do not mobilize the people in increasing numbers, then there would be stagnation and erosion of whatever strength that we have and we would be giving away initiative to the pro-imperialist and reactionary forces. The people that we mobilize are the source of new members to make the party ever stronger and more effective in the struggle for national democracy.

We must participate in electoral campaigns if these are relatively clean and

honest, and if the people have a good chance of electing good candidates, or of using the elections to discredit what needs to be discredited and advance the revolutionary cause of the people.

But elections come only once every so many years and these are held under the auspices of the ruling classes and their parties which have overwhelming advantages in finances and facilities and in the use of current and accumulated antipeople biases and devices in the political and cultural system.

Although electoral struggle alone cannot suffice to effect fundamental changes in the present society, we must strive to employ the conscious and organized strength of the people to counter the monopoly of the ruling classes over the state, the educational system and the mass media. Constant campaigns of political education, mass organization and mobilization of the people on fundamental issues must be waged.

The electoral struggle is only one of several forms of legal struggle. And certainly legal struggle is secondary to extralegal forms of struggle if we consider that the ruling classes are bound by their interests to use counterrevolutionary violence against thoroughgoing social revolution. But electoral and other legal forms of struggle are nevertheless important and necessary methods for achieving reforms and demonstrating the justness and reasonableness of the revolutionary cause.

The worst of the pro-imperialist and reactionary forces in the country will always try to use the line of rabid anticommunism against the Partido ng Bayan and seek to repress it. But the leaders and members of the Party have gained more than enough experience in coping with and overcoming the worst campaigns of terror and vilification under the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique.

The national democratic movement has gained strength precisely because it has passed through the rigors of struggle. When patriotic and progressive forces and elements are attacked as communist, they become more recognized as the true defenders and promoters of national freedom and popular democracy. They also gain the opportunity to explain their cause and they attract a greater mass following.

In the course of the campaign for the establishment of Partido ng Bayan, I have

been repeatedly asked whether this party is a rival or an extension of the Communist Party of the Philippines. My simple answer is that it is a party with a national democratic character and has its own political and organizational integrity. Quite clearly, the Communist Party of the Philippines remains the Marxist-Leninist vanguard party of the proletariat.

Considering the great advances already achieved and still to be achieved by the national democratic movement, Partido ng Bayan is bound to win great victories in electoral and other forms of legal struggle. We must anticipate that as we win more seats in elections, US imperialism and the local reactionaries will exert more efforts to defeat the sovereign will of the people through violence and deception.

But whatever will be the outcome of our electoral campaigns in terms of seats gained, we shall be able to help raise the level of consciousness, organization and militancy of the people to a higher one which facilitates the comprehensive victory of the people's revolution for national freedom and popular democracy.

Ceasefire, Constitution and Coup d'etat

Interview with Vivian S. de Lima for National Midweek,

January 21, 1987

VSL-NMW: The current ceasefire agreement signed by the National Democratic Front (NDF) clearly denies the status of belligerency to the NDF now and in the future. Does this mean that the NDF itself accepts a status of being merely an insurgent force subject to the criminal laws of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP)?

JMS: The status of belligerency is not something that can be denied to or bestowed on the NDF by a mere scrap of paper. It is a status that has been earned through revolutionary struggle. Long before Mrs. Aquino could rise to the presidency of the GRP, the revolutionary forces had been building the people's revolutionary government.

VSL-NMW: Does the people's revolutionary government really exist? Are you suggesting that the GRP-NDFP agreements are merely preliminary to negotiations and agreements between the people's revolutionary government and the GRP?

JMS: My answer is yes to both questions. The revolutionary movement has been establishing organs of political power since 1968. These organs of political power comprise the people's revolutionary government. Since 1971, there has been the constitution of the Provisional Revolutionary Government.

No solution to the fundamental problems of the people and no comprehensive agreement for lasting peace can be worked out if the GRP insists on negotiating

and making agreements with the NDF within the pro-imperialist and reactionary framework of GRP authority, constitution, laws, institutions and processes.

I suppose that, in the eyes of the people's revolutionary government, GRP-NDFP negotiations and agreements are at best preparatory to GRP-People's Revolutionary Government negotiations and agreements; and for GRP-NDFP agreements to have some effect would be a matter of people's revolutionary government tolerance.

VSL-NMW: It is obvious that the thrust of the GRP position is to deny to the revolutionary movement the status of belligerency and to dismantle the New People's Army (NPA) in exchange for the legalization of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), general amnesty and rehabilitation measures. What can the NDF and the people's revolutionary government do?

JMS: It is an undeniable fact that the people's revolutionary government has millions of people and large areas under its governance, commands a powerful people's army and exercises comprehensively the functions of government. In facing up to the GRP, the NDF can insist on the solution of such fundamental problems of the people as US domination and feudal exploitation. If the GRP keeps on sidetracking the fundamental issues, the NDF can stop negotiating with the GRP, and it would be justified in so doing with the full support and understanding of the people. On its part, the revolutionary forces and the entire people will have to change the balance of forces until the GRP sees the necessity of negotiating with the PRG itself. I suppose it is absolutely clear to everyone that the revolutionary armed struggle will not cease until the revolutionary cause of the people — which is national and social liberation — is achieved. The revolutionaries are in the revolutionary movement to realize a cause far larger than any concession that may be offered by the GRP. In this light, CPP legalization, general amnesty and rehabilitation measures for surrenderers are candies for small kids.

VSL-NMW: If the NDF were a mere insurgent force and without a status of belligerency, can it ever hope to make an agreement of lasting peace with the GRP, involving the solution of fundamental social problems, and effect a coalition government to ensure the implementation of the agreement?

JMS: There is no hope. By insisting on reducing the NDF to a mere insurgent force, the GRP can even ignore completely the fundamental issues or break off

further negotiations. However, aside from demanding the dissolution of the NPA, the GRP may also choose to go through the motion of discussing fundamental issues just to be able repeatedly or indefinitely to extend the ceasefire, place the NPA at a political and military disadvantage and use exposed facilities and personnel of the NDF involved in the negotiations as unwitting tracers for the AFP intelligence services to track down underground personnel and organs of the revolutionary movement.

Let us assume that the GRP and the NDF go as far as reaching a comprehensive agreement regarding the fundamental problems. The set of solutions agreed upon will not amount to anything but mere promises by the GRP president, subject to Congress and its processes. For instance, a land reform program agreed upon will be subject to mutilation and negation by a big comprador-landlord Congress.

The kind of coalition that the GRP can offer — and only as a possibility — is one in which the CPP surfaces as a legal party, fields candidates in elections and works out an alliance within and outside the reactionary legislature. In other words, what the GRP would want to achieve is a legal CPP working within the reactionary framework of exploitative and oppressive laws and institutions. This kind of coalition is different from one between the people's revolutionary government and the GRP; and it would override the conflicting political authority of both.

VSL-NMW: The plebiscite on the new draft constitution will soon be held. What do you think should be the position of the illegal and legal forces of the national democratic movement?

JMS: The national democratic movement should wage an educational campaign all the way, explaining to the people the positive and negative aspects of the draft constitution. You see, this draft is a basket of good and rotten apples. It contains nice big words about the formal democratic rights of the individual in the abstract (i.e., it is blind to the reality of exploiting and exploited classes). But there is absolutely no provision that eliminates or drastically reduces foreign and feudal oppression and exploitation.

There is no obligation on the part of the national democratic movement to categorically say “yes” or “no” to the draft constitution. In the first place, the people, especially the working class and the peasantry, had nothing to do with

the formation of the Con-Con (Constitutional Commission) and the making of this draft.

The revolutionary forces, which have their own constitution and program of government, would, I suppose, be unwilling to endorse the Aquino constitution. There may be certain individuals and organizations in the broad national democratic movement opting for a critical yes. Their position may be tolerated by the more progressive forces.

But still the best position is to conduct the educational campaign all the way, beyond the plebiscite.

VSL-NMW: But there are indications that the overwhelming majority of the people will go to the polls; and that the constitution will be ratified by most of them. Will the national democratic movement not be isolated?

JMS: By conducting an educational campaign, the national democratic movement cannot be isolated and avoids being damned for endorsing a liberal yet pro-imperialist and reactionary document. The movement can simply seek to raise the people's level of political consciousness and expand the ranks of the advanced section of the people. This advanced section and the middle section which tends to take the critical yes position make up the majority of the people.

VSL-NMW: The US and local reactionaries may also say that the middle and backward sections of the people comprise the majority of the people. But they are divided into yes and no blocs. The backward section will tend to take the no position in response to the calls of the Marcos and Enrile factions.

JMS: The plebiscite is a passing thing. The fatal flaws of the Aquino constitution are permanent. A pro-imperialist and reactionary, though not outrightly fascist, document cannot solve the ever worsening economic and political crisis of the ruling system.

In the forthcoming plebiscite, the people are not actually making a choice between a constitution that suits their fundamental interests and a constitution that suits the reactionary and exploitative interest of the big compradors and landlords. They are simply being asked to vote yes or no to a big comprador-landlord constitution. And the middle and backward sections of the people are vulnerable to the economic, political and cultural influence of the competing factions of the same exploiting classes.

The revolutionary movement has its own way of concentrating the sovereign will and best interests of the people. It is by waging a people's war. It is not by counting the votes in elections, plebiscites and opinion polls which are controlled and manipulated by the exploiting classes; but by building the revolutionary party, people's army, organs of political power, mass organizations and the united front despite the odds posed by the oppressors' control and use of the economy, the coercive and persuasive apparatuses of the state, the schools and the mass media.

VSL-NMW: In your view, were there real coup attempts against the Aquino government? What have been the consequences of these well-publicized coup attempts?

JMS: I do not think there were real or serious coup attempts. No one among the supposed plotters has been arrested. There was merely a US-inspired shakedown of the Aquino regime. Enrile was used to the limit in compelling President Aquino to reduce the number of nationalists and liberal democrats in her cabinet.

There are indications that, as early as November 10, there had already been a compromise arranged by the US for Enrile to resign in exchange for the resignation of all other cabinet members, allowing Mrs. Aquino to throw out certain elements (except Maceda) disliked by the US.

The key cabinet posts (defense and economic) have always been held by rabid pro-US and reactionary elements. But the US wants a thoroughly pro-US and reactionary cabinet to firm up the resolve of the executive to extend in 1988 the US military bases beyond 1991 and to do every bidding of the US.

In exchange for willingness to serve US interests, President Aquino is now assured of full US support. The ruling clique is now in the process of rapid consolidation as a US-Aquino clique. This has been signaled by the appointment of General Rafael Ilete to the position of defense minister. He is simultaneously a pro-US and a pro-Aquino man.

General Ramos momentarily appears to have become even stronger than Enrile ever was. But he will be an easy pushover once the Aquino constitution is ratified. He is vulnerable to the charge of overstaying in the military and can be easily shunted to some other position eventually.

VSL-NMW: Are you saying that President Aquino is going to have a stable

government?

JMS: In the short term, a US-Aquino ruling clique is being consolidated, especially vis-à-vis other reactionary factions. But in the medium term (two to three years), the coup threat will become real and imminent if the fundamental problems of the people are not solved and the social crisis continues to worsen. A military faction will try to ride to power on the issue of corruption, which has already begun to afflict the regime, as well as on the issue of the regime's failure to quell the revolutionary movement. It would take only one year for the Aquino regime to rot and stink, because it keeps itself within the parameters of foreign and feudal domination; and no matter how tricky or brutal the Aquino presidency and the military may be in fighting the revolutionary movement, the ever worsening economic and political crisis will continue to provide the fertile ground for armed revolution.

VSL-NMW: It was widely talked about in October and November that you were a primary target of a military clique. Were you aware that there was a serious threat to your life?

JMS: It was during the third week of October when I learned that there was a threat to my life. I was then in Manila to get my visa to Japan. Leaks from military cliques had been verified and collated. The scheme was ostensibly to launch a coup involving a surgical operation against progressive leaders and so-called leftists in the Aquino cabinet and converting President Aquino into a figurehead.

I could see that progressive leaders were vulnerable and that the military plotters had already started the bombing incidents. But I did not take the threat to my life then as seriously as when the bombing incidents were already harming people and Victor Corpus had been presented by the military to slander me. Of course, the threat would become even more serious immediately after the brutal assassination of Lando Olalia.

But the people rose up to give Lando the greatest funeral honors ever given to a proletarian and revolutionary martyr in the entire history of the country and to condemn the US and the fascists who are still scot-free. More people have become convinced that there are more forms of struggle than one to combat the enemy and carry out social revolution.

VSL-NMW: What are the implications of Olalia's assassination? How will this affect the plan and chances of Partido ng Bayan in the forthcoming elections?

JMS: The scheme of the US is to restore a system of two parties controlled by factions of the same big comprador-landlord classes subservient to the US and to marginalize the Partido ng Bayan through a campaign of slander and through terror tactics.

The US wants to make sure that all its dictates, especially the extension of the US military bases beyond 1991, are carried out by a subservient government. CIA and DIA operatives have orchestrated the campaign of slander and terror tactics against Partido ng Bayan.

But the national democratic movement, including Partido ng Bayan, has gained a lot of experience and strength in the course of struggle against a blatant rule of terror —the US-instigated Marcos fascist dictatorship. Partido ng Bayan cannot be daunted because the assassination of Lando Olalia has served only to expand the ranks of those determined to carry out social revolution.

There are organizations whose task is to carry out the armed revolution. But Partido ng Bayan is determined to conduct legal struggle. Despite tremendous odds, it can win a significant portion of the local executive and legislative seats in the forthcoming elections.

Whether the reactionaries have only two or six major parties, they will be bitterly divided against themselves. They cannot solve the ever worsening economic crisis and cannot find a way of reversing the trend toward violent conflicts among themselves.

The Continuing Struggle in the Philippines

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Among those who presume that the Aquino government is at the head of a process of transition to democracy or more accurately a return to and consolidation of the prefascist or pre-1972 conditions in which the US-controlled neocolonial system carried bourgeois-democratic embellishments, there is the lack of a comprehensive and profound understanding of the roots of the Philippine crisis, the final aggravation of that crisis, the process through which the fascist dictator was removed, the character and unfolding of the new regime and the trends and prospects forged by contradictory forces in fierce struggle.

Abetted by the propaganda of US officials and mass media and by the soft-headed echoing by social democrats and other stripes of reformists, so much wishful thinking has caused the failure to perceive and analyze the most glaring facts of the ever escalating struggle between revolution and counterrevolution. It is therefore the task of this essay to provide the essentials of a comprehensive and profound understanding of the Philippine situation. At every major step, both the socioeconomic and political aspects of the Philippine crisis are presented.

I. Roots of the Philippine crisis

The old democratic revolution of 1896 led by the liberal bourgeoisie and supported mainly by the peasantry burst out against the colonial and feudal system instituted and dominated by Spain. It was a revolt against a colonial system of oppression, without the subtleties of modern imperialism and with the rigors of theocracy. It was against a system of exploitation characterized mainly by sheer colonial plunder through heavy taxation, trading monopolies, corvee labor and religious tribute, and by the rapid expansion of feudal estates and dispossession of peasants under the impetus of foreign trade with the industrial capitalist countries.

US modern imperialism aborted the total victory of the Philippine revolutionary movement against Spain by intervening in Philippine affairs and prevailing over the revolutionaries in the Filipino-US war of 1899-1902. The defeat of the revolutionary democratic forces spelled the retention of domestic feudalism and the superimposition of US monopoly capitalism on it.

Under the Paris Treaty of December 30, 1898 signed between the United States and Spain, the Philippines was sold by the latter to the former at the price of US\$20 million. The US colonial government which was formally instituted was bound by this treaty to respect all the property rights established under Spanish colonial rule.

The retention of landlordism suited the new colonizers because its main thrust was to expand raw-material production for export and the unequal exchange of raw material exports and manufactured imports. The United States proceeded to increase the agricultural mills and open mines; put up a few manufacturing enterprises for slight processing of local raw materials but absolutely dependent on imported equipment; and improve the system of transportation and communications.

The interaction of US monopoly capitalism and domestic feudalism evolved a semifeudal social economy and favored the rise of a native and permanent resident comprador big bourgeoisie as the financial and trading adjunct of US and other foreign monopolies. The comprador big bourgeoisie is the class most dominant in the semifeudal economy, especially in the cities. It combines with the more widespread landlord class which continues to dominate the countryside. Big compradors are often big landlords too.

The US colonial government made a concession to the antifeudal demands of the

peasantry by allowing the free movement of the peasants, the opening of public land for resettlement and the expropriation of a few hundreds of thousands of hectares of land owned by the much-hated religious corporations. The free movement of peasants allowed the surplus labor to resettle on public land or to sell their labor power to areas beyond their domicile. The friar lands at first redistributed in the main to landless tillers eventually fell into the hands of landlords because of the high redistribution price. And there was only a quantitative increase of the working class because there was no qualitative leap from a backward agrarian economy to an industrial economy.

The US colonial government also made a concession to the liberal bourgeoisie by expanding the public school system and by increasing the number of professionals and technicians because after all they were needed for the expanding bureaucracy and businesses. The highly educated would become mainly an adjunct and reserve force of the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class; and only a few of them would adopt the viewpoint of the national bourgeoisie which is pressed down by foreign monopoly capitalism. The ideology promoted among the formally educated has been bourgeois subjectivism compromised with religio-sectarianism and a pro-imperialist conservative liberalism as opposed to the progressive liberalism of the most advanced thinkers of the old democratic revolution. When it was time for the US to shift from direct colonial rule to indirect rule by granting nominal independence to the Philippines on July 4, 1946, the US could pass on national administration to political leaders — the bureaucrat capitalists — steeped in subservience to US interests and representative of the interests of the local exploiting classes, the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class.

The reconquest of the Philippines by the United States from the Japanese occupation forces in 1945 had enabled it to reimpose military, political, economic and cultural dominance over the Philippines. It was able to extract from the neocolonial state the continuance of the US military bases as well as the privilege of US firms to exploit natural resources and own public utilities like Filipino citizens. No less than the main component of state power, the Armed Forces of the Philippines, would remain dependent on US indoctrination, strategic planning and logistical support.

Reconstruction after World War II meant that of an agrarian, preindustrial and semifeudal social economy. US and big comprador firms and landlords were the ones that benefited most from the war damage payments and rehabilitation

funds. Before the end of the 1940s, the unequal exchange of raw material exports and manufactured imports resulted in severe economic and financial crisis. Thus, in 1949 and 1950, the US agreed to foreign exchange and import controls in order to ease the crisis, especially because there was the pressure of an armed revolutionary movement. This had sprung from the antifascist resistance in World War II and was growing as a result of the unjust acts of the US in reimposing its domination as well as that of the landlord class in extensive areas of Central Luzon.

In the entire decade of the 1950s, the system of import and foreign exchange controls resulted in the establishment of manufacturing enterprises, which were supposed to have an import-substitution character. These enterprises were highly dependent on imported equipment and components but stimulated patriotic Filipino businessmen and some bourgeois nationalist political leaders like Claro Mayo Recto to raise the demand for national industrialization, using the slogan of “Filipino First.” This was the period when the Filipino working class reached the level of 15 percent of the population and 25 percent of the basic toiling masses.

The US and its most rabid Filipino lackeys would eventually consider import and foreign exchange controls intolerable towards the end of the 1950s. And in 1962, the first executive act of the newly elected president Diosdado Macapagal was to scrap import and foreign exchange controls. The new game plan of Washington was to openly impose its economic policy dictates through multilateral agencies like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank rather than through US agencies like the US Export-Import Bank, the predecessors of the US Agency for International Development and economic missions; extract “national treatment” privileges for US investors under the cover of all foreign investors; and promote foreign borrowing and high fiscal spending for infrastructure projects and investments for raw-material production.

The main thrust of US economic policy had been to squelch the public clamor for national industrialization and to draw away borrowed and local resources from any prospect of genuine industrialization. While it urged capital-intensive infrastructure projects and the construction of an overcapacity of agricultural and mining mills, the US was tolerant only of “nonagricultural” development through labor-intensive cottage industries of the handicraft type in the 1960s.

Throughout the 1960s, there was a stagnation of the industrial sector and a contraction of industrial jobs, especially in manufacturing. To make matters worse for the ever increasing mass of surplus labor, the public land suitable for peasant resettlement and cultivation became exhausted toward the end of the 1960s. Amidst all the previous din about land reform and government-supported resettlement of landless tillers, one reactionary puppet regime after another had perpetuated landlordism and allowed landlords, bureaucrats and US agricorporations to overtake the peasant settlers and national minorities in the remotest frontier areas.

A perception of the exhaustion of land available for peasant resettlement is of utmost importance in understanding the resurgence not only of peasant war on a nationwide scale but also of the armed revolution as a comprehensive force growing to destroy the integuments of the entire semicolonial and semifeudal society.

Since the inception of the semifeudal social economy at the beginning of the century, there has been no genuine industrialization involving the establishment of basic industries or land to absorb the ever accumulating surplus labor and relieve the peasants' hunger for land. Spontaneous peasant resettlement, without benefit of any kind of material support from the reactionary government, had been the principal way out for surplus labor, especially the landless tillers, since the beginning of the century. But with the exhaustion of the land frontier, the entire social system was ready to explode.

The reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines on the theoretical basis of Marxism-Leninism on December 26, 1968 had been very timely. The Party was favored by the worsening crisis of the system and the significant growth of the legal democratic mass movement in the entire 1960s. It established the New People's Army in the countryside on March 29, 1969 by incorporating the cadres and fighters of the old people's army which had survived defeat in the early 1950s.

II. Final aggravation of the crisis

A semicolonial and semifeudal system like that of the Philippines, afflicted by three bloodsuckers — US imperialism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism — is a society in permanent crisis. And the crisis can plunge to a new depth from which it can never rise.

The declaration of martial law on September 21, 1972 and the imposition of a fascist dictatorship on the Filipino people meant that the crisis of the system had become so grave that the ruling classes of big compradors and landlords could no longer rule in the old way. The final aggravation of the crisis is joined with the rise of the determined forces of armed revolution.

The absolute lack of basic industries that are the foundation of modern industry, the frustration of even only the so-called import-substitution manufacturing (repackaging and reassembly), the exhaustion of the land frontier and the acceleration of land accumulation by the foreign and domestic exploiters, the rapid depression of the world capitalist market for raw material exports, the resultant high trade deficits and the need for colossal amounts of foreign loans, which became dramatically obvious in the financial crisis of 1970, shrank the socioeconomic ground for amicable mutual accommodation through the electoral process among the factions of the exploiting classes.

Towards the end of the 1960s, culminating in the presidential elections of 1969, there was a race among reactionaries to build private armies, cultivate their own cliques within the Armed Forces of the Philippines and use armed force for political maneuvering. Being president of the country and commander-in-chief of the AFP, Marcos was able to take the lead in organizing violence for the benefit of his own faction, which was narrower than the Nacionalista Party under whose banner he had been elected president. He had the entire national leadership of the conservative opposition party, the Liberal Party, bombed and almost wiped out on August 21, 1971 while they were assembled in an electoral campaign rally for the 1971 senatorial and local elections. Then he sought to put the blame on the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army and proceeded to suspend the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus.

The legal democratic mass movement was not cowed. It fought back with rallies and demonstrations demanding the restoration of the writ of habeas corpus and Marcos would back down and restore the writ in January 1972. But before doing so, he had gotten from the Supreme Court a formal obeisance to his view that on his sole judgment as president, he could adopt extraordinary measures, including the declaration of martial law, without having to consult the legislature or present proof of the factual basis of such an action to any court.

After another round of bombings which he staged in 1972, Marcos declared martial law and usurped absolute and supreme authority on all aspects of

government — executive, legislative and judicial — and sought to destroy all intrasystemic rivals and critics as well as the legal democratic mass movement and the armed revolutionary movement. He used as principal scapegoat the CPP and NPA which he claimed to have 10,000 rifles but which in fact had only 350 automatic rifles. Then he proceeded to coerce and cajole the constitutional convention into coming out with a constitutional draft giving him explicit autocratic power.

The United States encouraged, approved and supported the fascist dictatorship in accordance with the Nixon doctrine which had urged the fortification of the Philippines in view of the impending US defeat in the Vietnam war; and with the calculation that the autocratic regime could assure continuance of the US military bases and “parity rights” under a new label, “national treatment” in the economy, reverse certain decisions of the Supreme Court, which were unfavorable to US investors, and suppress the growing anti-imperialist and antifeudal mass movement.

The fascist dictatorship presented itself as the political center putting down the Left and the Right, as the promoter of democratic revolution and implementor of land reform, as savior of the republic and builder of a new society. The US celebrated Marcos for creating stability and the most favorable conditions for private investments. The ideology of national security was riding high within the policy-making bodies of the United States and repressive regimes were considered the most efficient and cheapest instrument of “modernization.”

The Marcos clique of bureaucrat capitalists was in fact the ultrarightist faction in power. It was the most subservient to US imperialism and the most rapacious part of the exploiting classes. It was conducting a fascist counterrevolution, effecting massive transfer of land and other assets to itself, narrowing the neocolonial republic to an autocracy and aggravating the crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal social system.

The terms of trade for Philippine raw material exports (sugar, coconut, logs, copper concentrates and the like) deteriorated throughout the 1970s. But the illusion of development was created by huge amounts of foreign loans which were used not only to cover the growing trade deficits but also to finance or induce the most unproductive programs and projects such as the rapid construction of roads, bridges, tourist facilities and office buildings, the unnecessary increase to the point of overcapacity of agricultural and mining

mills, the importation of hightech equipment and high consumer goods for the upper classes; and the rapid expansion of the Armed Forces of the Philippines from 50,000 in 1972 to 250,000 regular troops, police and paramilitary personnel.

The proportion of direct investments for the entire industrial sector decreased despite the high investments in construction financed by foreign loans. The share of manufacturing decreased despite incentives for the so-called export-oriented manufacturing which involved a narrower range of products (garments and semiconductors), slighter processing and lesser value-added, lesser regular employment and a bigger drain of foreign exchange (due to transfer-pricing) than the so-called import-substitution industries of the past.

There was an aggravation and deepening of the backward agrarian character of the economy even as half a million of the thirteen million hectares of Philippine agricultural land came under the miracle rice program with its overpriced irrigation systems and importation of farm equipment and agrichemicals.

The much-vaunted land reform program of Marcos meant the actual transfer of only a measly 2,300 hectares of land to 1,230 tenants while Marcos and his cronies amassed hundreds of thousands of hectares of land. The illusion of land reform was contrived by putting a few hundreds of thousands of hectares under the fixed rent system which is even more onerous to the tenants than the old sharecropping arrangement based on the actual crop.

Accumulated unemployment went up to more than 40 percent of the total work force because of the contraction of industrial employment, the exhaustion of the land frontier and dispossession of peasants and the ceaseless depression of raw-material production for export. There was a massive increase of farm workers competing for a decreased number of farm jobs.

Both employed and unemployed suffered from the general condition of unemployment, low wages, inflation and repeated devaluations of the currency. Seventy percent of the people fell below the poverty line. Sixty percent of children were malnourished. Eventually pockets of famine would arise in areas affected by the collapse of sugar production.

It was not simply the socioeconomic crisis of the system inflicting the daily violence of exploitation on the people. There were also the conspicuous acts of

violence to oppress the people. Before the end of the fascist regime, 160,000 people had been killed, tens of thousands of people had been tortured, hundreds of thousands had been subjected to illegal detention and humiliation for at least a day (70,000 of them for more than one month) and six million people had been forced to leave their homes and farms (2.5 million of them permanently displaced). The figures take into account the victims of military and police suppression in both the Moro and non-Moro areas.

The Marcos fascist regime started to worry about foreign loans and its own mortality in 1979 when the international credit system started to tighten. In the 1970s, the US and other capitalist countries encouraged the Philippines and other third world countries to avail of foreign loans in order to deploy the excessive amount of Eurodollars and, subsequently, petro-dollars and thereby stimulate the sale of manufactures from the capitalist countries. The bright idea was to pump prime the capitalist countries which otherwise would have slid into recession. But the trouble with this neo-Keynesian idea put on a global scale is that the Philippines, like most third world debtors, was prevented from going into genuine industrial development and would never be capable of paying back its debts on the basis of its persistent agrarian, pre-industrial and semifeudal base. Finally, the monetarists of the Milton Friedman type took over from the neo-Keynesian easy lenders.

In 1981, the state corporations and private crony corporations benefited by foreign loans started to collapse due to the international tight credit situation. Only the cronies closest to Marcos could be accommodated with refinancing from funds provided by multilateral agencies. The big compradors who were outside of the Marcos clique started to grumble against it. In previous years, even as the clique in power got the lion's share of the contracts, they had been benefited by a considerable amount of spin off and they had lavished praises on the regime. In 1983, on the eve of Benigno S. Aquino's determined return to the Philippines from a three-year exile to the US, the socioeconomic crisis was already so grave that Marcos was in a state of political panic.

Despite the Marcos regime's brutal policy of suppressing every manifestation of the national democratic movement and despite the colossal amounts of foreign loans to buoy up the regime, such forces of the armed revolution as the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army and the National Democratic Front grew in strength and advanced. The legal democratic movement, which was comprehensively antifascist, anti-imperialist and

antifeudal also resurged with a bigger following among the basic toiling masses of workers and peasants and the middle social strata.

At the start of the martial law regime, the Communist Party had only three thousand members heavily concentrated in the three regions of Manila-Rizal, Northern Luzon and Central Luzon. Elsewhere, there were only skeletal regional organizations and seeds of revolutionary work at the grassroots. At the end of the fascist regime, the Party gained some tens of thousands of members leading the revolutionary struggle of millions of people on a national scale and at the grassroots. All the regional Party organizations had acquired flesh and muscles.

In 1972, the New People's Army had only 350 automatic rifles and several hundreds more of inferior weapons. It was heavily concentrated in the region of Northern Luzon, particularly in Cagayan Valley. It had deployed armed propaganda teams arousing, organizing and mobilizing the masses, and striving to develop armed resistance at strategic points in various regions of the country. By 1986, it had gained 14,000 firearms (7,000 of which were automatic rifles) and had created fifty-nine guerrilla fronts in sixty-three out of seventy-three provinces in the country.

The mass base of the Party and the people's army had increased from some 250,000 in rural areas and some 50,000 in urban areas in a few regions in 1972 to seven million people in more than 11,000 out of 41,000 Philippine villages or more than 700 out of 1,540 Philippine municipalities in the rural areas and to three million people in urban areas all over the country. The mass base consists of people led by organs of political power or are in mass organizations for workers, peasants, youth, women, fishermen and others.

The organs of political power have been formed along the united front line since the beginning of the revolutionary armed struggle. In principle, they are also the mass base of the National Democratic Front which was formed in 1973 and is entrusted with the task of paving the way for the People's Revolutionary Government, especially from the municipal to the national level, as a democratic coalition government.

The preservation and growth of the armed revolutionary movement did not only guarantee the doom of the Marcos fascist regime but also exposed the fatal weaknesses of the entire ruling system and proved the correctness of the strategic line of encircling the cities from the countryside until the people's army

and other revolutionary forces shall have accumulated enough strength to seize the cities.

III. The fall of Marcos

Ahead of all objective factors causing the decline of the Marcos fascist regime was the continued deterioration of terms of trade for Philippine raw material exports and the tightening of international credit. The regime was discomfited by the exposed bankruptcies of the state corporations, crony corporations and the entire government, and by the tightening of the budget. The allocation for debt service in the budget had become larger than those for public works and the military. From 1981 to 1983, Marcos increasingly realized his vulnerabilities.

Earlier, foreign loans could directly fund the construction projects of the ministries of public works, public highways, human settlements and others; while the peso revenues of the government plus US military and economic support funds could be channeled in great amounts to the ministry of national defense. In 1983, the officers and men of the Armed Forces of the Philippines were already complaining that their salaries had stagnated while the rate of inflation soared. Marcos feared losing grip on the single instrument most crucial to his retention of power.

As early as the late 1970s, there had been protests from AFP officers from the rank of colonel downwards that the system of over staying generals, which Marcos had adopted in order to retain favorites and ensure loyalty, was holding up promotions. In 1981, the rivalry between his two cousins, General Fabian Ver, Presidential Security Command chief, and General Fidel Ramos, Philippine Constabulary chief, for the position of AFP chief of staff tended to create two strong factions. Minister of Defense Juan Ponce Enrile supported General Ramos but Marcos appointed General Ver to the contested position and showed to him a letter of the defense minister deprecating Ver's low qualifications and favoring Ramos. Thus, a feud would start between Ver who took the Philippine Army chief General Josephus Ramas as his closest ally on one side and Enrile and Ramos on the other side.

From 1981 onward, the two factions maneuvered against each other with regard to officer promotions; domestic and foreign purchase contracts for the military; private security contracts; control of the dollar blackmarket, smuggling and vice den operations; tactics and deployment of troops and so on. Ver created the

regional unified command as interservice composites and undercut the authority of the Philippine Constabulary chief over his own service. Marcos underestimated the severity of the feud between the Enrile-Ramos and the Ver-Ramas factions because they were all the king's men.

With regard to the armed revolutionary movement, Marcos had a long-term view of it as the principal threat to his own regime and to the ruling system. But he personally underestimated the actual strength of the New People's Army and he alternately described it as strong or weak, depending on his purpose. He did not know that the NPA had reached the critical mass of nearly 5,000 automatic rifles in 1983 and was already effectively puncturing the arrogance or morale of AFP officers and men in the field. Marcos also privately underestimated the actual strength of the legal national democratic movement.

The underestimation of the strength of the armed revolutionary movement and the legal democratic mass movement was with regard to its relation to Marcos' own armed strength. He underestimated even more the conservative opposition without the present active leadership of his chief political rival Benigno S. Aquino who was in exile. In previous electoral exercises that he had staged, Marcos had made participation of the conservative opposition a mere embellishment of his rigging operations. But on the other hand, he overestimated Aquino in 1983, especially because his return to the country was endorsed by US State Secretary George Schultz and Rep. Stephen Solarz, chairman of the House foreign affairs subcommittee for Asian and Pacific Affairs.

Marcos committed the biggest mistake in his political career by having Aquino assassinated in August 1983 on the calculation that it would be best to get rid once and for all of this dramatic figure who could take advantage of the socioeconomic crisis and revive the conservative opposition by going into a temporary alliance with the national democratic movement and gaining the dominant US support.

It was after the assassination of Aquino, the spontaneous outpouring of public outrage and the unprecedented sustained mass actions under such umbrella organizations as Justice for Aquino, Justice for All (JAJA) and subsequently the Committee for the Restoration of Democracy (CORD) and at the core of which were the solid organizations of the national democratic movement, that the US State Department adopted the stand of easing Marcos out. State Department Secretary George Schultz, who felt personally and officially insulted by the

murder of Aquino, encouraged assistant secretary for East Asia Affairs Paul Wolfowitz, Philippine desk's John Maisto and US ambassador to the Philippines Michael Armacost (who would soon rise to No.3 position in the State Department) to do the paper work and seek interagency support for easing Marcos out.

Up to late 1984, the Pentagon resisted the idea of easing Marcos out of power before the end of his 1987 presidential term because the operation would involve not only the withholding of bilateral and multilateral funds but also the encouragement of an anti-Marcos faction and thereby the promotion of a split within the AFP in order to persuade Marcos to announce an election before 1987. But the view that the revolutionary mass movement was fast gaining ground and would do so faster after the probable whitewash of the Aquino assassination (exoneration of Marcos and General Ver) would eventually be convincing even to the Pentagon.

Thus in late 1984, there was already a US interagency consensus for the easing out of Marcos. This was indicated by the National Security Study Directive (NSSD) in the diplomatically ambiguous terms of "reform or else." US defense undersecretary Richard Armitage and deputy assistant secretary for international security affairs James Kelley also made public statements critical of Marcos' management of military affairs and encouraging to General Ramos (who had temporarily taken over the position of AFP chief of staff due to General Ver's leave of absence) as well as to the colonels who would publicly launch the Reform the AFP Movement (RAM) in March 1985 right before the eyes of Marcos at the Philippine Military Academy graduation exercises. Defense Minister Enrile and acting AFP chief of staff General Ramos encouraged the RAM.

Then came the series of interagency pressures on Marcos, chiefly in the form of visits by Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) director William Casey in May 1985 and then by Reagan's personal envoy Senator Paul Laxalt in October 1985. The repeated message to Marcos had been to hold presidential elections before 1987 and soon after the release of the findings on the Aquino assassination by the Agrava Commission, or else funds from abroad would continue to be withheld and disaffected AFP officers would be difficult to manage. Subsequently, Laxalt kept up the pressure in telephone conversations with Marcos until the latter agreed to make the announcement on snap elections in November 1985.

A few days after Marcos made his snap election announcement, President Carter's assistant secretary of state for East Asia Richard Holbrooke came to Manila to team up with US Ambassador Stephen Bosworth and Manila CIA station chief Norbert Garrett. Presenting themselves as bipartisan representatives of US foreign policy, they met Mrs. Corazon Aquino, Jose Cojuangco and Agapito "Butz" Aquino and told them that Mrs. Aquino could be a sure winner if she would keep the communists and communist sympathizers out of her inner campaign organization and prospective cabinet and if she would not make the US military bases a campaign issue.

Keeping the Reds out of her campaign organization and prospective cabinet was no problem for her because in the formation of BAYAN or Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (New Patriotic Alliance) in May 1985, the yellow pro-Aquino elements had broken off after failing to gain control. Mrs. Aquino deliberately avoided any negotiations with BAYAN on the snap election but wanted it to support her without her having to make any reciprocal commitments. On the US military bases, she departed from the basic document of the so-called convenor group which she had signed on December 26, 1984 calling for the dismantling of the bases not later than 1991. She took a new tack by declaring that she would "keep her options open" until 1991 despite the fact that negotiations on the bases would have to start in 1988 due to the scheduled renegotiation of another five-year compensation package for 1989 to 1994.

In a unique way, Mrs. Aquino played a decisive role in her becoming president. As the widow of the martyr, she was the center of public sympathy. She deliberately declared over and over that she was not interested in the presidency until it was ripe for her to declare her candidacy in the snap election. To put her in a position of moral ascendancy over all potential presidential candidates on the opposition side, rabid pro-US elements made her as one of the three presiding officers of the so-called convenor group who were not supposed to be interested in the presidency. But she would eventually run for the presidency by virtue of one million signatures urging her to run as well as of mediations by US ambassador Bosworth and Jaime Cardinal Sin between her and another opposition presidential aspirant Salvador Laurel.

The snap election of February 7, 1986 proved to be a fraud as correctly predicted by the revolutionary organizations and the biggest legal democratic organization BAYAN, which called for a national strike movement immediately after it became clear that Marcos won the presidency by massive fraud. US officialdom

and mass media were alarmed that the Left was the big winner by taking the initiative in leading the fight against the Marcos regime. Under US direction, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) departed from its old line of critical collaboration (occasional criticism of the grossest human rights violations but consistent collaboration with the Marcos regime on the fundamentals of the system) by declaring on February 14 that the foundation of the Marcos regime was immoral and illegitimate. Then, Mrs. Aquino called for civil disobedience. And contradictory forces converged to make gigantic mass actions against the fraudulent elections.

The Marcos regime cracked wide open on February 22, 1986. It aborted a coup plan of the RAM under the leadership of Enrile and Ramos but the frustrated coup plotters took a defiant stand in Camp Aguinaldo. With the help of Cardinal Sin and Radio Veritas — the Catholic radio station partly financed by the CIA — they called on the people to protect them from Marcos and Ver. It is probable that US special envoy and troubleshooter Philip Habib had given the go-signal to Enrile for a coup. But the RAM was infiltrated by Marcos' counterintelligence agents.

US ambassador Bosworth, the JUSMAG and CIA staff worked fast to ensure a military stalemate between the Marcos-Ver and Enrile-Ramos camps and immediately put in General Rafael Ilete as a mediator. Though he was Philippine ambassador to Thailand, he had been at hand because the US had put him into the committee formed by Marcos under Pentagon pressure to reorganize the AFP and ostensibly to mollify the RAM.

While the military stalemate continued, the spontaneous rising of the masses in Metro Manila and the provinces would occur. At the highway between Camp Aguinaldo (AFP general headquarters) and Camp Crame (PC headquarters), hundreds of thousands of people converged until Marcos fled on the evening of February 24, 1986 shortly after Laxalt's final advice to him to "cut and cut cleanly." Twenty percent of the people that converged on that portion of the EDSA highway came from various antifascist organizations, mainly the component organizations of BAYAN. Eighty percent were spontaneous masses.

The tens of thousands of people converging on the presidential palace and park came from BAYAN to the extent of at least ninety percent. It was some 500 members of the Quezon City chapter of BAYAN that took over Channel 4 (the government radio-TV network) at a crucial moment before the RAM detachment

moved in. In the provinces, mass actions were organized and launched by BAYAN. The most crucial of these mass actions was the one in Angeles City (location of the US Clark Air Force Base) which discouraged the tank advance into Manila by a pro-Marcos general from Camp Aquino in Tarlac.

It was a combination of contradictory forces that brought down the Marcos fascist regime. It is wrong to say that the US and anti-Marcos reactionaries were solely responsible for the overthrow. Neither is it correct to say that the legal national democratic forces did it all. Among the spontaneous masses were various kinds and levels of consciousness but all converged on the objective of overthrowing the long-hated regime.

However, if there has to be a singling out of the most decisive factor that caused the downfall of Marcos, it was the revolutionary mass movement. It worked the longest and most effectively to weaken and isolate the Marcos fascist dictatorship, especially while the intrasystemic or conservative opposition was rendered impotent until 1983. It was fear of this movement growing even faster, had Marcos stayed in power longer, that had been the main factor in the calculations of the US and the local reactionaries when they decided to ease him out or to junk him. From 1983 to the very final days of the Marcos regime, it was the revolutionary movement which provided the hard core of the mass uprising. But the overall balance of strength between the revolutionary and counterrevolutionary forces was still such that the US and anti-Marcos reactionaries would be able to determine at the top the basic character of the new regime.

IV. Character and unfolding of the Aquino regime

A popular uprising protected the aborted coup makers — Enrile-Ramos and the RAM — from the Marcos-Ver forces and paved the way for Mrs. Corazon Aquino to assume the Philippine presidency. She had the legal claim to the office on the basis of the mere assertion that she won the snap election although within the very processes of voting, counting and proclamation of the winner under the Marcos constitution, she had lost it. But she was riding high on the wave of a popular uprising that was generally anti-Marcos and antifascist.

It was impossible for the Enrile-Ramos tandem and RAM to have put up any other person as president in the face of the popular uprising. More important, as far as they were concerned, were the orders of their US superiors to support Mrs.

Aquino. It was also impossible for the national democratic forces at the core of the popular uprising to demand effectively that they get any formal share of high positions in the new regime or anything else beyond the given strength of the revolutionary movement and the given level of consciousness and organization of the four-day people's uprising.

The overthrow of Marcos was not a social revolution, uprooting comprehensively the evils of US imperialism, feudalism and fascism. It did not mean the solution of the fundamental problems of the people and the crisis of the social system. The US retained its hegemony over the Philippines. The same exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords continued to rule the same semicolonial and semifeudal state and society. The same Armed Forces of the Philippines continued to be the main component of state power. Even the most brazen fascists have been retained in accordance with the US scheme of moderating or minimizing the split within the AFP and among the reactionaries. Thus, Enrile and Ramos became agents of transition from one puppet regime to another.

The forces of the national democratic revolution had no choice but to seek the overthrow of the US-supported Marcos fascist dictatorship and thereby strengthen themselves through revolutionary struggle. The change of puppet presidents did not reduce the strength of the revolutionary forces nor take initiative away from it. On the other hand, the objective conditions for further growth in strength have become more favorable.

The Marcos regime simply passed on to the Aquino regime an ever worsening socioeconomic crisis. And worse, no less than the main component of state power has become severely split first between the Marcos-Ver and the Enrile-Ramos factions in order to effect the fall of the former and rise of Mrs. Aquino to power as Philippine president; and subsequently allowed her as AFP commander-in-chief and form her own military faction. The fractiousness of the AFP and the higher capacity and proclivity of the reactionary factions to unleash violence against each other are unprecedented phenomena in Philippine history and are the unprecedented gains for the revolutionary movement from the downfall of Marcos.

Since its beginnings on February 25, 1986, the Aquino regime has been a pro-US and reactionary regime. The key positions in the Aquino cabinet such as the ministers of national defense and the economic ministries were entrusted to rabid

pro-US and reactionary elements. No less than the long-time Pentagon agent and Marcos' erstwhile fascist henchman Juan Ponce Enrile was retained as minister of national defense. The minister of finance and the Central Bank governor persisted in pursuing the same economic policies dictated by Washington either directly or through multilateral agencies like the IMF and the World Bank.

Only the secondary positions in the Aquino cabinet went to the human rights lawyers who had a record of being bourgeois nationalists and civil libertarians. They evoked the liberal democratic tendency which was secondary to the essential pro-US and reactionary character of the Aquino regime and which would eventually become a deliberate facade after several months.

The Aquino regime benefited from a continued contrast with the outright fascist regime that had fallen. It was an anti-Marcos and antifascist stance, not a comprehensive and deepgoing anti-imperialist and antifeudal stand, that generated the popularity of Aquino. She retained the autocratic power of Marcos but rationalized the retention of such power as a tool for undoing the worst features and effects of the Marcos regime. Thus, Aquino released all those categorized and well-known as political prisoners, restored the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus, scrapped the Marcos constitution in favor of her own transitory constitution, formed a commission on human rights and a commission on good government and consistently advocated the making of a constitution with a bill of rights in the proper liberal democratic phraseology and with provisions for a check-and-balance system among the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government. But she retained most of the antinational, antilabor and antipeasant decrees of Marcos.

Mrs. Aquino had to release the political prisoners and restore the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus not only to pay her debt of gratitude to the people and fulfil an electoral campaign pledge but also to invalidate the fascist proclamation and decrees under which her own husband had been persecuted in 1972 and convicted to death in 1977. She decreed the formation of the Presidential Commission on Human Rights but her decree made sure that the commission would have limited powers of investigation. She did not repeal the decree of Marcos requiring trial of AFP officers and men by the military courts even if their victims were civilians. The commission has not succeeded in effecting the punishment of a single soldier for human rights violations under the Marcos regime.

With Mrs. Aquino calling for national reconciliation and declaring that she was still to unsheathe the sword of war, she was engaged in deception all the while. As early as March 1986, she had allowed Enrile and Ramos to deploy at least fifteen additional combat battalions from the dissolved Presidential Security Command and the training camps against the revolutionary forces in the countryside. There was an escalated campaign of suppression and eventually a higher rate of human rights violations than under the last years of the Marcos regime in both rural and urban areas.

The Presidential Commission on Good Government was used not so much to investigate and seek the punishment of the bureaucratic crooks of the past regime and recover assets in favor of the public as to negotiate and effect under-the-table transfer of recoverable assets from the old set of crooks to the new set of crooks headed by an inner circle of Aquino-Cojuangco kins like Jose Cojuangco, Tingting Cojuangco, Pedro Cojuangco, Ricardo Lopa, Paul Aquino, Igmidio Tanjuatco and Johnny Sumulong. Mrs. Aquino and her kins had worked out new economic and political alliances with former cronies of the Marcos fascist regime.

In forming the constitutional commission in May 1986, she ostensibly handpicked the commission members autocratically but she was actually directed by the US and reactionary interests to appoint an overwhelming majority of members who are pro-US representatives of the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class. Thus, the substantive provisions of the Aquino constitution perpetuate and promote imperialist, big comprador and landlord interests even as there are the provisions formally asserting the civil and political liberties of the individual in the abstract and the check-and-balance system of the branches of an inevitably big comprador-landlord government.

On July 6, 1986, the Manila Hotel incident occurred. Some well-known pro-Marcos generals and colonels and a few hundreds of AFP troops occupied the hotel in order to provide a stage for Arturo Tolentino, Marcos' vice-presidential running mate in the snap election, to take his oath of office as president in the absence of Marcos. The incident was not a coup attempt in the real sense because the troops were not used to attempt a seizure of power but merely to make a show. Mrs. Aquino was safely in Mindanao with General Ramos.

There were signs that Enrile and RAM were in on the affair before it was launched. During the first five hours of the hotel occupation incident, Enrile

could not be contacted by frantic palace officials. And then it was his chief subaltern Col. Gregorio Honasan who negotiated with the armed occupants of the hotel for their surrender. Even before consulting Aquino, Enrile forgave the military men involved in the incident. To complete the farce, General Ramos would punish them with thirty push-ups.

The Pentagon, through the military attaches in the US embassy, was behind the entire show from beginning to end. It was intended to exert pressure on Aquino and at the same time to expose the assets of Marcos within the AFP. Col. Rolando Abadilla had been tricked into organizing the occupation of the hotel on the understanding that the bulk of RAM under the Enrile-Honasan subfaction would join up.

At any rate, as a result of the incident, the Aquino faction became more and more suspicious of Enrile and carried out the tactic of splitting Enrile and Ramos as well as RAM by having Aquino consult Ramos on military matters while bypassing Enrile, by utilizing the high respect of Ramos for Iletto with whom he had closer and longer relations than Enrile and by cultivating and extending favors to Ramos' sister Leticia Shahani, who had been promoted to foreign affairs deputy minister. It was the smart way to move in on the No.1 position occupied by the military faction under the Enrile-Ramos tandem. At this time, the Aquino faction in the AFP under the deputy minister of defense General Rafael Iletto which had started small and had been No. 3 among the military factions in March 1986 was already occupying the No. 2 position as the Marcos faction fell to No. 3 as the known pro-Marcos generals and colonels were either under house arrest, retired, kicked out or shunted to offices without men to command.

Mrs. Aquino felt confident enough to make a state visit to the United States in August 1986. She begged for an increase in economic support funds and military assistance, rescheduling of debts and more loans and other accommodations. In return for these, she pledged to promote stability and more incentives to foreign investments. She declared that she had called for negotiations and national reconciliation with the revolutionary forces to gain the moral ground for unsheathing the sword of war. She assured Reagan in conversations that she would agree to the extension of the US military bases beyond 1991.

Enrile had always been uncomfortable about the possibility of being unceremoniously shunted off the Aquino cabinet and held to account for

complicity in abuse of political power and corruption. As he became aware of the president's plan to cut him down, he pushed his chief political adjutant to organize the Nacionalista Party as his future political shelter, threatened to rejoin the Marcos faction by participating in pro-Marcos anticommunist rallies and used the bulk of the RAM under Honasan to make coup threats and coup rumors (culminating in Oplan "God Save the Queen"), and extract promises from the Aquino regime that his (Enrile's) assets would not be subjected to investigation. Enrile's self-interest found supreme shelter under cover of pushing US demands on the Aquino regime. Thus, in making coup threats from August to November 1986, the pro-Enrile bulk of RAM ostensibly pushed such US demands as the following: removal from the Aquino cabinet of the human rights lawyers who were described as communists or communist sympathizers; a pledge by Aquino to come out openly in favor of the extension of US military bases beyond 1991 during the negotiations in 1988; prompt compliance with the economic policy dictates of the IMF and World Bank such as wage freeze and antistrike policy, anti-industrialization, import liberalization, privatization, conversion of foreign debt to equity in profitable enterprises and so on; and official endorsement of the low-intensity conflict scheme and the death squads in both urban and rural areas and the removal of appointed officers-in-charge suspected of being communists.

Philip Habib came on a secret mission to Manila on the days close to Mrs. Aquino's departure for her state visit to Japan on November 10, 1986 ostensibly to arrange a compromise between her and Enrile. The deal agreed upon was for Enrile to step down and allow his replacement by General Iletto as defense minister and allow the Aquino-Iletto-Ramos combine to occupy the No. 1 position in the military. In exchange, Aquino had to submit to all the above stated US demands and give a final assurance to Enrile that he would retain his ill-gotten assets. He would also be given the highest military award, the Philippine Legion Merit Award. Washington's final seal of approval was secretly delivered to Aquino in Japan on November 12, 1986 by US undersecretary of state Gaston Sigur.

The Pentagon and CIA agents lost no time in ordering their Filipino military assets to make their first big kill in Manila, bringing to the main city the low-intensity conflict warfare already started in several Mindanao and Visayan cities. On November 13, 1986, a comprehensive leader of the legal democratic movement Rolando Olalia, president of the newly established Partido ng Bayan (People's Party), chairman of Kilusang Mayo Uno (May First Movement) and vice-chairman of BAYAN, was kidnapped, tortured and murdered. His brutally

mutilated body was deliberately meant to be found so as to intimidate the legal progressive forces. But the legal democratic movement would carry out a funeral march of unprecedented size for a working class leader without the benefit of media and church hype. The murder of Olalia was the start of a pattern of successful and unsuccessful assassination attempts that would victimize prominent open leaders like Bernabe Buscayno, former commander-in-chief of the NPA; Lean Alejandro, BAYAN general secretary; and Dr. Nemesio Prudente, president of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines — all survivors of detention under the Marcos regime like Olalia.

The initial response of the National Democratic Front to the murder of Olalia was to suspend the negotiations with the Aquino regime for a ceasefire agreement. But the regime deceptively made it appear that Enrile was replaced as defense minister to counter his murderous colonels and satisfy the NDF's demand for justice. The NDF signed the ceasefire agreement to create an atmosphere for negotiations on substantial issues on November 28, 1986, despite the previous murder of Olalia and the subsequent insulting tirade of Aquino equally against the revolutionary forces and her reactionary rivals.

Subsequently, the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines made a comprehensive study of the recent submissions of the Aquino regime to US demands; the content of the newly drafted Aquino constitution; the Olalia murder and so many other barbarities in both urban and rural areas; the position and actuation of the regime in negotiations with the NDF; and the change of the relative position of the Aquino faction in the array of reactionary factions.

The CPP leadership decided sometime in December 1986 that the Aquino faction was no longer just a pro-US reactionary faction fighting more rabid pro-US reactionary factions like those of Marcos and Enrile. It had consolidated as the pro-US reactionary faction in power vis-à-vis its rival reactionary factions and was casting away the bourgeois nationalists and liberal democrats who had been responsible for the real but secondary liberal democratic tendency. The most important fact in the consolidation of the US-Aquino regime was the Aquino-Ileto-Ramos combine getting the full blessings of the US and becoming the top faction within the AFP.

The NDFP-Aquino regime negotiations on substantive issues which were supposed to coincide with the 60-day ceasefire agreement proved conclusively that the Aquino regime had absolutely no interest in fulfilling the basic

antifascist, anti-imperialist and antifeudal demands of the people. It was simply and solely interested in having the revolutionary forces surrender to the political authority, constitution, institutions and processes of the big comprador-landlord joint class dictatorship; offering in exchange only some dubious terms of personal benefit to traitors of the revolutionary cause; and rendering useless any negotiations on the national democratic demands of the people.

The intransigent position and actuations of the Aquino regime throughout the negotiations were enough reason to break off from them. But on January 22, 1987, peasants belonging to Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP or Philippine Peasant Movement) and their urban supporters in a demonstration were massacred (19 were killed and several hundreds were injured) right in front of the presidential palace by palace guards and their Marine and police reinforcements. Even before the end of the ceasefire period of February 7, the NDF representatives and other personnel in Manila and the regions had to withdraw and secure themselves.

On January 26, 1987, another incident occurred in which a few hundreds of AFP troops under one Col. Canlas, an officer from Mrs. Aquino's own region, seized the television station Channel 7 and made anticommunist demands on the Aquino regime. It was patently not a coup attempt but it was loudly described as such by Iletto and Ramos. Aquino was again safely out of Manila; she was in Cebu. The mock coup served to deflect the public outrage over the peasant massacre in front of the presidential palace and fitted into the US propaganda scheme of making the rightist Aquino regime look like the center, besieged from the Left and the Right. The mock coup attempt was staged to directly favor Aquino.

Soon after the breakdown of the negotiations with the NDF in February 1987, Mrs. Aquino completely unmasked herself by declaring total war against the revolutionary movement and endorsing the low-intensity conflict scheme and the death squads assassinating legal progressive leaders in both urban and rural areas. She claimed credit for having paralyzed the revolutionary forces with the ceasefire agreement, compelling them to divide their house again over the Aquino constitution and smoothly pushing its ratification. It had been her constant theme that she (the rightist representing the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class to both of which she belonged) was the representative of the middle class or the center and was out to split and isolate the Left. And in a conscious effort to override the growing peasant demand for land reform and the

peasant massacres by her military forces, she went through the motion of forming a series of study committees on land reform and issued press releases as if she had been sincerely interested in land reform.

Despite the maximum troop deployment and escalation of campaigns against them, since ten days after the fall of Marcos in 1986, the revolutionary forces all over the country had restrained themselves from launching tactical offensives and had launched these only in five regions where enemy troops were most aggressive. Then the ceasefire agreement meant a complete abstention from tactical offensives, except in Cagayan valley where enemy forces refused to honor the ceasefire. After Aquino's declaration of total war, the revolutionary forces decided to launch nationwide tactical offensives at an unprecedented rate and seized more weapons than ever before from the fractious and demoralized enemy forces. Under the direction of the Pentagon and CIA operatives, the most notorious of whom pretend to be retirees like Gen. John Singlaub and Ray Cline, military and paramilitary forces accelerated their attacks on vulnerable legal progressive leaders, especially in the urban areas. But the revolutionary forces would respond only in July 1987 by fielding more guerrilla units and armed city partisan to attack the far more exposed US and Philippine counterrevolutionary personnel and installations related to the campaigns of suppression.

In connection with the May 11 legislative elections, the Partido ng Bayan (PnB) was first banned from participation by the Commission on Elections on flimsy or unsubstantiated anticommunist grounds only a few days before the deadline for the filing of candidacies. Then, it was subjected to the assassination of twenty-nine of its leaders and campaigners at various levels; grenade-throwing at its offices, arrests, raids on its offices and other forms of harassment. Most damaging to the party was the declaration of 695 out of a total of 1,540 cities and municipalities as trouble spots in which the military supervised the elections and discouraged known PnB followers from voting; and the ban on election inspectors and poll watchers other than those assigned by the US-Aquino regime. The US and the Aquino regime were determined to squelch the hope of the Alliance for New Politics (the electoral alliance of Partido ng Bayan, BAYAN, Volunteers for Popular Democracy, etc.) to get at least twenty percent of the congressional seats on the basis of the proven strength of the legal democratic mass movement.

But the antidemocratic and anticommunist actions directed against Partido ng Bayan had other results overlooked by the US-Aquino regime. The pro-Enrile

and pro-Marcos factions were also adversely affected by fraud and terrorism in their own bailiwicks; and the pro-Enrile faction was able to get the evidence of fraud in the program for computerized cheating by the special operations group of Jose Cojuangco and Paul Aquino. Enrile presented the evidence to the Manila CIA station chief Norbert Garrett and former US defense undersecretary Gen. Richard Stillwell. They believed Enrile and made encouraging statements to him and Honasan, head of the RAM. By this time, the latter had won over Col. Victor Batac who used to head the pro-Ramos subfaction of the RAM. The Enrile faction mistook the encouraging statements as a go-signal for a coup d'etat, especially after Sen. Jesse Helms of the US Senate foreign relations committee publicly attacked the fraudulent conduct of the May 11, 1987 elections, the report of the Manila CIA station to the US select intelligence committee against Aquino (derided as the Sugar Queen) was leaked to the press and major US mass media assailed the Aquino regime as being soft on communists and inefficient in achieving stability and improving the climate for foreign investments.

Aside from igniting the August 28 coup attempt by more than a thousand troops headed by Enrile's chief hatchetman Col. Honasan, the exposure of the cheating in the May 11 elections also meant the exposure of earlier cheating in the so-called ratification of the Aquino constitution. In both February 2 plebiscite and May 11 legislative elections, incredible claims of more than 95 percent of eligible voters registering and more than 90 percent of registered voters actually voting were made by the Aquino regime. These claims are no different from those of the Marcos fascist regime for its own rigged voting exercises in the past. These figures depart drastically from normal registration and voting patterns established in the 1950s and early 1960s. The Aquino regime is using the same electoral tactics that the Marcos regime used.

Exactly at the time that Aquino could claim her regime to have become more stable and consolidated because of the reinstatement of the Philippine Congress, she would be confronted with the first real coup attempt on August 28, 1987. It was real enough because Col. Honasan had at least moved his troops up to the gates of the presidential palace when the president was in it. But at the same time the coup plotters did not have enough determination to break through the gates and capture the president; and therefore it still carried characteristics of the old shows d'etat, mere shows of force for pressure effect. Honasan would subsequently declare that he had merely intended a show of force and effect such policy changes (short of overthrowing the president) as further reorganization of the cabinet, better pay for AFP officers and men, more vigorous conduct of the

anticommunist campaigns of suppression and so on. No mention of the electoral cheating was made so as to dissociate Enrile from the military adventure. US and Philippine media analysts did not also mention the electoral cheating because they had been committed to drumbeating the May 11 elections as the cleanest and most honest ever even before counting started. It was a counting that extraordinarily dragged on for more than three months.

It was clear that the US at the highest and most responsible level— White House and National Security Council—never gave a go-signal to Honasan for a coup d'état. But obviously Pentagon and CIA operatives were in cahoots with Honasan. When the military adventure began to get out of hand, with more than fifty people getting killed and hundreds more wounded and the AFP headquarters building burning down, the US military attaches had to show their hand conspicuously to referee the confrontation between the Aquino and Enrile military factions.

The most important thing for the US and its Pentagon arm was to exact more benefits from the entire incident. So, Aquino was forced to kick out her executive secretary Joker Arroyo who had been described as an anti-US Rasputin and purify her cabinet the pro-US way. Raul Manglapus was appointed foreign affairs secretary on the condition that he would not only smoothen the extension of the US military bases but that he would not also ask for an intolerably high compensation package in the form of rent. Military officers got sensitive and more lucrative positions in the upper sections of the bureaucracy. The budget for the military was jacked up from 11.4 billion Philippine pesos to 16.8 billion and salaries of AFP personnel were increased by a whopping sixty percent. The consequent problem for Aquino is how to satisfy the demand of the civilian bureaucracy for adequate compensation. To satisfy the anticommunist demands of Honasan and his principals, Aquino has urged the military, police and paramilitary forces to kill communists with impunity. Without the least rhetoric about respect for civil and political liberties, she urged them to do so in a speech before a group of US big businessmen and Filipino big compradors last October 20.

Earlier in July 1987, she had issued Executive Order No. 226 otherwise known as the Omnibus Investments Code (OIC) guaranteeing non expropriation of foreign investments, unrestricted remittance of profits and repatriation of capital, tax exemptions, accelerated depreciation, and so on. But worse than any similar issuance of Marcos, the new investment code removes all restrictions on the

proportion of foreign equity in all fields of investment and on the proportion of products to be dumped on the local market by foreign reexport firms upon the judgment of the Board of Investments and grants longer tax holidays for foreign investments, complete tax exemption for reexports of foreign firms, tax exemption on the basis of job generation and so on. The tax subsidies to foreign investors are bound to be shouldered by the Filipino people who are already straining under heavy tax burden. Nevertheless, foreign investments in new enterprises are not coming in any significant amount for a number of reasons: the main thrust of capitalist countries is to revive their own stagnant home industries and wage a foreign trade offensive; the Philippine economy is depressed and offers a limited market; and the unpaid foreign loans are still in the extended process of being converted into equity in the Philippines.

On the crucial question of land reform, affecting the overwhelming peasant majority (seventy-five percent of the population), Mrs. Aquino had issued her final word before the opening of Congress in July and passed on to this landlord-dominated body the task of legislating a land reform law. Mrs. Aquino upheld in Proclamation No. 131 and Executive Order No. 229 the counterrevolutionary provisions in her own constitution stipulating that the expropriation of landed estates must be based on the volition of the landlords to sell and the payment of the going market price for the land and that Congress must decide the land retention limits and priorities in expropriating land.

She made clear that she would merely continue the bogus land reform program of Marcos which involved the offer to sell land to the tenants of rice and corn land at the going market price; and if farm workers wished to participate in the ownership of export-crop plantations they could purchase shares of stocks in agrcorporations. In one stipulation, she made a special attack on peasants under the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas who had on their own recovered land previously grabbed by Marcos and his cronies by declaring that they would not be entitled to any benefit under her land reform program. In brief, there is not going to be any genuine and thoroughgoing land reform under the US-Aquino regime.

V. Trends and prospects

The obvious transition that has occurred in the Philippines from 1983 to 1986 has been one from a pro-US reactionary faction, ruling as an outright fascist clique to another faction of the same kind, ruling with a bourgeois democratic

facade. The same joint class dictatorship of the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class persists. But the economic and political crisis of the same ruling system has been further aggravated and deepened.

The transition is merely a temporary fluctuation. The forces of fascism are still very much within the new regime. And another transition is developing towards a restoration of fascism at the highest level of the reactionary government. What used to be a real liberal democratic tendency, secondary to the basic pro-US and big comprador landlord character of the Aquino regime, has become merely a facade to the intensified oppression and exploitation of the broad masses of the people who fortunately are not helpless because they have their revolutionary forces nurtured and tempered through continuous struggle. The US-Aquino regime is encompassed by the final stage of the deterioration of the ruling system which has gone on since the 1972 imposition of fascist dictatorship on the people.

In its overeagerness to retain its hegemony over the Philippines, the US has fed to the Aquino regime the same line that it had fed to the Marcos regime. The line misrepresents the new regime as the center and as one capable of fighting simultaneously the Left and the Right. But this time, not even the US or the entire world capitalist system is in a position to provide the new rightist regime with all the necessary funds to reconcile the contending reactionary factions, mollify the suffering people and fight a revolutionary movement that has already gained experience and strength in various forms of struggle, especially armed struggle.

The Aquino regime is actually far weaker than the Marcos fascist regime in socioeconomic terms. It can never hope to reach in real terms before 1992 the GNP level of 1982 which had been bad enough and at which the negative growth rate had begun. Foreign creditors are no longer as willing as they were in the 1970s to bloat up the Philippine GNP with foreign funds. The regime estimates that from 1987 to 1992 it has to pay out the staggering amount of \$20 billion in debt service but it can only get \$4 billion in new loans. The debt service on the total accumulated foreign debt of \$28.6 billion for the year 1987 is more than \$3 billion which is more than sixty percent of export earnings for the same year. The government has assumed as its obligation \$22 billion of the total foreign debt and must pay as debt service this year the amount of 75.2 billion pesos, which is 47 percent of the total government budget of 160 billion pesos. Debt service is the No. 1 expense item in the budget of the Philippine government.

While the working people's incomes are sinking, the regime is driven to increase the tax burden in order to waste the revenues on debt service and militarization. There is going to be no fundamental change in the character of the social economy.

There is going to be no industrialization and agrarian reform to absorb the ever accumulating surplus labor and remove the root causes of social unrest. The main thrust of the Aquino economic policy is wage freeze and worker repression, import liberalization, dependence on agriculture, privatization, foreign debt conversion to equity and wastage of resources on debt servicing and militarization.

The world capitalist market will continue to absorb the raw material exports of the Philippines but at prices lower and at quantities less than before. At the same time, the Philippines will have to pay inflated prices for imported consumer and producer items. Especially after the global stock market crash, the US has to reduce its budgetary and foreign trade deficits and is in no position to play Santa Claus to the Philippines. The proposal for a mini-Marshall Plan for the Philippines involves a measly amount of \$1 billion yearly added to the current level of US official assistance. Yet the US proponents wish the amounts to be shared by the United States, Japan and Western Europe.

The socioeconomic ground for amicable mutual accommodation among the major reactionary factions of Aquino, Enrile, Marcos and Laurel is more limited than at any previous time. The rapacity of the Aquino ruling faction in taking advantage of business opportunities and transferring to itself recoverable ill-gotten assets of Marcos and his cronies is comparable to the rapacity of the previous ruling clique. The Marcos style of overkill in rigging elections adopted also by the new ruling faction has already provoked the Enrile faction to launch a coup attempt as serious as the one last August 28 and has convinced both the Enrile and Ramos factions that they must hold on to their guns to keep their wealth and return to power. Consequently, the Aquino regime has pulled back at least four maneuver battalions to Manila for counter-coup and presidential security purposes.

Under current conditions of grave crisis, voting exercises staged by the ruling reactionary faction can never be an effective method for resolving contradictions among the reactionary factions nor of robbing a determined revolutionary movement of political initiative. On the other hand, such exercises can intensify

the division and strife among the reactionaries and create conditions favorable to a revolutionary movement that builds its political power in its own way while at the same time uses every form of legal struggle both to strengthen the legal democratic forces and take advantage of contradictions among the reactionaries.

The armed followers of the Aquino, Enrile and Marcos factions are both inside and outside the Armed Forces of the Philippines. While in power up to the final days of its collapse, the Marcos faction never had to contend with armed organizations of its rival factions. Both the Marcos and Enrile factions have tremendous military and financial assets which the Aquino faction and other anti-Marcos reactionary factions never had while they opposed the Marcos ruling clique. The armed threat to the Aquino faction comes from within the system not only from the definable factions of Marcos and Enrile but also from some potential military group riding on the continuing general discontent among AFP officers and men and seizing power for itself or for some military-civilian combine of counterrevolutionaries. Such a group may either be inspired or adopted by the US at some point when it chooses to heap all blame on the Aquino faction for failure in the anticommunist campaign of suppression, for corruption, for inefficiency and such other charges.

There are five possibilities for the Aquino regime:

First, Aquino retains power up to 1992 because she dutifully complies with US demands (especially on the US military bases which are up for renegotiation) and the US continues to shore her up.

Second, she is overthrown by a coup d'etat because she does not follow US orders well enough or her regime stinks too much for following US orders.

Third, she is simply assassinated by pro-Marcos, pro-Enrile or other anti-Aquino elements within or outside the AFP, which are undeniably plenty.

Fourth, she is compelled to resign and she gives way to her vice-president Salvador Laurel because she would rather step aside than suffer the worse consequence of staying on.

Fifth, she is compelled to call for new presidential elections before 1992 in order to avert a worse consequence. The Marcos and Enrile factions continue to work on this possibility by insisting that Aquino upheld the Marcos constitution and yet she was never proclaimed the electoral winner under the same constitution.

The threats to Aquino from the US and her reactionary rivals are far more immediate than from the revolutionary movement. But while the revolutionary movement cannot yet directly overthrow her regime in the next few years, the revolutionary movement can cause her regime to fall in the same way that it caused the Marcos regime to fall.

The violent contradictions among the reactionaries themselves make the political conditions favorable for the growth in strength and advance of the armed revolutionary movement. In turn, the rising strength of the armed revolutionary movement — plus that of the Moro revolutionary organizations — would further crack the ruling system, induce the reactionary factions to fight each other even more bitterly and lead to the further isolation and fall of the Aquino regime.

Before a fascist coup can succeed or the US-Aquino regime itself can declare a state of emergency, suspension of the writ of habeas corpus or martial law, the urban-based democratic mass movement and the urban revolutionary underground are bound to grow in strength. Despite the exaggerated view that the fate of the progressive mass organizations and even the armed revolutionary movement is determined by the voting exercises and other pretenses at democracy played out by the class enemy, BAYAN has increased the number of its member-organizations from about a thousand to more than two thousand and the total of individual members from one million to more than two million since the fall of Marcos; and has launched unprecedented gigantic mass actions like the Olalia funeral march of about a million people on November 25, 1986 and the nationwide people's strike on August 26, 1987 against the oil price hike which paralyzed transport in most regions of the country. There are still broader legal multisectoral and sectoral alliances and more mass organizations arising.

While the legal democratic mass movement and the armed revolutionary movement advance, it is expected that the pro-imperialist forces of reaction, be they the ruling faction or a coup-making faction, will escalate their own anticommunist and antidemocratic actions to force the legal progressive forces to go underground. For instance, when the nationwide tactical offensives of the people's army and the nationwide people's strike coincided in August 1987, the coup-making faction of Enrile and Honasan found it opportune to launch their August 28 coup attempt. And there was the consequent possibility that the Aquino ruling faction itself or a new reactionary faction in power would declare a state of emergency to wipe out the legal democratic forces.

The revolutionary movement had the clear orientation never to give up the legal forms of struggle so easily because after all the people's cause is just and reasonable but at the same time to have the urban underground and the armed revolutionary movement to absorb as many as possible of those mass activists and leaders being hunted down and in danger of being murdered. The movement continues to hold on to this orientation and will not be discouraged by either selective assassinations or a wider campaign of suppression.

The US and the Aquino regime can never hope to destroy the armed revolutionary movement because the socioeconomic and political crisis of the ruling system continues to worsen and because the movement follows the general line of the national democratic revolution enabling it to marshal all positive forces; applies the theory of protracted people's war combining armed struggle, agrarian revolution and mass base building; and has reached a level of strength and experience that is beyond the capability of its adversaries to destroy. The revolutionary movement has outlasted and prevailed against the Marcos regime. It is easier for it to outlast and prevail against the much weaker US-Aquino regime.

If the US and its puppets cannot destroy the armed revolutionary movement in El Salvador, a country of some three million people and 21,000 square kilometers, the more they cannot hope to destroy the armed revolutionary movement in the Philippines, a country of 58 million people and nearly 300,000 square kilometers. The mass base of the Philippine revolutionary movement is several times the population of El Salvador.

The Communist Party of the Philippines has some 35,000 members distributed all over the country and deeply rooted among the toiling masses in urban and rural areas. These are cadres and members tempered in revolutionary struggle and beyond identification by the enemy. The Party is assisted by hundreds of thousands of revolutionary mass activists in leading more than eleven million people and extending their influence to tens of millions more.

According to early 1987 records of the interim General Command, the New People's Army operates in at least 59 guerrilla fronts consisting of guerrilla base areas and zones in 63 out of 73 Philippine provinces or more than 800 out of 1,540 municipalities or close to 12,000 villages. It has 30,000 full-time and part-time guerrilla fighters with 15,000 firearms, nearly 8,000 of which are automatic rifles; and some hundreds of thousands of militia personnel, most of whom have

no firearms but are capable of military support functions such as surveillance, communications, transport, food production and the like. On the basis of these glossy figures. We can see that the NPA has not reached the level of 25,000 combat effectives with automatic rifles. In fact, the exact count of these in is 5,600 as of November 1985 and 6,100 in 1986.

At any rate, the balance of forces between the New People's Army and the Armed Forces of the Philippines is no longer as unfavorable as it was during the 1970s. The four major services of the AFP (Army, Constabulary, Navy and Air Force) have 171,000 regular troops but only 45,000 of these in 88 maneuver battalions are combat effective. Augmenting the regular troops are 50,000 police and another 50,000 paramilitary personnel.

Of the total revolutionary mass base of eleven million people, seven-and-a-half million are in the countryside and three-and-a-half million are in the cities. These are the people led by organs of political power and are members of revolutionary mass organizations for workers, peasants, women, youth, cultural activists and others. The National Democratic Front shares with the CPP and NPA the same mass base and paves the way for the creation of organs of political power at levels higher than the village level.

The probable course of development of the people's war consists of the stages of strategic defensive, strategic stalemate and strategic offensive. The strategic defensive is already maturing and is in the advanced phase; and is likely to advance and pass on to the strategic stalemate in a period of three to five years from 1986. Increasing the NPA's automatic rifle strength from 8,000 to 25,000 and thereby allowing the NPA to operate effectively in 1,000 municipalities can bring the people's war into the stage of strategic stalemate. The strategic offensive — the final drive towards total victory — is possible within the next decade.

The US wants to reverse the revolutionary trend by using what it calls the low-intensity conflict, a vicious and brutal policy of using Filipinos to kill Filipinos and terrorizing the people with psywar and dirty tricks. On mere suspicion of being connected with the revolutionary movement, people in both urban and rural areas are targeted for massacre, assassination, torture, strafing and bombing, zoning and forced evacuation. The entire US-Aquino regime, the military, police and paramilitary forces are responsible for these but there are frequent attempts to make these barbarities appear as having been perpetrated

solely by paramilitary forces and even by ordinary civilians.

The low-intensity conflict scheme is supposed to preempt the commitment of US troops. But, in fact, it prepares for a blatant US war of aggression because US advisors, trainers, Pentagon and CIA covert operatives, US ground and navy patrols with the AFP, US air and naval surveillance operations, direct US funding for death squads and vigilante groups through the CIA as well as indirect funding through international anticommunist organizations and Pentagon-directed coup rumors and mock coup attempts have increasingly come into play. The US military bases in the Philippines signify perpetuated aggression since the beginning of the 20th century (these did not arise from the treaty of two independent states) and are launching pads of current intensifying US intervention. US military intervention has already reached the point that the national question has come to the fore and the revolutionary forces have decided to target US military personnel and installations. When Filipino mercenaries shall have failed to prevent the armed revolution from reaching the stage of strategic stalemate, the US shall be ready to launch the war of aggression.

The revolutionary forces in the Philippines recognize the increasing impotence of the US against national liberation movement since its defeat in the Vietnam War. They know that so far the US has failed to launch a direct invasion of Nicaragua, is afraid of having its own troops incurring heavy casualties and is therefore utilizing the contra mercenaries. But the Philippine revolutionary forces adopt the attitude of preparing against the worst to be able to hope for the best. Mindful of the possibility of a US war of aggression, they are decided on multiplying squads, platoons and companies for widespread, intensive and fluid warfare against large enemy forces; acquiring the means against tanks and military aircraft; and inflicting heavy casualties on US aggressor troops as soon as they come. After all, how does small Nicaragua defend itself and prepare itself against the North US behemoth, if not by arming hundreds of thousands of people.

The CPP, NPA and NDF are determined as ever to win total victory in the national democratic revolution against US imperialism and the local exploiting classes through self-reliant and independent efforts of the Filipino people. But they also need the expanded internationalist support — moral and material — from peoples and revolutionary forces abroad in the face of escalating US intervention and possible all-out aggression. The Philippine revolutionary forces can best contribute to the advance of independence, socialism and world peace

by winning in their own revolutionary struggle.

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On the Question of Revolutionary Violence

**Speech Prepared for the lectures on Crisis and Revolution,
sponsored by the League of Filipino Students, February 1993**

Comrades and Friends,

First of all, let me convey my warmest greetings to the leadership and the entire membership of the LFS. I congratulate all of you for holding the lecture series on the Philippine crisis and revolution. I am deeply pleased and honored to participate in this lecture series and to speak before you right now. The geographic distance makes no gap between us. The electronic means of communication instantly connect us. But most important of all, we have the fastest line of communication because we have an immediate basis for common understanding.

We adhere to the same general line of pursuing the people's revolutionary struggle for national liberation and democracy against the US, Japanese and other foreign monopoly capitalists and the local exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords.

Introduction

The subject assigned to me is of crucial theoretical and practical importance. Before you can begin to become revolutionaries, you must in the first place recognize why there is the need for revolutionary violence. There are the priorly existing conditions of oppression and exploitation and the priorly established system of violence called the state. You must reckon and contend with these facts if you are for social revolution.

As a student of social science like you, I urge you to form yourselves into the teams in order to conduct social investigation and mass work among the workers and peasants and find out for yourselves whether they are suffering from intolerable oppression and exploitation and whether there is an urgent need for revolutionary violence. Best of all, you can decide to serve the people all your lives and devote yourselves to their revolutionary struggle.

In any exploitative society, whether slave, feudal or bourgeois, the state is the highest form of political organization, whose class character is determined by the dominant exploiting class and is used by it to coerce other classes into submission.

In the history of civilization there is yet no example of one form of exploitative class society being replaced by a higher form of class society always unleashes counterrevolutionary violence against the newly rising progressive class and the people who demand revolutionary change. Therefore, the new social system can arise only upon the victory of the armed revolution waged by the upcoming ruling class and the rest of the people.

In the course of waging revolution against the feudal order, the bourgeois recognized forthrightly the need for revolutionary violence and actively used it to seize political power. And after becoming the ruling class, it would use the power of the state to put under its control the proletariat and rest of the people and suppress any revolutionary movement initiated by the proletariat.

In reacting to the proletariat's revolutionary ideas and actions, the bourgeoisie, its ideologues, propagandists and politicians, gloss over the historical fact that the bourgeoisie itself has gained political power through revolutionary violence and has kept his power against the proletariat through counterrevolutionary violence. However, the bourgeoisie misrepresents the state as supraclass or as a nonclass product of voluntary social contract or constitution-making among the people, thus misrepresenting its own exploiting class interests as a creation of the heavens or as the realization of the self-development of thought.

In an exploitative class society, the state is essentially an instrument of class coercion, of class dictatorship, in the hands of the dominant exploiting class. It consists of the army, police, courts and prisons. These are employed by the ruling class to enjoy the freedom to exploit the ruled classes and to pretend using solely the means of suasion, like the schools, the mass media, the church and

other institutions, the electoral competition, the legislative process and so on to keep the social order.

The reactionary state employs its coercive apparatuses against individuals, organizations, classes and the people that raise basic revolutionary demands and participate in a revolutionary movement against the fundamentals of the ruling system. You must recognize that when the legal democratic movement of the workers, peasants and youth resurged in the Philippines in the 1960s, there was an escalation of efforts on the part of the US and the Manila government to use force against it.

And when the Communist Party of the Philippines was reestablished and the New People's Army came into existence because militants in the mass movement recognized the need for the revolutionary armed struggle, the reactionary state began to undertake the brutal campaigns of suppression. It would rather use counterrevolutionary violence than undertake basic reforms to meet the basic revolutionary demands of the people. A state that violently reacts to the revolutionary demands of the people is ripe for overthrow by armed revolution.

In the history of mankind, the bourgeois state of monopoly capitalism is the worst kind of revolutionary state. In addition to serving as the instrument for the domestic exploitation of the proletariat, for the extraction of surplus labor, it engages in imperialist domination of other peoples in order to draw those of the entire people in the abstract. There is in effect a continuing mystification of the state superprofits and debt service payments. The 20th century is drenched with the blood of the people because of the violence unleashed by the imperialist states against them in colonies and semi-colonies and in the two world wars among the imperialist powers themselves. The cold war between the US imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism also exacted a heavy toll on the people.

There has been an imperialist ideological offensive which drums up the idea among others that social revolution is possible without the violent overthrow of the reactionary ruling class and that armed revolution is counterproductive. This idea runs counter to the revolutionary idea that only consequent to the seizure of political power by the most progressive class in a given historical epoch is it possible to carry out social revolution.

In the bourgeois and imperialist ideological offensive of 1989-1991, the neoliberals and the social-democrats misrepresented the French Revolution of 1789 as an unnecessary exercise and not as the necessary way by which the bourgeoisie made its historic triumph over feudal rule, to pave the way for the political preeminence of industrial capitalism. And the disintegration of the revisionist ruling parties and regimes was misrepresented as the fall of socialism. It was in fact the culmination of the peaceful evolution of socialism through bureaucrat capitalism to undisguised capitalism. This process has been relatively nonviolent as it involves protracted degeneration from a higher form to a lower form of society.

The counterrevolutionary ideas of neoliberalism, populism and social democracy currently being espoused by unremolded petty bourgeois elements are sterile and ineffectual in the Philippine situation. The semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system in the Philippines is so rotten and its chronic crisis is worsening so rapidly that no argument and no effective countermeasure can be made by the reactionaries against the ongoing revolution of the by the reactionaries against the ongoing revolution of the 120 people led by the proletariat and guided by the theory of Marxism-Leninism.

There can be no alleviation of the domestic crisis of the ruling system. This arises from the fundamentals of an agrarian, preindustrial and semifeudal Philippine economy that is an appendage of the world capitalist system. The domestic crisis is part of the longrunning depression in most of the third world countries and in the former Soviet bloc countries due to the lopsided economic investments favoring the industrial capitalist countries, the deteriorating terms of trade and the mounting debt burden.

Following the neocolonial internationalization of capital, the depression of the underdeveloped or the less developed countries has recoiled upon the major industrial capitalist which are now in a state of prolonged recession, if not depression. The drive of the monopoly firms to increase their productivity and their rates of profit through the application of high technology is deepening and aggravating the crisis of overproduction in the world capitalist system.

There is now a new world disorder. There is social turmoil in many third world countries, in the former Soviet bloc countries and in the major industrial capitalist countries. We are once more on the eve of social revolution in several countries and several continents. We are entering a new period of revolutionary

struggle in the world. The international environment for the Philippine armed revolution is increasingly favorable.

Revolutionary and counterrevolutionary violence in Philippine history

It is an iron law of history that oppression and exploitation engenders resistance. Philippine history and current circumstances provide ample proof of this truth. One period in Philippines history is significantly and radically different from another as a result of violent developments. The social condition of the people in every period is determined by what kind of economy and political power is holding sway and is the outcome of the balance and struggle of the forces of armed revolution and armed reaction.

Spanish colonialism conquered the Philippines by force of arms in the 16th century. Inasmuch as the native inhabitants were in disparate patriarchal slave and tribal societies in the archipelago, the conquistadores could apply divide-and-rule tactics over the native people and conscripted native troops in one area to augment the Spanish troops and quell the resistance of the people in other areas.

In more than 300 years of colonial rule, Spain systematically used the sword to impose its rule on the people and build a colonial and feudal society. It had to have a nationwide centralized system of administration for the purpose of oppressing and exploiting the people. Unwittingly, the colonizers drove the colonized people to perceive ultimately a common enemy and to unite in resistance to oppression and exploitation.

Since the 16th century, there had been sporadic and spontaneous outbreaks of violent popular resistance of varying geographic and time scales. Although these were quelled by the colonizers, there was a cumulation of the violent struggles of the people and a cumulation of anticolonial, antichrist and antifeudal national consciousness.

The qualitative leap occurred in 1896 when under the flag of the Katipunan the Philippine revolution broke out. These demand was for national independence from Spain and the social emancipation of the peasants from the feudal rule of the religious orders that were the biggest landowners.

The qualitative leap was not only one from a long cumulative train of spontaneous uprisings to a nationally conscious and nationwide revolution

against colonial rule but it was also one from the reformism of Jose Rizal and the propagandists to the line of armed revolution of Andres Bonifacio and the Katipunan.

Anyhow, the Philippine revolution of 1896 was of the old democratic type, bourgeois liberal in ideology and led by the nascent bourgeoisie. The lasting value of this revolution was that it bequeathed to us a revolutionary sense of nationhood and democracy.

Without this legacy made sacred by the blood of our forefathers, without the just violence of the Filipino nation against the prior unjust violence of the foreign oppressors, we as a people would be in a much lesser position than we are today in the community of nations. As a matter of fact, we are proud to claim the honor of being the first nation to liberate itself from colonialism in Asia.

After our victory over Spanish colonialism, the US could intervene successfully and could conquer the Philippines because of superior military force and the inadequacies in the ideology and strategy and tactics of the Philippine revolutionary government and army.

In the course of the Filipino-American war, which started in 1899, the US aggressors killed off nearly one-tenth of the Filipino people, through combat, massacres, forced relocations, food blockades and other forms of barbarities. At the same time, the US used the slogan of benevolent assimilation and peace negotiations in order to split the ranks of the revolutionaries.

The liberal ideology of the leadership of the revolution could be coopted by a modern imperialist power. The latter also used the slogans of liberalism and ladled out concessions to the leaders who were inclined to compromise with the enemy and betray the revolution. After all, a modern imperialist power like the US was in a better position than the old type Spanish colonialism to concede to the reformist demands previously submitted to the Spanish parliament before the start of the armed revolution.

As a result of its successful war of aggression, the US was able to put the Philippines under its own colonial rule and begin converting the Philippines into a semifeudal society, dominated by the resident or native comprador big bourgeoisie and a landlord class subservient to the new colonial order.

The comprador big bourgeoisie grew from the expanding trade with the

industrial capitalist countries. It teamed up with the landlord class. The peasantry would quantitatively decrease from more than 90 percent of the population towards 80 percent. And the industrial proletariat would emerge in significant number as one more basic exploited class. The middle social strata of the urban petty bourgeoisie and middle bourgeoisie would also increase as never before in the 19th century.

The problems of foreign and feudal domination persisted. Thus, there would be violent uprisings in every decade. In 1930, the CPP was established to engage in legal struggle but was soon suppressed by the US colonial authorities. The class struggle between the proletariat and the big bourgeoisie and between the peasantry and the landlord class intensified as the world depression worsened and the interimperialist war loomed.

In early 1942, the Philippines came under occupation by the invasionary forces of fascist Japan. On March 29, 1942, the merger party of the CPP and the Socialist Party formed the People's Army Against Japan (Hukbalahap or Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon).

In conjunction with the armed struggle against Japan, the revolutionary movement was able to establish Red political power and carry out land reform in Central Luzon. Were it not for the Right opportunist retreat-for-defense policy, which weakened guerrilla warfare by absolutely dispersing small armed teams of three to five men the revolutionary forces would have won greater victories.

At any rate, armed struggle was waged and solid mass organizing was done. The people gained political power in the barrios and carried out land reform and social reforms. Towards the end of the Japanese occupation, the revolutionary forces took advantage of the concentration of the Japanese troops in the Cordillera and went on a general offensive in Central Luzon. They were able to seize power in the municipal centers of several provinces in Central Luzon.

In the process of reconquering the Philippines after WW2, the US military forces, together with the pro-US guerrilla forces, the pro-Japan Constabulary troops and the landlord-organized civilian guards, suppressed the revolutionary forces through massacres and other forms of barbarities and reinstated landlord power over Central Luzon.

The US proceeded to grant nominal independence to the Philippines and thus

turned it into a semicolony or a neocolony. The joint class dictatorship of the landlord class was installed nationwide. The politicians of the two exploiting classes became directly responsible for the national administration of the Philippines.

But the US made sure that it retained property rights, military bases and control over the Armed Forces of the Philippines by making it dependent on the US for strategic planning, indoctrination, officer training, supplies and so on.

The leadership of the merger party of the Communist and Socialist parties had prevented the Hukbalahap from continuing the revolutionary armed struggle with the right opportunist line of “peace and democracy” and welcoming the return of the US forces and the Commonwealth government. Because of the relentless bloody assaults on the revolutionary forces and the people and the unseating of legislators belonging to the Democratic Alliance, the Hukbalahap was converted in 1950 into the People’s Liberation Army (Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan). The Jose Lava leadership of the old merger party declared all-out armed struggle against the US-Quirino regime.

However, the strategic line of the armed struggle was “Left” opportunist. It called for a quick military victory in two years’ time on the basis of a total HMB armed force of only 3000 riflemen deployed mainly along the Sierra Madre. There was no consideration of the need to do painstaking mass work and to accumulate armed strength over a long period of time. The crisis of the ruling system was expected to participate in the uprisings.

Within months after the successful first wave of HMB offensives in August 1950, the merger party of the Communist and Socialist parties and the HMB main forces were being smashed by the US-directed and US-supplied Armed Forces of the Philippines, which had fielded 30 battalion combat teams in Central and Southern Luzon and an efficient intelligence network in Manila. The defeat of the armed revolution made the entire decade of the 1950s one of extreme reaction, whipped up by McCarthyism and the cold war.

It took nearly two decades before the revolutionary armed struggle could resume. A few months after its reestablishment on the theoretical foundation of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought on December 26, 1968, the Communist Party of the Philippines formed the New People’s Army on March 29, 1969.

The CPP correctly analyzed Philippine society as semicolonial and semifeudal and, correspondingly, the Philippine revolution as national democratic of a new type, under working class leadership. The proletariat was recognized as being in basic alliance with the peasantry, in further alliance with the urban petty bourgeoisie and still further with the national bourgeoisie.

All these patriotic classes were ranged against the reactionary classes of big comprador and landlords. The Philippine revolution was set forth as a process to be realized in two stages: national democratic and socialist.

The protracted people's war is made possible by the chronic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal system, by the proletarian revolutionary leadership guided by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, by the peasant majority of the population and their democratic demand for land reform and by the favorable tropical terrain. The revolutionary organs of political power can be created in the countryside even while the reactionary state is still entrenched in the cities.

Even before the Marcos ruling clique declared martial law in 1972, the armed forces of the counterrevolutionary state of big compradors and landlords were already engaged in the most brutal campaigns of suppression.

One after the other, Task Force Lawin and Task Force Saranay, each in division strength, were deployed against a few hundreds of fighters of the NPA in the second district of Tarlac from 1969 onward and in Isabela from 1971 onward.

But the Party and the NPA engaged in guerrilla warfare with an ever-widening and deepening mass base. When the enemy forces concentrated on one area, they had difficulties in occupying the target areas and the adjoining ones and they gave up far wider areas beyond.

The NPA has therefore deliberately expanded and consolidated its mass base in the countryside on a nationwide scale in order to have the widest room for maneuver. The most successful deployment of the NPA has always involved the existence of a center of gravity in relative concentration (no more than one-third of total armed strength) and many more units dispersed for mass work (at least two-thirds of the total armed force).

Martial law from 1972 to 1986 has proven futile in trying to destroy the armed revolutionary movement. It merely incited a greater number of the people to fight back. The shift to the pseudodemocratic regime of Aquino has also proven

to be ineffective in suppressing the armed revolution. General Ramos is the consistent prominent figure in all the failures of the reactionaries to suppress the armed revolution.

Today, the total NPA armed force nationwide is equivalent to several brigades or more than a score of battalions or several scores of companies or hundreds of platoons or so many hundreds of squads. The NPA is in about 60 guerrilla fronts in substantial portions of about 60 provinces or in several hundreds of municipalities or in at least 10,000 barrios. A guerrilla front is built out of a number of guerrilla zones. A guerrilla zone has roughly the size of a municipality.

The NPA can victoriously carry out the revolutionary armed struggle, only as it is supported by the organs of political power, the mass organizations and the local Party branches and is augmented by the local militia units and self-defense units.

The NPA would have become a much stronger force in the 1990s and up to the present, were it not for the “Left” opportunist errors of militarism and insurrectionism which have played into the hands of the AFP and undermined the revolutionary mass base.

You must already be aware of the movement launched by the Communist Party of the Philippines within its ranks to reaffirm basic Marxist-Leninist principles, rectify errors and further strengthen all the revolutionary forces. This movement is expected to raise higher the fighting will and capabilities of the CPP and the people. The CPP recognizes the need for revolutionary violence in order to overthrow the oppressive and exploitative ruling system and install a new social system in which the people enjoy national independence, democracy, social justice, material and cultural progress and peace.

Character and direction of the Ramos regime

The Ramos regime is fundamentally similar to the Marcos and Aquino regimes and to their predecessors since 1946. It is the principal political agency of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system in the current period. It has a big comprador-landlord character subservient to the US, Japanese and other foreign monopoly capitalists. General Ramos is the current chief representative of the local exploiting classes and top running dog of US imperialism.

At the same time, he and his clique have certain peculiarities. Their key men are retired and active military officers. They represent the increasing militarization of the ruling system. General Ramos was the military hatchet man of Marcos and, subsequently, Aquino. Now he is his own president. He and his ilk are at the pinnacle of reactionary power. They have more license than ever before to carry out military plans against the revolutionary forces and the people.

In terms of background and service record, General Ramos is a long-running dog of the US. He graduated from West Point. He served in the Korean war and in the Vietnam war and specialized in intelligence work and psywar before he became the chief of the Philippine Constabulary, the most brutal and notorious military service. He was one of the so-called “Rolex 12”, the conspiratorial group under Marcos that planned and launched martial law in 1972.

Even before the proclamation of martial law, he had directed the campaigns of suppression against the revolutionary forces and initiated the formation of paramilitary and vigilante groups. When he became chief of staff of the AFP under Marcos, he launched Oplan Mamamayan as a comprehensive plan seeking to assault and destroy the revolutionary forces as well as wage psywar campaigns through “peace and order” councils.

Under US direction, Ramos collaborated with Enrile in order to form a faction called the Reform the AFP Movement (RAM) to oppose and overthrow the Marcos-Ver faction. Under the Aquino regime, he pushed hard the “total war” policy and the US-instigated “low intensity conflict” scheme in his capacity as chief of staff of the armed forces and then as defense secretary. He was practically the president for military affairs. Although he became the target of anti-Aquino and anti-Ramos military factions, he was able to take personal advantage of the factionalization of the reactionary armed forces and the coup attempts against the Aquino regime.

General Ramos offered no solution to the basic problems of the Filipino people. He has adopted policies aggravating these basic problems. His “total war” policy continues to wreak havoc on the lives of the people. Since his coming to power, he has escalated the military campaigns of suppression against the revolutionary forces and the people.

The master plan Lumbat Bitag II has fully deployed all the six divisions of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the revolutionary movement. They are

pursuing a war of quick decision (strategic offensive and gradual constriction). There is less use now of the so-called special operations teams (SOTs) but an increased use of bombardments from the air and from the ground by artillery fire in order to massacre the people, destroy their homes and farms and force their evacuation. So-called base-denial and search-and-destroy operations are rampant.

General Ramos has completely no remorse over the more than two million people turned into refugees by his total war policy 130 and over the thousands of victims of massacres, warrantless arrests and seizures of property, torture and extrajudicial killings since the start of the Aquino regime in 1986.

The military obsession of the Ramos regime is made most obvious by the fact that for the first year of its rule, the military budget has been increased by 20 percent to P31.2 billion. In comparison, the budget for health and education have been decreased by 51 percent and 20 percent respectively. The appropriation for the CAFGU is P1.78 billion or P5 million per day and the number of CAFGU personnel is being increased from 60 thousand to 80 thousand. The budget for intelligence services has also been increased to P392 million. Daily military expenditures is P88 million, excluding those camouflaged under departments other than the department of national defense.

The reactionary armed forces are the main component of the reactionary state and at the same time remain the puppet and mercenary force in the US. The United States has all the levers for controlling the AFP. Although the US has withdrawn its forces from military facilities in the Philippines, they retain access to these and have the core personnel in these under the guise of advisors, liaison officers and technical experts. The military facilities are now maintained mainly at Philippine expense. The US has reduced its financial and military grants and military sales credits are enough to make the reactionary armed forces dependent on the US.

The US and the Philippine reactionary forces are collaborating in the conduct of the “total war” policy. This involves not only the provision of equipment and other supplies but also strategic and tactical advice, technical support and the feeding of intelligence and reconnaissance data from the Pentagon and the CIA.

The socioeconomic crisis of the ruling system

The socioeconomic and political crisis of the ruling system is bound to deepen and aggravate under the US-Ramos regime. Together with the total war policy, all other policies already stated by General Ramos can only exacerbate the crisis of the system and the suffering of the people.

The IMF and the World Bank dictate economic policies on the US-Ramos regime as in previous regimes. These favor the foreign monopoly capitalists and the local exploiting classes at the expense of the broad masses of the people. General Ramos has already acceded to more investment privileges for foreign monopoly capitalists and accepted all foreign debt obligations, including the fraudulent loans.

General Ramos wanted to turn the Philippines into an economic “tiger” like Hongkong and Singapore reexporting low-value added products and he believes that this can be achieved by further pressing down wage levels. But he disregards the fact that there is already a glut of reexports from the so-called economic “tigers” in the face of the recessionary trend in the industrial capitalist countries.

All major industrial capitalist countries, especially the United States, are reducing consumption. They are consolidating their financial positions nationally and regionally and are holding back on investing and lending money to third world countries like the Philippines because of the huge ocean of unpaid debts from such countries. In the current crisis of overproduction, the winning monopoly firms are trying to further increase their rates of profit in their home grounds by adopting high technology and throwing workers out of their jobs.

Undermining the financial position of the Philippines, General Ramos has announced that foreign monopoly firms and the big comprador landlords can – without any limitation – retain their foreign exchange earnings abroad. The worsening economic situation is likely to adversely affect the foreign exchange earnings of contract labor which has been the biggest dollar earner. The terms of trade for Philippine raw-material exports and reexports continue to deteriorate.

The Ramos regime is running out of means to service the foreign debt. There is no debt cap. Getting new loans to service or pay old debts has been exhausted since a long time ago. And during the entire period of the Aquino regime, local public borrowing to pay for foreign debt stands at US\$29 billion, despite the fact that from 1986 to the end of 1991, more than that amount was paid in foreign

debt service.

General Ramos did not even pretend to be concerned about the land problem, which involves the peasant majority of the population. He has expressed his lack of interest by announcing that he would raise the land retention limit to 50 hectares, thus excluding at least 95 percent of all landlords from the pretended coverage of the bogus land reform program of the previous regimes.

His regime has agreed to the proposal of extending 99-year lease on land to foreigners and to that one of exempting Mindanao from the coverage of “land reform” in the next thirty years in order to accommodate fifteen “industrial estates”.

Because of the nonsolution and aggravation of the land problem, it is clear that the ground for people’s war remains exceedingly fertile. It is the armed revolutionary movement led by the CPP that is responding to the demand of the peasantry for land reform. At the moment, the minimum land reform program is being carried out on a wide scale by the revolutionary forces. This includes rent reduction, control of interest rates, improving farm wages, raising prices of farm products and raising production in agriculture and sideline occupations. Eighty percent of the peasantry are landless and they expect the maximum land reform program of the revolutionary movement to ultimately satisfy their hunger for land.

Eighty percent of the people live below the poverty line according to the latest data. Unemployment is running high. At least 50 percent of the labor power in the Philippines is unemployed. Inflation is soaring. Production continues to break down. Basic producer and consumer goods are in short supply. Basic services are inadequate and are breaking down. There is environmental disaster due to imperialist plunder and pollution. There is lack of relief from the series of natural calamities that have struck the Philippines.

The political crisis and peace pretense of the regime

General Ramos is a minority president. Even his claim to having gotten 23.5 percent of the vote is under question. Thus, since the start of his regime he has adopted tactics in order to expand and consolidate his political base. At this point in time, he has approached the Marcos, Eduardo Cojuangco, Enrile and other reactionary groups for reconciliation and he has made shady deals with them,

including the retention of their ill-gotten wealth and new business privileges.

Following the Pentagon's orders and serving his own selfish interests, Ramos has made it a major policy to reconcile and work out compromises with the anti-Ramos military factions. So far, he has reconciled with them to an extent that the underground leaders and members of the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabansa, Soldiers of the Filipino People and Young Officers' Union have agreed to surface. As a result, these factions are in a better position to expand and consolidate their following within the AFP.

The Ramos regime was succeeding in consolidating its position. But when the revolutionary armed struggle and the legal democratic movement rise to a new and higher level because of the ever worsening crisis, the contradictions among the political and military factions within the ruling system will once more burst out as never before.

Related to his drive to consolidate his political position and to make his regime appear evenhanded in dealing with all types of opposition, he has taken the posture of being willing to enter into peace negotiations with the NDF. He has no illusions that there will ever be an agreement for a just and lasting peace. But he calculates that he can gain certain advantages from going through the motions of seeking peace negotiations with the NDF.

In an attempt to make himself credible about his willingness to negotiate peace, he has undertaken certain "confidence-building" measures. While in the process of releasing all detainees belonging to the anti-Ramos military factions, he has released proportionately fewer Left political detainees and far more slowly. He has repealed Republic Act 1700 (Antisubversion Law) but he retains all the oppressive laws like those making political offenses criminal and nonbailable and allowing warrantless arrests and seizure of properties. The violation of human rights in the informal ways of the military, paramilitary and vigilante groups continues unabated.

There was sophistication in the peace pretense of the US-Ramos regime. Hypothetically, the regime is willing to go all the way to peace negotiations and agreements, using the El Salvador model. At every step towards formal peace negotiations, the regime seeks to undermine first the position of the NDF through the total war policy and its complement of psywar schemes. The objective is to liquidate the revolutionary armed struggle.

The Ramos regime has already gone so far as to approve mutually with the NDF the Joint Declaration, co-signed by the GRP and the NDF representatives in The Hague in September 1992. The declaration has put the NDF and the GRP on an equal footing and set forth a mutually acceptable substantive agenda. But it also gives the peace pretense of Ramos a semblance of seriousness, which is useful in its psywar scheme.

The National Unification Commission has been created to peddle the old line of amnesty and rehabilitation to surrenderers. It is also a revival of the old “peace and order” councils under Oplan Mamamayan. It seeks to round up and mobilize leaders of the reactionary government, the churches, big business, the landed gentry and nongovernmental organizations at various territorial levels to campaign for the regime’s line of pacification to isolate the armed revolutionary movement under the pretext of engaging in consultations; to entice local cadres and commanders of the armed revolutionary movement to surface and capitulate; and to split the revolutionary movement.

Another related move undertaken by the Ramos regime is to recruit some renegades and use them to attack no less than the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines and its major decisions, especially the rectification movement which is meant to correct the errors made by these renegades and further strengthen the revolutionary movement.

The peace pretense of the US-Ramos regime is meant not only to consolidate its political position to enable it to run government in a civil manner. It is intended to disarm and let down the guard of the progressive legal forces, the underground revolutionary forces and the entire people. The US-Ramos regime is already preparing for a return to undisguised military fascist rule. The regime is anticipating the worsening of the crisis and knows no other way to rule other than in the manner of using open terror.

Both houses of Congress are now under the overwhelming control of the Ramos ruling clique. A proposal to change the form of government through constitutional amendment is now underway to pave the way for a situation in which the Marcos-style president can revert to despotic rule in a false transition from an old form to a new form of government.

The legal progressive forces should expand and intensify the anti-imperialist, antifeudal and antifascist movement and combat the antinational and

antidemocratic schemes of the US-Ramos regime. They should not entrap the issues within the narrow framework of wishful thinking or prospecting for a peace settlement with the regime. And they should keep their Left position and not be drawn to the position of “third force” between the GRP and the NDF.

Conclusion of the discussion

Let me now raise the question which is supposed to be the focus of my discussion. Is there a need for revolutionary violence?

The objective social conditions – the fundamental character and the chronic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system – have persisted and worsened since the time that the armed revolutionary movement was resumed in 1969 by the Communist Party of the Philippines. If you ask the revolutionary forces and the people themselves, they will certainly answer that there are even greater reasons now to persevere in the revolutionary armed struggle and win greater victories in the national democratic revolution.

They can also point to the fact that the US-Ramos regime is not offering anything to address the root causes of the civil war. It is in fact carrying out policies that deepen and aggravate the basic social problems. Indeed, it would be incomprehensible and shameful for the revolutionaries to capitulate to a regime that is escalating its total war and yet is weakening due to dwindling resources for feeding its own corruption and undertaking its brutal campaigns of suppression. Considering the background and the current circumstances of the present regime, there is no bigger inciting factor to armed revolution than the character and direction of the regime.

Despite its fullest and best possible deployment in the field, the reactionary armed forces can concentrate on only nine out of the sixty guerrilla fronts of the New People’s Army. In the face of this, the New People’s Army can win greater victories by carrying out people’s war through extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare with an ever widening and deepening mass base.

In coordination with the revolutionary forces in the countryside, the legal democratic movement based in the urban areas can also expand and intensify their efforts at arousing, organizing and mobilizing the people along the national democratic line of all the burning issues.

If the aim is to seize political power and consequently make social revolution,

the main form of revolutionary struggle is the armed struggle. Although in this context the legal struggle is secondary, it is important and indispensable because it combines with the armed struggle to win over millions upon millions of the people to the revolutionary cause.

Without the development of the legal democratic movement in the urban areas, especially that of the working class and the urban petty bourgeoisie, the revolutionary armed struggle that is still based in the countryside can be isolated in political and technical terms and cannot be benefited by a continuous supply of cadres from the urban areas.

I can very well understand the acute need of the revolutionary forces in the countryside for coordination with those in the cities and for more cadres to be dispatched to the countryside from the cities. While people's war now requires that the people's army encircles the cities from the countryside, there is always a great demand for cadres to go to the countryside before political power can be sized in the cities.

Thank you.

On the Culpability of the Aquino Regime

for the Socioeconomic and Political Crisis

September 26, 1990

Among the forces of reaction in the Philippines, it is the Aquino ruling clique that is most culpable for the socioeconomic and political crisis that is wreaking havoc on the lives of the Filipino people.

Even without the natural disasters, such as the drought in the previous two years, the earthquake, the typhoons and floods, the Aquino ruling clique has not only prevented the solution of basic social problems but has aggravated them.

It can be said that the Aquino regime, because of its subservience to US and other foreign interests and because of its own narrow big comprador-landlord interests, is a socioeconomic and political disaster for the entire Filipino people.

Since the beginning, the Aquino regime has followed the same socioeconomic policies of the Marcos regime, dictated by the US and Japan directly and through the IMF and the WB.

This regime has recklessly assumed all foreign debt obligations of the previous regime, including the most harmful loans. It has also incurred its own gargantuan foreign and local public debt and wasted public resources on debt service, military expenditures and consumption. It has delivered superprofits and assets to foreign multinational corporations and to a dynasty and a new set of cronies.

This regime does not have a single pet industrial project, except a certain scheme of the ruling family and its Taiwanese collaborators to milk the Philippine National Bank of funds for a dubious petrochemical processing plant. It is absolutely clear to everyone that the regime's pretense at land reform is meant to preserve and strengthen the landlord class. The economy continues to be weighed down by a grave land problem.

The long-accumulated socioeconomic problems, the rapid deterioration of public services and the ineptness and corruption in administration, including the handling of natural disasters, are compounded by the foolhardiness of the regime in following the military adventurist course of the US in the Middle East, allowing the US to use military bases in the Philippines for rapid deployment of US military forces and being hit hard by adverse consequences for which no recompense whatsoever is demanded.

The Philippines has not only lost the source for at least twenty percent of its oil supply but has to suffer from the rising price of oil and the loss of a big amount of income of overseas Filipino workers panicked by Philippine diplomatic missions to leave Kuwait and Iraq. And yet the Aquino regime does not make demands from its imperialist masters to offset losses of the Philippines.

What the Aquino regime simply does is to devalue the peso and raise oil prices in complete disregard of the ceaselessly worsening plight of the Filipino people; and threatens to unleash more and more violence against the people who raise an outcry and mobilize themselves against exploitation and oppression.

In fact, there is already an actual state of martial law without formal declaration of it. Human rights violations have become more widespread and worse than during the Marcos regime. The Supreme Court has already provided the legal ground for military rule, with or without Aquino, through such anti-democratic rulings as selective application of the right to bail and warrantless arrests.

No amount of force unleashed by Aquino and her vice commander-in-chief General Ramos can frighten the Filipino people. The people are fed up with the Aquino regime and its pretensions; and are rising up against the regime and the intolerable social, economic and political conditions. The objective conditions for generating an unprecedentedly large and intense mass movement are excellent.

On 100 Years of Struggle against US Imperialism

Address to the International Conference

Sponsored by the Congress of Teachers and Educators

for Nationalism and Democracy (CONTEND), February 3, 1999



In the spirit of anti-imperialist solidarity, I convey warmest greetings to all the participants in the International Conference on 100 Years of Struggle Against US Imperialism.

We recall the outbreak of the Philippine-US War on February 4, 1899 and we celebrate the people's revolutionary struggle against US imperialism. We draw inspiration from our revolutionary forebears, honor our people who persevere in the struggle, learn lessons from the past and current circumstances and define the tasks for completing the struggle for national liberation and democracy.

In celebrating the 30th anniversary of its reestablishment, the Communist Party of the Philippines has expressed the resolve to continue the national-democratic revolution through protracted people's war against US imperialism and the local reactionaries even if this revolution should take another hundred years.

For as long as the Filipino people remain under US imperialist domination, we do not cease to wage all forms of revolutionary struggle for national liberation and democracy. As the enemy never gets tired of oppressing and exploiting them, the people can never get tired of resisting oppression and exploitation and fighting for national and social liberation.

The absence of genuine national independence and the reign of greed and terror in our country are the bitter consequence of the successful US war of aggression.

The US destroyed the Philippine republic that issued from the armed revolution against Spanish colonialism. The US imposed its own colonial rule on the people and granted them nominal independence only after making sure that it could continue to profit from semicolonial rule through the local exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords.

I commend CONTEND for celebrating the Filipino people's armed resistance against the US war of aggression and the continuing US imperialist domination. This celebration comes into sharp contrast with that of the big comprador-landlord state which has spent a lot of tax money in order to gloss over the people's revolutionary struggle and the need to continue it.

The US war of aggression

Since the beginning of its alliance with the Aguinaldo-led revolutionary movement against Spain, the US had been driven by its monopoly capitalist interests to deceive and betray the Filipino leaders, wage a war of aggression against the Filipino people and take over the Philippines as its own colony. It coveted the Philippines as a strategic post for turning the Pacific Ocean into an US lake and for allowing US monopolies to take a slice of the Chinese melon.

The historians present in your conference can tell you all the facts about the double-faced dealings of US agents in Singapore and Hongkong, the arrogant and clever military maneuvers of the US forces in Manila, the pre-arranged surrender of the Spanish authorities and the mock battle for Intramuros, the Proclamation of Benevolent Assimilation, the US-Spanish Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898 ceding the Philippines to the US for USD20 million, and the US provocation at San Juan bridge on February 4, 1899.

To impose themselves on the Filipino people, the US aggressors arrested, tortured and killed hundreds of thousands of Filipinos. Millions of our people suffered forced relocations and food blockades. The genocidal methods previously used against the US Indians were used in the conquest of the Philippines and would be used again and again in the '40s and '50s and from 1969 to the present. The same methods were also used against the Vietnamese people during the '60s and '70s.

The estimate of Filipino casualties from the US war of aggression ranges from 250,000 to one million or more than 10 percent of the entire population. General Bell testified before the US Congress that at least 600,000 Filipinos were killed in Luzon alone. Until now, there has been neither the full satisfaction of the people's demand for revolutionary justice nor official apology from the US government over its dastardly crimes against the Filipino people and entire humanity.

Moved by the spirit of patriotism and by democratic aspirations, the Filipino people fought heroically against the US imperialists. The Philippine-US war lasted from 1899 to 1902 when the main forces of the revolutionary army were destroyed or their leaders capitulated. But the armed resistance, including that of the Moro people, continued in many regions up to 1916.

At great cost to Filipino lives and property, the US imperialists were able to conquer and impose direct colonial rule on the Philippines. This persisted until the Japanese imperialists invaded and occupied the country in 1942. The interimperialist war was a big opportunity for the people to build their own independent revolutionary armed strength. But the subjective forces of the revolution could develop strength only in Central Luzon, Manila and Southern Tagalog.

Continuing US domination

The US reconquered the Philippines in 1945. In advance of the grant of bogus independence to the country, it made sure that US military bases and US property rights and privileges would persist. And yet it tried vainly to postpone the shift to semicolonial rule. However, confronted by an armed revolutionary movement, it relented and gave way to such a rule in 1946, with national administration conceded to the politicians and bureaucrats of the big compradors and landlords in subordination to US imperialism.

The key factors for continued US control over the Philippine neocolonial state are the following: the conversion of the economy into a semifeudal one since the beginning of the century, dependence of the coercive apparatuses of the state on US indoctrination and military supplies, the pro-imperialist training of puppet political, business and cultural personnel and the merger of imperialist and feudal culture.

In the semicolonial political system, the people have suffered a series of puppet regimes. The US is the most responsible for the prolonged the oppressive and exploitative policies of all these puppet regimes, from Roxas to Estrada, and for the prolonged Marcos fascist dictatorship. The US dictates all major policies either bilaterally or through US-controlled multilateral agencies like the IMF, World Bank and WTO. The US remains as the No. 1 imperialist power dominating the Philippines even as it even as it has found it convenient since the '60s to take cover behind multilateral arrangements.

The US military bases have been closed down since 1992 because after all US military control is effected through the puppet military and police forces, and US military bases in nearby countries and spy satellites are being used as additional instruments for US control over the Philippine archipelago. In addition, there is the US-Japan security partnership. But the US is always interested in multiplying

its military control over the country. Thus, it is pushing the Visiting Forces Agreement, which the people are now vigorously opposing.

So far, US imperialism has succeeded in keeping the Filipino people under its domination, not only because of its superior military force but also because of its capabilities for deception. In the face of US imperialism, the old democratic revolution was not only limited by its inferior arms but was confounded by a foreign power that used bourgeois liberal slogans to advance its monopoly capitalist interests.

To this day, US imperialism misrepresents itself as the teacher and prime example of democracy and its Filipino marionettes in the political, economic and cultural fields echo and ape the misrepresentation. In this regard, we have always taken pains to distinguish the official ideology of pro-imperialist conservative liberalism from the anticolonial and anti-imperialist progressive liberalism that has characterized the best of petty-bourgeois thinking since the old democratic revolution.

US imperialism and the local reactionaries use the subjectivist and opportunist ideology and language of the petty bourgeois to sugarcoat imperialist as well as subservient policies, trample upon the basic national and democratic rights of the toiling masses of workers and peasants and attack the new-democratic revolution. They talk about free enterprise and individual rights in the abstract to obfuscate the reality of imperialist and class exploitation and oppression.

The neoliberal language of so-called globalization is nothing but a recycling of the antiquated bourgeois-liberal catchphrase, "free marketplace of goods and ideas". It is calculated to assail and put aside the Marxist-Leninist critique of modern imperialism, exactly at a time that the rapidly rising social character of the productive forces through the adoption of higher technology by the imperialists in their own countries makes the capitalist relations of production and the relations of the imperialists and the oppressed peoples more untenable than ever before.

In a conspicuously sinking "emerging" market like the Philippines, the mainstream exponents of "free trade" globalization insist on using neoliberal language. But marginal though special ideological and political agents of the ruling system tout globalization as an irresistibly new fact of life, as something that supposedly makes the anti-imperialist and class struggle irrelevant and

outdated and as something that can be reformed for making a "civil society".

Since the late '70s these pseudoprogressive recruits of imperialism and local reaction from the petty bourgeoisie have claimed that the Philippine social economy is no longer predominantly agrarian and semifeudal but an industrial capitalist one because of the supposed economic development under the big comprador-landlord Marcos regime. Since the coming to power of Ramos in 1992, they have proceeded to claim that the Philippine economy is so tightly integrated into the global economy that the question of national sovereignty and independence has become passe.

The current worsening crisis of the world capitalist system is bringing to the surface the basic contradictions between the imperialist countries and the oppressed peoples, among the imperialist countries themselves, and between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the imperialist countries. The illusion of free trade globalization is dissipating. The reality of nation-states and distinct modes of production are more conspicuous than ever before. The whole world is now in social and political turmoil. This is the eve of social revolution on an unprecedented scale.

We are clearly still in the era of modern imperialism and the proletarian revolution and not in a nebulous era of "globalization" or in a utopia of liberalism where everything is for sale and the invisible hand of self-interest peaceably settles everything in the market. In fact, the crisis of overproduction is already driving the imperialists to wrangle over the shrinking market.

Most important development

So far in Philippine history, the most important development by way of continuing the unfinished democratic revolution against the imperialists and the local reactionaries is the reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines under the guidance of the theory of the revolutionary proletariat and its adoption and implementation of the general line of new-democratic revolution through protracted people's war.

In representation of the revolutionary proletariat, the CPP brings to a new and higher level the revolutionary struggle of the Filipino people for national liberation and democracy. It is armed with the ideological weapon to contend with and defeat the fallacies and lies of imperialism, revisionism and reaction. It

has also proven in deed for more than three decades that it has an effective strategy and tactics to preserve and accumulate the revolutionary armed strength of the people.

Without the ongoing new-democratic revolution through protracted people's war, there is no hope for the Filipino people to liberate themselves from the clutches of foreign and feudal domination. Foreign domination would continue for another 400 years and US domination would continue for another hundred years if all that we did in that course of time were to seek accommodation, reforms and civility from a ruling system that is inherently oppressive and violent against the toiling masses.

For the Filipino people to achieve national liberation and democracy, there must be organized forces, including a revolutionary party, a people's army, mass organizations and organs of political power to carry on the struggle and defeat the enemy. Fighting the enemy also involves fighting its special ideological and political agents who are used either to penetrate and liquidate from within the revolutionary forces or attack them from the flanks or behind.

The Second Great Rectification Movement within the Communist Party of the Philippines is of great importance not only for the Party itself but also for the broad masses of the people. It is an educational movement to heighten revolutionary resolve against the enemy and to rectify both malicious and honest errors. It is also a practical constructive movement to further strengthen the revolutionary forces and the people in their struggle.

In the new-democratic revolution, there is always the need for an echelon of alliances: the basic alliance of the workers and peasants, the progressive alliance of the toiling masses and the urban petty bourgeoisie, the patriotic alliance of the progressive forces and the middle bourgeoisie and, whenever possible and necessary, the unstable temporary alliance with sections of the reactionaries — all for the purpose of isolating and destroying the power of the enemy, the most reactionary puppet of the imperialists.

Front runner in the anti-imperialist struggle

By staying on the road of new-democratic revolution through protracted people's war, the CPP builds the strength of the people to win victory and march further on to socialism. In the whole world today, the Filipino people are among front

runners in the revolutionary struggle of the oppressed peoples for national liberation and democracy against imperialism and the local reactionaries.

In the past, the Filipino people had the distinction of being the first nation in Asia to wage and win the old democratic revolution against a colonial power. Again, they have the distinction of being among the most persevering and most successful in waging the new-democratic revolution through protracted people's war. They serve as a torch bearer of international significance in the transition from the 20th to the 21st century.

This transition is one from a century of great victories of socialist and national liberation movements, temporarily defeated due to revisionist betrayal, to a century of greater struggles and greater victories of the world proletariat and oppressed peoples. It is pure nonsense to think that history ends with monopoly capitalism and bourgeois liberalism.

The scientific basis for our revolutionary optimism is the chronic and ever worsening crisis of the world capitalist system and the irrepressible efforts of the revolutionary forces to learn from history, to resist oppression and exploitation and to carry the revolutionary struggle forward.

US-Macapagal All-Out War Policy,

a Plague on the People

8 August 2002

It is fine that the spokesman of the Communist Party of the Philippines, Comrade Gregorio Rosal of the Information Department of the CPP Central Committee, has exposed as a plague on the people the longrunning all-out war policy being carried out by the military, police and paramilitary forces of the Macapagal regime in various regions of our country.

It is appropriate that he has mentioned a wide range of tactics, especially armed tactical offensives, to defend the people from the aforesaid all-out war and to discourage, overpower and punish those who ruthlessly oppress and exploit the people. He has also affirmed that electrical transmission towers and lines and communications lines can be targeted, without causing loss of life and injury to the civilian population, as in the previous struggle against the Marcos dictatorship.

At any rate, the important message from the CPP spokesman is that the Macapagal regime cannot unleash all-out war with impunity. The revolutionary forces and people are ready to fight and defeat their enemy in order to achieve national and social liberation from US imperialism and the local exploiting classes.

Ms. Gloria Macapagal has come out as the big warmonger with her declaration of redeploying military forces and carrying an all-out war against the New

People's Army. She is a rabid implementor of the dictates of the US and she follows the baton of General Angelo Reyes, secretary of national defense, whom the US has assigned as her handler. It has become obvious that he is her superior in policy-making regarding military affairs and the peace negotiations between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

In the course of the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations, we have observed that Ms. Macapagal does not act as the political leader and commander-in-chief of Reyes. She has acted more like his subordinate. We have known a number of times when she gave her go signal to the GRP negotiating panel but Reyes reversed her decision.

So long as Ms Macapagal is afraid to assert her office and exercise her political will over him, Reyes will always be able to paralyze the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations and give full rein to his mania for all-out war and his pipedream of annihilating or forcing the capitulation of the revolutionary forces and the people.

Ms. Macapagal seems to be oblivious of the fact that it was General Angelo Reyes, then chief of staff of the reactionary armed forces, who pushed his compadre Estrada to carry out a costly all-out war policy against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and make the budgetary deficit rise by more than 20 billion pesos within a few months.

Now, Reyes has one more president to manipulate and make a fool of. Taking the cue from him, she is boasting that Abu Sayyaf has been decimated and that it is time to concentrate all available military strength against the New People's Army. The two of them are insinuating that the nationwide all-out war against the NPA is going to be much easier, much cheaper and much more successful than going after the small bandit gang Abu Sayyaf in a tiny island.

But the truth is that the joint military campaign of two US battalions and fourteen puppet battalions in Basilan and elsewhere has been a colossal failure. The CIA-created Abu Sayyaf remains intact and, even according to General Roy Cimatu, is replenishing itself with fresh recruits. At least four of the five principal ringleaders are scot-free. Two of the three hostages were killed in a bumbling rescue operation. In their long occupation of Basilan, the US and puppet troops killed and injured far more innocent civilians than members of the

bandit gang.

With such a record, how dare Ms. Macapagal and General Reyes say that they can carry out a policy of all-out war and finish off a nationwide armed revolutionary movement of the people for national liberation and democracy, without worsening the already grave socioeconomic and political crisis and increasing the suffering of the broad masses of the people. If the regime cannot defeat a small bandit gang in a tiny island, how can it defeat a nationwide revolutionary movement of millions of people in both urban and rural areas.

Chronic Financial Crisis and the Way Out

October 2, 2004

First of all, I wish to thank the rank and file of BAYAN-National Capital Region for inviting me to this forum on the Philippines' chronic financial trouble and on the way out. I am honored and pleased to serve as the main speaker on a subject that is so important and so urgent.

I will try to provide you with the facts and analysis of the problem and state a number of solutions proposed from various points of view. I hope that this forum would raise the level of our understanding of the problem and our determination to seek and carry out the solution with the participation of the broad masses of the people, especially the working people.

It is understandable why Bayan-NCR is acutely interested in analyzing the problem and identifying courses of action towards the solution. Anytime soon the worsening conditions of mass unemployment, poverty and hunger are likely to result in unprecedented mass protests. Certainly you are interested in galvanizing the people through an understanding of the problem and leading them to the best possible course of action.

The problem: chronic financial crisis

The subject of chronic financial crisis in the Philippines is complex enough. But the puppet politicians and their retinue of economists and propagandists make it appear as far more complex than it is by obscuring its root causes. Out of fear, habitual ignorance or craven dishonesty, they conceal above all the principal responsibility of the US imperialists or finance capitalists for the chronic and current economic and financial crisis.

Usually, puppet politicians blame each other for corruption and wanton spending. However, to evade or mitigate their major share of culpability, they sometimes refer to the crisis of the US and world capitalist system as the cause of the Philippine economic and financial crisis. Of course, they do not mention the fact that they are willing puppets who benefit from the status quo and accept the economic and financial bondage of the Philippines to foreign monopoly capitalism.

The economists and propagandists serving every reactionary regime never cease to sing the virtues of staying within the bounds of the economic, financial and trade policies dictated by the United States and such US-controlled multilateral agencies as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Since the time that the Philippines became a US colony in the early years of the 20th century, the US imperialists have ensured political control of the Filipino people through acts and threats of military suppression. This has enabled them to hold the Philippine economy in their vise, keeping it pre-industrial, agrarian and semifeudal, afflicted by chronic budgetary and trade deficits and therefore ever vulnerable to foreign indebtedness and financial manipulation.

Since their grant of nominal independence to the Philippines in 1946, after reconquering it from the Japanese fascists, the US imperialists have conceded national administration to the politicians of the big compradors and landlords but have ensured continued US hold on the levers of political, military, economic, financial and cultural control over the people.

Among such levers of control, what the imperialist master considers the smartest is financial. This is supposed to be the most effective tool of neocolonialism, in combination with the other tools, especially in ever prostrate economically backward colonies or semicolonies like the Philippines. Financial control by the foreign monopoly capitalists negates or hollows out the substance of what the rulers of the semicolonial client state claim as political and economic independence.

What differentiates modern imperialism or monopoly capitalism from old style colonialism in the period of free competition capitalism is the growing importance of the export of capital over the export of goods. Basically, the export of capital from the imperialist country to the Philippines takes two forms:

direct investments for internal control of the client economy and indirect investments or loans to the puppet state and to private entities. Ultimately, the superprofits drawn from direct investments and the servicing of loans far exceed any new capital export from the imperialist countries.

The US has gained control over the Philippine economy by using various kinds of financial instruments. Let me mention some at crucial points in Philippine history. After conquering the Philippines, the US colonial authorities floated bonds on Wall Street in order to pay the costs for the invasion and occupation of the Philippines and collected taxes from the Filipino people in order to redeem these bonds. The US would get far more in return after paying Spain USD 20 million for the Philippines.

After reconquering the Philippines from Japan at the end of World War II, US war damage payments to the Philippines were made mainly to US firms to assist these in rebuilding their plants and inventories. The rest went to the puppet government and private claimants, both of which promptly spent the money for consumption, especially the importation of consumption goods.

After the basic recovery of the Philippines economy from the ravages of World War II, the first big financial crisis in the Philippine semicolony occurred when in 1949 the foreign exchange reserves amounting to USD 2 billion (mostly from war damage payments) were depleted. The trade deficit had widened because of unbridled importations of consumer goods. Austerity measures had to be adopted.

The US conceded for a while up to 1959 to the puppet government the institution of foreign exchange controls and the establishment of so-called import-substitution industries. These encouraged Filipino entrepreneurs to raise the demand for national industrialization. Even the Garcia regime espoused the “Filipino First” policy. The US reacted by cutting off loans from the US Export-Import Bank and US private banks, thus causing a financial crisis. This destabilized the Garcia regime in 1960 and paved the way for Macapagal to get US support for ensuring his election to the presidency.

Thus, it was the Macapagal regime that proclaimed the full decontrol policy, which enabled the US monopoly firms to remit superprofits freely and legally. This policy caused the first big devaluation of the peso. The trade deficits widened from year to year as the importation of consumer goods increased. The

regime touted a “land reform” program and an integrated steel mill project but failed to develop the economy as a whole. The regime used the slogan of “free enterprise” to mean further opening up the economy to foreign monopolies. The USD 200 million foreign debt at the end of the Garcia regime reached USD 600 million at the end of the Macapagal regime.

The Marcos regime adopted and implemented the “development plans” designed for the Philippines by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). These plans involved using domestic resources, Japanese reparations and foreign loans for rapid and massive infrastructure projects and encouraging foreign monopoly firms to invest in raw material production (sugar and coconut mills) and mining mills (copper and nickel). The regime did not carry out any real program of land reform and national industrialization despite bombastic pretenses. It used colossal foreign borrowing in the name of development in order to favor big comprador enterprises and undercut the people’s demand for national industrialization.

After the declaration of martial law in 1972, the regime engaged in unbridled foreign borrowing. This went on under the encouragement of the World Bank, even as the inability of the Philippines to repay the loans became more and more obvious. The IMF offered special drawing rights, debt restructuring and structural adjustment plans, always demanding more incentives to foreign investments and ensuring foreign capital repatriation, profit remittances, state guarantees for private debt and priority for debt servicing. Ultimately, the regime pushed foreign debt to the level of USD 27.2 billion at the time of the Marcos fall. In addition, it left a local public debt of PhP 144.4 billion.

The flow of international credit started to slow down after 1979 when the crisis of overproduction in raw materials began to hit hard the third world countries, including the Philippines. The US policy makers began to criticize the World Bank policy of undertaking “Keynesian” official lending for infrastructure building and enhancing raw material production. They began to favor a monetarist and neoliberal policy of using high interest rates to attract global funds to the US.

The Philippines suffered a severe financial crisis in 1983. By then, the foreign debt level had reached USD 24.6 billion. Exports in sugar, coconut and copper concentrate fell. The favored construction and related firms floundered. The Marcos regime had to declare a moratorium on foreign debt payments. This

combined with the public outrage over the killing of Aquino to mark the beginning of the rapid fall of the fascist regime.

The Aquino regime tried to take new foreign loans but could not get much beyond the amount needed to service the accumulated foreign debt, cover the growing trade deficits and buttress government deficit spending. It harped on the slogans of free market and import liberalization. It did not undertake genuine land reform and national industrialization. It could not borrow much from abroad because global funds, attracted by high interest rates and investment returns, increasingly flowed to the US. It had to resort to local public borrowing, thus public debt rose to PhP 521 billion in 1992. Foreign debt at the end of Aquino regime stood slightly below USD 30 billion.

The Ramos regime surpassed the rate of both local and foreign borrowing by the Marcos regime that under its 20-year watch had accumulated some PhP 144 billion in domestic debt and USD 26.6 billion in foreign debt. In only six years, local public debt ballooned to PhP 922 billion and foreign debt to more than USD 45 billion. The regime's so-called medium term development program completely ignored land reform and national industrialization.

It used the local public debt to increase graft-ridden spending for the benefit of "independent power producers", special projects of various sorts, infrastructure related to private real estate projects and state purchases of computers and vehicles. It used the foreign loans to cover the trade deficits that were due to high import costs of 4 components for the so-called export-oriented low value-added semi-manufacturing and to finance a boom in private construction, which went bust in the Southeast Asia-wide financial crisis of 1997. The foreign loans came mainly from foreign commercial banks.

Since 1997, the Philippines has been in a protracted and unprecedentedly severe financial crisis. This was clearly due to an unrelieved crisis of overproduction in the types of goods for export (raw materials and low value-added semimanufactures) to the industrial capitalist countries and in the overcapacity generated by the private construction boom. The financial crisis has followed from the crisis of overproduction and the failure to pay the loans. Ramos was complicit with the imperialists in further bankrupting the economy and making the people suffer. Ironically, the reactionaries still tout him as a great manager.

The Estrada regime was in dire financial straits from the very beginning because

of the economic and financial state left by the Ramos regime. At any rate, it was still able to push the foreign debt level to USD 50 billion and the local public debt level to PhP 1.068 trillion at year end 2000. The new foreign loans were used for servicing the accumulated foreign debt and covering new trade deficits. With less foreign funds to manipulate for serving his corrupt ends, Estrada turned to local public borrowing, raiding social security funds for financing scams and collecting cash from the numbers game and other forms of gambling.

Focus on the Arroyo regime

So long as it can still borrow from domestic sources and from abroad, a puppet regime would not admit that the Philippines has a chronic financial crisis. But now the crisis has become so severe that the Arroyo regime cannot deny it. The widespread collapse of enterprises, massive unemployment, depressed incomes, peso devaluation, inflation due to scarcity of basic goods, declining social services and other realities expose the grave economic and financial crisis.

Foreign debt under the Arroyo regime is USD 56.3 billion as of end June 2004 and is expected to reach almost USD 60 billion by the end of this year. The local public debt is PhP 1.833 trillion. In so short a time, the Arroyo regime raised the foreign debt by USD 6.3 billion and the local public debt by PhP 765 billion. The accumulated debt will continue to rise to new levels because new foreign loans are used to service foreign debt and cover budgetary and trade deficits. The Arroyo regime has made debt payments amounting to PhP 358 billion in 2002, PhP 425.7 billion in 2003, and has earmarked PhP 542 billion in 2004. It has claimed that in 2005 it can make PhP 310 billion and PhP 385 billion respectively in interest and principal payments or a total of PhP 695 billion.

Clearly, the “normal” or “non-crisis” situation, from the viewpoint of reactionary regimes, is for the debt payments to increase as foreign debt correspondingly increases. Despite all these, the balance of payments, which takes into account loans and debt repayments, as well as the trade balance of goods and services and transfers such as OFW remittances, is still projected to be at a deficit of PhP 600 billion in 2004.

The IMF prescription is for the Arroyo puppet regime to give priority to automatic appropriations for servicing the accumulated foreign debt, to raise the tax burden, to reduce deficit spending and adopt austerity measures at the expense of the people in an already devastated economy supposedly in order to

counter inflation due to scarcity of goods and the printing of money. The regime is frenziedly trying to con the Filipino people into accepting more and higher taxes, more wage cuts and freezes, more cuts on the already deteriorated social services, the privatization of government-controlled corporations and the assumption of their debts by the state, especially the colossal debts of the National Power Corporation.

Arroyo's economic managers claim that the regime would be able to raise additional revenues and cut this year's gargantuan P200 billion government deficit to more manageable levels, continue to making bigger debt payments, and thereby convince the IMF-WB and foreign commercial creditors of its ability to incur more and bigger debts.

The Arroyo regime is silent on losses due to rampant and high-level graft and corruption and the tax evasion by the wealthiest and most rapacious big compradors and landlords. Conservative estimates place losses due to graft and corruption at P100–120 billion annually. The most recent and most serious charges of graft and corruption have involved not only members of Macapagal-Arroyo's official family such as the alleged \$14 M IMPSA scam bribe and P1.1 B GSIS loan to PEA for the Macapagal Highway, by members no less of Macapagal-Arroyo's immediate first family.

The Arroyo regime is deaf to proposals for a review, not to mention reversal, of the policy of automatic appropriations for debt payments and adherence to the impositions of foreign monopoly capital. It persists in imposing new and higher taxes in accordance with IMF-WB and WTO prescriptions and impositions.

The fact is that time is fast running out on the Arroyo regime and the people are bound to rise up and resist the blatantly anti-people and anti-national policies and pretended solutions which are in fact further impositions and exactions. These so-called solutions will only aggravate the situation and exacerbate the suffering of the entire nation.

The Arroyo regime blames the crisis on an unfavorable international economic situation, and on the large deficits and debts that its predecessors incurred. But the main point of Arroyo is to conceal from the public her own culpability for subservience to the interests of foreign monopoly capitalism and the local exploiting classes and for taking the path of surpassing the rates reached by her predecessors in local and foreign borrowing and in further sinking the Philippine

economy into bankruptcy and beggary.

The Arroyo regime fails to mention all the root causes of the financial crisis: foreign domination of the economy, feudal backwardness, and bureaucrat-capitalism. The current regime, like all its predecessors, conceals the culpability of US and other foreign monopoly capitalists in keeping the Philippine economy agrarian and pre-industrial, with the collaboration of bureaucrat capitalists who are themselves big compradors and landlords.

Foreign monopoly and feudal exploitation of the people over the past century has resulted in economic stagnation, chronic crisis, the absence of basic industries, chronic trade and current accounts deficits, deepening indebtedness, and a quagmire of poverty and misery into which more and more of the toiling masses are forced to flounder. Even the doctored and manipulated government statistics would reveal that the percentages of employment in the industrial and manufacturing sectors have not increased over the past four decades but have in fact steadily decreased from 16.5 percent (industrial) and 12 percent (manufacturing) in 1970 to 15.1 percent and 9.2 percent respectively in 2003. Further underdevelopment and worsening crisis have pushed more than 80 percent of the population below the poverty line.

The Arroyo regime refuses to admit that the Philippine economy has further deteriorated and has been stricken with an unprecedented crisis after being brought into the WTO under the neoliberal policy of “free market” globalization. It must be recalled that it was through a legislation sponsored by then Senator Macapagal Arroyo that Philippine entry into the WTO was effected. “Free market” globalization enabled the foreign monopoly capitalists to plunder with utmost rapacity the third world economies and to degrade the so-called “tiger” and “emergent” economies and weaker capitalist countries. The result has been the rapid reconcentration of capital into the hands of a few giant monopoly capitalists in the US principally and in the two other centers of capitalism, Europe and Japan; and the consequent devastation of the third world and retrogressive countries, which continue to sink in the ocean of foreign debt and poverty.

| | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | |
|----------------------|------|------|-------|--------|--------|
| Third World debt | | 72.8 | 609.4 | 1458.4 | 2492.0 |
| Debt service | | 9.2 | 93.4 | 163.8 | 398.9 |
| Debt/GNP ratio | | 10.9 | 21.0 | 34.1 | 39.1 |
| Debt service/exports | | | 13.5 | 18.1 | 18.1 |

(Source: WB, Global Development Finance, different years)

Third world countries are being crushed by a mounting debt burden. Total third world debt amounts to US\$ 3 trillion. Debt service, the ratio of debt to GNP, and the ratio of debt service to exports have rapidly increased over the decades, as the following table shows:

For the Philippines, the average debt-to-GDP ratio from 1972 to 1980's was 15 percent. From 1980 to 1986, it had shot up from 19 percent to 55.6 percent, to 67.1 percent in 1993 and 77.3 percent in 2003. Clearly, the 1990s figures were way above the third world average.

Even as the US and other imperialist countries enjoy the privileges of power within the WTO, they are nonetheless afflicted by economic and financial crisis arising from the inherent contradictions of capitalism. Japan and Europe were struck hard by the crisis of overproduction and recession in the wake of the 1997 Asian financial crisis. Then, the "high tech bubble" burst in the US in 2000. Since then, the global depression has worsened, driving the major imperialist powers all the more to intensify the exploitation and oppression of the proletariat and people of the world. At the same time, they have heightened their own competition and contention.

The worsening crisis of the world capitalist system has driven the US to become ever more rapacious and violent, to the detriment of the proletariat and people and even its imperialist allies. The US has been trying to stimulate its economy by giving tax cuts to the monopoly bourgeoisie and stepping up military production. Relatedly, it is whipping up repression on a global scale under the pretext of anti-terrorism and launching wars of aggression in order to assert hegemony and seize sources of raw materials (especially oil), markets, fields of investment and spheres of influence.

Acting in subservience to US imperialism, the Arroyo regime is imposing on the Philippines all the US policy dictates in economics, finance and other matters. Thus the crisis of the US and world capitalist system will continue to worsen the crisis of the Philippine ruling system. There is no way out for the Filipino people but to fight for their national and democratic rights and interests in a comprehensive way against US imperialism and the local puppets.

The solution: reforms and revolution

The broad masses of the people demand the strengthening and completion of the

struggle for national liberation and democracy be strengthened and completed, the cancellation of all fraudulent and odious foreign loans benefiting the foreign and local exploiters, the confiscation of ill-gotten assets obtained through such loans and the termination of the puppet law providing automatic appropriations servicing foreign debt. They know that there can be no end to the chronic economic and financial crisis and to the monopoly capitalists' practice of international usury, the entire nation, especially the toiling masses of workers and peasants, are able to wield power.

The comprehensive solution to the chronic economic and financial crisis is for the Filipino people themselves to gain power by fighting for national and social liberation, undo the dominance of US imperialism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, uphold national sovereignty and independence, defend economic sovereignty and national patrimony and undertake economic and social development through genuine land reform and national industrialization.

There are various ideas on how to carry out the solution. These include carrying out the electoral struggle to put into office good men and women who will push the necessary reforms, using the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations to forge agreements on reforms and arrive at truce and alliance against common problems, changing the present regime through a peaceful mass uprising in order to put up a new government that would undertake reforms and overthrowing the ruling system through armed revolution in order to make a social revolution.

1. Let us consider electoral struggle. It is possible to put into executive and legislative offices some good men and women. They can advocate economic, financial and other reforms and in the process expose the rottenness and subservience of those who oppose these as well as the entire ruling system. However, they need to be aware that the US and the local exploiting classes will always seek to buy off or isolate those who seek to change or challenge the fundamentals of the system and ensure the overwhelming dominance of the rabid reactionaries.

A good indicator of the rottenness and subservience of the local wielders of power in the semicolonial and semifeudal system is the fact that the presidential decree of Marcos providing for automatic appropriations for debt servicing remains a law more than 18 years after his fall, through one presidential successor to another and one Congress to another. This is not proof of how powerful is the ghost of Marcos. This is proof of how powerful is the US master

over its series of puppets with regard to economic and financial policy.

A very small number of national executive and legislative officials express patriotic and progressive views. The US and the ruling politicians see them as ineffectual against the scheme to amend the 1987 constitution for the purpose of undercutting civil and political liberties, removing the nationality provisions that seek to limit foreign investments and paving the way for the return of US military bases and the deployment of foreign troops on the Philippines. They are pushing the scheme under the guise of changing the form of government from presidential to parliamentary and shielding the Arroyo regime from a people's mass uprising similar to those against Marcos in 1986 and against Estrada in 2001.

2. Let us consider the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations. The NDFP can clarify and ventilate the reforms that need to be adopted and implemented. The objective is to work out comprehensive agreements in economic, social, political and constitutional reforms and go for a truce and alliance against common problems or inimical forces. But these negotiations are easily subject to sabotage by the US and its worst puppets.

Right now, the NDFP wishes to negotiate social and economic reforms. With regard to economic and financial policy, the objective of the NDFP is to persuade the GRP to agree on the adoption of certain measures to protect the people from the devastating consequences of the policy dictates of the US and such US-dominated multilateral agencies as the IMF, World Bank and WTO. The Philippine government in the 1950s adopted some of these measures to some extent. In recent times, China and Malaysia have been able to hold their ground against the worst US and IMF dictates on financial policy. But so far, the Macapagal Arroyo regime is tightly bound to US dictates and the myth of "free market" globalization.

The rabid puppets of the US imperialists in the Arroyo cabinet and in the military as well as agents of clerico-fascism are in control of the GRP side of negotiations and are blocking the progress of the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations. They endorse, condone and applaud US imperialism for listing the Communist Party of the Philippines, New People's Army and the NDFP chief political consultant as "terrorists". They agree to the US violation of the national sovereignty of the Filipino people and to the usurpation of jurisdiction over the internal affairs of the Philippines. They attack the safety and immunity

guarantees for duly-authorized persons in the peace negotiations. They connive with the US in using the “terrorist” label to violate human rights in general and the Hernandez political offense doctrine in Philippine jurisprudence in particular.

3. Let us consider how a broad united front can replace the Arroyo regime. It is possible for a people’s uprising to occur as it did in 1986 and 2001 in order to remove the incumbent ruling clique from power, and to install a new government that is patriotic and progressive, enjoying the support of the broad masses of the people and a broad range of forces bound by a program of reforms similar to those envisioned by the Movement for the Advancement of Nationalism in 1966. I think that the NDFP would be open to such a possibility.

Recently, I have publicly exchanged views with the distinguished nationalist economist Alejandro Lichauco on how to confront the chronic all-round rottenness and crisis of the ruling system and how to constitute a new government that can be the instrument for realizing the people’s demands for national independence, democracy, development, social justice and peace. May I reiterate my view that all patriotic and progressive forces can try working together in forming a united front government, which includes the real and sincere representatives of workers, peasants and the middle social strata as well as the civil bureaucrats and military personnel who criticize and repudiate the corruption and subservience of the ruling politicians to the US.

If such a government can arise, the question of economic and financial policy can be resolved along the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal line. It is possible for the working people and the middle social strata, represented in such a government, to agree on a firm policy of canceling all fraudulent and odious foreign debts, undertaking genuine land reform and national industrialization and strengthening diplomatic and economic relations with the ASEAN, China and Japan as well as Russia, France and Germany against the hegemony of the US.

4. Let us consider the new democratic revolution through people’s war. It has been going on since 1969. It aims at the armed seizure of political power in order to carry out the all-round social revolution of the working people and the middle social strata. It is the people’s ever available and effective method for achieving optimal results.

It is extremely difficult or impossible to achieve basic reforms (like the end of foreign monopoly domination, land reform and national industrialization) within

the ruling system because the US and the exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords wield powerful instruments of violence against the people. Thus, the people have chosen the path of armed revolution and built their own revolutionary army in order to carry out a new democratic revolution, with a socialist perspective.

Only when the workers, peasants and the middle social strata have won power would they be able to adopt and implement an economic and financial policy that defends economic sovereignty and the national patrimony, abolishes completely the dominance of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, develops the economy on a self-reliant basis through centralized planning and carries forward an independent foreign policy of promoting international solidarity, development, fair and equitable economic relations among all countries and fostering world peace.

Socioeconomic and Political Realities and Need for Peace Negotiations

**Delivered at the International Peace Research Institute
in Oslo, Norway, June 1, 2005**

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Greetings of solidarity!

Thank you for inviting me to speak at your well-known institution. I am delighted and honored by your invitation. I have long appreciated your work in peace research and in providing support to peace negotiations.

I wish to describe the socioeconomic and political realities in the Philippines and proceed to a discussion of the need for peace negotiations between the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP).

Socioeconomic realities

Many people, including Filipinos, think that the Philippines is a small country. In fact, it has a population of 84 million, which is the 12th largest or within the top 6 percent of national populations. It has an area of 300,000 square kilometers, which is the 73rd largest land area or within the top 38 percent of the 191 member-states of the United Nations. At nominal prices, the gross domestic

product for 2004 is PhP 4.843 trillion or USD 86.482 billion. It includes a lot of overvaluation in the industrial sector and a lot of false estimates in the agriculture and service sectors.

The estimated output value share of agriculture is 14.8 percent, industry, 31.9 percent and services, 53.2 percent. The output value share of agriculture is understated. It does not cover the considerable part of the agricultural product which the peasants consume. The estimated employment share of agriculture is 36 percent, of industry 16 percent and of services 48 percent. Based on this, the peasants are responsible for more than 69 percent of the basic production of goods and the industrial workers for nearly 31 percent.

The Philippine social economy remains underdeveloped, despite all previous official rhetoric about development. It is still basically agrarian and pre-industrial in terms of the development of the productive forces. The principal means of production is still agricultural land, which is mainly for domestic food consumption and secondarily for export crops (coconut, sugar, bananas, pineapple, etc.).

The degree of mechanization in agriculture is limited and is concentrated on estates for export crops. In 2001, only some 11,500 tractors and 700 powered harvester-threshers were available for over 13 million hectares of agricultural land. Only 30 percent of the country's total farm area is irrigated as of 2002. Land ownership is heavily concentrated with less than one-third of landowners owning more than 80 percent of all agricultural land. The Philippines has rich natural resources and most of the minerals for industrialization. But after extraction, the mineral ores do not go beyond the primary stage of processing and are exported as raw materials. There is a certain amount of modern industry but this is based on equipment, fuel and other inputs from abroad. The industrial sector produces neither capital goods nor basic metals and chemicals.

Export-oriented low-value added semi-manufacturing, which have come into favor with policymakers and investors since the late 1970s, is far more import-dependent and provides less regular employment than the repackaging and reassembly for import-substitution and domestic consumption in the 1950s and 1960s. It has reduced output value and employment since the 1997 economic and financial crisis in Southeast Asia.

The crisis of overproduction of semi-manufactures for re-export since the middle

of the 1990s (1994 for garments and 1996 for electronic assembly) has come on top of the earlier crisis of overproduction of raw materials since the late 1970s. However, despite the continuing global oversupply of low value-added semi-manufactures, the Philippines has continued to stick to electronic assembly and garments. These account for 75 percent of gross export earnings. However, the high imported content of the semi-manufactures up to 85-95 percent in the case of electronic equipment yield a very small amount of net export earnings.

The Philippine economy is a neocolonial adjunct of the US and world capitalist system. It is exceedingly dependent on direct investments, loans and trade with the global centers of capitalism. It is bound by policies dictated by major capitalist countries bilaterally or through multilateral agencies like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Despite its external linkages, the Philippines retains a distinct system of socioeconomic relations. These are precisely called semifeudal. The comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class are the basic exploiting classes and together constitute a fraction of one percent of the population. The basic exploited classes of workers and peasants are 15 and 75 percent of the population, respectively. The intermediate social strata are the middle bourgeoisie and the far more numerous urban petty bourgeoisie.

The Filipino people have long clamored for genuine land reform and national industrialization as integral factors for breaking the persistence of large feudal holdings and realizing Filipino-owned industrialization in order to raise the level of economic development and change social relations for the better. But one reactionary regime after another has done nothing more than to pay lip service to land reform and national industrialization.

After the US and other capitalist powers shifted policy stress from Keynesianism to "free market" globalization, the reactionary regimes in the Philippines have obscured the need for land reform and national industrialization by harping on the need for raising productivity for the global market. In this regard, the real drive has been to further allow the foreign monopolies to take over natural resources, privatize public assets, get more tax exemptions and tariff cuts, and dump their surplus goods on the Philippines.

The Philippine economy is in a chronic state of crisis. This has rapidly deepened and aggravated under the current policy regime of unbridled "free market" globalization under which foreign monopoly capitalism is actually on a rampage.

The semifeudal economy is incurring huge foreign trade deficits faster than ever from the unequal exchange of its raw-material exports and consumption-driven manufactured imports. The foreign trade deficits have not been relieved but in fact been aggravated by the export-oriented low-value added semi-manufacturing because this involves a high amount of overvalued imported content.

The huge trade deficits and rising debt service result in chronic current accounts deficits and unfavorable balance of payments. But the deficits are often covered by new debts at more onerous terms, including short-term portfolio investments and the flotation of bonds by state corporations in the capital market. These render the economy more vulnerable. The foreign debt is ever mounting. The foreign exchange remittances of overseas contract workers are in fact used for further import-dependent consumption but are often cited as a resource for paying a major part of the foreign debt.

The high level of government budgetary deficit is due to economic depression, the sale of income-generating state assets, reduction of tariffs, tax evasion by the exploiting classes including tax holidays and exemptions, bureaucratic corruption and high military expenditures. Moreover, the reactionary government and its various corporations enter into onerous loan and supply contracts with foreign banks and companies that aggravate the deficits to be covered by local public and foreign borrowing.

The Philippine economy and the reactionary government in particular are bankrupt. But they are kept afloat by exporting ever larger volumes of certain goods whose prices keep on sinking, by rescheduling of old debts and incurring new debts at ever more onerous terms under various programs dictated by the IMF and the World Bank, by privatization of government assets and by capturing the foreign exchange remittances of Filipino overseas contract workers who now constitute 10 percent of the population and whose annual remittances have grown to USD 8.5 billion in 2004.

We can trace the deterioration of the Philippine economy by looking at the growth and uses of foreign and domestic borrowing, from one regime to another. The Marcos regime was the very first one to dramatically raise the level of foreign borrowing from the level of USD 600 million in 1965 to USD 27.2 billion in 1986. The regime used the foreign funds to finance the graft-ridden construction of sugar, coconut, copper and nickel mills, irrigation systems, roads

and bridges and tourist facilities. This was mainly under the auspices of the Keynesian policy stress of the World Bank before 1980.

But at the onset of the 1980s, economic policy stress would shift to monetarism and neoliberalism in the US and in the world capitalist system. Supposedly the time had come to act decisively against so-called wage inflation and social spending by the state. Both were blamed as the cause of the stagflation problem. While the US sought to attract funds from abroad by offering high interest rates in the market, the World Bank was made to cut down on concessionary official lending and the IMF was made to whip up trade and investment liberalization, privatization and deregulation as payback from the third world debtors.

The tight international credit situation in the 1980s compelled the Aquino regime to raise the level of local public debt from PhP 144.4 billion in 1986 to PhP 521 billion in 1992. The Aquino regime restricted imports and brought the level of foreign debt to USD 29.9 billion in 1992. To countervail depressed prices in the global market, the raw material exports of the Philippines had to be increased.

Still the financial crisis sharpened in the early 1990s

The Ramos regime harped on "free market" globalization. It outstripped the Marcos regime in foreign borrowing and the Aquino regime in local borrowing. It brought the level of the country's foreign debt to USD 46.2 billion and total domestic public sector debt to PhP 922 billion in 1998. These borrowings were made in order to cover foreign trade and budgetary deficits, respectively. The deficits grew as the regime promoted the export-oriented low-value added semi-manufacturing and private construction of high-rise office buildings, residential towers, hotels, golf courses and other recreational facilities. The economic and financial collapse came as a major part of the 1997 Southeast Asia crisis.

The bankruptcy of the Philippine economy and state was conspicuous when the Estrada regime took over. Government expenditures went too far ahead of tax revenues. The IMF kept on pressing the regime to reduce government expenditures, adopt new tax measures and give priority to debt service. To pursue its bureaucrat capitalist purposes, the regime engaged in scams by raiding the pension funds of state and private employees and collecting money from the underworld. The Estrada regime raised the level of the country's foreign debt to USD 51.2 billion and local public debt to PhP 1.068 trillion by year end 2000.

The Arroyo regime raised the level of the country's foreign debt to USD 56.3 billion and the local public debt to PhP 1.833 trillion in June 2004. The compounded foreign and local public debt is PhP 6 trillion. In fact, the foreign debt has gone beyond USD 60 billion and the local public debt beyond PhP 2.5 trillion. In terms of the size of the total public debt, the Philippines is in a worse situation than Argentina. The Philippine public debt/GDP ratio has risen from 56 percent in 1997 to 80 percent in 2004. Last year, the reactionary government paid 81 percent of its revenues for both interest and principal amortization. This year it is allocating 94 percent of revenues for debt service.

Since 2001, the Arroyo regime has overborrowed from the private capital market, mainly US, by floating bonds. It is now given a low credit rating and is being forced by the IMF to raise taxes amid a depressed economy. The value added tax is being raised by 20 percent. Other measures for raising taxes are being implemented. Under conditions of deregulation, the oil companies are allowed to freely raise their prices and so are the power, water and other public utilities, their service rates. The reactionary government is raising the fees for services it provides.

The IMF and WTO require the regime to undertake further denationalization, liberalization, privatization and deregulation. State assets such as those in the National Power Corporation are being bargained away. Debts of state corporations being auctioned off remain as sovereign debt and do not become the liability of the new private owners. The mineral, forest and water resources of the country are further being opened up for unrestricted exploitation by the foreign monopolies. Mimicking the Bush regime, the Arroyo regime is planning to privatize the social security agencies of the state.

Major official statistical data in the Philippines are falsified to conjure the illusion of achievement. The Arroyo regime claims that the GDP grew by 6.1 percent in 2004. The Employers Confederation of the Philippines describes this as jobless and industry-less growth. The regime pretends to surpass by so many times the stagnant growth rates in the most advanced capitalist countries. It absurdly cites the heavy electoral spending last year, the proliferation of international call centers and false estimates of production rises in agriculture and service sectors of the economy as major items in the GDP growth.

The chronic rate of mass unemployment in the Philippines goes beyond 40 percent. One can arrive at this rate by compounding the officially admitted

unemployment and underemployment rates (the latter is actually unemployed). Unemployment has increased conspicuously since the 1997 Asian financial crisis, with the formal sector shrinking fast. The claimed unemployment rate of 11.7 percent in 2004, which is comparable to that of Germany, is simply unbelievable. Supposedly "employed" by some specious definition are 30.635 million workers out of a total labor force of 34.571 million. But only 18.62 percent (5.067 million) are verifiably employed in the formal sector, while 67.47 percent (20.670 million) are in the informal sector, which is a realm of random surveys and false estimates.

The real value of nominal wages has drastically gone down due to the rapidly soaring prices of basic commodities and services. Inflation has been pushed by the peso devaluation, the scarcities in import-dependent basic producer and consumer goods and the heavy electoral spending by the regime. The inflation rate of 5.4 percent for 2004 in IMF and government statistics is simply unbelievable.

The peso has been devalued vis-à-vis the US dollar and is now less than half its value in 1996 and only a third its value in 1985. Funds for essential producer and consumer imports have become scarce because of superprofit-taking by the monopoly firms, the huge amounts of debt service, spending for foreign-made luxuries and weapons and salting away of dollars by big Filipino businessmen and high bureaucrats.

The broad masses of the people suffer the rising costs of basic commodities and such services as transport, water and electricity. Since the privatization and deregulation of public utilities in the 1990s, the price of oil products has increased on average by 160 percent, of electricity by 175 percent, and of water services by 450 percent. The social infrastructure is breaking down and the allocations for such social services as health, education, unemployment relief and housing are being cut back. The Arroyo regime has drastically slashed real spending on education by 3.2 percent, on health by 24.5 percent and on housing by 61.0 percent from 2001-2004.

Contrary to absurd government claims that poverty has fallen from 40 percent to just 30.4 percent of the population in 2003, some 90 percent of the population live on the equivalent of around USD 3 a day. A recent report by the Asian Development Bank points out that the Philippine government achieved the reduction of the poverty level not by raising the people's income but by lowering

the poverty line. Indeed, while the general price level supposedly rose by some 15 percent between 2000 and 2003, the government raised the poverty line by just 7 percent to just PhP 33.60 or some USD 0.60 a day.

Millions of children are subjected to forced labor, malnutrition, deprivation of education, military assaults on rural communities and forced evacuation. Women are degraded and forced to leave their families in order to earn a living abroad. Large numbers of women and children are forced into prostitution. The environment is being damaged by logging for export and foreign mining pesticide-dependent plantations and other pollutant enterprises.

Social discontent is acute and widespread among the toiling masses of workers and peasants and the middle social strata of entrepreneurs, traders and intelligentsia. They are increasingly engaged in strikes, protest rallies and other forms of concerted action. But the regime always tries to intimidate the people and orders the military and police to attack them. Human rights violations are rampant. There is more than enough of socioeconomic exploitation and political oppression to drive so many people to wage revolutionary resistance.

The Filipino people demand such bourgeois democratic measures as land reform and national industrialization in order to break the agrarian, pre-industrial and semifeudal character of the economy. They demand measures to be undertaken to uphold national sovereignty, conserve and use wisely the rich natural resources of the country and make sure that the social wealth created serves the material and spiritual well-being of the current and future generations.

Political realities

The Philippine ruling system is semicolonial. It has been so since the US formally ended its colonial rule, granted nominal independence on 4 July 1946 to the Philippines and turned over the reins of national administration to Filipino bureaucrats and politicians from the exploiting classes. At the same time, it has retained strategic control over the Philippines in the economic, financial, security and other fields.

Unequal treaties have ensured the subservience of the Philippine ruling system to the US. The Treaty of General Relations of 1946 guaranteed that US corporations and citizens retained their property rights and that US military forces kept their military bases and their radar and loran stations. A series of

bilateral economic and trade agreements gave US corporations and citizens so-called parity rights to exploit natural resources and operate public utilities. The predecessor agencies of the US-AID started the practice of planting agents in key agencies of the puppet government.

A series of bilateral military agreements on US military bases, military assistance and mutual defense has bound the Philippines to US military power. Even after the dismantling of the US military bases in 1992, following the nonrenewal of the military bases agreement by the Philippine Senate in 1991, the US continues to exercise military control over the Philippines through control of military logistics, planning, indoctrination and training of military officers.

It continues to encroach on Philippine territory and use Philippine military facilities under the Visiting Forces Agreement ratified by the Philippine Senate in May 1999 and the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement signed by US and RP defense officials in November 2002. It uses various general pretexts such as mutual defense, regional security and war on terrorism and more specific pretexts like joint military training exercises, civic action, humanitarian mission and the like.

The key binding factor of the Philippine ruling system is US hegemony. But the politicians and bureaucrats of the local exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords have their relative autonomy from the neocolonial master. They feed on the common trough of bureaucrat capitalism and compete in pretending to be for public service. They are divided into factional parties of the same dominant classes.

From 1946 to 1972, a two party system or a duopoly existed, patterned after that of the US. In this system, the political factions of the exploiting classes engaged in political and electoral struggle in an increasingly violent way. Subsequently, the Marcos ruling clique usurped all powers of government through a fascist dictatorship from 1972 to 1986. Since the fall of the Marcos regime, there has been a proliferation of reactionary political parties and coalitions. There is not a single reactionary party or coalition that can claim a majority of the electoral votes at the national level.

The instability of the ruling system has worsened from the period of 1946 to 1972 through the Marcos fascist dictatorship and further on to the period of the post-Marcos regimes. The political crisis is chronic and it involves the

contradictions within the ruling system becoming more violent. It is a reflection of the ever worsening socioeconomic crisis. As the pie for bureaucrat capitalist looting decreases, the struggle over it becomes more bitter and more conspicuous.

There is of course a semblance of civility and noblesse oblige among the reactionary political factions in the ruling system when they utter platitudes to the public and try to show good behavior to the US, the chambers of commerce and the dominant church. But they do have their own violent factional strife. To consolidate and expand their power and wealth against their rivals, they cultivate links with groups of military and police officers and they operate armed groups and private security agencies.

The coercive apparatuses of the state, the military and police, are themselves divided into factions. These reflect the major political factions whose patronage is necessary to ensure promotions in rank and assignments to lucrative posts. They also arise from rivalries in operating or taking payoffs from criminal syndicates of various types, including those engaged in the numbers game (jueteng), illegal logging, drugs, kidnapping for ransom, bank heists, smuggling and so on.

At this moment, the Arroyo regime is extremely unstable and isolated. The sentiment is widespread that Arroyo was not really elected as president last year. She is widely perceived to have bought the votes and cheated in the counting. But what is really most damaging about the regime is the crudity and conspicuousness of its puppetry to the US and the colossal multinationals, the corruption of gargantuan proportions, the imposition of a heavier tax burden on the people in a depressed economy, the soaring prices of basic commodities and services and the escalation of human rights violations in the urban and rural areas under the pretext of counterterrorism.

A broad united front of opposition forces is growing against the Arroyo regime. The key forces in this broad united front are the political parties and groups that have demonstrated significant electoral following, military and police officers that dissociate themselves from rampant corruption and other criminality of their colleagues and the patriotic and progressive forces with the organized masses willing to confront the regime and cause its downfall, as in the case of Marcos in 1986 and Estrada in 2001.

The broad united front is reportedly trying to form a revolutionary council of patriotic and progressive forces to succeed the Arroyo regime and to lay the basis for the election of a new government in six months to one year after the ouster of Arroyo. It seeks to unite the military and police officers in upholding the principle of civilian supremacy, withdrawing their support from the regime, letting the masses rise up in protest and causing the regime to resign.

In reaction, the Arroyo regime has become even more servile to the US, more corrupt, more arrogant and more ruthless in the face of the developing broad united front. It believes that it can continue borrowing from abroad by complying with the demands of the IMF for increasing the tax burden and giving priority to debt service and that it can receive huge amounts of US military and financial assistance in exchange for its support for the Bush "war on terrorism", the rise of US military intervention, the reestablishment of US military bases and the inflow of foreign investments.

There is a trend towards an unbridled rule of open terror, without any proclamation of martial law. The minions of the regime are now busy pushing the enactment of an anti-terrorism law and the removal from the 1987 constitution of the provisions that put limitations on the declaration of martial law, that guarantee the basic rights of a criminal suspect under the Miranda doctrine, that assert economic sovereignty and limit foreign investments, that protect the national patrimony and that prohibit foreign military bases and foreign troops.

To say the least, the extremely pro-imperialist and reactionary elements in the Arroyo regime wish to prevent the implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law and the negotiation of social, economic and political reforms and would rather scuttle the peace negotiations than address the roots of the civil war in the Philippines. The terrorist-listing is calculated to extort from the NDFP the capitulation and pacification of the revolutionary forces either under the guise of a "final peace agreement" of empty generalities and a prolonged ceasefire without the substance of a just and lasting peace.

Relatedly, the most vicious kinds of pressure are being exerted on the NDFP. Under the direction of US psywar experts, the military and police have unleashed a campaign vilifying the most respectable institutions, organizations and personages as "terrorists" and then telling them to clear themselves by

denouncing the revolutionary forces. This psywar campaign is combined with a campaign of assassinations and abductions directed against patriotic and progressive religious, lawyers, human rights activists, journalists, leaders of the party list parties (like Bayan Muna, Anakpawis and Gabriela) and leaders and members of the mass organizations of workers, peasants, urban poor, women, youth and others.

It is reprehensible that the Arroyo regime has collaborated with the US government in demonizing and listing as "terrorists" the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army and the chief political consultant of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. In the current wave of assassinations and abductions, the NDFP senior legal adviser Justice Romeo T. Capulong has been clearly targeted for assassination. NDFP consultants residing in Philippines are experiencing increased surveillance and intimidating actions from armed agents of the GRP.

This "terrorist" listing violates the mutually acceptable principle of national sovereignty and the noncapitulation principle in The Hague Joint Declaration, the safety and immunity guarantees for all duly-authorized persons in the peace negotiations under the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees and the basic democratic rights and the Hernandez political offense doctrine as affirmed by the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law.

Since August last year, when the US renewed the "terrorist" label and listing of the CPP, NPA and the NDFP chief political consultant, the NDFP has expected the GRP to join it in condemning the unjust act of the US and to comply with all the aforesaid agreements as well as with the related agreements in the Oslo Joint Statements I and II. The GRP must comply with existing agreements or else the NDFP sees no point in negotiating with it.

At whatever rate the GRP complies with mutual agreements or whether the formal talks in the peace negotiations will resume sooner or later or never, the NDFP is committed to upholding, defending and promoting the national sovereignty of the Filipino people. This is the main guiding principle of the NDFP in seeking political and constitutional reforms through the peace negotiations.

The NDFP can consider the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations worthwhile and

useful only if these can become the way for asserting the national sovereignty and empowering the workers and peasants who comprise ninety percent of the Filipino people. The toiling masses should have all the conditions and possibilities for expressing and realizing their national and democratic rights and interests.

Need for peace negotiations

The two contending and negotiating parties, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) have in their respective ways recognized the need for peace negotiations and have set forth the objectives they wish to achieve.

According to the stalwarts of the national security division of the Arroyo cabinet, the maximum objective of the GRP in pursuing the peace negotiations is to cause the capitulation of the NDFP or facilitate the military victory of GRP and the minimum objective is to conjure false illusions, befuddle the consciousness of the revolutionary forces and people and split the ranks of the revolutionary movement.

The NDFP has been quite open in declaring that the line of struggle for national liberation and democracy is the same line that it pursues in the negotiations for a just and lasting peace. This is the maximum objective of the NDFP in the peace negotiations. The NDFP also has the minimum objective of propagating the national democratic line on issues, arousing the people in their millions to raise the level of revolutionary struggle and seeking allies within the ruling system for the purpose of isolating and defeating the intractable foe.

Since the time of the Marcos fascist dictatorship, I have been privileged to be involved in discreet and public discussions about the question of peace negotiations. I can use the historical method to demonstrate clearly the development of the position and attitude of both the GRP and NDFP about the question of peace negotiations. But such an approach might only ignite a speculative debate about the motivations and calculations of the contending parties. We are on more solid ground if we look at the existing agreements of the two negotiating parties.

Since 1992 the GRP and NDFP have forged twelve agreements. We can use these agreements to determine and measure what the two parties are willing to

consider and agree upon as matters in the interest of the Filipino people. The preliminary stage of 1992 to 1995 yielded serious agreements that paved the way for the stage of formal talks from 1995 to the present.

The Hague Joint Declaration was mutually approved by the principals of the GRP and NDFP negotiating panels in 1992. It proclaims the need for peace negotiations in order to address the roots of the armed conflict and arrive at reforms for laying the stable foundation for a just and lasting peace.

It declares the mutually acceptable principles of national sovereignty, democracy and social justice as the guiding principles for the negotiations. It is against any precondition that negates the inherent character and purpose of peace negotiations. It sets the substantive agenda, to include respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, social and economic reforms, political and constitutional reforms.

The Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) was mutually approved in 1995 by the principals of the GRP and NDFP negotiating panels. It protects the panelists, consultants and all other persons duly-authorized in the peace negotiations and provides the mechanism for terminating the peace negotiations by any of the two parties and for allowing persons duly-authorized to participate in the peace negotiation to go to their safe positions within 30 days after the date of the notice of termination.

The Joint Agreement on the Formation, Sequence and Operationalization of the Reciprocal Working Committees was mutually approved in 1995 to guide the drafting of the tentative comprehensive agreements one after the other in accordance with the substantive agenda as set forth by The Hague Joint Declaration. A supplementary agreement was mutually approved in 1997 to require mutual approval by the principals of the comprehensive agreement on social and economic reforms before there can be a negotiation of political and constitutional reforms.

The Comprehensive Agreement of Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) was approved by the principals of the NDFP and GRP in 1998. This is the first of the four comprehensive agreements in accordance with the substantive agenda. Since 2004, the GRP and NDFP have agreed on the operating guidelines of the Joint Monitoring Committee and has fully constituted it, together with its Joint Secretariat in Manila, to monitor the

joint and separate implementation of the CARHRIHL.

At the opening session of the resumption of formal talks in Oslo in April 2001, the NDFP Negotiating Panel and the GRP Negotiating Panel agreed to cooperate in trying to finish the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms within six months from June 2001. Had the GRP cooperated with NDFP, this comprehensive agreement would have been finished a long time ago. There would have been a chance to finish the comprehensive agreement on political and constitutional reforms in 2002 and that on the end of hostilities and disposition of forces in 2003.

Unfortunately, in June 2001 the GRP suspended indefinitely the formal talks until 2004 avowedly in protest to the killing of Colonel Rodolfo Aguinaldo by the New People's Army. He was one among the most notorious torturers and murderers of the Marcos fascist dictatorship. Even while in civilian office, he continued to participate in military operations against the NPA and the people in Cagayan province. The NPA therefore had long regarded him as an armed combatant with abundant blood debts.

To further complicate matters, the GRP agreed with the US government in November 2001 to put the CPP/NPA and the NDFP chief political consultant in the "terrorist" list in a bid to pressure the NDFP to capitulate by signing the so-called final peace agreement which the GRP had unilaterally drafted. The US made the "terrorist" listing in August 2002, followed by various other governments (Netherlands, Britain, Australia and Canada) and by the European Council.

There are now two major obstacles blocking the resumption of the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations:

1. The "terrorist" listing. It is a malicious act which seeks to blackmail and pressure the NDFP to capitulate. It violates the principles of national sovereignty and non-capitulation in The Hague Joint Declaration; the protection to persons duly-authorized to participate in the peace negotiations under the JASIG and the basic democratic rights and the Hernandez political offense doctrine in the CARHRIHL.

The GRP has made the resumption of the formal talks impossible by failing to end its complicity with the US in labeling and listing the CPP, NPA and the

NDFP chief political consultant as "terrorist." It has also failed to join the NDFP in upholding the Oslo Statements I and II against the "terrorist" listing. Worst of all, it has repeatedly dueted with the US on the line that the NDFP must capitulate in order to have the names of revolutionary forces removed from the list. It must join the NDFP in complying with the existing agreements to pave the way for the resumption of the formal talks.

2. The demand for capitulation. The NDFP rejects the demand for capitulation carried by the so-called final peace agreement drafted by the GRP. This violates the noncapitulation and substantive agenda provisions in The Hague Joint Declaration and the Joint Agreement on the Formation, Sequence and Operationalization of the Reciprocal Working Committees. The NDFP also rejects any attempt to convert the peace negotiations into ceasefire negotiations that lay aside the principle of addressing the root causes of the armed conflict through the negotiations on social, economic and political reforms.

The GRP must comply with the existing agreements. If it does not, how can the NDFP expect that the GRP will ever comply with the comprehensive agreements on the substantive agenda? But it is highly probable that the GRP is already looking for a way to prevent the negotiation of social and economic reforms and to scuttle the peace negotiations. It is trying to make the NDFP capitulate and, if the latter does not capitulate, to subsequently escalate the war against the revolutionary forces and people.

It should be realistic and reasonable for the Arroyo regime to agree to the resumption of the formal talks on social and economic reforms.

The broad masses of the people expect this; they are looking for way out of the current social, economic and political crisis. After resumption of the formal talks, conversations between special representatives of the GRP and NDFP principals on how to accelerate negotiations and agreements are possible, without violating the existing agreements.

But the problem of the Arroyo regime might be the false illusion that the US can provide it with economic and military assistance sufficient for buoying up the ruling system and defeating the revolutionary forces and people. In the meantime, the regime is becoming more and more isolated, weak and vulnerable to the rising resistance of the people and broad united front of opposition forces. This is the worst time for the Arroyo regime to be arrogant and shun the peace

negotiations with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines.

Proclamation 1017 is a Tyrannical Act of Desperation, Incites the People to Intensify Oust-Arroyo Movement

25 February 2006

Gloria M. Arroyo has issued Proclamation 1017 to combine a declaration of a state of emergency and invocation of commander-in-chief authority to call the troops to suppress rebellion. By this proclamation, she claims to have the power to prohibit peaceful assemblies, revoke rally permits issued ministerially by local mayors, order warrantless arrests, suspend the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus, and so on.

The real malevolent objective of Arroyo in issuing the proclamation is to suppress the people's assemblies in the nationwide anniversary celebration of the events of 22-25 February 1986 that resulted in the overthrow of Marcos. She is terribly afraid that the people's mass actions critical of her rotten and hated regime would encourage her own military and police forces to withdraw support from her.

Indeed, she has undertaken so-called preemptive actions by ordering the arrest of military and police officers suspected of opposing her regime and revoking rally permits nationwide and ordering the violent dispersal of people in peaceful assembly. The proclamation and its immediate consequences demonstrate that Arroyo is tyrannizing the people and even her own military and police officers whom she suspects of siding with the people.

Proclamation 1017 is a tyrannical act of desperation by an utterly isolated usurper of authority and her small coterie. It proves that Arroyo will go to any length, including the bloody suppression of the people and her opponents. It is the prelude to worse tyrannical acts to come if the people and the broad united

front of patriotic, progressive and all other anti-Arroyo forces do not act promptly to stop her.

To oust the Arroyo regime, it suffices for the legal patriotic, progressive and other anti-Arroyo forces and their allies among the active and retired military and police forces to do their best in mustering their own respective following and in drawing the broad masses of the people to gigantic mass actions in the vicinity of the presidential palace and key points in the national capital region and in the provinces. The people hate the Arroyo regime for its puppetry to foreign interests, electoral fraud, corruption, brutality and mendacity.

According to reports received by the Negotiating Panel of the National Democratic Front (NDFP), the New People's Army (NPA) led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) is determined to continue intensifying the revolutionary armed struggle by concentrating its fire on military, police and paramilitary units that are deemed loyal to the Arroyo regime because they do not demonstrate that they are anti-Arroyo by raising a red flag or the Philippine flag with red side up and allowing the troops to wear the red arm bands.

According to the same information, the CPP, NPA and NDFP are desirous of a revolutionary transition council (predominantly patriotic and progressive) to replace the Arroyo regime on a program of upholding national sovereignty and independence, realizing genuine land reform and national industrialization, promoting a patriotic, democratic and scientific culture, carrying out an independent foreign policy for peace and development, and opting for truce and alliance with the revolutionary forces against foreign and local oppressors and exploiters.

The information reveals that among the opposition parties, the legal forces of the national democratic movement and the ranks of retired and active anti-Arroyo military and police officers in the broad united front, there is a growing common desire to form a transition council that can negotiate a just and lasting peace with the NDFP by addressing the roots of the civil war. Otherwise, the US-dominated ruling system of big compradors, landlords and corrupt government officials cannot be overhauled in favor of a new Philippines that is truly independent, democratic, socially just, progressive and peaceful.

Terrorism and Further Drives the People to Armed Revolution

February 21, 2007

Even without the Anti-Terror Act, euphemistically called the Human Security Act of 2007, the US-directed Arroyo regime has unleashed the counterrevolutionary military and police forces on the people and spurred them to commit all kinds of barbarities, including the massacre and massive displacement of people in the countryside and the extrajudicial killing, abduction and torture of so many unarmed legal activists. These atrocities are all in line with the Bush global war of terror and its Philippine puppet version called Oplan Bantay Laya I and II.

Upon the signing of the Anti-Terror Act by Gloria M. Arroyo, the reactionary military and forces and their special operations teams and death squads are further licensed and further emboldened to commit acts of state terrorism. The main objective of the Act is to suppress the people's movement for national liberation and democracy and the broad range of legal forces criticizing and opposing the regime. If the targets of the act were only such small groups like the supposedly Al Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf and Jema'ah Islamiyah, the existing system of security agencies and criminal law on murder would have sufficed.

The Arroyo regime is inspired by the malevolent example of Bush in using the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center as pretext for carrying out wars of aggression and pushing fascist acts of legislation and executive fiats on a global scale in the name of anti-terrorism. It is ironic that while the Bush

global war of terror is beginning to unravel in the US, Iraq, Afghanistan and other parts of the world the Philippine puppet authorities rush to produce the Anti-Terror Act. This is calculated to please the Bush regime and serve the selfish political interest of the Arroyo ruling clique.

The term "terrorism" is an old political cussword, an emotionally loaded word of witchhunt for attacking the freedom of thought and belief or for inciting hatred of certain racial or ethnic characteristics. Now, it is passed off as a legal term, with all its vagueness and broadness, to override the clear and well-defined differences between common crimes and political offenses. It is a catch-all term of vilification.

The easily acknowledged targets of proscription are now Abu Sayyaf and the Jema'ah Islamiyah. But the Arroyo regime is already spreading the word that the Moro Islamic Liberation Front can be similarly proscribed if it does not capitulate. Proscription is extendable to other Moro organizations and people who stand for the right of the Moro people to self-determination and ancestral domain. The Arroyo regime is now hell-bent on proscribing the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army and the NDFP chief political consultant and making a list of "terrorists" in line with the previous designation of the same entities as "terrorist" by the US. The NDFP is also being threatened with "terrorist" listing if it does not capitulate.

After the proscription of the CPP and the NPA as "terrorists", it would be easy for the Arroyo regime to proscribe other parties and organizations as "terrorists" collaborating and conspiring to commit "terrorism". The Arroyo regime has demonstrated its viciousness in fabricating criminal charges against the broad united front of opposition forces. In this connection, the legal patriotic and progressive mass organizations and the legal opposition parties are vulnerable to proscription.

It would also be easy to arrest and detain indefinitely individuals as officers and members of "terrorist" organizations or as accomplices and accessories in the commission of "terrorism". If a member of an already proscribed organization, an individual can be easily subjected to rigorous surveillance and punitive sanctions. These make the Anti-Terror Act a bill of attainder, which criminalizes and punishes individuals on the basis of guilt by association.

Any party or organization or individual can be proscribed as "terrorist" upon the

decision of the implementing agency, the Anti-Terrorism-Council, on the basis of intelligence reports and recommendations by the military and police. The council is composed of the executive secretary, secretaries of justice, interior and local government, national defense, foreign affairs, finance and the national security adviser. The National Intelligence Coordinating Agency serves as the council's secretariat. It is merely pro forma for the secretary of justice to get from a regional trial court an ex parte ruling for the proscription. The target of proscription has no chance to look at and contest the intelligence dossiers used against him or her.

As a matter of course, the reactionary military, police and paramilitary forces can arrest and detain anyone whom they regard or suspect as a "terrorist". The time limit for detention without charges is supposed to be 72 hours. But this is more than enough time to torture a confession out of the detainee and detain him or her indefinitely on the unbailable charge of terrorism (maximum penalty is reclusion perpetua of 40 years). There is also enough time to remove all traces of the arrest and make the detainee disappear permanently. This is not a far-fetched possibility under the prevailing conditions of continuing human rights violations with impunity and the stigmatization and suppression of patriotic and progressive organizations and individuals as "terrorists".

The malicious intent of the Anti-Terror Act is to unleash state terrorism with impunity and create a climate of fear without the need of any proclamation to declare martial law. The objective is to intimidate and suppress not only the revolutionary organizations and movement of the people but also the opposition, dissenters and the independent media within the system. Thus, the Anti-Terror Act provides for the easy proscription of organizations and individuals, the widespread use of the 72-hour detention limit to torture and even murder a detainee, indefinite detention on the nonbailable charge of terrorism, the freezing and confiscation of financial assets, the easy incrimination of so-called accomplices and accessories, the unlimited intrusions of surveillance into privacy and family life, the oppressive restraints even on those released on bail, and so on.

As well-proven by the ultimate failure of the 14-year Marcos fascist dictatorship, the Arroyo regime will ultimately fall in disgrace by using the Anti-Terror Act to terrorize the people. For a while, the draconian regime can do a lot of repression and harm to the people. But unwittingly it incites and drives the broad masses of the people and the revolutionary forces to wage the armed revolution for national

liberation, democracy and justice more fiercely than ever before. Many political activists and people who would otherwise stay in the legal political struggle are pushed by the regime to join the armed revolution and seek justice for wrongs done to them.

Whether the NDFP is proscribed by the Arroyo regime as "terrorist" or not, it will find negotiations impossible with the reactionary Philippine government after the proscription of the CPP and NPA as "terrorist". The negotiating panelists, consultants and other related personnel and volunteers who are not necessarily members of any organization of the NDFP will have to undertake legal prudence and safeguards against the allegation of being "terrorists" in the Philippines and the host countries where they are. The treachery of the Arroyo regime is well-proven by its arbitrary suspension of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees and the abduction and murder of a considerable number of NDFP consultants and other personnel in the peace negotiations with the reactionary government.

The CPP, NPA and NDFP are confronted with the vow of the Arroyo regime to destroy the people's revolutionary movement for national liberation and democracy or to render it strategically inconsequential before 2010. It is therefore understandable why the Filipino people and revolutionary forces are raising the level of their own strength and capabilities for greater struggles for the purpose eradicating not only the Arroyo regime but the entire ruling system of big compradors and landlords who are beholden to US imperialism.

On Arroyo's Bankrupt and Deceptive Economic Policy

December 30, 2007

Gloria M. Arroyo, the fake president, keeps on babbling that her regime is propelling the Philippines to become a "first world country". She is obviously lying.

In utter subservience to the US-dictated policy of "neoliberal" globalization, she has worked against the line of national industrialization and genuine land reform and has aggravated and deepened the agrarian, pre-industrial and semifeudal character of the Philippine economy. She has worsened the backward and impoverished "third world" conditions of the Philippines.

The US and other foreign monopoly capitalists have collaborated with such local exploiters as the big compradors, landlords and the corrupt bureaucrats represented by Arroyo to denationalize the economy and prevent its industrial development through the so-called liberalization of trade and investments, the privatization of public assets and anti-social deregulation at the expense of the working people, women, children and the environment.

The Arroyo regime has misrepresented as "development" the consumption-led and debt-ridden growth of the economy. It has used domestic and foreign borrowing to finance and abet the growing trade and budgetary deficits and to conjure the false illusion of economic growth. It wastes public funds through overpriced and graft-ridden infrastructure projects and the purely parasitic expenditures for the military and bureaucracy.

The Philippine economy remains dependent on the production of agricultural

and mineral raw materials, which are being exported at greater volume but at lower prices. At the same time, agriculture has become lopsided, as production of staple food is neglected and food products are dumped on the Philippines from abroad under the policy of trade liberalization. Thus, the country has become a net food importer.

The low value-added semi-manufacturing for re-export provides little net income because of transfer pricing and the heavy amount of imported components. The large-scale export of women and men (now more than 10 percent of the population) as overseas contract workers is the result of the worsening underdevelopment and lack of job opportunities in the Philippines. It has become the biggest source of foreign exchange income although at great social cost to the country.

The Arroyo regime has deliberately raised the value of the peso by grabbing and undervaluing the foreign exchange earnings of the overseas contract workers, by increasing the foreign debt through program and project loans and the sale of bonds in the commercial market and by attracting portfolio investments, structured dollar loans and Japanese yen in the carry trade.

The national debt keeps on increasing because there is no real development base for reducing the trade and budget deficits. The attempt of the regime to increase revenues has dismally failed because of the underdeveloped, bankrupt and depressed condition of the real economy, the policy of trade liberalization and the unbridled corruption that allows tax evasion and raids on the treasury. The Arroyo regime has been auctioning off state assets to foreign vultures in combination with local vultures who are cronies and close relatives of the Arroyo couple.

What is in store for the Philippine economy in 2008? The underdevelopment and chronic crisis of the Philippine economy make it extremely vulnerable to the current financial crisis and recessionary trend being generated globally from the US. These have started to have a severely adverse impact on the Philippines. The Filipino people will undergo unprecedented economic and social suffering in terms of rising unemployment, decreasing real income, soaring prices of basic goods and deteriorating social services.

The US and global demand for both the Philippine raw-material exports and semi-manufactured re-exports will contract because of the continuing industrial

decline, reduced employment and recessionary trend in all the imperialist countries. US economic growth is expected to go down to less than two percent from the usual level of around 3 percent. The thirty OECD countries are expected to have an average growth rate of less than 3 percent from the usual level of more than 5 percent.

The US consumer market has drastically contracted because of the decline of regular employment and incomes as a result of the series of attacks on the US working class. Under the piratical banner of neoliberalism, the monopoly bourgeoisie has pushed down the wage level, cut back the social benefits and eroded the democratic rights of the workers. It has undermined the US consumer market and caused the crisis of overproduction to recur.

And yet many of the workers were inveigled to engage in stock speculation through easy credit and to let investment managers raid their pension funds during the high-tech bubble in 1995-2000. The bigger scam came when more workers and other people were drawn to far easier credit for consumption during the housing bubble from 2001 onward. In the wake of the ongoing mortgage meltdown, the US consumers are without savings and are deeply indebted.

The mortgage meltdown has acquired global dimensions because US mortgages were repackaged and sold as financial products under such fancy names as "structured investment vehicles" and "asset-backed securities" to foreign banks and investment houses. Since August this year there has been an epidemic of write offs and write downs, involving the evaporation of more than USD 400 billion. This is expected to result in the tightening of international credit by USD two trillion as federal and commercial banks become more prudent in lending.

But the financial crisis generated globally by the US is not only about the mortgage meltdown and the necessity of writing down or writing off "asset-backed securities" by foreign banks. The US national debt has risen so fast from the level of USD 5.7 trillion in 2001 to USD 9.1 trillion at present. It is expected to rise to the level of USD 10 trillion before Bush steps down. The US has abused confidence in the US dollar as the global currency.

The US trade deficit has rapidly grown to the annual level of more USD 850 billion because of the US industrial decline and outsourcing of consumer goods, such as those produced in China, India and Southeast Asia. The US budget deficit has also grown rapidly because of the tax cuts to corporations and the

wealthy and the unbridled spending for the Pentagon and the wars of aggression. The Pentagon budget has risen to the annual level of USD 600 billion and the costs of the Iraq war have gone far beyond the officially admitted level of USD 500 billion for "operations" and are already in the range of USD one to two trillion if related costs are taken into account.

The abuse of international credit by the US to cover trade and budget deficits has led to a rapid decline of the dollar and to pressures for an international credit crunch. The dollar decline is generating defensive responses from such big US creditors like Japan, China and the oil producing countries. To play safe, they are gradually reducing their dollar positions in favor of other currencies or a basket of currencies. The financial crisis of the US is serious enough to start undermining the standing of the US as the sole superpower in economic and politico-military terms, as the main engine of global economic growth and as the global market of last resort.

In 2008 the underdeveloped and semifeudal Philippine economy will face serious problems in relation to the export of raw materials and the re-export of low value added semimanufactures in a shrinking global market as well as in relation to the securing of new loans and selling bonds to service the accumulated debt and finance the import of oil and other critically needed goods. The international credit standing of the reactionary state will be further degraded as its difficulties to repay the public debt and collect revenues become obvious.

As the international reserves will decrease conspicuously, the Arroyo regime will not be able to conjure the illusion of economic growth and raise the value of the peso against the US dollar and other major currencies. In the real economy of the Philippines, the working people and middle social strata will be beset by intensified exploitation, increased poverty and misery and the heavier weight of oppression. The social discontent and people's resistance will further spread and intensify.

The Policy of "Neoliberal" Globalization

and Worsening Economic Crisis in the Philippines

September 11, 2008

Thank you for inviting me to speak on the policy of "neoliberal" globalization and the worsening economic crisis in the Philippines on the occasion of the 31st anniversary of the founding of the League of Filipino Students (LFS). I congratulate the LFS in Baguio City for its achievements. I appreciate the cooperation of the LFS with the Anakbayan, UP Baguio-University Student Council, the Nationalist Corps and the Politically Inclined Students in bringing about this important forum.

"Neoliberal" globalization

First of all, let me explain what the policy of "neoliberal" globalization is all about. It is a policy of deception, misrepresenting monopoly capitalism as "free market" capitalism. It has been adopted since 1980 supposedly to solve the problem of stagflation, the phenomenon of stagnation and inflation going together and the vicious cycle whereby the attempt to solve either one of them aggravates the other.

In pushing the policy, Reagan and Thatcher identified Keynesian and social democratic state intervention as the root cause of stagflation for generating wage inflation and "excessive" social spending. They therefore espoused giving full play to the "free market" and giving the monopoly bourgeoisie and the giant corporations all the opportunities to raise capital resources, make profits without

restrictions and get big tax cuts supposedly to develop the economy, generate jobs and make the working people less "dependent" on government.

To achieve the "neoliberal" or "free market" objective, the imperialist states headed by the US have launched an unrelenting attack on the hard won rights of the working class to job security, trade union organization and social benefits. Wage levels have been pushed down. Full-time regular jobs have been replaced to a great extent by part-time jobs. Indirect wages as may be in the form of social insurance, medical insurance, educational benefits and social services have been cut back or cut off. The real incomes of the working class have relentlessly fallen.

However, the "neoliberal" policy has given the multinational banks and firms of the monopoly bourgeoisie all the opportunities to accumulate capital and reap profits through the liberalization of investments and trade, the privatization of state functions and assets, the deregulation at the expense of the working people, women, children and the environment and the denationalization of the economies of underdeveloped countries.

According to the "neoliberals" or "free marketeers", it is wrong to use the direct hand of the state for pursuing economic development and ensuring social welfare. But it is perfectly correct to hand out state resources, state contracts, subsidies, investment insurance and tax exemptions to the giant corporations and likewise to engage in accelerated military spending. No to social welfare but yes to corporate welfare. No to social spending but yes to military spending.

The "neoliberals" have missed the essential point about the problem of stagflation. When it arose in the 1970s, it was because Germany and Japan, which had been ruined in World War II, had reconstructed under the Marshall plan and all imperialist powers were once more caught up in a serious crisis of overproduction as a result of competition and profit-making at the expense of the workers. All capitalist economies were pressing down the wage levels in order to maximize profits and counter the falling rate of profits in the course of expanding production. At the same time, the US led the way in undertaking inflationary activities, including the profuse flow of US dollars abroad, the global deployment of US military forces and the war of aggression in Indochina.

The crisis of overproduction is consistently at the base of the crisis of the US and world capitalist system. By pushing down wages to maximize profits, the

monopoly bourgeoisie unwittingly contracts the market for the products of expanding production. The crisis of overproduction becomes conspicuous when large stocks of goods cannot be sold, production has to be cut down and workers are laid off.

From decade to decade, since the late 1960s, the crisis of overproduction has become worse, with the problems of unemployment and inflation becoming more sticky and the growth rates actually stagnant. But since the official adoption of the "neoliberal" policy, the trick to conceal the economic problems has been to increase the money supply and make credit easy for the giant corporations and for the consumers in the huge US market. As a result, we now see a gigantic financial crisis generated by the US.

The US has lived off the people of the world by abusing confidence in the US dollar as global currency. It has gone into industrial decline by heavily importing consumer goods from East Asia. It has incurred trade deficits and has become the world's biggest debtor. It has also gone into heavy budgetary deficits and domestic debt by rapidly increasing expenditures for military production contracts and global deployment of military forces, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan.

It is not only the US federal government that is heavily indebted but also the giant corporations and households. All of them are unable to pay their debts and are the major factor in the current financial crisis afflicting not only the US economy but the entire world economy. Twice have the US households been victimized in a big way since 1995 through credit and financial manipulations.

First, fund managers invested the pension funds of US workers on the hightech bubble which lasted until it burst in 2000. US households were enticed to purchase stocks on margin. At least 40 percent of them did so. Subsequently, in a more sweeping way, US households were encouraged to buy on credit into the housing bubble which began to burst in 2006. The "neoliberal" policy makers and managers of the US economy had devised the housing bubble to provide US households an artificial source of further credit for consumption, keeping up their role as the biggest consumer market of the world despite the decline of industry and regular employment in the US.

But the US mortgage meltdown, which has become conspicuous since last year, has exposed not only the wobbly US financial system but also the financial

plague the US had spread all over the world. The US banks and hedge funds, in concert with the Fannie Mae (Federal National Mortgage Association) and Freddie Mac (Federal Home Loan Mortgage Association), the two biggest state-backed mortgage banks, had repackaged the bad mortgages into collateralized mortgage debts and asset-backed securities and sold them to the biggest banks in various countries. Not only is the mortgage meltdown exposed but the whole range of economic and financial crisis in the US and in the world.

The current financial crisis, which is the worst since the Great Depression, has resulted in the tightening of credit, economic recession in the imperialist countries and depression on a world scale. The underdeveloped countries are victimized by the tightening of credit and decreased orders from the imperialist countries for raw materials and semi-manufactures.

Despite global economic depression, some sectors in imperialist countries have found ways of raking in superprofits and conjuring the illusion of positive growth rates in imperialist countries and even on a global scale. They are the giant corporations in fuel and food, which are the most basic necessities of all countries. They are inflicting terrible and intolerable suffering on the people of the world, especially those in the underdeveloped countries.

Impact on the Philippines

As a semicolonial and semifeudal country, under foreign and feudal domination, the Philippines has an inherently and chronically crisis-stricken economy and society. The only way it can end the underdeveloped, agrarian, pre-industrial and semifeudal character of the economy is to undertake national industrialization and land reform. These were previously prevented by the World Bank-sponsored Keynesian fiscal policy of promoting infrastructure-building to serve raw material production and commerce.

The current "neoliberal" globalization policy of denationalization, liberalization, privatization and deregulation has been far more aggressive in preventing industrial development and land reform. Under this policy, the Philippine economy has become more deeply underdeveloped and more rotten than before and become more vulnerable to the worsening crisis of the world capitalist system.

The "neoliberal" policy is imposed on the Philippines by the US through its

puppets. It expressly prohibits the leaders of the reactionary government from upholding the key role of the state in mobilizing the people and economic resources for national industrialization and land reform. These twin objectives are supposed to be decided by the market rather than by the state and the people. Under the influence of "neoliberalism", puppet leaders in the Philippines talk more often about the "free market" than "development" as state-supported industrial development.

The expression "free market" is actually used to mean leveling the field of competition with the bulldozers of the foreign monopolies and flattening the people to the ground. The expression "development" is limited to mean infrastructure-building with the use of onerous foreign loans and foreign supplies as in the time of the Marcos regime. None of the succeeding regimes since that of Aquino, which hyped trade liberalization, have paid even the slightest lip service to a well-founded and comprehensive industrial development, through the cooperation of the state and the Filipino entrepreneurs.

The 1987 constitution of the reactionary state has reduced land reform to a "free market" transaction, with the landlord selling his land voluntarily, demanding current market value or offering the stock distribution option. The principle of state intervention in order to realize social justice, such as the expropriation of landlord estates for affordable redistribution to the tenants, has been laid aside. The landless tillers are given the cynical advice that if they wish to own land they are free to buy even a piece of Forbes Park or buy stocks from Hacienda Luisita of Cory Aquino or from any of the many agricultural corporations of her cousin Danding Cojuangco.

Under the Ramos regime, the so-called medium term development program did not provide for national industrialization and land reform. But it pushed for the denationalization of the economy to benefit the foreign monopolies and big compradors. It violated the principles of economic sovereignty and conservation of the national patrimony. It removed the restrictions on foreign investors in banking, mining, agriculture, domestic trade and other types of enterprises. It allowed the unrestricted flow of foreign capital in and out of the country and the big comprador exporters of raw materials to stash away foreign exchange abroad. It ran far ahead of the schedule set by the WTO for lowering the tariff on all types of products.

The reactionary government incurred huge local public debt and foreign debt for

infrastructure, especially in graft-ridden power generation projects conceded to foreign companies. It went into a privatization spree, selling off state assets and prime public land to foreign investors in order to cover trade and fiscal deficits. It created a boom in the private construction of office and residential towers and golf courses with the use of foreign commercial loans and favored the expansion of low value-added semimanufacturing of consumer goods under the auspices of giant corporations and big comprador firms, whose foreign debts are guaranteed by the state.

The financial crisis of 1997 brought down the Ramos regime's claims to economic success. By the time Estrada became president, the reactionary government had gone bankrupt and foreign credit dried up to the extent that he was compelled to serve his corrupt appetite by taking payoffs from jueteng and using social security funds of government and private employees for the shadiest of deals. He was reduced to begging for infrastructure loans from Japan, which wanted to extract excessive trade and investment privileges.

When the turn of Arroyo came, she renewed the orgy of local and foreign borrowing and the frenzy of implementing the "neoliberal" economic policy which she had strongly pushed as a senator. The imperialists were pushing another wave of easy credit in accordance with the "neoliberal" dictum that economic and financial problems are solved by scooping money from the central bank into helicopters for these to pour out on the problem.

Under the "neoliberal" economic policy, the semicolonial and semifeudal character of the Philippines has been aggravated and deepened due to the absence of national industrialization and land reform, the unrestricted freedom of the foreign monopolies to dump their surplus products and to extract superprofits, the ceaseless landlord and corporate accumulation of land, bureaucratic corruption, the limitation on the country to produce for export only raw materials and slightly processed goods, the ever growing trade and fiscal deficits and the ever mounting foreign debt.

Like the Ramos regime, the Arroyo regime has been strenuously insistent on the denationalization of the economy. It has made so many attempts to have the 1987 constitution amended so that nationality requirements and restrictions on foreign investors can be removed from the economic provisions. At any rate, it has pushed further legislation as well as multilateral and bilateral treaties and executive agreements to promote investment and trade liberalization in favor of

foreign investors to the detriment of economic sovereignty, the national patrimony, the working people and the environment.

It has allowed the dumping of foreign surplus manufactures and agricultural products on the country and has thereby undermined and destroyed the domestic production of these. It has continued the privatization of state assets and public lands. These have been sold to foreign corporations and to cronies. Laws seeking to protect the workers, women, children and the environment have been eroded or circumvented in the "neoliberal" spirit of deregulation for the profit-taking purposes of foreign monopolies and the big compradors.

The Arroyo regime has gone into unbridled deficit spending and foreign and local borrowing, mainly for the purpose of profit-taking by the imperialists and the big compradors, bureaucratic corruption and upper class consumption. Statistics of these go into the absurd game of conjuring the illusion of an annual economic growth rate. Counterproductive activities and borrowings which bankrupt the state and the economy are misrepresented as factors of development. Even as the economy is bankrupt and depressed, the Arroyo regime is giving top priority to servicing the foreign debt and is raising the tax burden on the people.

The Arroyo regime is over-brimming with loyalty to its imperialist masters. But now it is faced with the severe problems generated by the crisis of the US and world capitalist system. International credit has tightened. Foreign orders for raw materials and consumer semi-manufactures have decreased. To make matters worse, the prices of fuel and food imports are soaring. The giant oil and food companies have fabricated the media tales of fuel and food shortages in order to make a big killing in the "free market."

The regime does nothing to restrain the foreign monopolies from ceaselessly hiking the oil price and inflating the prices of all basic commodities. For so long under the policy of trade liberalization, it has allowed the dumping of rice from abroad and has thus destroyed local rice production. It has made the Philippines the No. 1 rice importer of the world. It has also been utterly stupid in failing to build its reserve rice stocks and thus in having to buy rice from the world market when the prices are soaring.

Tasks of Filipino students

The Philippine economy and society are plunging from one level of crisis and depression to another. The Filipino students are suffering the rapidly rising costs of study and living and need to cope with so many problems arising from the oppression and exploitation of the entire people by foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

It is of urgent and great importance for the League of Filipino Students and all other patriotic and progressive youth organizations to arouse, organize and mobilize the student masses in their millions. You must unite and fight against "neoliberal" globalization and all other inimical policies of imperialism and local reaction. These are detrimental to you as students and youth because you now face not only the current rising costs of study and living but also the dire prospects of unemployment in an increasingly crisis-stricken and rotten ruling system.

You must also fight the US-instigated war of terror. This has taken the form of state terrorism and direct US military intervention in the Philippines and the US wars of aggression in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. The violence that the US has unleashed all over the world is aimed at forcing the people to submit themselves to exploitation. It is the complement to "neoliberal" globalization. US imperialism is behind the gross and systematic violation of human rights by the Arroyo regime and its armed minions. We can expect the escalation of exploitation and oppression, under the US-instigated policy of "free market" globalization and the US global war of terror.

You must conjoin with the broad masses of the Filipino people in the struggle for national liberation and democracy against US imperialism and the local exploiting classes. You must carry out all possible and necessary forms of struggle to advance the revolutionary cause. We can prepare for and proceed to the socialist revolution only by completing the new democratic revolution, by victoriously finishing the unfinished Philippine revolution initiated by our revolutionary forefathers. The people have high hopes in the Filipino youth as a resolute and militant force for revolutionary change.

Politics of Repression in the Philippines

October 31, 2009

I thank the International Committee Against Disappearances, IBON Europe and the Filipino Refugees in the Netherlands for inviting me to give a brief background on the politics of repression in the Philippines.

It is an honor and privilege for me to speak on the same occasion with Edith Burgos and Jayel Burgos, whose beloved Jonas Burgos has been a victim of forced disappearance by the military forces of the Arroyo regime.

I have always admired the late Jose Burgos and his entire family for their high sense of patriotism and devotion to democracy. I am happy to provide the general historical, socioeconomic and political background to Edith's presentation of the current human rights situation in the Philippines and Jayel's of the Free Jonas Movement.

History of repression and exploitation in the Philippines

The Filipino people have long suffered a history of repression and exploitation. They went through more than three centuries of colonial rule by Spain, from the 16th to the 19th century. After they won national independence in 1898, the US unleashed an imperialist war of aggression to conquer the Philippines. It imposed a new colonial rule and laid out a semifeudal economy. In 1946 it established a puppet state to rule the current semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system.

Those who have wielded political power in several stages of Philippines history have repressed the Filipino people not merely for the pleasure of intimidating,

imprisoning, torturing and killing people but for such coldblooded reasons as the accumulation of private wealth through exploitation and all the social and cultural gratifications that wealth brings.

Spanish colonialism reached the Philippines initially in search of gold and spices. It was on a long term pursuit of sheer plunder upon the impulse of European mercantile capitalism. In addition to the dispossession and proletarianization of the peasants of Europe, colonialism was a major method of the primitive accumulation of capital. The Spanish colonizers employed divide and rule tactics and repressed the Filipino people in order to maintain a colonial and feudal system.

The most brutal forms of suppression were applied on the people who opposed the system or any its aspects. Even when blood was not being shed, exploitation was a daily and more widespread form of violence to people who were required to render forced labor, pay feudal rent and give religious tribute. Ultimately, the Filipino people developed a national consciousness and a revolutionary unity of purpose, fought for national independence and won the first bourgeois democratic revolution of the old type in the whole of Asia.

Unfortunately, the US intervened and launched a war of aggression against the Filipino people. It killed 1.5 million Filipinos from 1899 to 1913 in order to impose a colonial and semifeudal system on the Philippines. The new colonial system of US monopoly capitalism involved a method of exploitation in which direct and indirect investments were made by US banks and corporations on a limited number of modern enterprises in order to facilitate the export of raw materials and the extraction of superprofits.

In the entire period of direct colonial rule, the US adopted and implemented repressive policies against the growing working class, against the peasant masses who demanded land reform and against the entire Filipino people who clamored for genuine, immediate and full independence. The US imperialists and their local reactionary allies became more repressive as the Communist Party, the revolutionary party of the working classes, emerged in 1930 and challenged the ruling system.

Another imperialist power, that of Japan, took over the Philippines from 1942 to 1945 and exacted a toll of one million deaths on the Filipinos in barbarous acts of repression. At the same time, the conditions of World War II and the Japanese

occupation gave rise to the armed revolutionary movement of the people led by the merger party of the Communist and Socialist parties in certain regions.

In reconquering the Philippines from Japan, the US wrought heavy destruction on Filipino lives and property. Soon after landing troops on Philippine soil in late 1944, it sought to destroy the revolutionary forces of the people that had run ahead in liberating Central Luzon. At any rate, the revolutionary forces and people held on to their arms and demanded national liberation and democracy for the Philippines.

Repression under the semicolonial and semifeudal system

The US granted a bogus kind of independence to the Philippines and established a puppet state in 1946. Since then, the Philippines has been a semicolonial and semifeudal country. The US conceded to the politicians and bureaucrats of the big compradors and landlords the responsibility for national administration. But it retained its dominant economic and military power as well as political and cultural sway through unequal treaties, agreements and arrangements.

The US has continued to rule the Philippines but this time indirectly through the local reactionary classes. Factions of the political representatives of these classes have taken turns in administering the puppet republic at first through the duopoly of the Liberal and Nacionalista parties from 1945 to 1972, then through the monopoly of political power by the fascist party, Kilusang Bagong Lipunan, from 1972 to 1986 and currently through the multiplicity of reactionary parties and coalitions.

Whichever of these parties has taken the reins of national administration, it has been subservient to the interests of US monopoly capitalism and the local exploiting classes. It goes to any length to repress the patriotic and progressive forces and mass movement of the people for national liberation and democracy. It collaborates closely with the US in undertaking repression.

The US has the biggest interest and the most decisive say in the policy-making and planning of repression in the Philippines. It provides indoctrination, strategic direction, officer training and military equipment to the apparatuses of repression. The military and police forces are beholden to the US. Up to 1992, they were controlled by the US military forces in huge US military bases that existed in the Philippines.

Even after their military bases were dismantled in 1992, the US military forces have continued to control the forces of repression in the Philippines. They have done so from their military bases in Japan, South Korea, Guam and Australia. They cover the Philippines with satellites, air patrols and naval patrols. They control the Philippine radar and sonar system. They have military stations in Philippine military camps as well as advisors, trainers, assets and units embedded in Philippine military and police offices and units.

The US used the regimes of Roxas, Quirino and Magsaysay to attack and destroy the revolutionary forces of the Filipino people within the period of 1946 to 1957. The backbone of the armed revolutionary movement was strategically broken in the years of 1950 to 1952, with more than 10,000 mass activists and cadres tortured and murdered by the military. As this movement subsided, the US and the local reactionaries became even more repressive and enacted the Anti-Subversion Law in 1957 in order to destroy any remnant, extension or successor of the old merger party of the Communist and Socialist parties.

However, the chronic crisis of the Philippine ruling system continued to worsen during the regimes of Garcia, Macapagal and Marcos within the period of 1957 to the end of the 1960s. The proletarian revolutionaries revived the anti-imperialist and antifeudal mass movement among the workers, peasants and the youth. The puppet regimes tried to suppress the mass movement. Instead, this grew in strength and led to the founding of the new Communist Party of the Philippines in 1968 and the New People's Army in 1969.

Under the instigation of the US, the Marcos regime decided to declare martial law and impose a fascist dictatorship on the Philippines in 1972 in the vain hope of destroying the CPP and NPA. In fourteen years from 1972 to 1986, the military and police arbitrarily arrested and detained hundreds of thousands of people, tortured more than a hundred thousand, murdered tens of thousands of people and displaced more than 5 million people.

In the human rights case against Marcos in the US court system, nearly 10,000 cases of disappearances, torture and extrajudicial killings were documented and proven. But justice and indemnification for the victims of human rights violations have been elusive in the Philippines. Not a single military or police officer has been punished for any of the human rights violations.

The US and the local reactionaries have maintained the system of impunity for

the perpetrators of repression, from the level of Marcos to the master sergeant in the army. They decided in 1986 to drop Marcos and stop the blatant autocracy only because he had failed to suppress the revolutionary movement and also because he put the entire system at risk by having his political rival Aquino assassinated in 1983.

Further, they made sure that the post-Marcos regimes would continue the repression of the Filipino people even without martial law in order to maintain the system of exploitation by the multinational banks and firms and the local big compradors and landlords. The apparatuses of repression and their officers remained intact and continued to engage in human rights violations against the people, the legal democratic forces and the revolutionary forces.

The widow of Aquino became the president and put up a liberal democratic facade to her reactionary regime. After consolidating her ruling position and pretending to seek a peace agreement with the revolutionary movement, she unsheathed the sword of war and repression under Oplan Lambat Bitag and under the US-dictated doctrine of low intensity conflict against the revolutionary forces and the people. The subsequent regimes of Ramos, Estrada and Arroyo would have their respective national operational plans and also seek to suppress the revolutionary movement despite short periods of lip service to the need for peace negotiations.

What we are confronted with today in the Philippines under the Arroyo regime is state terrorism under Oplan Bantay Laya inspired by the US global war of terror and backed up by increased US military supplies and by the permanent deployment of US interventionist troops under the Visiting Forces Agreement. The US and the local reactionaries in the Philippines make the pretense of combating terrorism but they are in fact then ones perpetrating terrorism through the gross and systematic violation of human rights.

Oplan Bantay Laya has involved 1,093 documented cases of extrajudicial killings, 209 of forced disappearances, hundreds of those detained on trumped up charges, more than a thousand victims of torture, and hundreds of thousands of victims of forced evacuation. The reactionary military forces are escalating their gross and systematic violation of human rights as they follow the impossible order of the Arroyo regime to destroy or reduce the armed revolutionary movement to inconsequentiality before June 2010.

The Arroyo regime has become notorious throughout the world for the abduction, torture and extrajudicial killing of unarmed social activists, including workers, peasants, women, youth, priests and pastors, human rights advocates and journalists. The violators of human rights set up their victims by making false charges of terrorism, rebellion and murder and putting them on the list of the enemies of the state or the order of battle.

Then the abductions, torture and extrajudicial killings follow.

Still further the psywar machinery of the reactionary armed forces spreads lies that the victims have committed offenses against the revolutionary movement and have therefore been victimized by their own comrades. The level of criminal cunning and malice of the perpetrators of human rights violations under the Arroyo regime surpasses that under the Marcos fascist dictatorship.

The current crisis of the world capitalist system is the worst since the Great Depression. It will continue to worsen in the years to come because the imperialist powers are not solving it but are aggravating it by using public money to bail out the big banks and corporations and raise profits on their balance sheets and not to revive the economy and increase employment. The imperialist powers and their puppets are promoting chauvinism, racism and fascism and are increasingly using state repression and unleashing wars of aggression in order to overcome the resistance of peoples and national liberation movements.

The crisis of the Philippine ruling system will continue to worsen due to its internal weaknesses and the global economic crisis. For decades, the US-directed policy of neoliberal globalization has further aggravated and deepened the underdeveloped pre-industrial and agrarian character of the Philippine economy. The demand for Philippine raw-material and semi-manufactured exports has gone down. Debt service is increasing and yet new credit is decreasing.

Social discontent is widespread and intense among the toiling masses of workers and peasants and the middle social strata due to the rising mass unemployment, the sinking real incomes, the soaring prices of basic commodities and services, the growing tax burden, the lack or inadequacy of social services and other socioeconomic problems. The rulers in the Philippines do not solve these problems but increasingly unleash violence to suppress the people's protests and demands for respect for their rights and improvement of their social conditions.

The US and the local reactionaries are shifting the burden of crisis to the working people.

As they exploit the people more, they repress the people more as they seek to preempt or stop resistance. The broad masses of the Filipino people are capable of fighting for their rights and interests. But they also need the solidarity and support of the people of the world to fight the imperialist powers most effectively.

Interview on 2010 Elections

By D. L. Mondelo, Correspondent, Bulatlat, April 10, 2010

1. Claims are persistent that the Arroyo ruling clique is engineering a failure of elections and will remain in power after the 2010 elections. Do you believe such claims? Why?

JMS: I don't believe such claims. Arroyo will not dare to stay in power beyond June 2010 without the consent of her imperialist master. I do not think that the US has any special interest in keeping her in power and offending all those presidential candidates who have spent money and effort in the current electoral campaign. Arroyo is not indispensable to the US.

She herself is smart enough to know that she does not have the advantages that Marcos had in 1972 to be able to declare martial law and that if she dared to stay in power beyond June 2010 a broad united front of opposition forces and military factions would sweep her away from power within a short period of time.

It would be greatly advantageous for the people and the revolutionary forces if Arroyo would make the foolish mistake of keeping herself in power beyond June 2010. Such a mistake would further inflame the broad masses of the people to rebel and boost the strategic plan of the revolutionary forces to advance from strategic defensive to strategic stalemate in the people's war.

2. What is your general view of the character and conduct of the electoral contest in 2010, especially among the four major presidential candidates?

JMS: The general character of the electoral contest is determined by the

overwhelming predominance of candidates who are themselves big compradors and landlords and who are political agents of the evil forces of foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

The debate among the four major presidential candidates is shallow and superficial. It has not dealt seriously with the basic problems that are the root causes of the oppression and exploitation of the Filipino people. It has trivialized the people's clamor for change. All the four major candidates are oblivious of the crisis now wracking the world capitalist system and the domestic ruling system due to the US policy dictates of neoliberal globalization and global war of terror.

The two front runners, Aquino and Villar, are very simplistic in presenting themselves as the best choice for the electorate. Aquino presents himself as the paragon of clean and honest government in contrast to the corrupt Arroyo regime. Villar presents himself as the example of a poor man who overcomes poverty through sheer personal diligence and perseverance.

3. Between Aquino and Villar, who is likely to win? What are the factors to consider in making estimates?

JMS: Aquino remains No. 1 in the latest polls by the Social Weather Station and Pulse Asia. And Villar has lost substantial points supposedly because of the effectiveness of the Villarroyo line against him. Now, he is trying hard to react by harping on the Gloriaquino line and pointing to the Aquino relatives occupying high positions in the Arroyo regime.

There are several important factors involved in winning the presidential post. These include the personal characteristics of the candidates, the money and political skills for using the media (especially the infomercials), street level propaganda and buying the support of those who deliver votes at the provincial, district and municipal levels.

In the few remaining weeks, all factors will be at play with full intensity. But the most important factor will be the distribution of money to the local leaders who deliver the votes. The source of money usually includes the big comprador-landlord interests and the US and other foreign interests through cutouts among the local big businessmen. The final-month push by Ramos in vote buying in 1992 is a classic example.

4. You seem to dismiss both Aquino and Villar as having the same class

characteristics. But which one offers a relatively better program?

JMS: Manny Villar offers the relatively better program, which unfortunately has been underplayed during the campaign. He promises land reform and self-reliant food production, expansion of local manufacturing to generate employment, support for small and middle entrepreneurs, conservation of natural resources, ecological protection, peace negotiations, review of the Visiting Forces Agreement, respect for human rights, indemnification of the victims of human rights violations and independent foreign policy.

Noynoy Aquino and Mar Roxas are rabid exponents of the US-dictated policy of neoliberal globalization, which has put the Philippine economy in severe crisis and is inflicting terrible suffering on the people. In this regard, they are the economic policy soulmates and the real presidential and vice presidential candidates of the free marketeer and tax gouger Arroyo in view of the weakness of the administration presidential candidate Gibo Teodoro.

Like his late mother, Aquino will pay lip service to land reform but will actually prevent it in so many clever ways. In the particular case of Hacienda Luisita, he will insist on the scam or swindle called the stock distribution option in order to prevent land reform. He promises a clean and honest government but the Kamag-Anak, Inc. and other vested interests are financing his campaign and are prepared to collect the spoils of bureaucrat capitalism and subservience to foreign economic interests.

5. Which of the two front runners would be more amenable to having serious peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines? Why?

JMS: Both Aquino and Villar promise to have negotiations with the NDFP. The important question is which of them is more amenable to negotiate in accordance with The Hague Joint Declaration and agree with the NDFP on the social, economic and political reforms in order to address the roots of the armed conflict and make a just and lasting peace.

Villar appears to be more amenable because of the program that he has spelled out. There are people around him to advise him to accelerate the peace negotiations.

If he becomes president, Aquino would likely continue to get advice from Bobby and Erin Tanada to move on honestly with the peace negotiations.

But there are many elements in the Aquino camp who are rabid anti-communists and pseudo-progressives who will advise Aquino to pretend being for peace negotiations as a way of deceiving the people and sharpening the sword of reaction in a renewed futile attempt to destroy the revolutionary movement.

6. What would you tell the new president as encouragement to engage in peace negotiations? Where and how should the peace negotiations be held? What degree of progress in the peace negotiations would allow you to return for a visit or permanent stay in the Philippines?

JMS: I would remind the new president that the socioeconomic and political crisis is worsening, that the people and the revolutionary forces are already in the process of raising the level of the people's war and that it is worth trying to agree on social, economic and political reforms in order to make a just and lasting peace in accordance with The Hague Joint Declaration and the subsequent agreements.

The peace negotiations should continue to be held in a foreign neutral venue, with the help of the Norwegian government as third party facilitator. It is extremely complicated, costly and risky to hold peace negotiations in the Philippines. You can imagine the largescale mobilization of security forces on both the sides of the GRP and NDFP every time that there are talks. It would take too much time for GRP and NDFP to formally agree on the scope of their respective territories as well as the neutral or buffer zones. The NDFP side would also have to take into account the dangers of GPS surveillance and the related electronic weapons.

I would certainly go back to the Philippines to live the rest of my life if there would be a just and lasting peace as a result of the peace negotiations. But I think that as soon as a comprehensive agreement on social and economic reforms can be signed by the principals of the GRP and NDFP, I would consider going to the Philippines at least for a short visit.

7. Are the revolutionary forces helping in any way any of the electoral coalitions, parties and candidates? Is it true, as charged by the military, that the revolutionary forces are supporting any candidate so long as he or she pays for the permit to campaign or permit to win?

JMS: As chief political consultant of the NDFP in peace negotiations with the

GRP, I am not in a position to know in sufficient detail about the concrete relations of the revolutionary forces with electoral coalitions, parties and candidates for presidential, legislative and local executive positions.

I presume that as a matter of principle the revolutionary forces do not endorse or support the ruling system and its electoral system in particular. However, in line with the policy of the broad united front, the revolutionary forces may have appropriate relations with their allies who are engaged in the electoral contest.

As to be expected, the military officials of the ruling system would hurl all kinds of allegations and invectives against the revolutionary forces. But I would presume that certain allies would extend various kinds of donations and support to the revolutionary forces in order to help them undertake programs, projects and activities that are of social benefit to the people.

8. In your view, is it alright for Satur Ocampo and Liza Maza to be in the NP senatorial slate and to be with Bongbong Marcos? What are the chances of Satur and Liza?

JMS: It is of public knowledge that Satur and Liza are on the NP senatorial slate on the basis of a bilateral alliance between Makabayan and the NP. Makabayan has considered the NP as a worthy ally because of its acceptable program, which is patriotic and progressive.

However, after the NP-Makabayan alliance was established, the NP included Bongbong Marcos as a candidate in its senatorial slate. We know from press reports that Satur and Liza protested and threatened to withdraw from the NP senatorial slate. And that they were satisfied only after Villar publicly clarified that they were not compromised as guest candidates in the senatorial slate by the inclusion of Bongbong as another guest candidate and that the program of the NP remains firm on respect for human rights and indemnification of the victims of human rights violations during the Marcos regime.

The latest poll surveys done by SWS and Pulse Asia do not rank Satur and Liza above Nos. 26 to 29. I hope that their rating will improve in the remaining weeks.

9. What are the chances of the progressive party list groups?

JMS: The latest poll survey of Pulse Asia shows that they are doing well.

Gabriela and Bayan Muna are at the top, each assured of three members of Congress. Anakpawis is assured of two and can aim for one more. Kabataan is also assured of one and can aim for one more. There are other progressive party list groups. My estimate is that there will be a significant increase of members of Congress who come from the progressive list groups.

10. Will the 2010 elections produce a new type of leadership to veer the ruling system away from its worst features? Will there be any significant change in the socioeconomic and political system for the better as a result of the elections? How will the revolutionary movement respond to the crisis situation and to whatever kind of leadership will arise in the ruling system?

JMS: Without a sufficiently strong progressive mass movement, there can be no certainty that the 2010 elections will produce a new type of leadership to veer the ruling system away from its worst features and cause a significant change for the better. The kind of debate carried out by the four major presidential candidates in the electoral campaign shows that there is little or nothing to expect from the next president. Within its first six months or first year, the new regime will be tested whether it is interested in serious peace negotiations or not.

Without a strong mass movement to advance their national and democratic interests, the Filipino people will continue to be oppressed and exploited with impunity by the foreign monopolies, the big comprador-landlords and the corrupt bureaucrats. The socioeconomic and political crisis of the ruling system will continue to worsen. The ruling clique and the ruling classes of big compradors and landlords will become more incapable than ever of ruling the old way.

The revolutionary forces and people will certainly demand revolutionary change. It is timely for the CPP to have issued the call for advancing the people's war, from the strategic defensive to the strategic stalemate during the forty-first anniversaries of the CPP and the NPA.

Follow Up Interview on Aquino and Villar

Interview by D. H. Mondelo, Correspondent, Bulatlat, April 11, 2010

1. Our interview on the 2010 elections last week attracted a great deal of attention from the top mass media in Manila and elicited reactions from certain major political quarters. First of all, what do you think of the reaction of the presidential spokesman Gary Olivar? He said to the effect that because you had expressed support for Manny Villar you accepted the existing ruling system and that you would be amenable to a peace agreement without any revolutionary change.

JMS: The presidential spokesman should read carefully the full text of the interview in Bulatlat. I described the ruling system as one in need of basic social reforms and revolutionary change because the system is run by the oppressive and exploitative forces of foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

I referred to the 2010 elections as one dominated by the big compradors and landlords. I did not endorse the ruling system and I made clear that all the major presidential candidates, including Noynoy Aquino and Manny Villar, are competing to become the chief representative of the same rotten system, which I described as semicolonial and semifeudal.

I merely compared the two top presidential contenders, Aquino and Villar, in answer to your specific question. Indeed, Villar offers the relatively better program by promising land reform and self-reliant food production, expansion of local manufacturing to generate employment, support for small and middle entrepreneurs, conservation of natural resources, ecological protection, peace negotiations, respect for human rights, indemnification of the victims of human

rights violations, review of the Visiting Forces Agreement and independent foreign policy.

2. What about the reaction of the spokesman of Noynoy Aquino, Edwin Lacierda? He said that because you support Villar he is therefore supported by the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. He went further to claim that you and therefore the CPP, NPA and the NDFP were responsible for the protest demonstration of peasants and farm workers in front of the residence of Noynoy Aquino.

JMS: The non sequiturs are plenty and amazing. The spin doctor of Noynoy Aquino is as maliciously way off the mark as the spin doctor of Gloria M. Arroyo. I am just the chief political consultant of the NDFP in peace negotiations with the reactionary Manila government. I never said that I represented the CPP, NPA and NDFP in making a comparison between Manny Villar and Noynoy Aquino.

The Nonoy Aquino camp should not dismiss the series of injustices done to the peasants and farm workers of Hacienda Luisita as the handwork of communists. Noynoy Aquino should not hide behind cheap Red-baiting. The Cojuangco-Aquino family to which Noynoy Aquino belongs has long exploited the peasants and farm workers and has prevented land reform through the swindle called stock distribution option.

Worst of all, the bodyguards of Noynoy himself participated in the Hacienda Luisita massacre. Noynoy has continuously used Red baiting tactics to cover up the murderous collaboration of the Arroyo regime and his own security agency in the Hacienda Luisita massacre and the subsequent murders in Tarlac. He aggravates his dishonesty by topping his consistent violent opposition to land reform with the patently false promise of carrying it out in 2014.

3. Cory Aquino has been praised for championing land reform and specifically for the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP)? Was she truly a champion of land reform? How would you compare her land reform program with that of Marcos? How important is the question of land reform?

JMS: Both Ferdinand Marcos and Cory Aquino were engaged in bogus land reform programs in their respective times. Thus, up to now, the land problem

persists. Millions of tillers own no land. Land is concentrated in the hands of a few landlords and agri-corporations. Feudal and semifeudal exploitation runs rampant throughout the country.

Marcos pretended to use the police power of the state in the name of social justice to carry out the expropriation of landlord estates producing rice and corn. But of course the bogus land reform program of Marcos did not solve the land problem because the bureaucrats and landlords combined against the tenants to raise the value of rice and corn land and in the meantime the biggest landlords and agri-corporations continued to accumulate land.

The bogus land reform program called CARP was even worse than that of Marcos. Under the Aquino constitution of 1987, the social justice issue of land reform was reduced to a real estate business matter. The issue of land reform was subordinated to the malevolent principles of voluntary sale by the landlord, current market value as the meaning of just compensation and evasion of land reform through the stock distribution option and conversion or reclassification of the land as nonagricultural.

I consider land reform as decisively important. If genuine and thoroughgoing, it means the socioeconomic and political liberation of tens of millions of peasants and farm workers. It is the fulfilment of the main content of the unfinished democratic revolution. It lays the ground for a just and lasting peace. When combined with national industrialization, it paves the way for a great advance in economic and social development.

4. Is it not good for the revolutionary movement that Aquino becomes president so that it has a clear target for arousing, organizing and mobilizing the masses along the line of fighting for national liberation and democracy? In the previous interview, you indicated what are the policies that Aquino would pursue against the Filipino people. Will you explain further?

JMS: I presume that in the first place the revolutionary movement would like to see a president of the rotten ruling system who is amenable to holding serious negotiations and making agreements on basic social, economic and political reforms in order to address the roots of the armed conflict and pave the way for a just and lasting peace. But I also presume that if such a president does not emerge, the revolutionary movement is more justified than ever in pursuing the people's war.

Together with his vice presidential candidate, Noynoy Aquino is known to be the candidate most favored by big foreign and local businessmen because he is most determined to pursue the same US-dictated policies of the Arroyo regime, such as neoliberal globalization and the global war of terror. In concrete terms, neoliberal globalization means allowing the foreign investors to plunder the country and prevent national industrialization and land reform. The global war of terror means allowing US military forces to violate the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Philippines.

Noynoy Aquino is surrounded by agents of the US and the Arroyo regime who have been major partners of Arroyo in adopting and implementing policies that are detrimental to the national and democratic rights and interests of the Filipino people and that have plunged the country into a grave crisis of high unemployment, extreme poverty, soaring prices of basic commodities, deteriorating social services, ever widening trade and budgetary deficits and ever mounting tax and debt burden.

Noynoy Aquino would be extremely helpful to the revolutionary movement if he would become president and pursue basically the same US-dictated policies of the Arroyo regime and thus become the target of the people's opprobrium. Probably, the mass movement that fell short of overthrowing Arroyo would be further outraged and gain enough strength to overthrow the new puppet of US imperialism.

5. You say that Manny Villar has a relatively better program than that of Noynoy Aquino. At the same time, you have pointed out that it has been underplayed. Can you guarantee that if Villar would become president, he would fulfill the promises that he makes in his program? Do you incur any liability by saying now that he has a program better than that of Aquino?

JMS: No, I cannot guarantee whether Villar will fulfill his promises or not. Manny Villar has his own free will and political will. He is responsible for his own motivations and actions.

As a political observer, I can only compare what appear now on paper as the programs of Villar and Aquino. People will respond to Villar accordingly, whether he fulfills his promises or not.

6. Is it true that Aquino is honest and is not corrupt?

JMS: Noynoy Aquino is honestly a rabid and violent defender of the big comprador-landlord class interests of the Cojuangco-Aquino family. But he is certainly dishonest when he denies the extreme exploitation of the farm workers and peasants in Hacienda Luisita, the swindling done with the use of the stock distribution option and the violence committed by the military and his own security personnel.

People other than me have pointed out the corruption of Kamag-Anak Inc. in which Noynoy has been a co-beneficiary and which supports him now. While his mother was president, he got contracts from government agencies for his security agency. While he was a congressman and senator for so long, he filed only a handful of bills (none becoming a law) and collected huge sums of public money. This is a manifestation of sloth, incompetence and corruption.

7. Who is more competent and more accomplished? Villar or Aquino?

JMS: In terms of service in the reactionary government, Villar is by far more competent and accomplished. He was active and productive in legislative work and became Speaker of the House and Senate President. Noynoy was a noynoy (no accomplishment) in legislative work. Aquino was also a noynoy in business in comparison to Villar. I need not repeat the rags to riches story.

8. Whom do you think will win the presidential race?

JMS: It is difficult to say. And for the moment I will not dare say. It is still either Aquino or Villar. I have just been informed that money has been flowing heavily to the Aquino side from big foreign and local businessmen for the purpose of stepping up anti-Villar propaganda and buying those who deliver the votes at various levels. Villar does not have a monopoly on money. There is more money from the moneybags in the foreign chambers of commerce and the Makati Business Club.

9. Whoever shall be the president, shall there be peace negotiations between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines?

JMS: Because of the worsening socioeconomic and political crisis of the ruling system, I presume that whoever shall be president of the GRP shall seek peace negotiations with the NDFP. It is the lookout of the new president who would overestimate the strength of the state and its coercive apparatuses and

underestimate the crisis and the growing strength of the revolutionary movement. But as I pointed out in our interview last week, both Villar and Aquino have already expressed their willingness to negotiate with the NDFP.

10. Is the NDFP already preparing for the resumption of the peace negotiations? But why is the New People's Army intensifying its armed offensives?

JMS: The NDFP is already preparing for the resumption of the peace negotiations. Consultations regarding this are going on among the NDFP panelists, consultants, the Philippine-based leading organs of the CPP and NDFP. The NDFP negotiating panel is in frequent touch with the Norwegian government as third party facilitator. As soon as a new president is elected, whoever he is, the NDFP is willing to receive his emissary,

The best explanations of why the NPA is intensifying tactical offensives can be found in the messages of the CPP Central Committee to the CPP rank and file last December 26, 2010 and to the NPA Red commanders and fighters last March 29, 2010. These messages are available in the website:
www.philippinerevolution.net

The people's war is going on precisely because of the escalating oppression and exploitation of the Filipino people by the US and the local exploiting classes. The revolutionary forces are thus striving to advance from the strategic defensive to the strategic stalemate.

On The 2010 Elections in the Aftermath

Interview by D. L. Mondelo, Correspondent, Bulatlat, May 22, 2010

1. What can you say about the conduct of the 2010 elections?

JMS: The conduct of the 2010 elections shows the rottenness of the US-dominated ruling system of big compradors and landlords. It was a process dominated by the coalitions, parties and candidates of the reactionary ruling classes. Beforehand, it excluded the leaders of the working people who were repressed or who were without campaign funds. It was merely a personality-based contest of the political agents of the same exploiting classes.

They did not offer any strong differences in terms of program. They mouthed slogans against poverty and corruption and the need for change. But they said nothing about overcoming the three monsters of foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism which exploit, impoverish and oppress the people. They gave no serious attention to the worsening crisis of the domestic ruling system and the world capitalist system.

The bilateral alliance of Makabayan and the Nacionalista Party (NP) put forward a common program for land reform, food self-reliance and rural development, expansion of domestic manufacturing and job opportunities, respect for human rights, peace negotiations, ecological protection, review of the Visiting Forces Agreement and independent foreign policy. But the NP downplayed the program.

The biggest winners in the elections were those who attacked the hated Arroyo regime and who benefited most from the biggest collection of campaign money from the big foreign and local businessmen. At the beginning of the campaign, the Liberal Party pretended to rely on piso-piso contributions but it eventually

collected and used the biggest amount of campaign money from the big businessmen, thus surpassing the Nacionalista Party in spending.

The unbelievably large leads of Noynoy Aquino over Estrada and Villar have aroused the inquiries into whether the election results were pre-programmed. There are reports that the foreign controllers of the automated system and the Kamag-anak Inc. were able to pre-program the results of the presidential and vice presidential elections. Complaints against poll irregularities are widespread and cast doubts on the veracity of the vote count

2. Can you explain further the victory of Noynoy Aquino?

JMS: Let us take in chronological order the factors that allowed Noynoy Aquino to get ahead of his principal rivals, especially Villar who appeared to be the No. 1 presidential candidate before Cory Aquino died and before Noynoy decided to run for the presidency.

Noynoy Aquino had a clever and agile set of propagandists who had a clear strategic line. To obscure his involvement in the Hacienda Luisita massacre and his palaboy record as a non-achiever in the Lower House and Senate, he was touted as the upright heir of his parents and as a moral crusader against corruption and he attacked the corruption of the Arroyo regime in order to ride on the widespread and bitter anti-Arroyo sentiment of the people.

Villar did not attack Arroyo in a strong way and became vulnerable to the Villaroyo line or charge of being the secret candidate of Arroyo. In the early part of April, the results of two major survey polls done by firms owned and controlled by Aquino relatives and friends were accordingly used to bring down Villar in the mass media. The precipitous decline of Villar was further aggravated subsequently by the attacks from Estrada and Enrile about the 2007 initial public offering of the shares of stocks of the Villar real estate company.

Of all the reactionary parties, the Liberal Party raised the biggest amount of campaign money to surpass the volume of pro-Villar informercials in both TV and radio and other forms of propaganda. The Villar money was eventually no match to the contributions from Razon, Pangilinan, Ayala and other bigshots of the Makati Business Club and from the foreign big businessmen. The Arroyo couple did not deliver to the Lakas presidential candidate the money that they had collected for the campaign.

There are indications that Noynoy Aquino was able to take incredibly big leads over Estrada and Villar because of pre-programming of the vote count. This is the biggest possible form of cheating and the most difficult to prove in contrast to the anomalous shading of the ovals before and during the elections in specific localities. The automated electoral system does not prevent the cheating tactics of the past but in fact allows cheating in a bigger and faster way.

3. What did the electoral campaign and results reveal about the Makabayan and the progressive party list groups?

JMS: Makabayan and the progressive party list groups proved themselves outstanding in putting forward the national and democratic demands of the people. They also got far more votes than any of the pseudo-progressive grouplets. Makabayan got nearly ten percent of the actual nationwide voters for each of its two senatorial candidates, Satur Ocampo and Liza Maza. And all together the progressive party list groups also got nearly ten percent. I believe that Makabayan and the progressive party list groups had more than 10 percent of the electorate, if not for the vote shaving by the pre-programmers.

Most of the votes for Villar are equivalent to the basic electoral base of Makabayan and the progressive party list groups. Definitely, Villar benefited more from the NP-Makabayan alliance than Makabayan did. But by his refusal to denounce the Arroyo regime as strongly as did Aquino and Estrada, Villar prejudiced not only himself but also his Makabayan teammates. It prevented the Makabayan senatorial candidates from benefiting from the anti-Arroyo sentiment and increasing their votes beyond their basic electoral base.

However, the progressive party list groups remain a significant bloc with a high potential as a swing force within the reactionary congress. Makabayan could have been a more effective force had it been able to build itself as a party from top to bottom, with organs, units and candidates at every level long before the elections. Before the elections, Makabayan had limited capacity for negotiating with major parties. It was limited to pushing only two senatorial candidates and some candidates here and there at lower levels when it made an alliance with the NP.

The NP was publicly known as the only major party willing to have an alliance and share campaign resources. But its leadership obviously monopolized decisions over the downplaying of the program, the strategy of the campaign, the

deployment of resources and other important matters. If it had a strong organization of its own, Makabayan could have been more assertive and could have fared better in an alliance with the NP.

While Makabayan had difficulties in ensuring the election of its two senatorial candidates, the progressive party list groups had far better chances in having more than ten of its nominees elected as members of Congress than Makabayan. But it is highly probable that the pre-programmers of the results of the elections were determined to cut down the number of winners among the nominees of the progressive party list groups.

During the electoral campaign, barefaced anti-communists and the pseudo-progressives tried to Red bait and equate Makabayan and the progressive party list groups with the CPP. And after the elections, they would mock the CPP as having failed to make any big electoral advance. The public knows that revolutionary forces are not equivalent to any electoral party. They measure their success in terms of increasing the revolutionary mass base and armed strength in the people's war and not in terms of taking seats within the reactionary government.

4. What do you expect of the presidency of Benigno Aquino Jr.?

JMS: The Aquino regime will pursue basically the same exploitative and oppressive policies dictated to the Arroyo regime by US imperialism. It will not solve but will aggravate the problems of the Filipino people, such as foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

The Aquino regime will continue to carry out liberalization, privatization, deregulation, curtailment of social rights, reduction of social services and increased taxation at the expense of the people under the US-dictated policy of free market globalization. US troops will continue to maintain forward stations and engage in military intervention under the pretext of combating terrorism. The Aquino regime will continue the US-dictated Oplan Bantay Laya under a new name and will generate a new wave of human rights violations.

US and foreign banks and corporations will continue to extract superprofits and plunder the country. The Aquino regime will be grossly incapable of stopping the widening trade and budgetary deficits and the mounting debt burden. The fiscal and sovereign debt crisis will shake the Philippine economy from the base

to the rafter and will be used by the foreign banks and corporations to further bend the Philippines.

As during the Cory Aquino administration, the Kamag-Anak Inc. will be at the head of big landlord and big comprador operations. While the regime might still tout a bogus land reform program, the Cojuangco-Aquinos intend to use layers of corporations to frustrate land reform in Hacienda Luisita and other landed estate. They are poised to benefit greatly from the corrupt practices of the high bureaucrat and big comprador.

The Aquino regime will try to broaden its support from various reactionary parties in Congress, including the Lakas-Kampi party of Arroyo. But the worsening socioeconomic crisis of the ruling system will tend to intensify the political contradictions among the reactionaries. There will be rising waves of legal mass protests and revolutionary resistance by the broad masses of the people. Ever aggravating the basic problems of the Filipino people, the Aquino regime will use brute force in a futile attempt to suppress the resistance of the people.

5. Would the Aquino regime pursue peace negotiations with the revolutionary forces represented by the National Front of the Philippines?

JMS: It may or may not. It remains to be seen whether it is seriously interested in peace negotiations. It can easily pretend to be for peace negotiations like the Arroyo regime did. But it can set preconditions and use various tactics in order to avoid complying with The Hague Joint Declaration of 1992 and the subsequent agreements and thereby prevent the peace negotiations from addressing the roots of armed conflict through, social, economic and political reforms.

The same military hawks and clerico-fascists who undermined and hampered peace negotiations with the NDFP during the time of Arroyo are now with the Aquino regime. The puppet president and his security advisers get guidance from the US security policy of counterinsurgency and anti-terrorism so-called and take detailed instructions from various US agencies represented in the US country team.

I will not be surprised if instead of agreeing to resume the peace negotiations, comply with the existing agreements and begin concentrated negotiations on

social and economic reforms the Aquino regime would set preconditions like indefinite ceasefire and front-loading the end of hostilities in vainly seeking the self-disintegration and pacification of the revolutionary movement.

According to the US Counterinsurgency Guide, the policy dictate of the US is for the puppet government to disarm, dismantle and reintegrate the revolutionary forces or in other words to destroy, coopt or reduce them to irrelevance or inconsequentiality. The US imperialists and their puppets conjure the illusion of peace negotiations at the national level if only to push further sham localized peace talks with their own agents and undertake palliative or band-aid measures in localities in order to deceive the people and to escalate military campaigns of suppression.

The imperialists and their puppets are also trying a new tack like pacifying or appeasing the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and other Moro revolutionary groups with foreign funds in order to unleash more military forces against the revolutionary forces of the NDFP. But the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army have already issued comprehensive statements for advancing the strategic defensive to the strategic stalemate in the people's war within the next five years.

On the Incoming Aquino Regime

Interview by Ilang-illang Quijano, Pinoy Weekly, 7 June 2010

1. Why do you think Noynoy Aquino won in the last election?

JMS: Noynoy Aquino won because prior to the elections he had been chosen by the US imperialists and the local ruling classes of big compradors and landlords to be the new president of the ruling system. Despite his pretense at relying on one-peso donations from the common people, it was the big foreign and Filipino businessmen that poured the massive financial support to his campaign.

In the course of the campaign, Noynoy surpassed Manny Villar in collecting and spending the funds for various types of propaganda. The big mass media supported Noynoy. His aides were clever at propaganda. To obscure his vacuous track-record and lack of accomplishment, his media handlers emphasized the notion that he is the spotless heir of his father and mother, and the attack on the corruption of the Arroyo regime. In this regard, the Villaroyo phrase attacking Villar as the agent of Arroyo took effect because Villar did not attack Arroyo.

There are also indications of pre-programming done in the automated electoral system of Smartmatic, which is controlled by the US and its agents, to ensure the victory of Aquino and Binay. It is obvious that a large number of votes were shaved off from Manny Villar and Loren Legarda. It is a case of overkill. Their sudden fall is unbelievable. There are reports that six weeks before election day, high representatives of the CIA, the Aquino family and the Arroyo regime decided the pre-programming of the results of the elections. The conversation between Pinky Aquino-Abellada and Mrs. Arroyo had paved the way for this arrangement.

2. At this stage it is said that the public sentiment is still optimistic about the incoming administration. Will this optimism last?

JMS: There is optimism in the public sentiment because the detestable Arroyo regime is over and the people are hoping that Aquino would fulfil his big promises such as making Gloria M. Arroyo and her cohorts accountable for the numerous crimes of corruption and violations of human rights.

Various parties and organizations are pushing Noynoy to fulfil his promises. Even the National Democratic Front of the Philippines issued a statement challenging the incoming Aquino administration to fulfil its most important promises during its first 100 days to improve the atmosphere and course for the resumption of peace talks between the NDFP and the reactionary government. If within the first 100 days Noynoy would fail to fulfil any important promise and the crisis in the country would continue to worsen, the broad masses of the Filipino people would hate the Aquino regime and Noynoy himself for being a traitor and deceiver of the people. It would then be evident that Aquino is a dummy of the collaboration between the US imperialists and local ruling classes, including the Arroyo and Aquino families. It is publicly known that these two families have long been in connivance with each other.

3. How can the mass movement ensure that Gloria M. Arroyo is held accountable for her crimes against the people?

JMS: The mass movement has to be vigilant, prompt and militant. Always remember that Arroyo and Aquino belong to the exploiting classes. They are rivals in the contest to acquire more power and wealth. But they collaborate in confronting the aspirations and interest of the masses. They can unite in deceiving the oppressed masses and in suppressing the mass movement against exploitation, oppression and government corruption.

Even as Arroyo is no longer president, she still has power. She is the president of Lakas-KAMPI. She has made sure that her minions control the Supreme Court, the Sandigangbayan and the Ombudsman and some big cases against her have been dismissed. She has made sure that that Lakas-KAMPI still has many governors and mayors. She has made sure that she has a direct share of power. She heads the Lakas-KAMPI bloc in the House of Representatives.

Arroyo can try to make herself or one of her stooges the speaker of the House or

she can strike an agreement with Aquino that one of his cohorts becomes the speaker if Arroyo is not made accountable for her crimes and in return Aquino is not put under threat of impeachment in the future. The mass movement can find out the alignment and realignment of political forces inside Congress because there are progressive members of the House.

Most important of all is the firm stand of the mass movement against the crimes of Arroyo and the vigorous efforts to hold her accountable. It should watch and fight the probable connivance between the Aquinos and the Arroyos. Aquino should be held accountable if he does not fulfil his promise to run after and prosecute Arroyo. The mass movement should also be watchful of the new wave of crimes that will certainly arise from the new regime.

4. Aquino promised that he would act on the most outstanding cases of violations of human rights. What do you think of this promise of his?

JMS: Let us see whether Aquino is capable of fulfilling his promises. If he is serious, he can do a lot within his first 100 days to render justice in the cases of abduction, illegal detention, torture and extrajudicial killings. These cases are very well documented. It is fine if he can do something good.

But there are obvious reasons that he would renege on his promises. Noynoy is possibly afraid of the whole or a section of the reactionary army and police. He may not be capable of thinking and doing a reshuffling of the military and police officers in order to create a favorable condition for obtaining justice in the many cases of violations of human rights during the time of Arroyo.

But there may not even be a question of Noynoy's fear of the military and police. Despite his declared dislike for the violations of human rights, what might still prevail over him would be his allegiance to the greedy and brutal character of the reactionary state and his class of big comprador-landlords, as well as his obedience to the policies and orders of the US imperialists on the use of the military, police and paramilitary to suppress the revolutionary forces and the legal democratic forces.

5. Some individuals in the Aquino camp were active in Red-baiting during the election campaign. Is this an indication of what the situation of human rights and peace talks will be under the Aquino administration?

JMS: The active and gross red-baiting done by his prominent henchmen during

the campaign is a strong indication or clear signal of what would be the policy of Aquino on the issue of human rights and peace.

Aquino himself indicated in his speech before the foreign correspondents that he does not need peace negotiations because he could handle the pacification and suppression of the revolutionary movement through the simultaneous use of military force and the so-called four-part policy of 1) good governance, 2) delivery of social services, 3) economic reconstruction and development and 4) security reforms.

This reveals that he was chosen to be president by the US imperialists and big comprador-landlords because they saw in the Hacienda Luisita massacre and the subsequent killings in Tarlac, Noynoy's penchant and capacity for violence against the toiling masses and those branded as communists and thus, he can be relied upon to enforce the so-called anti-terrorist policy and, in particular, the US Guide to Counterinsurgency.

There are indications that the human rights situation will become worse than during the times of Marcos, Cory Aquino and Arroyo. There are also indications that the new regime will do away with peace talks so that Noynoy can carry out the orders of the US imperialists. It is likely that he will be driven by his penchant for the use of violence to preserve the power and wealth of his family and his class.

Current Concerns and Prospects

Regarding Aquino Regime

Interview by Ang Bayan, June 19, 2010

1. Could you describe in brief the conduct and results of the past reactionary elections? How would you describe the electoral victory of Benigno Aquino III? What was the role in this of the US imperialists (and other key forces) and how would this affect the incoming Aquino regime?

JMS: As a whole, the 2010 elections were dominated by the political leaders, candidates, parties and coalitions of the local exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords. The US had a direct control over the automated electoral system and made sure that Noynoy Aquino was elected president through electronic pre-programming. The biggest US and local businessmen in the Makati Business Club provided huge campaign funds for him. As a consequence, the Aquino regime will serve the interest of the US and the local big comprador-landlords rather than the interest of the Filipino people.

2. What do you think would be the principal differences between the incoming Aquino regime and the outgoing Arroyo regime? What would be the commonalities? What do you think would be the highlights in the next six years under the Aquino regime?

JMS: For a short while, the Aquino regime will try to differentiate itself in appearance from the Arroyo regime and will present itself through sleek propaganda in the Philippine, US and global bourgeois media as more

democratic than its predecessor. But it would be essentially a continuation of the Arroyo regime in terms of subservience to the US economic policy of neoliberal globalization and the US policy of so-called anti-terrorism and counterinsurgency, which is outlined by the US Counterinsurgency Guide and combines US military intervention and state terrorism.

Like the Arroyo regime, the Aquino regime is set to be a puppet regime of the US, corrupt and brutal. In the next six years, the socioeconomic suffering of the people will become intense. The reactionaries themselves will become more divided against each other. Human rights violations will become more gross and systematic than ever before. The oppression and exploitation of the Filipino people will escalate. As a consequence, the conditions will incite the people to wage revolutionary resistance more than ever before.

3. What is your assessment of the seriousness and chances of Noynoy Aquino in carrying out his campaign promise of pursuing criminal charges of corruption against Gloria Arroyo? What would be Arroyo's chances and tactics in fighting off such plans? What would most likely be the role and handling of the US on this matter? What should the people's democratic mass movement do to push the prosecution and eventual punishment of Arroyo?

JMS: The pre-programming of the automated electoral system in favor of Noynoy Aquino would not have been possible without the collaboration of the US, Arroyo ruling clique, the Comelec and the Aquino family. I will not be surprised if so soon in a matter of months it will become publicly evident that Aquino has no intention of fulfilling his campaign promise of pursuing Arroyo with criminal charges of corruption. But if contrary to what I say now, Aquino fulfills his promise of sending Arroyo to prison, then I will be among the first to commend and congratulate him.

There is a definite reasonable standard to apply on the question of Aquino fulfilling his promise to send Gloria M. Arroyo to prison. He will have no excuse for failing to cause her arrest and detention within the span of three months. Arroyo was able to cause the arrest and detention of Estrada for plunder in April 2001, some three months after taking power in late January 2001. As president, Aquino has enough powers to cause a speedy investigation and prosecution of Arroyo, unless he is told by the US to go slow and forget about his promise.

Arroyo still has some significant amount of power and influence. This might be

enough to persuade Aquino to collaborate with her. But she does not have enough power to fight and overpower a president determined to send her to prison. As in Taiwan and South Korea, the US always sides with the new top puppet when this is really determined to send a predecessor to prison on the charge of corruption. It is up to the mass movement to press for the punishment of Arroyo for corruption and to be ready to denounce Aquino when he fails to fulfill his promise within three months.

4. Aquino has announced that it will definitely replace Arroyo-loyalist Gen. Delfin Bangit as the AFP chief-of-staff. How will this affect the fractiousness of the AFP? How much of an influence does Arroyo retain in the AFP? What are Aquino's options to unite the AFP and consolidate it under his new leadership?

JMS: Gen. Delfin Bangit is notorious for being a running dog of Arroyo and for human rights violations. But he is a minor player. As an individual officer, even as chief of staff, he is impotent by law and habit in relation to the new president as commander-in-chief. He is a creature of the command structure. Upon the change of president, Arroyo would have automatically lost a great deal of influence beyond those officers that she has favored and promoted.

In relation to the outgoing president, the incoming president inherits the obedience of the reactionary armed forces. In the case of Aquino, he also gets the advice of former officers loyal to his mother. And he is now consolidating the officers that he considers as most loyal to him. But beneath any apparent unity of the armed forces, there are contradictions among the thieving groups and criminal syndicates and among the running dogs of conflicting politicians.

Aquino can increasingly lose his grip on the military when his favoritism offends most officers and men, when he commits his own crimes or abuses of authority and becomes unpopular and isolated within and outside the military and when as a consequence a broad united front of opposition forces become strong and effective against him.

5. How would you picture the contradictions between the Aquino camp and the Arroyo camp vis-à-vis Congress, the Supreme Court and other aspects of the state that the Arroyo camp tries to maintain its hold on, and what effect do you foresee these contradictions would have on the functioning and effectivity of the Aquino regime and the reactionary state? What opportunities does such a situation open for the revolutionary forces?

JMS: There is potential sharpening of contradictions between what you call the Aquino and Arroyo camps. Aquino now might seriously try to cause the arrest and detention of Arroyo on the charge of corruption or plunder. Arroyo might someday find cause to rally her loyalists in the House of Representatives to threaten Aquino with impeachment. The Arroyo appointees in the Supreme Court might make a decision against the Cojuangco-Aquino interest in Hacienda Luisita.

However, do not be too sure about dramatic clashes between the Aquino and Arroyo sides in various branches of the government even as contradictions between both camps may persist. Do not discount the proofs or indications that the Aquino and Arroyo families have already secretly made agreements of convenience during the electoral campaign. These two families have a long history of collaboration. At any rate, Arroyo's remaining power and influence are dwindling. Thus Arroyo would be more inclined to retain as much of these by seeking and making compromises with Aquino.

6. The US Chamber of Commerce (Amcham) and the Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce in the Philippines and big comprador business groups such as the Makati Business Club and Management Association of the Philippines that have supported the Aquino campaign are now putting their agenda and blueprints forward, including on matters of the government deficit, taxes, investments and workers' wages. How do you see the economic prospects under the Aquino regime vis-à-vis the interests of imperialist and local big business on the one hand and the toiling masses and the Filipino people on the other?

JMS: The incoming Aquino regime follows the US-dictated neoliberal line of denationalization, liberalization, privatization and deregulation at the expense of the working people and the entire nation. Under conditions of a depressed agrarian and underdeveloped economy, the imperialists headed by the US and their big comprador-landlord partners will maintain or raise their profits by pressing down wages and exporting raw materials at a low price and will accumulate and concentrate land in the hands of a few at an accelerated rate.

Despite the depressed condition of the economy, the announced policy of Aquino is to impose new taxes and improve tax collection in view of the bankruptcy of the reactionary government. From year to year, austerity measures will be adopted at the expense of the working people. The public debt is now 4.5 trillion pesos and debt service has a crippling effect on the state. And yet the

reactionary state is bound to escalate military spending and all kinds of counterproductive activities. The public debt will continue to mount because the trade and budgetary deficits are ever growing and new debts are incurred despite more onerous conditions of borrowing.

The toiling masses of workers and peasants and the entire people will suffer increased oppression and exploitation. They will be driven to make demands for the improvement of their living conditions and respect for their national and democratic rights. But the regime is predetermined to be servile to the economic dictates of the US and the exploiting classes and would be predisposed to blame communists for the ills of the rotten ruling system and to unleash state terrorism.

7. The Arroyo clique is now on a propaganda binge to cover up its corruption, gross human rights violations and socioeconomic malaise with false claims of economic progress under its rule and calls for reconciliation under the incoming Aquino regime. It is likely that the Arroyo camp will also be in a fast draw to also expose corruption under the Aquino regime. What are her chances of getting away from people's historical judgment in much the same way Estrada was allowed to elude justice under the Arroyo regime.

JMS: The economy has deteriorated drastically since the 2001 beginning of the Arroyo rule. There has been no industrialization and land reform. Incomes of the working people and even the middle social strata have gone down in real terms. Poverty has been aggravated. A quick way of indicating the economic deterioration is to mention the fact that the level of public debt rose from 2.2 trillion pesos in 2001 to 4.5 trillion pesos now.

It is a nasty joke on the people for Arroyo to depict as economic growth the heavy electoral spending in the first half of the 2010. The reality of economic deterioration is too harsh and too clear for Arroyo to be able to get away with false claims to bringing about economic progress. Puppet regimes have kept the Philippines backward, agrarian and semifeudal and have always misrepresented consumption driven by foreign and domestic borrowings by the state as real economic growth.

I would expect that as soon as the Aquino regime engages in corruption Arroyo and her followers will expose it, unless the Aquino and Arroyo followers agree or come to a mode of collaboration and mutual benefit in a new wave of corruption. Like the two previously feuding wings of the Cojuangco clan, the

Arroyo and Cojuangco-Aquino families are not beyond reconciling and collaborating. The imprisonment of Arroyo might never happen. Even when it happens as in the case of Estrada, Arroyo would not be at a loss as regards to ways of getting off the hook.

8. The return to power of the Aquino-Cojuangco family and the Kamag-anak Inc. fuels speculation that corruption and bureaucrat capitalism will definitely worsen under the Aquino regime. What do you think would be the key issues and tactics in exposing corruption in the incoming regime? Aside from those mentioned, could you identify the biggest comprador-landlords and bureaucrat capitalists who are poised to benefit the most under Aquino's regime?

JMS: The biggest comprador-landlords and bureaucrat capitalists that will benefit from the Aquino regime include the resurgent Kamag-anak Inc. headed by Jose Cojuangco and the business empire of Eduardo Cojuangco and all the other business moguls in the Makati Business Club who contributed heavily to the Aquino campaign fund, like the Ayalas, Lopezes, Razons and Pangilins.

The list of donors and contributions for the Aquino campaign fund is obviously incomplete. Aquino is a liar for claiming to have spent only a little more than 400 million pesos and having for donors only those openly listed. Right from the beginning, his lack of personal integrity and credibility is showing. He is firmly on the path of deceiving and trying to make fools out of the people. This is clear no matter how much the clowns and sycophants try to hype his supposed cleanliness.

On top of the heap of big comprador-landlord families that are poised to benefit from the Aquino regime are the two wings of the Cojuangco clan, previously feuding but now collaborating to enrich themselves further through corrupt practices. From the very beginning of the Aquino regime, Danding Cojuangco is poised to overcome all the claims of the government against the ill-gotten wealth accumulated by him directly as well as put under his name by the fascist dictator Marcos. Is this not corruption on a grand scale now in the making right before our eyes?

It will take a little length of time before more scandalous cases of corruption will arise under the Aquino regime and make the regime stink to high heavens. Noynoy was lying when he said during the campaign that he could solve the problem of poverty by eliminating or reducing corruption. Corruption and

poverty are inherent to the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system that he wants to preserve. Foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism are the cause of poverty and corruption. No amount of crap from any reactionary politician can conceal this fact.

Even if Noynoy Aquino is given the benefit of a doubt, the mass movement must develop enough strength to be able to compel the new regime to cause the arrest and detention of Arroyo and her top criminal accomplices and to get back the ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses and his big cronies like Eduardo Cojuangco, Lucio Tan, Jose Campos and others. The progressive forces must also be keen at spotting, denouncing and taking action against the new cases of corruption that will occur under Aquino regime.

The people and the broad range of opposition forces must be vigilant and militant in connection with such issues as the aforesaid ill-gotten wealth in previous regimes. There are also giant cases of tax evasion, smuggling and other major economic crimes. There are the backlog cases and there will be new cases involving Noynoy Aquino's giving big deals and privileges to his relatives, friends and other donors to his campaign fund.

Factual and legal researches must be done without let-up so that the opposition forces and the mass movement will be well-equipped in exposing and opposing corruption. There are research organizations, lawyers' organizations and civic-spirited organizations concerned with good governance and corruption. They must be mustered to provide facts and support the mass movement. Definitely the mass movement must fight for national liberation and democracy against the imperialists, the local exploiting classes and the high bureaucrats who altogether are culpable for corruption and the poverty of the people.

9. The issue of land reform is one of the critical nagging questions that will continue to be faced by the incoming Aquino regime, considering that Aquino belongs to the Aquino-Cojuangco haciendero clan that has no intention of giving up Hacienda Luisita and has in fact so declared, contrary to Aquino's loose campaign promise to distribute the hacienda land by 2014 (although he also said the problem of HLI's debts that are bigger than its assets has to be solved first). What are Aquino's options in facing the widespread demand for land reform, including Hacienda Luisita? In the face of Aquino's expected failure (or more, exactly, lack of real interest) to implement land reform in the country, do you see any prospect in regard to the rise of the peasant movement's demand for

genuine land reform?

JMS: Noynoy Aquino has made clear that there will be no land reform in Hacienda Luisita until 2014. He wants the stock distribution option swindle to continue. Quite obviously he is in agreement with the scheme of his family to use the next four years to further encumber Hacienda Luisita, Inc. with debts and other obligations to other Cojuangco corporations, to reclassify parts and parts of the hacienda and transfer them to other Cojuangco corporations, to lay off all or most of those farm workers and tenants who previously agreed to the stock distribution option and to buy off the minor shares of any remaining farm workers.

Noynoy Aquino wants to cast away the decision of the Agrarian Reform Council under Arroyo that rejected the stock distribution option and put Hacienda Luisita under land reform. He is also bullying the Supreme Court in order to soften up the Arroyo appointees into consenting to uphold the SDO scheme. The position of Aquino on the issues of land reform and the Hacienda Luisita massacre shows that he has no interest in genuine and thoroughgoing land reform under his own nose and anywhere else.

Aquino wants to retain CARP-ER in order to allow landlords to sell land upon their sole volition and to evade land reform by demanding fair market value for their land, by reclassifying the land to put it beyond the scope of land reform and by using the stock distribution option in order to deceive the landless tillers. Aquino is most likely inclined to give way to the US-instigated global policy of landgrabbing by multinational corporations. It is inevitable for the peasant movement to rise and advance in order to demand genuine and thoroughgoing land reform. The landless tillers are hard pressed by the ever worsening social and economic conditions. They have no choice but to fight for land.

10. How would you describe the social democrats and other pseudo-progressive and reformist groups that were active in the Aquino campaign? How much influence would they be able to wield in the incoming Aquino regime? What role do you see them playing?

JMS: The social democrats and other pseudo-progressive and reformist groups that were active in the Aquino campaign are special agents of the counterrevolutionary state and do the dirty propaganda job for the worst of the reactionaries. During the electoral campaign, they specialized in Red-baiting the

two senatorial candidates of Makabayan and the progressive party list groups. They acted in concert with their military psywar partners.

The most powerful components of the Aquino regime are the money grubbers of the Cojuangco and Aquino families in back offices and their favorites among other big businessmen and the top-rung military and police officers. Relative to them, the social democrats or clerico-fascists and other special anti-communist agents are minor players but will have a major special role in continuing with their Red-baiting and anti-communist functions. They are inserted in presidential staff units, press office, education, finance, national security and so-called peace processes.

11. The fascist violence and violations of human rights perpetrated by the Arroyo regime under Oplan Bantay Laya 1 and 2 generated widespread national and international condemnation. Should not the Aquino regime release immediately the political prisoners and cause the investigation and prosecution of human rights violations, including the extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, illegal detention and torture of activists and other unarmed critics of the reactionary government under the Arroyo regime?

JMS: The widespread national and international condemnation of human rights violations under the Arroyo regime should have an impact on the incoming Aquino regime and should move it to order the immediate release of all political prisoners and cause the investigation, prosecution, trial and punishment of the human rights violators, from the level of Arroyo downwards. But even Philip Alston has expressed doubts that the new regime would dare to act against them and incur the risk of losing the support of the military and police.

Experience has shown that Cory Aquino could easily order the release of all political prisoners in 1986 but she did not dare to go after the human rights violators under the Marcos dictatorship. The victims had to file their tort case in US courts. Cory Aquino was not able to cause the punishment of the masterminds in the murder of her own husband. Now, Noynoy Aquino is reconciled with Eduardo Cojuangco who used to be regarded as the co-mastermind of Marcos in having Ninoy Aquino murdered.

Noynoy Aquino himself is probably inclined not to go after human rights violators under the Arroyo regime because of his apparent complicity in the Hacienda Luisita massacre and the subsequently killings in Tarlac. Like his late

mother, Aquino is again under advice by US operatives to concentrate on armed counterrevolution rather than to hold the military and police accountable for human rights violations. Aquino himself has already started to retreat from his previous promise of stopping and punishing human rights violators despite his continuing pretense at promoting democracy and avowals of defending the rights of his opponents.

It is important for the human rights organizations, the lawyers and other professional groups, the religious organizations and the broad masses of the people to persevere in the campaign against human rights violations and demand the punishment of the human rights violators, up to the level of those with command responsibility. With such a campaign, there is a chance for obtaining some amount of justice or reducing the human rights violations. But without such a campaign, the human rights violators would be further emboldened to commit their heinous crimes with impunity.

12. Would we expect the incoming Aquino regime to support the long standing demand for the compensation of the victims of human rights violations way back under the Marcos dictatorship?

JMS: It should be far easier than anything else for Noynoy Aquino to support and give way to the demand for compensation of the victims of human rights violations under the Marcos dictatorship. He should be able to sympathize with the victims because he, his parents and his entire family were also victims. The US court system decided the case against the Marcos estate and determined those victims that must be indemnified.

The beneficiaries in the US court decision must first be served in one act before there is another act to benefit other victims who are not covered by the said decision. Otherwise the charade will continue from year to year of denying indemnification to the clear beneficiaries and ridiculing them as greedy under the pretext of aiming with one legislative act to indemnify all victims of human rights violations, including those who did not join the suit against the Marcos estate in the US.

By the way, the indemnification of the victims of human rights violations, as determined by the US court decision, is stipulated in the GRP-NDFP Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL). The Aquino regime needs to be reminded that

there can never be a final peace agreement without fulfilling the demand for the indemnification of the victims of human rights violations under the Marcos regime.

13. Do you think Aquino will pursue the same program as the OBL or even a worse one in confronting the ongoing people's war?

JMS: There are clear indications that Aquino is bound by the US Counterinsurgency Guide and will continue Oplan Bantay Laya under a new name. In a speech on peace and security before foreign correspondents on April 22, he did not point to the importance and necessity of peace negotiations as the way of addressing the roots of the armed conflict and forging agreements on social, economic and political reforms in order to lay the basis for a just peace.

He echoed the line of the US Counterinsurgency Guide that the reactionary government can destroy, coopt or render the revolutionary movement inconsequential by operating efficiently without the necessity of peace negotiations. In that context, he presented four guideposts: good governance, delivery of services, economic rehabilitation and development and security reforms. The clear implication is that he can ignore all the demands for peace negotiations so long as he operates according to these guideposts.

Aquino has been chosen as the new chief puppet of the US because he is seen as having the penchant for unleashing violence against the working people and their supporters as in the Hacienda Luisita massacre and subsequent killings in Tarlac. He is already mouthing the terms of the US Counterinsurgency Guide and he is already assuring his US and Filipino handlers that he will allow the review of the Visiting Forces Agreement if only to satisfy the demands of some senators, allow some adjustments but keep the agreement intact and further legitimize the interventionist presence and entry of more US military forces.

14. The NDFP peace panel has said that it is open to resuming peace talks with the GRP under the Aquino regime. What would you say are the conditions and prospects of the talks?

JMS: In expressing its willingness to resume peace negotiations with the GRP, the NDFP has made clear that the two sides must reaffirm, comply with and carry forward The Hague Joint Declaration, the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees, the Joint Agreement on the Sequence, Formation and

Operationalization of the Reciprocal Working Committees, the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law and other agreements. There is no precondition whatsoever. The two sides are simply to comply with existing agreements.

There is yet no serious preliminary approach from the GRP to NDFP. The GRP-NDFP peace negotiations might never be resumed or will be delayed for a long time if Aquino takes orders from the US regarding peace negotiations and let military morons and the clerico-fascists control the GRP side of the negotiations like during the time of Arroyo. Like before, the GRP might be interested only in conjuring the illusion of GRP-NDFP peace negotiations to serve as a minor adjunct of the escalating brutal military campaigns of suppression cum fake local peace talks and fake social integration program.

15. In the past, what were the obstacles to the continuous progress of the GRP-NDFP negotiations? Why such obstacles?

JMS: First, let me point out that the peace negotiations would have progressed greatly since a long time ago if the GRP had complied with The Hague Joint Declaration and subsequent agreements. It is well proven by the successful forging and mutual approval of the CARHRIHL that the GRP and NDFP can make a comprehensive agreement if the GRP does not insist on putting up obstacles in violation of The Hague Joint Declaration.

For long stretches of time, the GRP put up obstacles like 1) the demand for holding the peace talks in the Philippines, 2) the demand to take up all four items of the substantive agenda all at the same time in a maneuver to frontload the fourth and final item on ending hostilities and to lay aside the second item on social and economic reforms and the third item on political and constitutional reforms, 3) the precondition of an indefinite ceasefire, 4) informal talks until a final agreement is to be formalized, 5) the terrorist blacklisting of the CPP, NPA and the NDFP chief political consultant, 6) the illegitimate so-called suspension of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees and 7) the abduction, torture and murder of NDFP consultants and staffers.

It was clear that the GRP became a party to the bilateral agreements with the NDFP, not to address the roots of the armed conflict and forge agreements on basic reforms for the purpose of attaining a just peace, but only to create the illusion of peace negotiations for the simultaneous purposes of deceiving the

people, probing for ways to undermine the revolutionary movement and escalating the military campaigns of suppression against the people and revolutionary forces.

16. It looks like the feuding families of the Aquinos and Marcoses are happily living together in the enclave paradise of the big compradors and landlords in the Philippines. The feuding branches of the Cojuangco clan have also reconciled with each other and are together poised to take advantage of the Filipino people. How do you respond to them and their propagandists when they attack you as merely on self-exile and enjoying yourself abroad? How do you respond in case Noytoy Aquino himself or any of his major subalterns rhetorically invite or challenge you to return home and they also call on the NDFP negotiating panel to hold formal peace talks in the Philippines?

JMS: It is unfair even for the reactionary mass media to keep on describing me quite casually as self-exiled. The public knows that in 1988 Cory Aquino canceled my passport in order to compel my return home and set me up for arrest by the military at the airport in Manila. But I applied for political asylum. Since then, I have been on forced exile and I have been recognized as a political refugee.

The wealthy and powerful Aquinos, Cojuangcos, Arroyos and Marcoses and their propagandists are not any better than me just because they are in the Philippines. They are malefactors responsible/accountable for exploitation and oppression. They are in the Philippines to exploit and oppress the Filipino people. Their exploitative class of big comprador-landlord-bureaucrats and their military and police minions keep me out of the country and are always on the lookout for my return so that they can do something against me.

Even while abroad, I have been subjected to all kinds of attacks by the US and the Philippine rulers. They have acted to block my asylum, to slander me continuously in the bourgeois press, to subject me to assassination attempts, to put me on the terrorist blacklist, to prevent me from compensated work, to deprive me of social benefits, to arrest and detain me on the trumped-up charge of murder and to continue imposing on me many kinds of restrictions and prohibitions even now, after the Dutch and European court decisions nullifying the false charges of murder and terrorism against me. Would any sane person say that I enjoy the material comforts that my adversaries and detractors enjoy in surfeit?

You can be sure that the Aquino regime is not interested in resuming the formal peace negotiations as soon as it uses the tactic of calling on me and on the NDFP negotiating panel to go the Philippines for formal peace talks. This kind of tactic would be in violation of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees which stipulates the neutral foreign venue for the negotiations. It would be a tactic to put the NDFP panelists, consultants and staffers under military surveillance for eventual bloody suppression as had happened during the time of Cory Aquino in 1986 and 1987.

Formal talks even in the countryside are not acceptable to the NDFP because of the need for the large mobilizations of forces on both sides and the danger of sabotage from those who oppose the peace negotiations and because the revolutionary forces would be vulnerable to surveillance with the use of drones, GSP, monitoring of electronic communications, thermal heat sensing, night goggles and other technical devices. The NDFP is already well informed about the military objective of the GRP in wishing to have the formal peace talks in the Philippines.

17. Are you optimistic that the CPP will greatly develop guerrilla warfare and advance the people's war from the stage of strategic defensive to that of the strategic stalemate in the next five years under the US-Aquino regime? What can the Party and the revolutionary movement do in the new situation and the areas of work that particularly need to be stressed?

JMS: Far more important than my optimism about anything are the clear public pronouncements of the Communist Party of the Philippines on the concrete conditions, political requirements and the strategy and tactics involved in the plan to accelerate the development of guerrilla warfare and advance from the strategic defensive to the strategic stalemate in the people's war.

The CPP has pointed to the ever worsening socioeconomic and political crisis of the domestic ruling system and likewise of the world capitalist system as the most important objective conditions for advancing the people's war. The toiling masses of workers and peasants and the middle social strata are suffering extreme forms of exploitation and oppression. And the widespread social discontent gives rise to various forms of mass resistance by the people.

The political requirements involve arousing, organizing and mobilizing the masses along the general line of struggle for national liberation and democracy

through the strategic line of people's war. I presume that the CPP has definite ideas about expanding the various types of underground mass organizations in the guerrilla fronts and the urban underground. I also presume that it welcomes and encourages the mass organizations and other progressive formations based in the urban areas.

In its recent message to mark the anniversary of the New People's Army, the CPP Central Committee called on the New People's Army to intensify its tactical offensives in order to seize more arms and build more NPA units and more guerrilla fronts, to complement the tactics of annihilation with the tactics of attrition in order to further debilitate the enemy, to enable the building of the organs of political power and mass organizations in the guerrilla fronts, to train the people's militia and self-defense units as auxiliary forces and to support the undertaking of land reform and other mass campaigns for the benefit of the people. All these foretell the bright future for the revolutionary movement of the people.

Neoliberalism: A Scourge on Humankind

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Background and Definition

The term “neoliberalism” was coined by the German scholar Alexander Rustow at the Colloque Walter Lippmann in 1938. Ludwig von Mises popularized it as “new liberalism” in his writings. The exponents of neoliberalism defined it as “the priority of the price mechanism, the free enterprise, the system of competition and a strong and impartial state.” They belonged to what were called the Freiburg School, the Austrian School and the Chicago School of Economics.

The concept of neoliberalism draws from Adam Smith the notion that the invisible hand of self-interest in the free market results in the common good but obscures his idea that labor power is the creator of new material values and social wealth. It harps on the notion that the economic freedom of the entrepreneurs spells political freedom of the entire society. It idealizes and perpetuates the idea of free competition capitalism.

It holds as sacred and inviolable the right to private property in the means of production and it vehemently stands against state ownership of any means of production and against state intervention in the economy unless it favors the private capitalists with profit-making opportunities, including the expansion of money supply and credit, tax cuts, contracts, subsidies, investment guarantees and other incentives.

The concept arose at the time of the Great Depression, when the crisis of overproduction in monopoly capitalism had given rise to fascism and the

imminence of World War II. But the neoliberal intellectuals ignored the reality of monopoly capitalism and the class struggle between the big bourgeoisie and the working class. They took the supraclass petty bourgeois viewpoint of standing above and against both fascism and socialism and preached about freedom based on the long past condition of free competition capitalism in the 19th century.

Friedrich Hayek, well known for the notion that socialism is “the road to serfdom”, founded the Mont Pelerin Society in 1947 in order to reconvene the neoliberal intellectuals and politicians. The neoliberals were a hyperactive yet marginal instrument of anticommunism in the Cold War. Hayek and Milton Friedman became the iconic figures of neoliberalism in the Chicago School of Economics.

Friedman became best known for pushing neoliberalism to become the official economic policy of US imperialism. He promoted the notion that economic freedom is a necessary condition for political freedom and that the state should not own productive assets and should not plan or regulate the economy but should give way to an unbridled “free enterprise” and a self-regulating “free market” and allow the big bourgeoisie to accumulate capital and avail of the profit-making opportunities.

Describing himself as monetarist, Friedman spread the notion that growing the economy and solving economic problems of stagnation and inflation was just a matter of manipulating the money supply and interest rates. He spearheaded the academic and media campaign to attack Keynesian economics and to blame the working class for wage inflation and supposedly big social spending by government. He and his fellow neoliberals proclaimed these as the cause of the stagflation in the 1970s.

Neoliberal economic policy

At the onset of the 1980s, the neoliberal economic policy was adopted by Ronald Reagan in the US and Margaret Thatcher in the UK and became known respectively as Reaganomics or supply-side economics and Thatcherism. It scapegoated the working class and government social spending for the phenomenon of stagflation and obscured the crisis of overproduction as a result of the reconstruction of Western Europe and Japan and the rapid rise of US military expenditures due to stepped up military production, overseas deployment of US military forces and the wars of aggression in Korea and

Indochina.

Reagan and Thatcher undertook signal actions and pushed legislation to press down the wage level, suppress the trade union and democratic rights of the working class and cut back on social spending by government. They reduced taxes on the corporations and individual members of the monopoly bourgeoisie and provided them with all the opportunities to make superprofits and accumulate capital.

These opportunities were made available through the flexibilization of labor, trade and finance liberalization, privatization of public assets, anti-social deregulation, the denationalization of the economies of the underdeveloped countries, the increase of overpriced contracts in war production and guarantees and subsidies for overseas investments.

Eventually the other imperialist powers followed the example of the US and UK. Even the social democratic, bourgeois laborite and neorevisionist parties adopted the neoliberal economic policy. This was given the fancy name of “free market” globalization. But this is imperialist globalization, allowing the imperialist powers to unleash the monopoly firms and banks against their own working class and against all working people, especially in the underdeveloped countries. The puppet states treasonously surrendered economic sovereignty and natural resources to the imperialist powers under the signboard of globalization.

The neoliberal economic policy was instigated by US imperialism and came to be known in 1989 as the Washington Consensus (coined by economist John Williamson) because it had long been designed and enforced by the IMF, World Bank and the US Treasury Department, to be joined subsequently by the WTO in the 1990s. It imposed on the underdeveloped countries the following prescriptions supposedly for development: fiscal policy discipline, redirection of public spending away from industrial development and self-reliance, tax reform for the benefit of foreign investors and at the expense of the people, market-determined interest rates, competitive exchange rates, import liberalization, investment liberalization, privatization of state enterprises, deregulation and legal security for property rights.

Neoliberalism, otherwise known as market fundamentalism, has accelerated the accumulation of capital and the taking of superprofits by the monopoly bourgeoisie. As a result, the crisis of overproduction and overaccumulation by a

few has recurred at a rapid and worse rate. The monopoly bourgeoisie has resorted to tricks of finance capitalism and has spawned a financial oligarchy in a futile attempt to override the recurrent crisis of overproduction and the tendency of the profit rate to fall. It has repeatedly expanded the money supply and credit, generated derivatives in astronomical amounts and made one financial bubble after another in order to raise the profits and overvalue the assets of the monopoly bourgeoisie.

Nevertheless, more than one hundred economic and financial crises of varying scales and severity have occurred in the world capitalist system in the last three decades of neoliberal economic policy. The severest crisis has burst out since 2007. It is comparable to the Great Depression of the 1930s with far more destructive political and social concomitants and consequences for the entire world. It is accompanied by the rise of state terrorism or fascism and further imperialist wars of aggression. The broad masses of the people are suffering from the terrible conditions of global depression and the intensification of exploitation, impoverishment, oppression and all kinds of degradation.

People's resistance

The imperialist powers and their puppet states have been unable to solve the ongoing supercrisis because they cling dogmatically to the neoliberal economic policy. They believe that this is so far the best policy adopted by the world capitalist system to let the monopoly bourgeoisie and financial oligarchy rake in superprofits and accumulate capital. They wish to perpetuate this scourge to humankind. It is therefore the compelling duty of the people to fight against this policy and against the system that has imposed it on the people.

The grave crisis of the system is inciting the broad masses of the people to wage various forms of resistance in order to uphold, defend and promote their basic democratic rights and to fight for their national and social liberation. Through their own struggle, they can build a fundamentally new and better world of greater freedom, democracy, social justice, development, international solidarity and peace. They aim for a socialist future.

Corruption Under the Aquino Regime

and the Need for System Change

Interview by D. L. Mondelo, Bulatlat.com, October 13, 2013

1. Are the plunderers in the pork barrel system limited to those involved in the Napoles case? Why is Aquino pointed to as the pork barrel king? Is he also engaged in plunder? If so, how? Is the corruption of Aquino limited to the pork barrel?

JMS: The plunderers are not limited to those involved in the Napoles case. Napoles and the senators and congressmen who are her accomplices could accomplish their plundering only with the collaboration of the executive officials under Aquino, particularly in the theft of Php 10 billion under the so-called Priority Development Assistance Fund.

Aquino is pointed to as the pork barrel king because he has control and sole discretion over huge lump sums of pork barrel amounting to hundreds of billions of pesos. He and his relatives and friends can at will, steal from various types of pork like the special purpose fund, unprogrammed funds, intelligence fund, presidential social fund, Malampaya fund, off budget account, among others. He has been caught with his pants down on the invention of the Disbursement Acceleration Program. He is discovered to have no constitutional peg whatsoever for this racket. He has been disbursing huge amounts of money illegally and criminally.

The corruption of Aquino is not limited to pork barrel. The IMF Direction of

Trade no less has found out that smuggling under the Aquino regime is at least three times worse than that during the Estrada and Arroyo regimes and amounts to USD 19 billion per year. The floods have become worse under the Aquino regime because of huge cuts from infrastructure projects. The sister and brother-in-law of Aquino have been exposed for trying to shake down the Czech company Inekon. The biggest tax evaders like Lucio Tan and Eduardo Cojuangco are intimates of Aquino.

2. Aquino controls both houses of Congress by corrupting most of the congressmen and senators, with the use of pork barrel disbursements, like those related to the impeachment and conviction of Corona. It is obvious that Aquino cannot be impeached by the Lower House and tried by the Senate. What can be done to punish Aquino?

JMS: The way to try and punish Aquino now is not by impeachment by the Lower House and trial by the Senate. One way is to charge and try him after he steps down from his office in 2016. Estrada and Arroyo have been similarly charged and tried. Another way is to carry out an Edsa type of uprising as in 1986 and 2001. If the uprising is successful, Aquino and his accomplices can be arrested and tried immediately.

The people's outrage over the pork barrel corruption can develop into a mass uprising beyond the ability of the government and the yellow media to counter it. The broad masses of the people are already fed up with the years of Aquino manipulation of the mass media, the opinion poll surveys and social media and the use of letter writing brigades and planted comments.

3. What do you think of the proposal of the former Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynato Puno to the One Million People March Movement to undertake a People's Initiative and hold a People's Congress to legislate the abolition of the pork barrel system in accordance with a provision in the 1987 Constitution?

JMS: It is an excellent proposal. I can see that the people's initiative can be joined by millions of people. It has a broad appeal and has a definite objective of abolishing the pork barrel system through the People's Congress in accordance with the 1987 Constitution and Republic Act No. 6735, which provides for a system of initiative and referendum.

The people's initiative has a high potential for becoming a movement for moral

regeneration and for system change as envisioned and advocated recently by the peace panel of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. The leadership of the movement may include former Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynato Puno, former Vice President Teofisto Guingona, Senator Grace Poe and stalwarts of the mass movement like Dr. Carol Araullo, Satur Ocampo and Liza Maza.

4. Going back to the possibility of overthrowing the Aquino regime, how would the people go about this? Some pundits say that Aquino cannot be ousted and replaced because those in the line of succession are also corrupt like him, like Vice President Binay and Senate President Drilon. How do you ensure having a good administration to replace the corrupt Aquino regime?

JMS: There is no need for using the existing line of succession. Philippine history has shown in 1986 and 2001 that a president can be ousted peacefully by the broad masses of the people who rise in great numbers. The organized forces of the mass uprising must persuade the military and police to respect the right of the people to speak and assemble. The effective leaders of the military and police can be subsequently persuaded to take a position against the regime and withdraw support from it.

They can be trusted by the masses if beforehand they declare that they uphold the principle of civilian supremacy and commit themselves to supporting a council of national unity as the civilian caretaker government in charge of arresting and prosecuting Aquino and his criminal accomplices and ensuring clean and honest elections within six months. The chair and members of the caretaker government can be appointed by a council for moral regeneration arising from the people's movement against the pork barrel and entire gamut of corruption.

5. If we get rid of the pork barrel system and Aquino and his accomplices, would that be enough to change the rotten social system in the Philippines? What does it take to make a system change truly for the benefit of the people?

JMS: Getting rid of the pork barrel system together with Aquino and his accomplices is not enough to change the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system of big compradors and landlords servile to US imperialism. So long as these exploiting classes continue to reign, bureaucrat capitalism or bureaucratic corruption will persist. The workers and peasants must smash the bureaucratic and military machinery of the exploiting classes in order to install the people's

democratic system.

6. Is it possible to have a government that you can cooperate with, short of achieving victory in the people's war against the ruling system? What do you expect from a government that you can cooperate with?

JMS: That government must assert national independence against unequal treaties, agreements and arrangements. It must let the strength of the workers and peasants grow in a democracy. Genuine land reform and national industrialization must be carried out. A national, scientific and mass culture must flourish. The foreign policy must be for peace and development.

7. Why is it that so far there is no such government as you describe? Why is it that such government has not arisen from the peace negotiations between the National Democratic Front of the Philippines and the Manila-based government?

JMS: All presidents and regimes since the start of the peace negotiations have been more interested in serving the US and their exploitative class interests, in amassing wealth through corruption, in using military force to suppress the revolutionary movement and in using the peace negotiations to seek the surrender and pacification of the revolutionary forces and people.

8. Is there still a chance that Aquino will show interest in peace negotiations either because he wants to shore himself up politically or because he is simply interested in peace as a noble objective?

JMS: The chance is nil or close to nil. Aquino has been merely interested in preserving and expanding the wealth of the Aquino-Cojuangco clan. He cannot think and act outside of the box of puppetry to the US, satisfying the interests of his fellow big compradors and landlords, plundering the national treasury and overrelying on the use of military force and manipulation of the mass media.

Global Trends and the Philippine Political System

Presentation at the Forum on Global Trends and the Philippine Political System at the University of the Philippines Baguio,

November 28, 2013

Dear Friends,

Good afternoon! I thank the Alliance of Concerned Students, ANAKBAYAN and League of Filipino Students for inviting me to this forum as the speaker. I am happy to join you in celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of the great Andres Bonifacio and the 49th founding anniversary of Kabataang Makabayan.

I am tasked to present the global trends and the Philippine political system before I receive and answer the questions in this forum.

A. Global trends

1. The crisis of global capitalism and global depression continue, especially because the imperialist powers stick to the neoliberal economic policy. This has accelerated the accumulation and concentration of capital in the hands of the few through the intensified exploitation of labor, the liberalization of investment, trade and finance, privatization of public assets, anti-social and anti-environment deregulation and denationalization of the underdeveloped economies.

2. Rising mass unemployment and prolonged economic stagnation are the result of the crisis of overproduction and bursting of financial bubbles. The economic and financial crisis is further aggravated by the so-called quantitative easing or wanton printing of money by the US to cover its public deficits. Industrial capitalist countries generally have adopted austerity measures in a vain attempt

to reduce their public deficits and solve their debt problem. Thus, they pass the burden of crisis to the people and aggravate the crisis of the entire economy.

3. The imperialist powers step up war production and launch wars of aggression. They consider these as stimulus to economic growth, while they consider spending for social services as counterproductive. Maintaining military superiority through more advanced weaponry, the deployment of military forces and wars of aggression is aimed at protecting and promoting foreign investments.

4. The imperialist countries whip up reactionary currents like chauvinism, racism, religious bigotry, fascism and warmongering in their home grounds to deflect the people's attention from the capitalist roots of the crisis. The monopoly bourgeoisie and its financial oligarchy conceal their responsibility for the crisis through their control of the mass media and the dominant political parties.

5. To override contradictions among themselves, the imperialist powers unite against the third world countries and peoples and shift the burden of crisis to them through intensified superexploitation, lopsided trade, currency imposition, international usury, intensified plunder and ruin of the environment.

6. The third world peoples are resisting. Mass protests are occurring daily all over the world. Those who are waging armed struggles against foreign domination and the local exploiting classes have the best chances of achieving national and social liberation. Some third world states assert national independence: DPRK, Cuba, Venezuela, Syria and Iran. They are resisting threats, provocations and blockades.

7. Despite their efforts to unite at the expense of the third world, the imperialist powers are hard pressed by the crisis. There is less space for mutual accommodation among the imperialist powers due to the addition of China and Russia. Thus, inter-imperialist contradictions are growing over economic, trade, financial, political, security, spying and environment issues.

8. The combination of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) has arisen as an economic bloc. It contributes to the multipolarity of the global economy against the vain attempts of the US to maintain hegemony over all. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization has also arisen as a countervailing force to

the US and NATO, especially in Asia.

9. The US has created politico-military quagmires for itself in West Asia, North Africa, Central Asia and South Asia and has potential trouble spots elsewhere but is pivoting to East Asia in an apparent move to contain China. The US is showing off its military power to push the Chinese authorities to further privatize state-owned enterprises and to encourage the Chinese bureaucracy to drop their residual pretenses at socialism.

10. In connection with its pivot to East Asia, the US is further entrenching itself in the Philippines militarily and otherwise. In effect, the US has gotten back military bases under the guise of rotating ever larger military forces and accelerating the comings and goings of aircraft carriers and other vessels of war.

B. The Philippine political system

1. The crisis of global capitalism certainly afflicts the Philippine economy. Exports (especially semiconductors) have been drastically reduced. Low-value added semimanufacturing and assembly plants have shut. Agricultural production has decreased. Over-dependence on call centers or business processing outsourcing (BPO) and labor exports & remittances of OCW can only aggravate the underdevelopment of the country. Unemployment is increasing rapidly. Prices of basic commodities and services are rising. Social services are decreasing and deteriorating.

The extraction of mineral ores is accelerated but these are being smuggled out. At the same time, luxury imports are being smuggled in. OCW remittances and BPO incomes are at risk. Budgetary and trade deficits are widening. The foreign and local debt burden is becoming heavier. OCW remittances from most countries are decreasing but appear to grow only because of nurse and caregiver remittances from North America.

2. The Aquino regime boasts of having the fastest growing economy in the whole world. But what is really the content of the GDP of 250 billion USD. It is a lie to claim a miracle economy when there is no industrialization going on. The GDP is a bubble created mainly by hot money (portfolio investments) in the carry trade and wanton government borrowing and spending for nonproductive purposes. The hot money from abroad flows mainly into the stock market and at best finances a growing overcapacity and bubble in private construction.

A real estate bubble is now being replicated in the Philippines. Even families of OCWs with short term contracts have been teased into buying condos on mortgage. The bubble can burst any time soon due to the rise of interest rates in the imperialist countries, a bust in the China bubble or a sharp fall of OCWs due to wars or social disorder abroad.

3. The underdeveloped, agrarian and semifeudal character of the economy, dominated by the imperialists, big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists, has been aggravated and deepened in the absence of genuine land reform and national industrialization.

4. As a consequence, the Philippine political system remains ever more the instrument of the US and the local exploiting classes of big comprador and landlords through the bureaucrat capitalists who themselves are members of the exploiting classes or come from the urban petty bourgeoisie and know no better than to improve their economic and social standing. The ruling system has been weakened by the privatization of its earning assets, the ever worsening crisis and by unbridled bureaucratic corruption.

5. The bureaucrat capitalists amass private wealth in the form of capital and land by using their government offices for the purpose. They are divided into factions that take the form of political parties and coalitions and compete for power and the spoils of power. There was the duopoly of the Nacionalista and Liberal parties before the Marcos monopoly through the KBL. Now, there is a multiplicity of parties dedicated to bureaucrat capitalism. In any case, the parties use the elections for peaceful rotation in the occupation of offices and for creating the illusion that the people have the freedom of choice. The latest feature of the reactionary elections is the adoption of the automated electoral system and its manipulation by a cabal of foreigners and big compradors.

6. The elections are used to formalize the exclusion of the genuine representatives of the toiling masses of workers and peasants (more than 90 percent of the people) who are earlier excluded by surveillance and vilification by the security services and bourgeois mass media and by the high financial costs of running an electoral campaign. As a result of a Supreme Court decision, the big comprador-landlord dynasties and parties will block any progressive urban petty bourgeois to win a congressional seat through the party list system.

7. The bureaucrat capitalists amass wealth by favoring their campaign financiers,

relatives and cronies with economic privileges, by adopting policies and rules for the purpose and by cutting into business contracts and government appropriations (especially with the use of the pork barrel system). Currently, the Filipino people are outraged by the corruption involved in the manipulation of pork barrel funds like those under PDAP and DAP and in the disappearance of calamity funds, so badly needed now by millions of disaster-stricken people in the Visayas.

8. The Philippine political system has been so designed that government officials are rewarded through the corrupt practices of bureaucrat capitalism for preserving and promoting the dominance for foreign monopoly capitalism and the exploiting classes and for betraying national sovereignty, auctioning off the national patrimony and for making constitutional amendments and laws that favor the foreign monopoly investors and the local exploiters.

9. Aquino was previously touted as the icon of good governance and economic growth. This kind of BS is in connection with the US scheme of combining psywar, intelligence and brutal military operations under Oplan Bayanihan to destroy the revolutionary movement. Thus, he was unwilling to have serious peace negotiations with the NDFP on basic social, economic and political problems and, if only to insult the NDFP, practically demanded the scrapping of all previous agreements and the surrender and pacification of the revolutionary forces and people under the guise of an indefinite ceasefire.

10. The Aquino regime is depending on US military intervention for the perpetuation of the oppressive, exploitative and corrupt ruling system. Thus, it welcomes every move of the US to entrench its military forces and expand US economic, political and cultural dominance in the Philippines. It is betraying and violating the national sovereignty of the people, selling out the national patrimony and letting the US use the Philippines as a base of aggression in East Asia and as a base of rapid deployment on a wider scale.

On Oplan Bayanihan and the Prospects of Peace and Environmental Justice

**Presentation at the Media Forum on Oplan Bayanihan
and the Prospects of Peace and Environmental Justice,**

**sponsored by the Apo Sandawa Lumadnung Panaghiusa sa Cotabato
(ASLPC) and Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas Probinsya sa Kutabato
(KMP-PK), Kidapawan City, North Cotabato, December 9, 2013**

Dear Compatriots and Friends,

Thank you for inviting me to be your speaker in this Media Forum on Oplan Bayanihan and the Prospects of Peace and Environmental Justice. I am mindful of your concern about the peace and order and environmental situation in Mindanao and I appreciate your desire to understand the root causes of the problems.

It is a privilege for me to share information and views with the forum participants who come from leading media institutions, youth and student organizations, civil society groups, academe, and church people in various affiliations. I am confident that our forum can shed more light on the issues and that we shall be better able to take them up in our efforts at public education and mobilization.

A. Oplan Bayanihan

1. Nature and Purpose of the Oplan. Like Oplan Bantay Laya, Oplan Bayanihan is a national military plan designed by the US and based on the US Counterinsurgency Guide for the vain purpose of destroying or reducing the New People's Army to inconsequentiality. But supposedly unlike Oplan Bantay Laya, which had become notorious for gross and systematic violations of human rights, Oplan Bayanihan is designed to be more emphatic on psywar and intelligence work, without lessening combat operations but making them more effective through psywar and intelligence work.

The basic premise of the US Counterinsurgency Guide and Oplan Bayanihan is that a regime can defeat a revolutionary movement by being credited for good governance, being clean on the straight path, and efficiently delivering services to the people. Even if untrue, claims of economic success are important in psywar and far more important than undertaking peace negotiations, which are considered dispensable and which may be undertaken only for the purpose of psywar.

2. The Key Role for Aquino. As campaign financiers in 2010, the biggest foreign and domestic businessmen chose Aquino to become the president and play the key role in Oplan Bayanihan. He enjoyed a honeymoon of more than three years with the bourgeois mass media, which touted him as the paragon of a clean, honest and efficient government and as the miracle maker of an economy growing fast and bubbling with hot money from abroad.

In coordination with the military, the key civilian agencies of Aquino in combining psywar and intelligence work against the revolutionary movement are the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Secretary, and the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) Chairman. They are in charge of deploying the dole outs under the Conditional Cash Transfer and the PAMANA funds in a futile attempt to undermine the mass base of the revolutionary forces and get intelligence at the community level about revolutionary fighters, mass activists and their families for the purpose of enticing them with payments, similar to those under the Amnesty and Rehabilitation Program under Cory Aquino and Ramos.

3. Unraveling of the Aquino Regime. The false image of Aquino and his regime as clean, honest and efficient has unraveled. It began when the Napoles pork barrel scam related to the Priority Development Assistance Fund became

exposed, uncovering Aquino as the pork barrel king who disburses for his personal gain and political advantage public funds in the Disbursement Acceleration Program and so many other lump-sum appropriations under his sole discretion.

Causing the Aquino regime to further unravel has been the disappearance of calamity funds and the failure of the regime to make pre-disaster preparations and to provide prompt and adequate rescue and relief assistance to the millions of victims of super typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda). The OPAPP, DSWD and NAPC have become notorious for bureaucratic corruption rather than for promoting peace, aiding people in distress, and fighting poverty.

B. Prospects for peace

1. Sabotage of the Peace Process. At the very first formal meeting of the GRP and NDFP negotiating panels in Oslo in February 2011, the GRP attacked The Hague Joint Declaration as a document of perpetual division. The NDFP pointed out that said declaration had been the framework agreement making possible more than 10 major agreements, including the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL). The GRP proceeded in 2012 to declare the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) as inoperative.

It has refused to release the political prisoners protected by the JASIG and the hundreds of political prisoners imprisoned by the Arroyo regime in violation of CARHRIHL. Absolutely ruthless and devoid of any human empathy, it has proceeded to imprison indefinitely more political prisoners. The NDFP cannot trust a regime that does not know how to respect agreements. When offered the possibility of truce and alliance or cooperation on the basis of a general declaration of common intent, the regime demanded surrender under the guise of “unilateral simultaneous indefinite ceasefires”, without reference to the agenda stipulated in The Hague Joint Declaration.

2. NDFP Commitment to Peace Process. The NDFP remains committed to the peace negotiations in accordance with The Hague Joint Declaration and further agreements, despite the bad experience of negotiating with the Estrada, Arroyo, and Aquino regimes. The most important reason of the NDFP for persevering in the peace negotiations is to seek the solution of the basic social, economic, and political problems that victimize the people in their millions.

There is no significant indication whatsoever that the Aquino regime is interested in resuming the formal talks in the peace negotiations with the NDFP. Therefore, what the people need to do is to hasten the removal of the Aquino ruling clique from power and demand the commitment of the next president to resume the formal peace talks.

3. Crisis Requires the Peace Process. For the sake of the Filipino people, the peace negotiations must be resumed, especially in the face of the protracted and worsening crisis of the world capitalist system and the domestic ruling system. The people are already suffering a high rate of unemployment, soaring prices of basic goods and services, decreasing and deteriorating social services, widespread poverty and misery. The illusion of economic growth bloated by hot money will soon burst and the people will suffer far more than they do now.

The successful advance of the peace negotiations is not an impossibility. The peace process is a matter of building on what has been achieved. It has already succeeded in producing a substantive agreement, the CARHRIHL, within the framework of The Hague Joint Declaration. It is possible to have a comprehensive agreement on socioeconomic reforms, with land reform and national industrialization as the key provisions. It is also possible to have a comprehensive agreement on political and constitutional reforms, with national independence and people's democracy as the key provisions. On the basis of these substantive agreements, then it is possible to agree comprehensively on the end of hostilities and disposition of forces. The people must be aroused, organized and mobilized to demand the resumption of peace negotiations.

C. Prospects of environment justice

1. Environmental Crisis in Mindanao. Nationwide, we see the wanton plunder of the natural resources and the destruction of the environment. The Philippines now has the second-lowest forest cover in the whole of Southeast Asia. The deforestation had been going on since the Spanish era in Luzon and Visayas, but in the past century has been principally caused by the operations of logging, agribusiness, and mining companies especially in Mindanao.

As of 2003 (the latest year for which official forestry data is available), the total remaining forest cover nationwide has gone down to just below 21 percent. It is even worse in Mindanao where forest cover is only 15.2 percent. The resultant loss of forest cover has left rural and urban communities alike more vulnerable

to typhoons, constant soil erosion, landslides, heavy silting of rivers and lakes, biodiversity loss and diminished wildlife, and urban overheating.

The use of open pit mining and large amounts of chemicals to accelerate extraction of minerals, including magnetite or black sand mining along the coasts, have aggravated soil erosion and the poisoning of the streams, rivers, lakes and coastal waters at the expense of the peasants and fishermen. The expansion of plantations for the production of bio-ethanol and such products for export like fruit, rubber and palm oil have involved excessive use of chemicals and grave imbalances in land use to the detriment of the environment and staple food production.

2. Responsibility for the Crisis. The foreign multinational firms and their big comprador and high bureaucrat allies are mainly responsible for the destruction of the environment in the Philippines. The Aquino regime is reprehensible for emboldening illegal logging, unrestricted mining and the rapid expansion of plantations. It has consistently upheld the pro-foreign Mining Act of 1995, and has encouraged the influx of big foreign mining firms in Mindanao side by side with the militarization of mining areas. The regime made a show of declaring a so-called total log ban in natural forests. But in reality it has made numerous exemptions and even tolerates outright illegal logging by the AFP-CAFGU and local government units such as in the PICOP and Forest Research Institute areas.

The imperialist powers headed by the US are responsible, both historically and in current volumes, for the carbon emissions that are causing global warming. Natural disasters caused both by extreme weather events such as cyclones, and slow-onset hazards such as coastal flooding, have become more frequent and destructive because of the global warming.

Third world countries like the Philippines, which did not produce the bulk of greenhouse gases, are more vulnerable not only because they are directly in the path of tropical cyclone belts and overheated ocean currents but also because underdevelopment hinders their capacity to cope with disasters. The super typhoon Yolanda was definitely maximized by the warming of the Pacific Ocean.

As shown by the measly outcomes of the recent COP-19 climate talks in Warsaw, the imperialist powers stubbornly resist the Third World demand for

them to compensate the victims of the natural disasters generated by global warming. They impose on the world the use of fossil fuel and retain the privilege of emitting carbon dioxide. For these reasons, it is but right for the oppressed peoples of the world to view the issue of climate change and its disastrous impacts as one of environmental injustice imposed by imperialism instead of being just a natural phenomenon that all countries face in equal measure.

It is true that the people, especially the most impoverished sections of the workers and peasants, are desperate enough to eke out a living in the margins at the expense of ecological balance and safe and healthy living conditions. But it is the height of callousness for the Aquino regime to put the blame on them for environmental problems and for living in disaster-prone areas, and even forcibly demolish and relocate their communities on that alibi. The broad masses of the people are the victims, not the culprits, of environmental injustice aggravated by human rights violations.

3. Attainment of Environmental Justice. For so long as the Philippines remains semicolonial and semifeudal, the imperialist powers and the reactionary puppets will continue to subject the Filipino people to environmental injustice. The way for the people to attain environmental justice is to struggle for national independence, democracy, social justice, development and international solidarity with the people of the world. But even now, we should be conscious of the need to stop the ruin of the environment and the wanton outflow of our precious nonrenewable resources, especially mineral ores, and do whatever is possible in this regard.

By gaining national and social liberation, a truly empowered Filipino people can prevent the plunder of natural resources and destruction of the environment. We can ban the imperialist and big comprador-landlord firms from taking away the natural resources as fast as they can while leaving the country more underdeveloped and the masses more impoverished than ever before. It becomes possible to protect and manage our natural resources and use them wisely by processing them for national industrialization and to support agricultural and all-sided rural development on the basis of agrarian reform.

With national industrialization and agrarian reform generating local production and employment many more times greater than what the imperialist and comprador-landlord firms can offer, it also becomes feasible for our people to adopt more ecologically wise methods of production, implement environmental

protection, avoid geohazards, and cope with disasters more effectively through mass mobilization.

There is a direct link between the struggle for peace and the struggle for environmental justice. In fact, we have always said that the only basis for a genuine and lasting peace is on the basis of justice brought about by substantial social, economic, and political reforms. Fighting for environmental justice means struggling for such comprehensive reforms, towards a just and lasting peace.

Political Context of Natural Disaster

Lecture at the Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Groningen, December 16, 2013

Good afternoon, friends. Thank you Jake for your kind introduction.

My task today is to talk about the political context of the corruption and criminal negligence of the Aquino regime in relation to the super typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda).

The scope of devastation, corruption and criminal negligence

Let me start by pointing immediately to the lack of preparedness of the Aquino regime before the super typhoon struck and the delayed and inadequate response of the regime to the great and urgent need for rescue and relief operations. The disaster made by the regime compounded the natural disaster, aggravating and worsening the intolerable suffering of the 16 million people in provinces of the Visayas and adjoining provinces of Bicol, Mindoro and Palawan.

The concerned scientists of the world and the Philippines had correctly estimated the magnitude, intensity and path of the super typhoon. They called on the Philippine authorities and the people in the provinces at risk to prepare against the impending disaster by evacuating the threatened coastal areas, bringing the people to safe areas and to storm shelters and stocking on food, water, medicine and other emergency supplies.

Two days before the super typhoon came, President B. S. Aquino boasted on television that all necessary preparations had been made, that he expected a zero casualty rate and that the planes, ships and relief goods were ready to provide

rescue and relief to the people in distress. He even dispatched the defense secretary and the interior and local government secretary to Tacloban city to posture as saviors before the cameras of TV crews brought in from Manila.

When the monster winds and the storm surges hit Tacloban city and the Visayan Islands, the truth came out that no pre-disaster preparations aimed at reducing risk had been made at all. There had been no sufficient information, warnings, instructions and mass mobilizations not to speak of evacuations, against the highly probable storm surges of at least 5 meters height.

The local and international mass media reported that the government was not carrying out any search and rescue operations in the crucial days soon after the storm. Anderson Cooper of CNN exposed to the world the fact the corpses were not being collected and not a single feeding center could be seen five days after the super typhoon. It was only six days after Haiyan struck that Aquino and his national officials announced their “adjusted disaster management plan,” which many foreign and local observers immediately criticized as too bureaucratic and unresponsive to the emergency needs in the disaster areas.

The immediate reflex action of Aquino and his cabinet officials was to blame the local governments for not moving fast enough, and to focus on the so-called problem of looting by deploying armed troops and police in Tacloban to restore a semblance of “peace and order.” He also appeared on CNN to minimize the number of death casualties and the scope of destruction and stupidly appeared to discourage international assistance.

He fired a police officer echoing the UN estimate that possibly at least 10,000 were killed in the disaster. He insisted that only 2000 to 2500 could have died. He led Philippine authorities in talking all the time about Tacloban city and on blaming the city mayor for his lack of preparedness. They obfuscated the fact that 15 to 16 million people in 32 provinces had been hit hard by the super typhoon and urgently needed rescue and relief.

It was only more than a week after Haiyan when the responsible government agencies began to set up a workable system of immediate food and fuel relief, but only in and around Tacloban city through its airport lifeline and in sections of highways cleared of debris. In most other ravaged provinces and municipalities, however, several more weeks passed without the responsible government agencies concerned providing food, clean water, medicine, clothing

and temporary shelter for millions of people in need, without collecting the corpses of those who died during and after the super typhoon and without clearing the debris. The suffering and dire conditions of the people would be alleviated here and there only when the relief aid came from international agencies and private donors.

Always shameless as a puppet, Aquino also allowed the US and its imperialist allies to bring into the Philippines military forces under the pretext of humanitarian aid. Instead of using military forces on an aircraft carrier and a fleet of destroyers, the US could have just brought in civilian relief agencies and their personnel.

Whatever complement civilian relief agencies the US brought were slow to respond because they were heavily dependent on heavy war equipment on board US war carriers. The US and its puppet Aquino have been more interested in psywar to promote the acceptability and increased presence of US military forces in the so-called US strategic pivot to East Asia. Even now as we talk, Aquino and his defense and diplomatic officials are seriously using the US role in the post-Haiyan relief operations as argument in order to fast-track the expanded US troop-rotation arrangement under the US-Philippine Visiting Forces Agreement.

The Aquino regime has had a less welcoming attitude towards private relief organizations and has threatened to tax their donations, unless these had been coursed through the agencies of the regime. The bilateral and multilateral aid from foreign governments have been coursed mainly through the Manila government. And a great part of this aid is stocked up in government warehouses for the corrupt bureaucrats, the military and the merchants to prey on. Most of the aid that has reached the suffering people has come from private donors and has been delivered efficiently by the people's organizations and religious groups to the communities in distress.

In the latest update from the UN office for coordinating humanitarian aid (OCHA) and other sources of information, the official toll is more than 6,000 deaths and more than 27,000 injured. Incredibly, the government-stated figure of nearly 1,800 missing persons has remained essentially unchanged in the past two weeks despite new information coming in from devastated towns showing entire villages wiped out.

These figures are still understated because of Aquino's order to keep them down. Sixteen million people have been adversely affected and four million have been displaced. More than one million houses have been totally destroyed or seriously damaged. The estimated cost of damage to infrastructure is PhP 23 billion (€380 million) and PhP 17 billion (€280 million) to agricultural products. But now smelling an opportunity for corruption, Aquino has announced in Tokyo during the ASEAN-Japan summit that PhP 120 to PhP 130 billion (€1.98 up to €2.144 billion) is needed for rehabilitation.

Political context of wrong policy, corruption and criminal negligence

What is perceivable as the wrong policy, corruption and criminal negligence of the Aquino regime in failing to anticipate and respond to the natural disaster, can best be understood by knowing the context of the entire semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system of the Philippines. The leaders of the reactionary parties and coalitions that dominate Philippine politics are agents of US imperialism and the local exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords.

The president of the Philippines is the chief representative of the local exploiting classes and is the chief servant of US imperialism. In 1946 the US had gone through the motion of granting nominal independence to the Philippines but in fact it retained its economic, political, military and cultural control over the Philippines. Whoever is the president of the Philippines is servile to US interests and is a big comprador-landlord like Aquino. He has undergone a process of competing for the position with other candidates from the same exploiting classes.

The winner in the competition gets the biggest amount of campaign money from foreign and domestic big businessmen by best catering to their demands before and during the elections. After the elections, the president gets the lion's share in the spoils of political power by taking the most bribes from those corporations that obtain business privileges, contracts, loan and loan guarantees, by delivering economic and business privileges to corporations of his relatives and friends and by channeling public funds to his own private account.

In using their public offices as means for amassing private wealth in capital and land, the president and other high bureaucrats are engaged in what has been called bureaucrat capitalism. You may simply call this bureaucratic corruption. It is a kind of capitalism with no investment risk and the pure profit is collected in

advance. This is a form of exploitation distinct from and related to exploitation by the imperialist firms and banks, the big compradors acting as their chief trading and financial agents and the landlords that are based in the countryside.

To serve their own interests, the bureaucrat capitalists serve the interests of the US, the big compradors and landlords. Otherwise they are thrown out of office in favor of another set of politicians in the next elections or even earlier. To be in good standing with the exploiters in the private sector, they follow the fundamentals of capitalist exploitation and they push the neoliberal policy of pressing down wages, liberalizing investments and trade, privatizing state assets, deregulating social and environmental restrictions and denationalizing the Philippine economy.

Under the auspices of semicolonial politics, the bureaucrat capitalists have perpetuated the semifeudal economy of the big compradors and landlords. Following the dictates of the US and the local exploiting classes, they prevent national industrialization and genuine land reform and thus keep the Philippines underdeveloped, impoverished and a reliable source of cheap raw materials and cheap labor. The exploitation of natural resources has been so extensive and intensive that the environment has been gravely ruined.

Poverty has made the people extremely vulnerable to natural disaster. The flimsy houses of workers, peasants and fishermen comprising more than 90 percent of the population are easily ripped apart by typhoons, swept away by floods or crushed by landslides. The use of open pit mining and of lethal chemicals to accelerate the extraction of mineral ores has caused soil erosion and heavy siltation and has poisoned streams, rivers and marine life.

Logging has deprived the people of forest cover against storms, the coastal mangroves against storm surges, the natural flow of the water from upland, soil fertility and the biodiversity that provides food and a healthy environment. The modern plantations use monoculture over extensive areas and use a lot of chemicals that poison the peasants and farm workers and the rivers and the lakes. In many cases, previous landgrabbing and demolitions have pushed many rural and urban poor communities to eke out subsistence living in barren and eroded slopes, steep ravines, tidal flats, under bridges, dumpsites, and other hazardous areas. And yet the government repeatedly brands these communities as “pig-headed” for resisting relocation or even blames them as the causes of environmental destruction.

Subservient to the global economy of the imperialist powers headed by the US, the bureaucrat capitalist rulers do not care about global warming and climate change. They do not condemn the continued prevalent use of fossil fuel and the wanton emissions of carbon dioxide. They do not demand a strategic shift in global fuel policy and compensation for the damage suffered by underdeveloped countries like the Philippines. Due to global warming and climate change, the sea level around island countries such as the Philippines has risen and the waters of the Pacific Ocean have warmed to such a point of causing more frequent and more disastrous storms. An average of 20 storms of growing devastating force is now assaulting the Philippines every year.

Aquino and the other high bureaucrats in the Philippines are not at all genuinely concerned about global warming and about natural disaster risk reduction and responses to disasters that occur, except as new potential sources of foreign aid from such mechanisms as World Bank-managed climate adaptation funds and the so-called Green Climate Fund. They are so obsessed with stealing public funds through filing-cabinet or fly-by-night NGOs, false cooperatives and ghost road projects that they have not implemented a truly comprehensive and practicable disaster preparedness program. Such a program would have ensured the installation of emergency communications and warning systems, construction of storm shelters and sturdy school houses that can double as storm shelters, the maintenance and timely prepositioning of warehouses with relief goods at regional and provincial levels.

In 2011 Aquino vetoed appropriations for pre-disaster preparedness on the stupid argument that he would rather spend money on the actual damage of disasters. But the calamity funds which had been appropriated from year to year supposedly for actual disasters, was designated at the sole discretion of the president and had always disappeared from year to year. In fact, such funds had disappeared into the pockets of the bureaucrat capitalists before super typhoon Haiyan struck. The post-disaster funds supposedly for the victims of typhoons Sendong and Pablo went into the pockets of the bureaucrats and their racketeering partners in pork barrel scams.

Perspective on the ruling system and the private initiative

More than five weeks have passed since 8 November, when Haiyan crashed into the Visayan islands, only a small part of the millions of victims has received relief goods from the department of social welfare and development of the

Aquino regime. Bureaucratic red tape is applied on the distribution of goods. The bureaucrats say that they would rather let the goods rot in the warehouse than distribute them to their political opponents. People living in the remote villages have not received any at all. In urban areas, people observe that relief goods are sold in the market. In the disaster areas, the government is allowing the merchants to raise the prices of basic goods by the hundreds of percent.

Some of the well-endowed and prestigious international private relief organizations that arrived to help in the relief and rescue efforts collaborate with the Manila government and have officials that behave like government bureaucrats in their attitude towards the people in need. They go where the mass media are present, they are arrogant, they ride in flashy new vans and cars and take photos as if they were tourists. The Manila government officials and their rich foreign collaborators forget that their duty is to retrieve the dead and clear the debris in Tacloban city.

Other foreign relief organizations with only a skeletal Philippine presence prior to Haiyan had to “parachute in” volunteers not familiar with the territory and people, and encountered many difficulties. Many of them decided to focus on their technical specialties such as operating field hospitals, setting up tents, water stations and evacuation camps in the more accessible and high-profile areas like Tacloban city. Weeks passed until an international Buddhist organization arrived, augmented its personnel by hiring the local people in need of work and income and cleared 50 percent of the debris in only a week’s time.

In proportion to their modest means, the people’s coalition of BAYAN (Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, New Patriotic Alliance) and its mass organizations under the banner of BALSAs, the Citizens Disaster Response Center (CDRC) and its regional networks, the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines, church parishes and communities has effected more distribution of relief goods and services and in a more systematic and community-sensitive way, than the reactionary government and its big foreign partners.

Of special mention are the formations of BALSAs Mindanao, forged in the midst of earlier typhoon calamities that struck Northern and Southern Mindanao last year, which organized their own relief caravans and crossed over by ferry to reach the ravaged Samar and Leyte islands. In proportion to their modest scale, medical teams from abroad and other parts of the Philippines who are inspired by the national democratic movement and international solidarity have done

more service to more people than similar teams from imperialist-funded organizations. Local communities struck by the super typhoon are also aided by groups and individuals who originate from them even as they are abroad or in other places in the Philippines.

As has been amply noted by most foreign media and relief agencies, who can make fair comparisons with their experiences in other major disaster relief operations, the people themselves in the calamity-stricken areas have been helping each other and raising themselves from the ground. They searched for missing family members and neighbors and buried their dead whose bodies were in the vicinity. They mourned the dead who had been swept away too far for them to trace. They shared whatever makeshift shelter, food and tools they had. They dug wells for fresh water. They foraged for whatever food was found among the shambles, including rootcrops and coconuts from the many uprooted coconut trees. They were reached and assisted by relatives and friends from other places who brought necessities. While some people could choose to leave, most people have no choice but to stay.

The peasants among them need farming tools, farm animals and seeds, and the fishermen need boats, engines, fuel and nets. All the people need building materials to have better shelter than what they have now. They also need to repair and replenish medical facilities and supplies, school facilities and books, and to establish alternative means of transport and communication, to the extent that pre-Haiyan public services (inadequate as they already were) have not been fully restored.

Long after the bourgeois mass media forget about the damage wrought by Haiyan, the period of rehabilitation and reconstruction will continue for a long while, even as the people face new typhoons and other natural and man-made disasters. The people are determined to revive and develop agriculture, fishing, animal husbandry and other means of livelihood, and to find alternative ways of satisfying badly needed social services that the reactionary government is unable to restore or provide. The revolutionary movement is ever present and growing among them in order to guide and mobilize them.

It is paradoxical and ominous that President Aquino who in the first weeks was minimizing the destruction to life, property and infrastructure is now maximizing the cost of such destruction in the hope of bloating the need for bigger budget allocations and bigger roles of foreign loans and big business in

the rehabilitation programs now being planned. He and his cohorts see new and huge opportunities for making a killing. The pundits and people most knowledgeable about the corrupt character of the Philippine ruling system are already warning that the high bureaucrats in the regime and their relatives and friends will engage in robbery during the recovery and will take advantage of the government appropriations, the foreign loans and grants for rebuilding the economy of the devastated areas and providing concessions and benefits to the people.

Even at this early stage of the long rehabilitation and recovery period, big corporate interests have already started to lobby the Aquino government and his new “rehabilitation czar” Panfilo Lacson for a big role in rezoning, planning housing and tourism projects, reconstruction of land titles lost during the calamity, land delineation, and relocation of entire coastal villages in the guise of avoiding geohazards but actually to free up choice beachfront areas for lease to real estate developers and foreign tourist enclaves. The people of the Visayas, especially the numerous peasant and fisherfolk villages living along its very long coastlines, are now being alerted to these new dangers to their land and resources that are being packaged as “rehabilitation” and “disaster preparedness.”

We know that the greater and persistent calamities suffered by the Filipino people come from those who rule the Philippines. We must look at pre-disaster preparedness both in the technical sense and in the broader social, political and economic context. We must expose and oppose every attempt of the bureaucrat capitalists, their imperialist masters, the big compradors and landlords to rob the people of the land and other resources that ought to be for the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction of their lives and communities. And the people must be ready to wage revolution against those who rob them after their suffering so much of natural disaster, corruption and criminal negligence. Thank you.

Burning Questions: Talking With José María Sison About Climate Change, Capitalism and Revolution

Interview with Quincy Saul, Published in Counter Punch,

September 9, 2015

José María Sison is a living legend. Born in 1939 in Cabugao, on the island of Luzon in the Philippines, to a wealthy and connected family, his education and compassion led him to become a revolutionary activist by the age of 20. Today he remains, at the age of 76, a leader of what has been called by the New York Times “the world’s longest running communist insurgency.”

1969 he founded the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) with 12 delegates, representing only a few scores of party members, and he has stayed the course through thick and thin – today it has 10s of 1000s of members. And at no easy price: his revolutionary works earned him nine years in prison, including a year and a half in solitary confinement. Released in 1986, he has lived in exile ever since, and remains on the US terrorist watch list. While no longer involved in operational decisions, he remains a chief political consultant for the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, and chairperson of the International League of Peoples’ Struggle. Not just a politician, Sison was also a professor of English literature, is an esteemed poet, and a winner of the Southeast Asia WRITE book award.

Some have recently alleged that the CPP has stagnated intellectually. However, the party’s ideological leadership seems to be effective, as even the detractors admit. As previously reported on Counterpunch, the New People’s Army operates throughout 20 percent of the countryside of the Philippines, on 100 fronts, across 70 provinces, 800 municipalities, 9000 barrios and 8000 villages.

Is this 21st century Maoism a blast from the past, or is it the only promise of a future for a country with the highest income disparity in Asia, where a quarter of the population lives on less than \$1 a day? Benedict Anderson has written of the “historical vertigo” of the Philippines: as visionary forerunner of anticolonial movements in the region, today it is home to arguably the strongest Left in Southeast Asia. Here we learn from Sison about how he translates vertigo to victory, as he responds the burning questions of 21st century politics and revolution.

How have ecological crises, and particularly the catastrophe of Haiyan, effected the ideology and practices of revolutionaries working above and underground in the Philippines?

JMS: The revolutionaries in the Philippines who work in both the urban and rural areas have always been conscious of the necessary relationship of nature and society or that of the environment and the people who produce new things of use and exchange value from the objects, means and conditions provided by the environment. The ecological crises and particularly the catastrophe of Haiyan serve to raise and sharpen the consciousness of the revolutionaries about the environmental issue and the urgent need to act on it.

The monopoly capitalist firms have been responsible for the wanton use of fossil fuel and carbon dioxide emissions in the Philippines, for the rapid deforestation – which has removed the shield to typhoons, caused soil erosion, prolonged droughts and floods together with landslides – and for the rapid expansion of mining and plantations, which use chemicals that poison the streams and kill marine life. Due to global warming, the surface of the Pacific Ocean has warmed and become the speedway for more frequent and stronger typhoons hitting the Philippines.

As a revolutionary strategist, what advice do you offer to those who are dedicating themselves to the global struggle for climate justice?

JMS: I wish to advise all those who dedicate themselves to the global struggle for climate justice to stand for it militantly as a distinct cause, and at the same time, to seek solidarity and cooperation with those who dedicate themselves to the struggle for social justice. They face a common enemy in monopoly capitalism and the imperialist powers which are the cause of climate and social injustice.

The global struggle for climate justice is interconnected with the global struggle of the people for social justice. The environmental crisis and the threat to the very existence of humankind are coming to the fore, concurrently with the recurrent and ever worsening economic, financial and social crises of the world capitalist system. The constant attempts of monopoly capitalism to seek superprofits and accumulate capital by increasing the organic composition of their capital – adopting higher technology, disemploying so many workers everywhere and using cheap labor and buying dirt cheap raw materials from the underdeveloped countries – have wrought havoc on the people and the environment.

The grave abuses and injustices inflicted by monopoly capitalism and by its local agents are driving the broad masses of the people to revolt against their exploiters and oppressors and to fight for a fundamentally new and better world. Thus, the forces of anti-imperialism, democracy and socialism are resurgent. Within this context, the exponents of climate justice must unite with those of social justice. In this regard, I invite them to participate in the 5th International Assembly of the International League of Peoples' Struggle, because this league pursues the struggle for both climate and social justice.

What are your perspectives on ecosocialism as an emerging ideological orientation at the intersection of social and environmental crisis and struggle? (For instance, The Ecosocialist Manifesto / Belem Declaration of 2009, The Enemy of Nature, by Joel Kovel, or The Plan Patria 2013-2019 of the Venezuelan government.)

JMS: Monopoly capitalism is the plunderer of both the labor power of the working class and the natural resources used in the process of production. It is driven by the profit motive to exploit, pollute and destroy the environment without minding the lethal consequences to the very existence of humankind. As the social and environmental crisis worsens, it is necessary for the working class and the rest of the people to struggle against monopoly capitalism, to establish the power of the working class, to protect the environment and fight for socialism.

The International League of Peoples' Struggle, which I chair, studies the various perspectives, like those in publications that you have mentioned, to adopt points for strengthening our own perspective. We advocate the most effective line and measures for stopping and rolling back global warming, and we strive to arouse,

organize and mobilize the working class and the people for the anti-imperialist and socialist cause against monopoly capitalism, which is clearly the biggest culprit responsible for the social and environmental catastrophe that we face.

What should the ideological orientation of the revolutionary movement be to mining in the Philippines? Many indigenous peoples and environmentalists oppose mining altogether, in favor of an ancestral mode of production in harmony with the ecosystem, a perspective which found internationalist expression this year around the International People's Conference on Mining 2015. Others in the revolutionary movement see mining not only as an indispensable source of revenue, but as prerequisite for passing through the necessary "stages" toward socialism (primitive accumulation, industrialization, formation of proletariat, etc.). This is also a burning issue from India to Ecuador, where indigenous cosmivision confronts proletarian developmentalism over what course the revolutionary movement should take. As Arundhati Roy asks about the future of revolution in India, "can we leave the bauxite in the mountain?"

JMS: The given situation in the Philippines under the hegemony of the US and other imperialist powers and the local exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords, is that mining firms can be owned totally by foreign monopoly firms. Limitless truckloads of raw mineral ores from so many parts of the country are being shipped out at a rapid rate to China, Japan and other countries for processing. Some mining firms specializing in precious metals like gold, silver, platinum and palladium fly them out by helicopter to ships waiting at sea.

Under the present circumstances, it is just for the indigenous peoples and for environmentalists to oppose totally the unrestricted mining by the imperialist and local reactionaries for their own narrow benefit at great damage to the entire people, economy and environment. But it is wrong to glorify underdevelopment and condone the social environment of widespread poverty, malarial swamps, malnutrition and disease in the name of a romantic, idyllicized communalism. The new democratic or socialist system, shall guarantee the wise utilization of natural resources, protection of the environment and the free and prior informed consent of the indigenous communities as well as the prior provision of benefits and sharing of prospective benefits.

There would be wiser utilization of natural resources and a higher level of environmental protection and conservation of the national patrimony if the

Filipino people themselves, under a people's democratic or socialist government, process the raw materials from the primary stage to the secondary and tertiary stages. It is sheer nonsense to reduce the Filipino people to a choice of underdevelopment under Filipinos who merely keep their rich natural resources in the ground or foreign monopoly capitalists who take away the nonreplaceable raw mineral ores. Socialism entails a further development of the forces and relations of production.

Under present conditions of big comprador-landlord rule in the Philippines, the foreign monopoly capitalists freely get large areas of mining concessions from the national government. And in collusion with corrupt government officials, they often use traditional chieftains of indigenous communities to circumvent the requirement of free and prior informed consent of the entire community, and get a series of small mining permits to escape formal environmental regulations by the national government and cover large areas to mine. But when the revolutionary forces are around to arouse, organize and mobilize the people against the mining companies, then the indigenous peoples, their revolutionary kinsmen and even the traditional leaders unite against the mining companies.

On the Question of Free Housing

Response to answers from KADAMAY, September 2, 2017

Good morning! I am Michael of KADAMAY National. We led the recent victorious occupy Bulacan. Tomorrow (and sorry for the short notice) we have a big cultural event. Around 6,000 people will attend. We are requesting you for a recorded message of solidarity. If you can. This is also a program for a call to join the national revolution. Thank you. We hope you grant our request. You can send the file or message to kadamaypio@gmail.com. Long live!

JMS: It is a pity and my apologies for not being able to send the message. If the request is made on such short notice, it is desirable to immediately send a draft or pointers.

Good day Ka Joma! I am from the national office of KADAMAY, working as prop officer. Given the recent occupation in Bulacan, I would like to forward some questions for sharpening our line and calls. The context is that in the campaign period for the occupation of the unoccupied houses in Bulacan, the major call carried was “Free Mass Housing”. The basis is 1. The social crisis and suffering among poor Filipinos are so severe that this did not reach the government’s so-called socialized housing program. Even if the initial payment for housing units is only P200, only 8 percent of “beneficiaries” can pay regularly. There are no employment and social services in these relocation areas. No. 2. The state’s housing is a business. This is not a service, because of the amortization and absence of basic necessities, what prevails is government extortion on the residents of its housing units. The collection of the National Housing Authority (NHA), in fact, becomes payment for big capitalist developers and contractors who are their business partners. The NHA housing units are also marked up to cater to these developers. This means that when we say “free

mass housing”, this is free from housing business and means free access. We also clarified that the underlying principle here is the struggle for the right to residence.

We discussed, together with other comrades, that it is not correct to use free mass housing as a general call because this does not include the aspiration for housing of all the poor. Among those driven off because of demolition or eviction, the call is not very appropriate, compared to the broader call of “right to residence”. This is already clear to me and to us. We also discussed the issue involving “free”. It is said that 1) using the term “free” does not fit in or is not in tune with the general national democratic program. Socialism does not provide free housing. Employment of productive labor determines the creation of state housing for the people; and 2) free is tantamount to calling for private property, unlike the land question, which is a question of breaking the feudal bondage in the relations of production. The call for free mass housing is not viable because it will fan the petty-bourgeois aspirations of home ownership.

JMS: All that you said earlier are correct. There is no rent-free public housing even under socialism, except institutional housing for the differently-abled, transitional housing for those displaced by war (refugees), natural disaster and duly authorized public projects, etc. A more precise call would be “decent affordable mass housing.” It was clarified that the scope of what is affordable does include free (especially for those living in the occupied areas who have not paid a cent to the government for their stay).

But doesn't this raise questions on what is affordable to some and not to others?

JMS: Decent low-rent public housing. Affordable can be a slippery term but public housing can be classified as a, b, and c according to general wage differentials or according to certain general status (singles, childless couples, students, temporary residents, etc.) The employed in the national democratic or socialist program are assumed to be able to pay rent. The lower rent they pay may impute indirect wage added to direct wages. But some rent must be paid to maintain, improve and expand public housing. Free public housing could mean tent camps, pig sty or no real housing at all or free housing could mean strict privately-owned housing. Be careful with the slippery terms. Our housing experts must advise the cadres and masses on what is possible under general conditions and needs for public housing as well as specific conditions that we come upon, such as livable and non-livable abandoned houses.

On our part, there was a need to sharpen the way we carried the campaigns in the past based on the urgent demands of the semiproletariat. We agree that our campaigns must take on more political shape, such as confronting the capitalist housing schemes and especially the overall reactionary state. This is where the confusion arose or where the imprecise connection of the points occurred. My question is: would it really mean or would it fall into the issue of private property if you say free mass housing?

JMS: Generally the employed must pay rent according to some classification. What about the unemployed or those who can pay low rent or insert themselves for free in the urban poor slums? How much can the state afford to provide temporary and conditional rent-free housing pending or related to job prospects? But there is yet no Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms on a plan for national industrialization and rural development? Let the experts do research and say what is feasible under what conditions.

If it is not in line with the general national democratic program for housing then are there current parameters to the national democratic program for housing that should be studied and outlined further?

JMS: Yes.

When we say Free Mass Housing, does it not reflect national democratic and socialist aspirations?

JMS: It sounds more like premature agitation for communism, which can invite taunts about flying off current realities.

Is it conflicting to some extent? How so?

JMS: Yes, it is really necessary to deal with current realities and work on realistic demands for the better. Use the Bulacan occupation as example for serious study about questions of ownership, lack of facilities or jobs nearby and other matters.

On a side note, some comrades have been saying that Engels' Housing Question explicitly states that calling for free housing is a bourgeois call.

JMS: Engels is correct. The expression free housing is loaded with the bourgeois freedom or right to owning a private house.

On the other hand, some others have been saying that his book does not mention what shape housing struggles and their slogans should take in the period of a bourgeois democratic revolution. Additionally, in your statement on the latest action for May 1st, you mentioned in the text the word “free” for housing. Even in one of your interviews published by JV Ayson, the word “free” was also included.

JMS: The term free in this general usage is incorrect if I said it or in an indirect quote or loose contexting by JV.

Is this put into context in some very particular cases, only in what cases?

JMS: There was too much made of the news that because Duterte withdrew the police, the houses and land had become free for KADAMAY. Simple question, have the land and house ownership been transferred to KADAMAY or some of its members? Study this point and what else should be done so that the outcome for KADAMAY would be good. I myself need sufficient information.

Even the call for rent-free public housing, except for those exceptions that I have mentioned is still up in the clouds. It is way ahead of solving the huge problem of employment through national industrialization and land reform. Free housing or free mass housing is slippery terms that fall into line with the bourgeois right to private housing.

I and we look forward to your insights regarding this issue and to further enrich the research and propaganda for sharpening the line. Thank you very much and excuse the not so formal letter. Long may you live!

Duterte Is No. 1 Terrorist in the Philippines

and Is Setting Up a Fascist Dictatorship

November 23, 2017

Duterte is the No. 1 terrorist in the Philippines. He is culpable for the abduction, torture and mass murder of an increasing large number of poor people suspected drug users and pushers, peasants and indigenous people in suspected guerrilla fronts and Moro people suspected of aiding the Dawlah Islamiyah from the time of the indiscriminate bombing of Marawi City to the present in several Bangsamoro areas.

And yet Duterte is utterly malicious and shameless in threatening and scheming to label and outlaw as terrorists the suspected members and entireties of such revolutionary organizations as the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army and even such legal patriotic and progressive organizations as BAYAN and its affiliates.

Duterte's bloodlust and mania for mass murder are boundless. He expects to wipe out through arbitrary arrests, torture, indefinite detention and massacre of suspected revolutionaries and legal social activists both the armed revolutionary movement and the legal democratic movement in order to set up a fascist dictatorship in the service of US imperialism and his fellow oligarchs among the big compradors, landlords and corrupt bureaucrats.

The US-Duterte regime is hellbent on frustrating the people's clamor for peace negotiations to address the roots of the civil war through the adoption and

implementation of social, economic, political and constitutional reforms as the basis of a just and lasting peace. The regime is striving to intimidate the people with its own terrorist scheme and crimes in order to seize absolute autocratic power for Duterte and limitless opportunity for the bureaucratic corruption of his family and ruling clique.

Duterte has repeatedly announced his termination or cancellation of his reactionary government's peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines and his decision to proclaim as terrorists the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines and the legal patriotic and progressive organizations like BAYAN and its affiliates.

As when Marcos imposed fascist dictatorship on the Philippines in 1972, the revolutionary forces, the legal democratic forces and the broad masses of the people now have no choice but to wage all forms of resistance and fight for national sovereignty, democracy, economic development, social and cultural progress and independent foreign policy.

The Filipino people and revolutionary forces waging the people's democratic revolution have no choice but to intensify the people's war through an extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare in rural areas and partisan or commando operations in urban areas. The legal democratic forces and broad opposition have no choice but to develop the underground and encourage endangered activists to become fighters in the people's army.

Duterte is already discredited as a mass murderer, political swindler, a sycophant to foreign powers and a corrupt bureaucrat. These characteristics of his and the ever-worsening chronic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system will surely limit his ability to stay in power and accelerate the growth and rise of a revolutionary united front against his rule of greed and terror.

Even within the reactionary armed forces and police, there are already rumblings against the despotic, criminal and corrupt character of the US-Duterte regime. Duterte is now worried to death by his own fear that anti-Duterte officers within his own army and police are inclined to act in the name of the people and unite with the broad opposition and mass movement in order to end the Duterte regime in the same manner that the Marcos and Estrada regimes were ended.

On Duterte's "Anti-Terrorist" Proclamation

Interview by Delfin T. Mallari, Jr., Philippine Daily Inquirer,

December 7, 2017

Mallari: The CPP and the NPA are not yet officially "terrorist group." There is still a court hearing. Do you think the CPP and NPA will participate in the court hearing?

JMS: I do not think that the CPP and NPA or their representatives will present themselves to any court of the big comprador-landlord state represented by Duterte. Most appropriate and most likely would be for the CPP and the NDFP issuing their respective proclamations exposing, condemning and holding Duterte and his fascist ruling clique responsible for gross and systematic acts of terrorism.

With Duterte's proclamation, he and his fascist gang will be able to designate just any person or organization as a terrorist and extort from corporations and businessmen under the threat of designating them as terrorists or grab their businesses by designating them as terrorist by accusing them falsely of financing terrorism. Duterte has learned a lot from Marcos' playbook and is even trying to improve on it.

Mallari: Could this indicate that he left a small room for possible resumption of the peace talks?

JMS: Duterte has completely shut down the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations. He is crazy enough to be happy going down in history as the butcher of the Filipino people. His ambition is to become the despot of death and destruction. It is easier

to oust Duterte from power than to resume peace negotiations with a regime under him. The NDFP is always willing to negotiate peace with the GRP but GRP must first get rid of its brutal, corrupt and puppet president, who has already publicly admitted being an Amboy and fascist.

Mallari: How about the non-inclusion of the NDFP? How do you read that?

JMS: The non-inclusion of NDFP is obviously motivated by a fear that the NDFP would make strong legal representations because of its established record of peace negotiations with the GRP. So, the proclamation targets CPP and NPA as "terrorist" because the framers of the proclamation are sure that they (CPP and NPA) would not present themselves or their representatives before any reactionary court of the big comprador-landlord state and would be the subject of an adverse ruling by that court. Why should they present themselves? The CPP leads the people's democratic government and the NPA is the weapon of this government, with its own people's courts.

Statement against Proclamation 360 and 374 of the US-Directed Duterte Fascist Regime

December 10, 2017

It is fine that GRP President Rodrigo R. Duterte is on record as having terminated the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations by issuing Proclamation 360 for the purpose. He and the officials of his regime and armed forces have boasted that they are hellbent on unleashing a single-minded war of suppression to destroy the revolutionary forces of the Filipino people.

The Filipino people and their revolutionary forces are therefore fully justified to defend themselves and defeat the current Duterte regime of the US-dominated big comprador-landlord state and pursue the people's democratic revolution. The terrorist regime of Duterte is merely a passing phase in the ever-worsening chronic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system.

Duterte, the No. 1 terrorist of the Philippines, has also issued Proclamation 374 labeling the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New People's Army (NPA) as terrorist organizations. His purpose is to apply the Human Security Act of 2007 (RA 9373) and the Terrorism Financing Prevention and Suppression Act of 2012 (RA 10168).

The vile purpose of the Duterte regime is to proscribe the CPP and NPA as terrorist organizations and wage a campaign to slander them, arbitrarily list down suspected officers and members for general intimidation, abduction, torture and mass murder as in Oplan Tokhang and further list individuals who

are suspected of financing and aiding the CPP and NPA , who are themselves deemed as terrorists and who are thus made vulnerable to the violations of human rights and extortions by the terrorist regime.

Within the Philippines and abroad, the Duterte regime is already notorious for the use of state terrorism and for human rights violations against suspected users and pushers of illegal drugs in impoverished communities, the toiling masses of workers and peasants, the Cordillera, Lumad and Bangsamoro national minorities and the brutal occupation of communities and destruction of the entire Marawi City by bombing.

The US-directed Duterte regime perpetrates gross and systematic acts of terrorism and human rights violations. It has no moral, political and legal basis for proscribing and further unleashing fascist violence against the revolutionary forces, the democratic organizations and the broad masses of the people who have the sovereign to resist and overthrow a regime that is oppressive and tyrannical.

The Filipino people and revolutionary forces encompassed by the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and by the People's Democratic Government (PDG) have the inherent status of co-belligerency in their long-running civil war with the US-propped big comprador-landlord state currently represented by Duterte. The CPP is the leading party of the new democratic revolution and the PDG. The NPA is the main armed force of the PDG.

The revolutionary political character of the CPP and NPA is solemnly manifested in the Program for a People's Democratic Revolution of December 26, 1968, the Guide for Building Organs of Political Power of April 1971, the Guide for Establishing the People's Democratic Government of October 1972, the Guidelines and Program of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) I of 1973 and 1977, the Declaration of Undertaking to Apply the Geneva Conventions of 1948, approved by the NDFP of July 5, 1996 and the GRP-NDFP Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL).

The PDG has a constitution founded on the sovereign will of the Filipino people and on the basic alliance of the working class and peasantry. It aims to complete the people's struggle for national liberation and democracy under the class leadership of the working class and its revolutionary party. From its modest

beginnings in 1969, the PDG has grown and spread nationwide mainly in the form of local organs of political power to more than 110 guerrilla fronts covering large parts of 17 regions and 71 provinces of the Philippines.

The PDG has a comprehensive administrative structure from the village to higher levels: municipal or city, district, provincial and regional. At the basic level of the village, the local organs of political power develop from the stage of the appointive barrio organizing committees to the elective barrio revolutionary committees through various ways of consolidation, which involve the building of the revolutionary forces.

The revolutionary forces include the local branch of the Communist Party of the Philippines, the revolutionary mass organizations of various exploited classes and sectors, the people's militia and self-defense units of mass organizations and the formation of the five basic subcommittees for public education, mass mobilization, economy, defense and health, subject to the formation of further subcommittees in order to better serve the people.

The US-directed Duterte regime is daydreaming that it can discredit and destroy the sovereign revolutionary will of the Filipino people by proscribing the revolutionary forces as terrorist organizations, requiring them to submit themselves to the sham processes of the reactionary state and unleashing gross and systematic crimes of terrorism and human rights of violations. The Filipino people and the revolutionary forces are determined to fight for national and social liberation, people's democracy, economic development, cultural progress and just peace.

The Duterte fascist regime has terminated the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations. But it cannot be too sure that it will last long because the Filipino people and even those in the GRP detest the monstrous crimes of the regime, especially mass murder, corruption and puppetry to the US. The crisis of the ruling system continues to worsen and the resources of the regime for violence and deception are limited. Thus, it is wise for the NDFP to remain open to peace negotiations with the GRP because the people and the broad united front of patriotic and progressive forces can get rid of the Duterte regime as it got rid of the Marcos and Estrada regimes.

Duterte's Scheme of Fascist Dictatorship

December 19, 2017

The Negotiating Panels of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) were poised to hold the fifth round of formal peace talks in Oslo when GRP President Duterte went into a daily series of anticommunist rants from November 18, 2017 onward and subsequently issued Proclamation 360 to terminate the peace negotiations with the NDFP and Proclamation 374 to designate the Communist of the Party of the Philippines (CPP), New People's Army (NPA), their suspected supporters and financiers as "terrorist."

Ironically, the two negotiating panels were about to make the biggest advance in the peace process by finalizing and initialing the drafts of the general amnesty to release all the political prisoners listed by the NDFP, Part I Agrarian Reform and Rural Development and Part II National Industrialization and Economic Development of the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER) and the Coordinated Unilateral Ceasefires (as prelude to a bilateral ceasefire agreement).

The panels expected that within the first quarter of 2018 CASER would be ready for signing by the principals and the Comprehensive Agreement on Political and Constitutional Reforms (CAPCR) would be negotiated and forged in coordination with the processes of the GRP Congress in revising the 1987 Constitution and possibly arriving at a consensus of all major political forces on what ought to be a federal system of government. But obviously Duterte had all along wished to preempt and exclude the NDFP from what is now coming to light as his scheme of fascist dictatorship under the pretense of federalism.

Duterte had allowed his panel to engage the NDFP panel in back-channel consultations in October 2017 in Utrecht and in subpanel bilateral meetings in Manila from September to November 2017 to complete the aforesaid drafts for panel-to-panel processing until he abruptly changed his mind and terminated the peace negotiations. The somersault followed his extended conversations with US President Trump who supposedly assured him of political and military support for a plan to crack down on the CPP and NPA and finish them off before the end of 2018.

Termination of peace negotiations necessary for Duterte fascist dictatorship

Although the plan is overambitious and quite impossible to achieve, it is necessary for Duterte to terminate the peace negotiations and slander the CPP and NPA by labeling them as “terrorists” to pave the way for further extension of martial law in Mindanao for the whole year of 2018 and the eventual nationwide expansion of martial law directed against the CPP and NPA. This is in line with Duterte’s scheme of imposing his fascist dictatorship on the Philippines.

Even before the first extension of the proclamation of martial law in Mindanao could lapse at the end of 2017, Duterte boasted that he had defeated the Dawlah Islamiyah (Maute and Abu Sayyaf groups) in Marawi City and therefore he had basically no more need for martial law in Mindanao. But he found in the extension of the martial law proclamation a device for including the CPP and NPA as targets in a further extension to the whole of 2018 through the expediency of terminating the peace negotiations and accusing the CPP and NPA of escalating violence and endangering public safety.

Duterte was quite confident of getting the further extension of martial law in Mindanao because of his “supermajority” in his rubberstamp Congress. He also has a steady majority of at least eight of the justices in the Supreme Court (four are his own recent appointees and five are appointees of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo) to uphold his martial law proclamation in the same way that they have been able to dismiss the plunder case against Arroyo and allow the burial of Marcos in the Libingan ng mga Bayani due to Duterte’s super-corrupt alliance with the Luzon-based dynasties of Marcos, Arroyo, Estrada and other notorious plunderers.

Duterte is hellbent on realizing his scheme to reimpose a fascist dictatorship on the Filipino people by revising and in effect scrapping the 1987 Constitution

under the pretext of adopting a federal system of government. The trick is similar to that of Marcos in pretending to opt for a parliamentary form of government in order to scrap the 1935 Constitution and install a fascist dictatorship under the cover of transitory provisions.

Federalism as pretext for imposing Duterte fascist dictatorship

on the people

Duterte is not really keen on establishing a federal system of government but on actually installing a highly centralized unitary kind of a presidential dictatorship on top of regional governments run by dynasties, including warlords and the most corrupt bureaucrat capitalists like himself. The big comprador-landlord state servile to foreign monopoly capitalism will remain intact under his scheme. To satisfy his appetite for autocratic power, Duterte finds it absolutely necessary to use martial law nationwide in a hysterical and futile attempt to intimidate and suppress the armed revolutionary movement, dissent and opposition in general. The suspension of the writ of habeas corpus provides an effective cover and license for abducting, dispossessing, torturing and murdering revolutionaries and all people who oppose him. Even now, he cannot wait for a court to approve his designation of the CPP and NPA as “terrorists.” He has repeatedly called on his military minions to kill them upon sight. The Bicameral Resolution No. 8 with the title “Constituting the Senate and the House of Representatives,” of the 17th Congress, into a “Constituent Assembly by Adopting a Federal Form of Government and for Other Purposes” is already on the rails and will be railroaded when congressional sessions resume in January 2018. Duterte and his cohorts will be the sole determinant of the content of the pseudofederal charter. The charter is already slated for ratification during the May 18 barangay elections. The Kilusang Pagbabago [Movement for Change], the Duterte troll army and the pro-Duterte hacks in print and electronic media are all arranged to rah-rah the ratification.

Even before Duterte is able to get a new constitution for his despotic purposes, the Filipino people have become familiar with his propensity for mass murder and deception in Oplan Tokhang. Combine this with the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus under martial law and you can expect a far bigger catastrophe than the Marcos fascist dictatorship in terms of murder and mayhem.

In the absence of any revolutionary social transformation, the country will be

getting more of the same ruling families of big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists at all levels of government. Corruption will continue to run rampant on top of excessive expenditures for establishing and elaborating on the regional level of government. The US and other multinational firms will continue to plunder and ravage the human and natural resources of the Philippines.

To get the blessings of the US and other imperialist powers, the new pseudo-federal constitution will get rid of the nationality requirements or restrictions on foreign investments in violation of economic sovereignty and national patrimony by simply inserting the phrase, “unless otherwise provided by law.” Precious limited resources for economic development, at best through centralized and regional planning, will be dissipated by profit remittances and capital repatriation by foreign monopoly firms, bureaucratic corruption and rising bureaucratic and military and police personnel for the central and regional levels of government.

The ever-worsening crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system will continue to result in the divisiveness of the reactionary classes, the intensification of the anti-imperialist and class struggle, the further rise of the armed revolutionary movement, dissatisfaction of indigenous peoples and national minorities and stronger currents of separatism among the Bangsamoro.

Surpassing Marcos as best recruiter and supplier

of the armed revolution

Duterte is bound to surpass Marcos as the best recruiter and supply officer of the armed revolution, as the unwitting wrecker of his own regime and ruling system and as provider of an ever more fertile ground for the growth of the people's democratic revolution through people's war. However, Duterte does not have as many years left as Marcos had when he imposed fascist dictatorship in 1972. His aberrant speech and behavior reveal the state of his mental and physical health.

His propensity to monopolize political power and bureaucratic loot and his ability to run the reactionary government Mafia-style will eventually work against him due to his own personal and class infirmities and more importantly due to the systemic crisis and lethal blows from the revolutionary movement and the people. The adverse results of his broken promises will soon bear heavily upon him. The broad masses of the people are already taking him to task for failing to solve the problem of illegal drugs, for destroying the entire Marawi City and for terminating the peace negotiations with the NDFP.

By his pseudo-independent foreign policy, Duterte is trying to turn the Philippines into a condominium of the imperialist powers. He thinks as if he can freely get, without strings attached, military equipment from these powers and limitless loans for limitless infrastructure building to buoy up the economy and keep himself in power. He has in fact allowed China to trample on the sovereign rights of the Philippines over the West Philippine Sea under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

He is aggravating the semicolonial status of the Philippines as well as the underdeveloped, agrarian and semifeudal character of the economy. This kind of economy is ever-dependent on the export of cheap raw materials, semimanufactures and cheap labor, on the import of foreign manufactures for consumption and on an ever-desperate resort to increasing amounts of foreign loans and speculative capital and to higher taxation to cover trade and budgetary deficits.

The broad masses of the people are angered today by the recently railroaded Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN). This further raises the prices of basic goods and services and generates inflation by increasing indirect taxes

(excise, sales and value-added taxes) just to cover tax cuts and tax holidays for the upper classes and fund the counterproductive spending and debt servicing by the state. The rates of unemployment and inflation, though understated in official statistics, are actually causing more poverty and misery on a wider scale.

Contrary to the assurances of his neoliberal economic advisers, Duterte cannot be saved by any increase in the GDP growth rate. The higher the growth rate, the bigger the take of the multinational firms, the big compradors and bureaucrat capitalists and the more severe the conditions of underdevelopment, mass unemployment and poverty afflicting the broad masses of the people. In the final analysis, the big problem for the US-directed Duterte regime is that the oppressed and exploited people have an armed revolutionary movement for undertaking meaningful change in terms of national and social liberation.

CASER – The Core of the People’s Demand

for a Just Society

Interview by JV Ayson, April 27, 2018

1. How would you analyze for the NDFP the first four parts of the peace negotiations between the government and the NDFP with regard to the main problem of the Filipino nation and the agreement on simultaneous ceasefires?

JMS: The first item of the agenda ensures the respect for human rights and adherence to international humanitarian law. The second item is focused on social and economic reforms such as land reform and national industrialization. This is the very meat of responding to the demand of the toiling masses to escape unemployment and disemployment, poverty and backward economy. The third item focuses on political and constitutional framework for implementing the reforms. The fourth item completes the end of the civil war between the two sides and the disposition of their armed forces.

2. Many consider CASER as the most important part of the peace negotiations because here lies the solution of extreme poverty, hunger, absence of justice and hopelessness that drive many Filipinos to cling to sharp blades or join the CPP and NPA. Can you again specify the socioeconomic reforms being advanced by the NDFP to include in CASER if this is already being formulated? As the NDFP chief political consultant, how would you explain the importance of CASER in the peace negotiations at the continuing struggle of the Filipino people for genuine social change, genuine democracy and social justice?

JMS: You are correct in saying that extreme poverty, hunger, absence of justice and hopelessness drive many Filipinos to join the CPP and NPA. I already cited land reform and national industrialization as the content of CASER. Included there are protection of the environment and wise use of natural resources for the Filipino people, upholding their rights and expanding and improving free public social services, especially education, health, housing and others.

3. Please explain the view that genuine agrarian reform and free land distribution as the basic content of the national democratic struggle, as principal companion of social justice and as basic solution to extreme poverty and hunger of the Filipino nation, because we know that most urban poor are people who labor in plowing the fields but have nothing to eat due to not having their own farm and not having decent jobs. Free land distribution is a big possibility as the principal socioeconomic reform in CASER.

JMS: Free land distribution to landless peasants is decisive in genuine agrarian reform. The former land reform was bogus because the peasant beneficiaries could not afford to pay the amortization and coverage was limited to rice and corn land. Eventually the peasants lose the land. If genuine land reform through free distribution, this can be said as the main content of the national democratic struggle because the peasantry constitute the majority of our population. If their production and income increase, they will become the strong foundation of the entire economy and the national market would expand for the products of national industrialization. Genuine land reform and national industrialization are interrelated.

4. Please summarize the long history of the continuing demand of the peasants for land, social justice and dignity.

JMS: The peasant demand for land, social justice and dignity were the big cause of the 1896 Revolution. The peasants were angered by the Spanish friar estates (hacienda) that were the fruit of land-grabbing. When the US imperialists prevailed over the Philippine revolution, they pretended to undertake land reform by buying the friar estates. But the redistribution price to the peasants was high. The peasants were unable to pay this so that the land ended up with people who were already rich. The land reform program of Macapagal, Marcos and Cory Aquino all failed also because the peasants could not afford to pay the amortization. The law was limited to rice and corn lands and provisions in the law could be bypassed by the landlords.

5. How will CASER change Philippine society in general? How would you analyze the implications of the agreement amidst the possibility of the intensifying social crisis in this country?

JMS: CASER can change Philippine society generally. This can be implemented if the GRP and the NDFP agree to uphold national sovereignty in the socioeconomic field, dismantle the feudal and semifeudal land relations and industrialize the economy. In short, leave the semicolonial and semifeudal system and enlarge industries. In developing, the nation must follow the principle of self-reliance and protect the economy from crisis and interference and plunder by the monopoly capitalists. Production must respond to the needs of the nation.

6. Do you believe that CASER would test the political will and sincerity of President Duterte regarding the fulfillment of his promises to bring genuine change to the Filipino nation amidst the continuing economic policy of the past government, bloody “drug war” and even the day-to-day demand of the masses for decent shelter and jobs, free housing and land distribution, social justice, and dignity?

JMS: We have no control over President Duterte’s political will nor we know fully his real plan for CASER and other issues regarding the peace talks. It is up to him to unfold his desires and plans. He promised and made the nation expect reforms as basis for a just and lasting peace. We would know his intent as the peace talks proceed.

7. What possibly would be the consequences of the exacerbation of the social crisis for the Filipino masses and for the Duterte government this year and also in 2018?

JMS: Many economic and financial experts say that the Philippine economy is declining in 2017 and 2018. Should this happen and combine with the preceding protest against the extrajudicial killings under Tokhang and other issues against Duterte, the economic crisis would lead to a political crisis. According to Duterte and Secretary Dominguez, they would pour plenty of money on infrastructure projects to rev up the economy and give jobs to many jobless. Let us see whether this happens.

8. How would you analyze the future for the completion of CASER in the face of

the intensifying social and political crisis, legal struggle, armed revolution, reaction, and peace negotiations? Do you see the completion of CASER this year? What is its relevance to the demand of the Filipino masses for genuine change at social justice?

JMS: CASER signed within 2017 would be a great victory and credit to the GRP and the NDFP. This would be the answer to those who claim that the Duterte government has nothing to say with regard to the backward economy and the intensifying crisis. CASER can be completed up to the signing before year-end 2017. I advised the NDFP panel and the Reciprocal Working Committee on Social and Economic Reforms to speed up the making of the common CASER draft. But they say that it is the GRP side that is slack. I would like the immediate completion of CASER to wave as an agreement for genuine change and the fulfillment of social justice. I am eager to focus on political and constitutional reforms in the first quarter of 2018 to start the campaign for charter change and the making of a new constitution and for the creation of the Federal Republic of the Philippines.

Why the Duterte Regime is Isolated and Hated by the Filipino People

July 14, 2018

After two years of broken electoral promises, mass murder, corruption, deterioration of the economy and sell-out of Philippine sovereign rights, the Duterte regime is isolated and extremely hated by the broad masses of the Filipino people, contrary to persistent pro-Duterte propaganda churned out by the reactionary bureaucracy and the military, mercenary poll survey firms, a major part of the mass media and troll armies deployed by Duterte and his allies.

In a futile attempt to deflect attention from the socioeconomic, political and moral issues against him, Duterte has engaged for several weeks in tirades against the God and related religious beliefs of Catholics and Christians. He accused the Catholic and other Christian institutions and their leaders of conspiring with the broad united front of patriotic and progressive forces that seek his ouster. The anti-God and anti-Christian rants of Duterte have served to undermine his own dwindling following and to further outrage the people and isolate him.

1. False promise to solve the problems of illegal drugs,

criminality and corruption

Duterte came to power mainly on the demagogic promise of wiping out the drug problem, criminality and corruption within three to six months after assuming

the presidential office. After two years in power, all these problems have become worse and more rampant. He has paid the most attention to the drug problem in order to display an iron fist by unleashing his death squads against the poor people in urban slums. The blood of drug lords at the level of governors and generals has been spared.

There has been only a Mafia-style rearrangement of the crime families. Duterte has emerged as the supreme lord and protector of the illegal drug trade, with his own close relatives like Paolo Duterte and cronies like his compadre Peter Lim, as his direct agents in their respective turfs. They have ensured that drug smuggling and nationwide distribution of illegal drugs are unabated. Peter Lim and other drug lords who face charges on the basis of evidence have been absolved recently by Duterte through his department of justice secretary Vitaliano Aguirre.

Some mayors who operate as drug lords in independent turfs and who have been slow at submitting themselves to the supreme lord and his adjutant lords have been ruthlessly murdered in their own homes or even in prison by police teams brazenly designated by Duterte. The worst phenomenon in the so-called war on drugs has been the murder of more than 23,000 alleged users and pushers of illegal drugs in urban poor communities.

The perverse logic of Duterte in calling for the extrajudicial killing of the poor suspects is to destroy the demand or market for the drugs. He openly calls on the police to list down drug suspects and surrenderers and to frame up a number of them in order to fulfill kill quotas in exchange for rewards in cash and promotions in rank. He further assures the police of impunity and, in any rare case of indictment or conviction for extrajudicial killing, presidential pardon.

Criminality has become aggravated because Duterte himself has used many police and military officers for criminal purposes and corrupted them mainly with cash rewards from his confidential and intelligence funds. He has directed them to list down alleged drug addicts and pushers, suspected petty criminals of various types, even mere loafers or loiterers who linger in the streets for relief from their cramped and humid shacks and alleged members and supporters of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New People's Army (NPA). The lists are subsequently used by the police and military for fulfilling kill quotas and getting rewards in cash and rank promotions.

An early sign that Duterte was not serious about his promise to wipe out corruption, especially at the highest level, was his refusal to arrest and prosecute those most liable for pork barrel plunder in the previous Aquino II regime as well as his efficient push on the Supreme Court (dominated by his and Arroyo appointees) to dismiss charges of plunder against former president Gloria Arroyo and other high officials. It has come to light that the biggest Luzon-based plunderers like the Marcoses, Arroyos and Estradas have been among the biggest electoral campaign financiers and supporters of Duterte.

Duterte's office of the president now takes the lead in corruption with most of the confidential and intelligence funds amounting to 2.5 billion pesos for 2017 going mainly to the pockets of Duterte and his military and police trustees. Corruption is also involved in the bloating of other presidential expenses for travels, communications, equipment and the like. Cabinet members like Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre have scandalized the public by absolving Peter Lim and other drug lords, with the obvious approval of Duterte.

Corruption is business as usual in all departments at all levels of the reactionary government. Duterte has ignored discoveries of anomalies in high offices by the Commission on Audit. The more he has ignored complaints from the public against corrupt officials. In a few token cases, he has fired his own appointees on charges of corruption but after only a few months he reappoints them to other lucrative positions. He develops personal loyalty to him through complicity in criminality and corruption.

2. Destruction of Marawi City, Lumad and other rural communities

in Mindanao and nationwide

The indiscriminate bombing and destruction of Marawi City from May 23, 2017 onward were done to show off the arrogance and iron fist capability of the Duterte regime with the help of imperialist powers. Duterte deliberately refused to avail of the offer of the Sultan and 15 leading families of Marawi City to negotiate with the Maute and Abu Sayyaf groups and ignored their repeated plea for the AFP to stop the bombardment.

He wanted simply to demonstrate his destructive power causing the devastation of the city, the death of thousands of residents and his own military and police personnel and the forced evacuation of 400,000 to 500,000 people within and

around Marawi, and the plunder of their homes by marauding soldiers. Tens of thousands of families are now being prevented from recovering their home lots and are unsure of getting compensation for the destruction of lives and property. A big number of evacuees are stranded in the cramped homes of relatives and in miserable evacuation centers.

The cost of military operations to destroy Marawi City amounted to more than three billion pesos. More than 120 billion pesos are estimated for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the city. Billions of US dollars of foreign assistance for the same purpose are unaccounted for. Like conquerors, the military cohorts of Duterte occupy and rule the city and many areas of the entire Mindanao, with the initial 60 days of martial law extended to the end of 2018 by the Supreme Court that is obsequious to Duterte.

Priority is being given to the construction of a big military camp on ten hectares where the Marawi city hall used to be located. This is in addition to the long standing Camp Ranao. A group of Chinese companies are favored by Duterte to build commercial stores and tourist facilities. Maranaws who used to applaud whenever he claimed to be descended from a Maranaw grandmother now call him Dutiti (meaning to say, poison in the Maranaw language).

The plan to destroy Marawi City was used to justify the declaration of martial law in the entirety of Mindanao and to justify the earlier military attacks on the Lumad and Bangsamoro communities under Duterte's all-out war policy. Earlier than the bombardment of Marawi City, Duterte had ordered the bombing, invasion and occupation of the land and structures of Lumad communities that have been forced to evacuate. As early as January 2017, the AFP started to carry out Oplan Kapayapaan which combines psywar, intelligence and combat operations.

To terrorize the people, the military and paramilitary forces of the regime and mining companies have gone on a rampage, threatening and killing community leaders, teachers and activists. The schools for Lumad children at primary, elementary and high school levels that the Lumad communities have built in cooperation with religious and nongovernmental organizations have been closed. Food blockades and the fake listing of the people as NPA fighters and supporters have been undertaken. The atrocities were committed even during periods of ceasefire in connection with the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations.

Under the pretext of fighting the people's army, Duterte has made it his characteristic act to bomb communities or rain artillery fire on them. Then the military, police and paramilitary forces proceed to commit further atrocities and compel people to evacuate. This is the modus operandi of the regime in the entirety of Mindanao and nationwide in order to deprive the people of their land and related resources and make these more available than ever before to the mining, logging and plantation companies owned by foreign and big comprador interests.

To realize his ambition of becoming a Duterte Threatens to Impose Martial Law on Whole of Philippines fascist dictator that is more efficient than Marcos in intimidating and controlling the people, Duterte is already undertaking a series of actions to lay the ground for the proclamation of nationwide martial law or a state of emergency which he dubs "revolutionary government". The ongoing martial rule in Mindanao is the dress rehearsal for its nationwide application. He has unleashed a series of operational plans for implementation in urban and rural areas for the listing of alleged drug addicts, criminals, loafers and terrorists and for the arrest and extrajudicial killing of those selected from the lists.

He is set to establish a national ID system for the purpose of systematic national surveillance and random checks on people. The Human Security Act (or Anti-Terrorism Act) is being amended by the Duterte-dominated Congress to widen the definition of terrorism as to include dissent, mass protests and strikes, increase the detention period of suspects from 3 to 30 days without charges, increase the penalty for terrorism so-called from 40 years to life imprisonment and to delete the fine of 500,000 pesos per day on the erring police officer for illegal detention. The amendments are meant to realize martial law even without proclaiming it.

People are being deceived to have themselves listed up in order to clear themselves and to receive supposed benefits. But the lists serve as basis for carrying out extrajudicial killings and causing mass intimidation. These have practically created a de facto situation of martial rule on a nationwide scale. There are also increasing cases of exemplary killings and harassment of local political oppositionists, religious leaders and social activists who are tagged by the military and police as NPA supporters for standing up for national freedom, democracy, social justice and environmental protection.

3. Repeated termination of the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations

Duterte was never interested in pursuing sincere and serious peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). He was merely play-acting when he said he would like to make peace with the people's revolutionary movement and become the first Left and socialist president of the Philippines. He promised to the NDFP on May 16, 2016 to amnesty and release all the political prisoners even before the start of the peace negotiations.

After assuming presidential office, he withdrew his promise to amnesty and release all political prisoners. In violation of The Hague Joint Declaration of 1992, he kept on making preconditions amounting to the surrender of the revolutionary forces and the people and the liquidation of the people's democratic government based in the countryside. At the outset of the talks, he ordered the widespread deployment and prepositioning of its troops in at least 500 barangays (villages) nationwide.

Failing to impose his preconditions, he fabricated reasons for terminating the negotiations several times. He declared the first termination on February 4, 2017, when he complained of an alleged incident which his negotiating panel could have presented appropriately to its counterpart and to the Joint Monitoring Committee under the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL). His defense secretary Lorenzana declared all-out war against the revolutionary forces and people.

Nevertheless, Duterte agreed to the holding of the 5th round of formal talks on May 27 to June 1. But he ordered the GRP Panel and OPAPP secretary Dureza not to participate in the formal talks, unless the CPP withdrew its order calling for the further intensification of people's war against the declaration of martial law in Mindanao. There was no ceasefire agreement and there was no way the NDFP negotiating panel could report and make recommendations to NDFP National Council and the CPP within the span of 72 hours. Duterte suspended the formal peace talks and threatened the arrest of eleven NDFP consultants upon their return to the Philippines.

He sued for a resumption of formal peace talks sometime in July 2017 but again unilaterally canceled these on July 19 when he made the brazen lie that the NPA tried to ambush his presidential convoy in Arakan, Cotabato on July 18. In fact, he was not in any of the unmarked vehicles which were fired upon because they ran through an NPA checkpoint. There was no ceasefire agreement in place. And Duterte did not get any prior permission from the CPP and NPA through the

NDFP to pass through the territory of the people's democratic government.

The second time that Duterte terminated the peace negotiation was on November 23, 2017 when he made the false claim that the NDFP was demanding a coalition government led by the CPP. He issued Proclamation No. 360 terminating the peace negotiations.

4. Scheme of fascist dictatorship under the cover of chacha for federalism

Duterte is obsessed with establishing a fascist dictatorship ala Marcos, his political idol, whose extrajudicial killings of around 3,500 over 14 years of autocratic rule he has already surpassed several times in only two years. His objective in unleashing campaigns to arrest people without judicial warrants and kill a number of them without judicial process under the pretext of eliminating suspected drug addicts, criminals, street loafers and terrorists is to terrorize the people and establish a fascist dictatorship.

These campaigns are now being directed mainly against the CPP and NPA and the leaders and mass activists of legal democratic organizations in the anti-Duterte broad united front. They are coordinated with the railroading of the charter change for federalism. The draft of the new charter from the Puno consultative committee, the resolution of both houses and the drafts of PDP-LABAN contain provisions that allow Duterte to have legislative and judicial powers in addition to executive powers during the transition period to a federal system of government. And the grounds for proclaiming martial law have been increased and eased up.

The same trick Marcos used to make a coup against the 1935 constitution is being replayed in the Duterte coup against the 1987 constitution. The supermajority of Duterte in the House of Representatives assures him of concentrating all powers of government in his hand. In a futile effort to deceive the people, he has announced that he would step down as soon as the fascist type of federal constitution would be ratified. But the people do not believe that he would give to another person what he has long craved for. Even now, he has displayed unmistakable signs of hubris from the power, privilege and resources in the hands of a head of state which are incomparably vast to that of a mayor in a remote big city.

The main beneficiaries of charter change are foreign monopoly capitalists who

expect 100 percent ownership of entire enterprises in all kinds of businesses and Duterte himself and the regional dynasties and warlords who will further enjoy opportunities for accumulating power and wealth at the expense of the people. In this regard, centrifugal forces are reinforced and emboldened to break up the Philippines ultimately. The reorganization and maintenance of the federal system will entail high costs and large increases of the tax burden at federal, regional and lower levels and will aggravate the financial bankruptcy of the GRP and the social and economic crisis.

In the course of the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations in 2016 to 2017, the NDFP commented that the change of government from unitary to federal does not necessarily mean change for the better but offered to negotiate with GRP a federal constitution that is more patriotic, democratic and socially just than the 1987 constitution and can serve as the basis for the NDFP to co-found the Federal Republic of the Philippines.

Obsessed with monopolizing political power, under his fascist dictatorship, Duterte has deliberately blocked the GRP-NDFP negotiations on political and constitutional reforms. He has also claimed mendaciously that NDFP is demanding from him a coalition government led by the CPP, without the determination of the relative weights of political parties through elections. It is good that the NDFP has nothing to do but to oppose the charter change intended to install a Duterte fascist dictatorship masquerading as a federal government.

The overwhelming majority of the people are vigorously opposed to charter change to put Duterte on a throne of absolute power. They have suffered more than enough the escalation of oppression and exploitation under Duterte. The revolutionary forces and the people are determined to fight the US-Duterte regime and those who persist in supporting the tyranny of Duterte, his gross and systematic violations of human rights, his mismanagement of the economy and all his other intolerable acts in oppressing and exploiting the people.

5. Mismanagement of the economy, heavier tax burden

and soaring prices of basic goods and services

Duterte admits that he knows nothing about economics. But he has chosen as policy makers or economic managers economists who adhere to the neoliberal policy regime, who agree with him to continue the policy pursued by the Aquino

II regime and who do not comprehend the changes that have occurred in the global and domestic economy even before said regime ended.

The financial meltdown of 2008 has resulted in a prolonged global economic depression, relieved now and then by heavy doses of credit at the level of central banks, corporations and households. The majority of countries have alarming levels of public debt due to budgetary and trade deficits. Only for a while did the Philippines enjoy the big inflow of portfolio investments to buoy up the economy. But these started to flow out at an increasing rate since 2014.

The decrease of income from the export of raw materials and semi-manufactures and less inflow of foreign loans and less direct investments have exposed the underdeveloped, pre-industrial and semifeudal character of the economy and resulted in widening budgetary and trade deficits. The remittances of overseas contract workers and incomes of BPO call agents have been used by the GRP to raise the level of import-dependent consumption. The balance of payments has deteriorated. With dollar reserves declining, the peso has depreciated at the exchange rate 53.6 pesos per US dollar.

The economists of Duterte know nothing beyond the neoliberal parameters of raising tax revenues, spending these for the operations of government and funding imports, servicing the previously accumulated debt and resorting to local public borrowing, foreign loans and investments. The growth rate of the Philippine public debt has tripled since 2016 and has increased by nearly 1 trillion. As of May 2018, the national government has outstanding debt of 6.83 trillion pesos while private loans outstanding for production and household consumption reached as much as 7.28 trillion pesos. Duterte's budget for 2019 is 3.757 trillion pesos, of which 1.2 trillion pesos need to be borrowed.

The Duterte regime has found no solution to the fall of production in agriculture and industry. It is just too happy that the GDP growth rate rises (supposedly 6.7 percent last year to 6.8 percent first quarter of this year) as a result of the growth of consumption, government spending and anti-industrialization investments. It does not care about productive investments to develop a self-reliant industrial economy. In the meantime, the number of unemployed Filipino workers leaped from 7.2 million to 10.9 million from December 2017 to March 2018. As compounded, the unemployed, underemployed and others already discouraged from seeking employment number as high as 13 million out of the labor force of 42.7 million.

The Duterte notion of development is to plunge into an eight trillion peso program of infrastructure projects up to 2022 to be sustained largely with tax revenues in collaboration mainly with Chinese construction companies and suppliers of materials and equipment. The expenditures and foreign debt required will prevent real development through national industrialization and genuine land reform as proposed by the NDFP and will continue to favor the export of cheap raw materials and the import of foreign manufactures.

Under these circumstances, the regime has planned and implemented since January the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN). The tax burden is increased from phase to phase, with corporations and the wealthy people given tax cuts and the broad masses of consumers paying excise taxes embedded in the inflated prices of basic goods and services they pay. TRAIN takes away anywhere from 1,000-3,000 pesos from the poorest majority Filipinos while giving 50,000–100,000 to the few richest Filipinos. It is scheduled to take even more from the poor and give more to the rich in 2019 and 2020.

The regime is raising taxes from the general mass of consumers, consisting mostly of low-income impoverished working people, swamped by a huge mass of unemployed, in a stagnant and underdeveloped semifeudal economy. The purpose is not only to fund the build, build, build infrastructure program but in fact mostly to pay for the doubled salaries of the military and police and for the rising costs of their operations and equipment, to assure foreign creditors of payment for the outstanding debt service and to cover the ever widening budgetary and trade deficits.

Even at the understated inflation rate of 5.2 percent, the rapidly rising prices of basic goods and services have caused the accelerated isolation and hatred of the Duterte regime by the people. As a result, the broad united front for the ouster of Duterte which was first motivated by outrage over Duterte's gross and systematic violations of human rights in his campaign of mass murder and mass intimidation is now further motivated and inflamed by a more sweeping outrage that involves the daily economic needs and survival of the overwhelming majority of the people.

Duterte has expected that he would be able to rev up the Philippine economy and employ more people by going on a spree of building a Metro Manila subway system, railways, roads, bridges, airports and seaports all over the country with

the use mainly of foreign loans, construction companies, labor, materials and equipment from China. But there are delays and discordances between Philippine and Chinese counterparts. And yet Duterte's neoliberal economists are too eager to raise the tax burden in advance in obeisance to Chinese and other foreign creditors.

Wages in the Philippines have stagnated since 2001 and are now assailed by the highest inflation rate since 2009. In view of the soaring prices of basic goods and services, the workers have been pressed by their inadequate income to demand higher wages, job security and the end of short-term contractualization. In this regard, the struggle of 8000 workers dismissed by PLDT exposes the falsity of Duterte's promise to end contractualization. The homeless urban poor also demand affordable social housing. They have occupied idle substandard government housing but are being subjected to harassment and violent attacks by the police.

In the rural areas, the peasant masses and indigenous peoples who have lost and continue to lose land to corporate and bureaucratic land grabbers are intensifying the struggle for land and cooperate with the people's army in dismantling the mining, logging and plantation enterprises of the land grabbers who refuse to comply with the laws of the people's democratic government and who damage domestic food production and the environment.

Land grabbing for real estate speculation and building tourist facilities is rampant. But in one glaring instance of unbridled personal greed, Duterte has used environmental cleanup and land reform as pretext for closing down Boracay Island and depriving thousands of families of jobs and livelihood in order to make way for Chinese casino owners and his cronies to take over major parts of the island.

In another conspicuous instance of extreme greed of the Duterte ruling clique is the grant of monopoly to favored bus companies at the expense of the huge mass of poor drivers and small operators of jeepneys, without giving any fair and realistic recourse for them. Adding insult to the injury, Duterte viciously made an outburst that he did not care that his victims were poor and that they would become poorer.

The widespread and intense people's detestation of the Duterte regime due to the rapidly rising prices of basic goods and services and the steep rise of the rates of

unemployment and landlessness are inflaming the struggles of the toiling masses of workers and peasants for jobs, land and better living conditions and are also fueling the mass protests against the escalation of the human rights violations and against the railroading of the charter change for federalism as pretext for a fascist dictatorship.

6. Opposition to social, economic and political reforms

in peace negotiations

Duterte has deliberately sabotaged and terminated the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations because of his ultra-reactionary adherence to the status quo under the oligarchy of big compradors, landlords and corrupt bureaucrats like himself. He is diametrically opposed to the very aim of making the comprehensive agreements on social and economic reforms and on political and constitutional reforms, which are the way to address the roots of the armed conflict and thereby lay the basis for a just and lasting peace.

He follows Lorenzana in condemning the NDFP proposed Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER) as socialism and the comprehensive agreement on political and constitutional reforms (CAPCR) as communist-led coalition government. He wants to retain the underdeveloped and semifeudal status of the economy and to ensure that charter change to federalism results in the imposition of his fascist dictatorship and the regional dynasties on the people.

Duterte exposes himself as a liar in previously making pronouncements that he is for national industrialization so that Filipinos would no longer become overseas contract workers separated from their family and motherland, that he is for the end of short-term contractualization of labor, that he is for minimum wage and higher wages to ensure a decent life for workers' families, that he is for land reform and provision of services to the peasants, that the indigenous people have the right of self-determination and are entitled to their ancestral domain, and so on and so forth.

In terminating the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations, Duterte has called for the intensification of all-out war against the revolutionary forces, the people's army and the people this year and thereafter. He leaves them with no choice but to fight back and take the initiative to launch offensives on a nationwide scale. The

CPP, NPA, all allied forces of the NDFP and the people's democratic government have declared that they are prepared to defend themselves and intensify people's war through extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare on the basis of an ever widening and deepening mass base.

7. False independent foreign policy in relations with US and China

In the first six months of the Duterte regime, US President Obama and members of the US Congress were alarmed by the extrajudicial killing of thousands of alleged drug addicts and pushers by Duterte's police death squads. They threatened to cut down US military assistance in consideration of human rights violations. Duterte was riled and threatened to veer away from the US and towards China and Russia. He also claimed to be forging an independent foreign policy.

But he cozied up to US President Trump and was assured of unlimited US military assistance under Trump's Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines. Since then, he has fully exposed himself as not really being for an independent foreign policy. He is in fact traitorously keeping the Philippines under the domination of both the US and China and making deals at the expense of the Filipino people and for his own benefit together with his cronies.

Since assuming presidential office, he has retained all the treaties, agreements and arrangements that make the Philippines subservient to US imperialism economically, politically, culturally and militarily and which give US military forces extraterritorial rights in the country. He has aggravated US military dominance over the Philippines by accepting Trump's Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines by which he can receive unlimited US military assistance through the circumvention of US congressional oversight.

He has found an additional foreign master in China, a rising imperialist power. He has laid aside the final judgment of the Arbitral Tribunal of July 12, 2016 which recognized the sovereign rights of the Philippines over its exclusive economic zone and extended continental shelf in the West Philippine Sea and over the Panatag Shoal in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of Sea. He has made no protest to China's militarization of the Spratlys and has practically conceded to China the trillions of dollars' worth of oil, gas and other natural resources in exchange for a few billions of dollars of high-interest Chinese loans for infrastructure projects.

These projects are extremely onerous. Chinese construction firms are in control of the projects. Sixty percent of the labor force is Chinese. The interest rate on the loans is far higher than that on Japanese concessional loans. Worse, the projects are overpriced. Construction supplies and equipment are 100 percent Chinese. In case of payment defaults, the loans are subject to more onerous terms and to conversion to Chinese equity. Thus, the infrastructure projects face the prospect of becoming Chinese property as in Sri Lanka, Pakistan and elsewhere.

8. Growing resentment against Duterte among military and police officers and men

When he still had cordial relations with leaders of the revolutionary movement, he told them that, as GRP president, he had to demonstrate to the AFP and PNP that he was their commander-in-chief, he would pretend to carry out an “all-out war” not really to destroy the NPA but to overstretch and wear out the military and police brigades in futile search and destroy operations and so-called peace and development operations and ultimately to favor the armed revolution with more easy targets for guerrilla offensives.

But for all intents and purposes, he is deploying the AFP and PNP in a mad drive to really suppress the armed revolution and clear the way for establishing his fascist dictatorship. Nonetheless, he is actually overstretching, overstraining and wearing out his military and police forces. Since he became president, there has been no letup in the all-out war under Oplan Bayanihan up to the end of 2016 and under Oplan Kapayapaan from early 2017 onward.

There has been no respite for the AFP and PNP maneuver units. The bulk of these has been deployed in Mindanao, undergoing the rigors of combat in Marawi City and also enforcing martial law in the rest of Mindanao, where they have to battle with the NPA and Bangsamoro armed groups. Of Duterte’s current total of 98 AFP battalions, he has deployed about 75 percent in Mindanao — 50 percent against the NPA and 25 percent against the Bangsamoro group —and only about 25 percent in Luzon and the Visayas.

With this kind of deployment, the NPA can easily fight back and take initiatives in launching offensives. The total strength of AFP and PNP combat troops cannot cover and control more than 40,000 barangays of the Philippines and all

the areas of responsibility and guerrilla fronts of the NPA. On the average, there are not even two AFP soldiers per barangay. From their guerrilla base and zones, the NPA can move freely in more than 80 percent of the barangays.

The NPA can use the national scale of the guerrilla fronts for fluid movement and flexible use of the tactics of concentration, shifting and dispersal, depending on circumstances, and the depth of the social and physical terrain of particular guerrilla fronts to lure in the enemy forces for annihilation. At the same time, it can deliver unexpected blows to certain vital but vulnerable parts of the enemy forces.

There is growing resentment among AFP and PNP officers and lower personnel against the Duterte regime despite the doubling of their salaries. Their grievances include the following: they are being overworked and being put in harm's way too often, the less deserving among them get promoted, they are being used for extrajudicial killings and other criminal purposes and a big number of them are being corrupted with rewards in cash for carrying out unlawful orders that violate professional standards and service rules.

There is an increasing number of active and retired AFP officers who are in touch with the popular movement to oust Duterte. They wish to develop a movement of officers and enlisted personnel to coordinate with the growing mass protest movement and withdraw support from Duterte at the decisive moment. They emulate the examples of AFP officers who withdrew support from Marcos in 1986 and Estrada in 2001 and helped effect their ouster.

9. Duterte's use of abusive and violent language

and attacks on Catholics and Christians

While he was campaigning for the presidency, Duterte's use of abusive, vulgar and violent language against his political rivals and those whom he accused of being involved in illegal drugs, criminality and corruption was entertaining to audiences in mass meetings and was even praised as a manifestation of an honest and frank character.

But since becoming president, Duterte's use of the same gutter kind of language and content in rambling speeches have become repulsive not so much because of boring repetition but because of the attempt to deflect attention from unfulfilled promises, failures and aggravation of problems.

Duterte has increasingly used abusive, vulgar and violent language to rouse hatred among his political followers against his critics and opponents, to goad the military and police to engage in violent actions against the people and to express contempt for the working class and peasantry, the national minorities, women, the youth activists and other people.

The madness of Duterte in using his kind of language is not simply because he is crazed by Fentanyl and by power or that he is a psychopath and sociopath as professionally established by a court-approved psychiatrist and officially certified in his divorce case. It is easier to understand that he is driven to gain more power and wealth and it becomes necessary for him to intimidate people and rouse his political followers and his military and police subalterns to protect him.

The extremely violent character of his regime is defined by both his language and the actual escalation of exploitation and oppression. Even as he has failed to deliver on his promises to end contractualization, raise wages, carry out land reform, create industries and more jobs, the police under his inspiration have become more brutal in suppressing worker and peasant strikes.

Even as he has failed to deliver on his promise to give land to the landless tillers and to assure the indigenous people to keep their ancestral domain and whatever schools and cooperatives that they have established, he has been extremely vicious in ordering the bombing and military occupation of rural communities in order to make more land and more resources available for exploitation by foreign and big comprador mining, logging and plantation interests.

He has directed the military and police to target the youth activists for terrorist labeling and listing for the purpose of violent actions, including abduction, torture and murder. He has displayed with utmost arrogance the worst kind of misogyny, including his call on troops to rape women or shoot them in the vagina in order to make them useless. This exposes his view of women as mere sex objects.

There is no limit to the vileness and malice of Duterte. In a futile attempt to distract attention from the socioeconomic and political problems he has generated, he has gone so far as to use his presidential authority to attack the religious belief of Catholics and Christians and generate a climate for persecution and murder even of religious leaders. As if to proclaim his own

stupidity, he has boasted of his own concept of God and attacked the God of the Catholics and Christians as stupid and lacking common sense, in gross disrespect and violation of the freedom of thought and belief.

As a result of his attacks on the God of the Catholics and Christians, a great number of his followers have left his camp and have put into question his sanity and competence to rule. He has become thoroughly isolated by a combination of factors which include state terrorism, mass murder, soaring prices of basic goods and services and high unemployment rate and his gross disrespect for Catholics and Christians.

10. Growing movement for the ouster of the Duterte regime

In real fear of being ousted as well as in furtherance of his scheme to establish a fascist dictatorship by scapegoating the CPP and NPA, Duterte has taunted them as incapable of ousting him and his ruling clique.

But the process of ousting a president of the neocolonial republic has been successful in the cases of Marcos in 1986 and Estrada in 2001 without the NPA having to engage in battles in Metro Manila and the CPP having to take power here.

To oust a brutal and corrupt despot it is sufficient that a broad united front of legal patriotic and progressive forces engage in mass mobilization through marches and rallies, culminating in the withdrawal of support by his own military and police personnel.

Indeed, Duterte has more to fear from his own assumed instruments of terror than from the NPA. Reports are rife that a moderate group of military officers is poised to demand the resignation of Duterte. Another group is poised to take action in order to compel the ouster or resignation of Duterte.

The most important reason why Duterte is now in danger of being ousted from power is that he has grievously offended the working class, the peasantry, the middle strata of the bourgeoisie, the national minorities, the women, the youth and others. They have become aroused, organized and mobilized to oust Duterte from his arrogant perch because of his reign of greed and terror.

Duterte Will Go Down in History

as a Scourge to the Filipino People

March 26, 2019

By his own policies and actions, Duterte has already defined himself and his ruling clique as treasonous, tyrannical, mass murdering, plundering, and swindling. He will certainly go down in Philippine history as a scourge to the Filipino people.

1. Supreme protector of drug lords

He misrepresented himself as a crusader against the illegal drug trade. But he took this as a license to incite and order the police to carry out the mass murder of 30,000 poor people tagged as drug users and peddlers.

It turns out that Duterte is the supreme protector of drug lords and drug smugglers that include his close Chinese friends and his close relatives. By his own admission, the drug problem has worsened, with drugs being freely smuggled and distributed to a clientele, rising in number from 1.8 million to 8 million.

2. Anti-Peace scheme for a fascist dictatorship

Duterte has terminated the peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines since 2017 in order to use the continuing armed conflict as the reason for his tyrannical rule, de facto martial law nationwide and his scheme of fascist dictatorship through charter change to a bogus federalism in which the powers of government are concentrated in his hands and by which he can handpick his regional and provincial agents.

Duterte's obsession with seeking to establish a fascist dictatorship is driven by his scheme to get a lion's share in the plunder of the social and natural wealth of

the people, to engage in selective and mass murders so as to entrench himself in power and prevent his arrest, prosecution and trial for crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court and by the people's court of the people's democratic government.

3. Chief plunderer and king of corruption

Duterte raised his 2016 electoral campaign funds from Chinese financiers and from such notorious Luzon-based plunderers as the Marcoses, Arroyos, Estradas, Enriles, Revillas and others who provided him with funds and bailiwick votes. Thus, he has gotten them off the hook in their plunder cases through the corrupt Supreme Court in exchange for their financial and political support.

Having become the president, Duterte is now the chief plunderer who cuts into all kinds of illegal and legal business enterprises, into big loan contracts with state banks and social insurance corporations, into the discretionary, intelligence, pork barrel and other accounts of the government budget and into contracts with Chinese and other foreign companies related to his infrastructure-building projects and other projects requiring the approval of the office of the president.

4. The butcher extends the scale of his butchery

Duterte has formed the national task force to destroy the revolutionary movement. This is both continuation of his all-out war against the people and the revolutionary forces and escalation of the same through the militarization of the civilian agencies, increased rechannelling of public funds to racketeering by the military and local officials, the faking of "localized peace talks," "mass surrenders" and "development" projects to divert funds from civilian agencies to military psywar and racketeering.

The worst and most brutal aspect of Implan Kalasag of Duterte's national task force is to apply Oplan Tokhang methods of frame up and murder on the critics of his regime and suspected revolutionaries. These are red-tagged and listed. The list is used to label people as "communists or terrorists" and make them targets of "legal offensives," and available for abduction, torture and murder by Duterte death squads embedded in the military and police. The murder of social activists, lawyers, human rights and peace advocates is now on the upsurge.

Duterte has turned the reactionary armed forces and police into his private armies by making their officers and men complicit with/in the commission of

mass murder, corrupting and rewarding them with cash rewards and promotions and assuring them of presidential protection and immunity.

5. Puppet of two imperialist powers

Duterte claimed that he was for an independent foreign policy and was favoring China only to even it up with the US. But in fact he is a puppet of both the US and the Chinese imperialists. All the treaties, agreements and arrangements that keep the US as the dominant imperialist power in the Philippines remain. But what makes Duterte's connection with China outstanding is that he has received bribes in advance to allow China to build and militarized artificial islands in the West Philippine Sea and to turn the Philippines into a debt colony.

The Philippines is made a debt colony of China by becoming burdened with high interest loans for overpriced infrastructure projects, which require the use of Chinese contractors, consultants, construction-materials suppliers, workers and the subjection of the Philippine government to Chinese laws and the conversion of loans to equity or acquisition of Philippine assets as a consequence of defaults in loan payments.



6. Sabotaging the Philippine economy

Duterte has kept and aggravated the same kind of agrarian, semifeudal and pre-industrial kind of Philippine economy by making it even more dependent on the export of raw materials and importation of foreign manufactures, principally catering to the upper class and mass consumers, and secondarily for semimanufacture of goods for re-export. There is no industrial development. What is passed off as development is private construction for the benefit of the big compradors and infrastructure building to facilitate the old pattern of economic and trade relations between the Philippines and foreign monopoly interests.

Some 10.9 million or a quarter of the work force is unemployed. A big number is underemployed. Thus, poverty has spread and become worse. The budgetary

deficit keeps on rising because of accelerated unproductive government spending and the trade deficit keeps on widening because of the prolonged domestic conditions of semifeudal exploitation and stagnation as well as the global economic depression. The Philippines is more than ever dependent on onerous foreign loans and the foreign exchange remittances of overseas contract workers.

7. Generator of inflation

Duterte is a generator of inflation in the Philippine economy. He is spending public funds at an unprecedentedly accelerated rate and raising taxes at the expense of the consumers, in order to cover the government budgetary and trade deficits and to assure foreign lenders that they can have the priority in being paid back. The people are victimized by rising prices of imports due to the deterioration of the economy and the depressed incomes from mineral and agricultural exports.

Duterte is earning money for himself and his clique by increasing the budget for buying weapons from abroad and for intelligence funds which are not audited. In collaboration with the Chinese cartels in the trade of food staples (rice and corn), he allows them to manipulate the supply and prices in the country and at the same time to import the food staples by way of increasing their leverage against local food production by the peasants.

8. Patron of land-grabbers

Duterte has boasted that he can carry out land reform and that the New People's Army is not needed for the purpose. In fact, he is distributing mere scraps of paper reminding so-called agrarian reform beneficiaries of their duty to pay for their arrears in land amortization. Ninety percent of so-called land reform beneficiaries in the bogus land reform program of the reactionary government have failed to make amortization payments.

In fact, Duterte is the patron of all land grabbers and land accumulators. He is accelerating the conversion or reclassification of land designated as subject to land reform to non-agricultural purposes. He is unleashing military offensives, bombing and forcing the communities of indigenous people and poor peasants to leave their land for the benefit of foreign and local mining, plantation and logging corporations. Thus, the people being displaced and dispossessed of their

land are resisting and are relying on the armed democratic revolution to solve the land problem by undertaking genuine land reform.

9. Enemy of the working class

Duterte promised to end the practice of short-term contractualization, subjecting workers to a series of work contracts for less than six months. But he would make fun of his own lie by stating only fools could believe him because he would never do such a thing. Unemployment has worsened under the Duterte regime. Thus, the wage conditions of the working class have further deteriorated.

The regime is bound by neoliberal policy of unbridled greed, which his economic advisers pursue. The capitalist employers are allowed to employ more five-month contractuels and to press down wages in the face of growing unemployment. Thus, the surplus population in both urban and rural areas is rapidly increasing and is inclined to join the armed revolutionary movement. This is backed up by state terrorism against the patriotic and progressive trade unions.

10. The misogynist and anti-Church demagogue

To entertain his followers, Duterte loves to use vulgarity to slander and humiliate the women and the bishops and priests of the Catholic and other Christian churches. It is his way of generating an image of the strong-man in the same way that he uses the mass murder of the poor tagged as drug suspects and the social activists tagged as “Red”. In fact, he has threatened to have his armed minions to shoot women suspected as NPA fighters in the vagina and to kill bishops and priests who are opposing his mass murder of the poor people tagged as drug users and peddlers.

Already in power, he is not at all afraid of what the women’s movement and the churches can do to defend themselves because he is confident that he can prevail with the use of the government, opinion and poll surveys and mass media and he can also use the Comelec and the military to rig the forthcoming elections. It is after being elected to the highest office that the modern bourgeois tyrant or fascist dictator can do anything criminal with impunity. It takes an armed revolution to overthrow such a monster.

On the May 13, 2019 Elections in the Philippines

Interview by Rio Mondelo, April 29, 2019

RM 1: The senatorial race in the May 13, 2019 elections in the Philippines is of crucial importance because if Duterte's candidates in Hugpong ng Pagbabago and PDP-Laban win in an overwhelming way, Duterte will have complete control of the government and will have two-thirds vote in the Senate to push his federalism project. What are the chances of Duterte's candidates and the opposition candidates in Otso Deretso, Labor Win, Makabayan and People's Choice?

JMS: If the elections are clean and honest, the senatorial candidates of Duterte will surely lose for the following reasons:

Many of the candidates are notorious plunderers like Estrada, Revilla, Enrile and Bong Go and butchers like Enrile, martial law administrator of Marcos, Bato de la Rosa of the infamous Oplan Tokhang. The Duterte slate stinks because of the track record of the candidates is so bad in contrast to that of the opposition candidates.

Most important of all, the Duterte candidates are seen as stooges of a tyrant, traitor, mass murderer, plunderer, incorrigible liar, antagonist of the Christian churches, and women, and whom the broad masses of the people perceive as responsible for the rising prices of basic commodities and the rise of mass unemployment and poverty. They are debased by the gross crimes of the Duterte regime as well as by their own crimes.

RM 2: Because he will surely lose in the senatorial race in the elections if these are clean and honest, what do we expect from Duterte? Will he rig the elections?

Why?

JMS: Duterte has total control of the Commission on Elections and the military and police personnel who will be deputized for election duties, especially in Mindanao, which is under martial law, and the other areas designated as trouble spots by the Comelec, the military and the police.

Duterte is well-known to have a sly criminal mind. He will certainly use his power over the Comelec and the armed services to rig the elections, especially because he wants to increase his despotic powers and prolong his stay in power by railroading charter change to a bogus federalism.

He is mortally afraid that the moment he steps down from power, he is liable for criminal prosecution by the International Criminal Court and for punitive actions by the Filipino people and their revolutionary forces. Thus, he is driven like crazy to prolong his stay in power and gain more powers to oppress and exploit the people.

Even before the elections, the rigging has started. The whole of Mindanao and the so-called trouble spots are already under martial rule, the public school teachers and people from various walks of life are being red-tagged for the purpose of mass intimidation and so many places elsewhere are being categorized by the Duterte regime as trouble spots. Anti-Duterte senatorial candidates are at a huge disadvantage.

RM 3: In view of Duterte's control of Comelec and the armed services to be deputized for the elections and his determination to rig the elections because of his fear of prosecution, why should the opposition candidates still run for the Senate?

JMS: They need to run in order to arouse, organize and mobilize the people for realizing the real majority vote and, when and if elections prove to be rigged, there will be clear ground for the people to take offense and rise up to oust Duterte in the same manner that they rose up after Marcos cheated in the 1986 elections.

Remember that before the 1986 elections there were the huge electoral rallies of the Aquino slate and the mass protest actions of BAYAN. These forces eventually conjoined with the mass following of the Catholic and other Christian churches and those military and police officers who turned against Marcos in

order to oust him after he cheated in the elections.

RM 4: There might [?] be no exact [?] repeat of history because Duterte has excelled at fabricating poll surveys and fake news, dominating the print and electronic media with paid ads and payola for broadcasters and columnists and most important of all Duterte has succeeded in causing mass intimidation through red-tagging and mass murders in Oplan Tokhang and Oplan Kapayapaan in the short span of three years. In the case of Marcos, he had stimulated and collected the people's wrath for at least 14 years before he could be ousted. Under these circumstances, is the broad united front in a position to make huge rallies now and then to oust Duterte after he cheats in May?

JMS: There are less than two weeks before May 13 for the opposition to show the huge electoral rallies of the opposition candidates as well as the protest rallies of the progressive organizations. We hope these will still arise before election day. But even if these do not materialize, it is still important for the opposition to do the best possible now so that in the long run when Duterte continues to abuse the people and violate their national and democratic rights, and to amass power and wealth, the people would be in a position to rise up with the intensity and magnitude of mass actions against Marcos in 1986.

There are certain factors that can run counter to the building of the broad united front. The climate of mass intimidation due to widespread red-tagging and actual murders of social activists might have a dampening effect on certain sections of the population. There are also anti-Duterte reactionaries who are at the same time more anticommunist and more pro-imperialist than they are anti-Duterte. These are the same elements that would be vulnerable to Duterte's false assurances that he would step down in 2022 or as soon as his bogus federalism is ratified.

RM 5: Of course, it is well-known that you do not depend entirely on elections and legal mass actions, where those in authority like Duterte have overwhelming advantages in terms of power and control over the armed forces and the mass media. In the meantime, what can the people do to assert themselves against an imminent rise of outright fascist dictatorship?

JMS: The people should never give up the legal mass struggles no matter how much are the mass intimidation and actual murders committed by the Duterte regime against them. By asserting and exerting their democratic rights to speak

out and assemble and to create the broadest possible united front, the people themselves make it counterproductive for Duterte to insist on his regime of tyranny, treason, mass murder and plunder.

In the meantime, while all efforts are being exerted to develop the legal democratic struggle against the Duterte regime, the revolutionary forces of the Filipino people are also developing and advancing the people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war.

They are deeply rooted among the toiling masses nationwide and can at will launch tactical offensives by surprise against the weakest points of the counterrevolutionary regime. As Duterte brutally attacks the legal democratic forces, he unwittingly incites the mass activists to join the armed revolution as did Marcos previously in the 1970s and 1980s.

Duterte's Use of AntiCommunism and AntiTerrorism for the Fascist Suppression of the Filipino People

July 6, 2019

A close reading of Executive Order No. 70, signed by Duterte on December 4, 2018 in order to create the National Task Force to End the Local Communist Armed Conflict, shows that it is a major step of his tyrannical rule to realize the imposition of a full-blown fascist dictatorship on the Filipino people and to reassure the US that he is still its puppet even if he makes a fast buck on the side from shady deals with China and the Chinese criminal triads.

Duterte's order uses the expression "whole nation" approach. This is but a rehash of the long discredited and failed catchphrases, such as "total war" and "whole government" approach used by previous regimes to mean all-out war against the revolutionary movement of the people. But Duterte and his task force wish to wage psywar and mass murder on an unprecedented scale, even surpassing the standards of repression set by his idol Marcos.

The implementation of the order has proven its repulsive murderous and deceptive character and its antipeople and antidemocratic objectives. In touting what it deceptively calls a "whole nation" approach, the Duterte regime is doggedly trying to militarize the Duterte cabinet and entire reactionary government in order to turn the entire Filipino nation against itself and serve the interests of the imperialists and local exploiting classes under the pretext of anticommunism and anti-terrorism.

The tyrannical and terrorist regime seeks in vain to misrepresent and demonize the forces of the armed revolutionary movement and at the same time to tag and brand the forces and activists of the legal democratic movement of patriotic and

progressive forces as “communist” and “terrorist”. Going to the extreme of absurdity, the regime blames both types of forces as the causes of underdevelopment, poverty and armed conflict.

The uppermost counterrevolutionary objective of the regime is to preserve the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system in which foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism exploit and oppress the people and to discredit, isolate and destroy all the national and democratic forces that fight for the national and social liberation of the Filipino nation and people.

The Duterte regime is using EO 70 to militarize all branches and agencies of the reactionary government, the state educational and communications system, all nongovernmental institutions and organizations in order to terrorize the people and impose fascist rule on the entire Filipino people under the long-discredited Cold War and McCarthyite shibboleth of anticommunism and the latter-day Bushite pretense of anti-terrorism.

The Duterte regime’s methods for trying to suppress the legal democratic forces and the revolutionary movement of the people are similar to those employed in Oplan Tokhang in the bogus war on drugs. Scare tactics are used to exact mass compliance, compel barangay officials to list up poor people as drug addicts and pushers and subsequently use the list for murdering people by the tens of thousands.

General Año, the notorious butcher head of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), has ordered the local governments to list down rebel suspects, give the list to the death squads for action, hold fake surrender meetings and declare as persona non grata the revolutionary forces as well as the patriotic and progressive organizations. But he has failed miserably to discourage the people from participating and supporting the revolutionary movement despite the fanfare he tries to stir up in the press.

At all levels of the reactionary government, the regime’s political and military agents terrorize communities, organizations or individuals deemed as opposed to or critical of the regime by red-tagging them and branding them as communist, waging psywar campaigns against them and subjecting them to all forms of punitive measures, including harassment, arbitrary arrest on trumped up charges or planted evidence of firearms and explosives, extortion, torture, murder, bombing and arson, forced evacuation and “hamletting”.

Under the so-called Oplan Kapayapaan, now renamed Oplan Katatagan, Duterte corrupts the reactionary military and police officers with discretionary funds for murdering rebel suspects in fake encounters, for staging fake surrenders under the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program and for arranging token projects and dole-outs under the Pamana Program, Peace and Development Program and Community Support Program.

Duterte's military, police and paramilitary units have extremely limited capacity to deceive the people with token delivery of social services and dole-outs because the programs they operate are encumbered by corruption at various levels. Moreover, the pretenses at civic action or real acts of militarizing civilian functions are discredited by the atrocities being committed by the same or by other military and police units. In the first place, the economic, social and political conditions are rapidly worsening under the crisis-stricken ruling system.

After sabotaging the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations and terminating them completely, Duterte and his sidekick General Galvez, his supposed presidential adviser, have utterly failed to realize their scheme of dividing the revolutionary movement through so-called localized peace talks, which are preconditioned on surrender and self-humiliation. Since the announcement of the shallow deceptive scheme, all leading organs of the CPP and commands of the NPA at various levels have rebuffed the scheme and vowed to intensify the people's war.

The Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process has become a worse hotbed of corruption and bureaucratic intrigue than ever before. Its open function now is to prevent peace negotiations within the framework of the The Hague Joint Declaration, avoid addressing the basic roots of the armed conflict and use the false claim of localized peace negotiations to escalate the armed conflict, seek the total destruction of the people's revolutionary movement by military means and support the imposition of fascist dictatorship on the Filipino people.

The broad masses of the Filipino people are fighting back against the tyrannical, treasonous, terrorist and corrupt Duterte regime. The anti-imperialist and democratic forces and the broad masses of the people in the Philippines are resolutely and vigorously exposing and opposing the regime's gross and systematic violation of human rights in the civil, political, socioeconomic and cultural fields.

As in the time of the Marcos fascist dictatorship, the tyrannical and terrorist

Duterte regime is unwittingly and practically forcing social activists and other people to join the armed revolution by threatening them with abduction and murder and is generating a clamor for armed partisan and commando operations against the worst human rights violators and plunderers to obtain justice for the aggrieved people.

The tyrant and terrorist Duterte is now being widely ridiculed as having unwittingly become the No. 1 recruiter and No. 1 supply and transport officer of the people's army by oppressing and exploiting the people and sending his armed minions to the countryside for annihilation in the people's war.

The revolutionary forces in the countryside and urban underground have been tempered in more than 50 years of revolutionary struggle and have built strength in an extensive and deepgoing way among the people, especially the toiling masses.

According to their publications, the revolutionary forces of the people are intensifying the people's war, carrying out social programs for the benefit of the people and building a people's democratic government mainly in the countryside.

How Duterte Serves Two Imperialist Masters and Offends the People until his Ignoble End

July 15, 2019

The tyrant Duterte recognizes that the US is still the most dominant imperialist power in the Philippines and does not dare to offend it in any serious way. The US is privileged and well-entrenched by a comprehensive range of unequal treaties, agreements and arrangements that give it full-spectrum dominance (economic, social, political, military and cultural).

It is not true that the Duterte regime has become independent of the US. It is even more untrue that it is opposed to the US. It is a puppet regime dependent for its tyranny and mass murder of poor people on a military and police force indoctrinated, trained and armed by the US.

Duterte has proven his puppetry to the US by scuttling the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations and pledging to it the destruction of the revolutionary movement. He has assured the US of charter change to allow US and other foreign corporations 100 percent ownership of land, natural resources in all types of businesses.

Thus, the Duterte regime continues to receive military aid under Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines in the name of “anti-terrorism” and beyond US congressional oversight. It still maintains close economic and financial relations with the US, the IMF, World Bank and the WTO and subjects the Philippines to a neoliberal policy regime.

The US estimates that Duterte is still more of an asset than a liability and that there is yet no urgent need to change him as when Marcos outlived his usefulness to the US in 1986. The US keeps in reserve the issue of human rights violations as potential cause for junking him when the Filipino people rise up to a certain high point and when he thereby becomes more of a liability than an asset.

The US appears to tolerate Duterte in trying to enrich his own family and cronies by taking commissions and other payoffs from onerous loans and overpriced infrastructure projects from China and by keeping shady relations with the Chinese criminal triads engaged in illegal drug smuggling and in gambling.

But the US has no choice but to consider seriously how threatening to its interest is China's drive to turn the Philippines into a debt colony and field of investment and to have at the same time the artificial islands China has built in the Philippine exclusive economic zone (EEZ) as its military bases in the West Philippine Sea.

The US observes that China is making a big headway into the Philippines with the collaboration of Duterte who has exposed himself as a traitor and paid agent of China by deliberately refusing to enforce the judgment of the Arbitral Tribunal in favor of the Philippines under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea against the false ownership claims of China over 90 percent of the South China Sea.

The exposure of Duterte as a traitor and paid agent of China is one more potential cause for the US to instruct the pro-US military and police officers to withdraw support from him at the time and circumstances it chooses.

The broad masses of the Filipino people are already outraged by Duterte's failure to take the appropriate diplomatic steps to consolidate the legal victory of the Philippines against China since the judgment of the Arbitral Tribunal on July 12, 2016. They are deeply insulted by Duterte's constant attempt to scare them with war by China.

Duterte has failed to follow the advice of Supreme Court Justice Antonio Carpio for the Philippines to make agreements with Vietnam and Malaysia to define the boundaries of their extended continental shelves and to ask the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf to confirm the boundaries of Philippine

continental shelf west of Luzon.

Duterte has also failed to go to the UN and the appropriate courts to complain against the transgressions of China in the Philippine EEZ in the West Philippine Sea and to demand justice and compensation for the building of artificial islands and the destruction of the marine environment.

Instead, Duterte does not conceal his self-serving and traitorous scheme to surrender to China the rich marine resources as well as the trillions of dollars' worth of oil, gas and other mineral resources in the Philippine EEZ in the West Philippine Sea. These resources are vital for the sustenance and development of the Philippines.

It is in the interest of the US and all other countries of the world to have the freedom of navigation in the high seas of the South China Sea and to be secure from any harassment, interference, threat or attack from Chinese military forces that are illegally occupying the artificial islands built in the Philippine EEZ.

It is a source of wonder why the Duterte regime and the US government have not combined strongly enough to complain against China's violation of the sovereign rights of the Philippines and have not formally invoked against China the US-RP Mutual Defense Treaty even only as a warning or deterrent to any act of aggression.

As much as the US has not shown any inclination to wage war with China over the West Philippine Sea, China has so far shied away from threatening to wage war with the US and the Philippines because this would completely negate China's line of peaceful rise. China is also known to fear internal economic and political instability, especially at this time that the US has instigated a "trade war" with it, abandoning the many decades of US-Sino collaboration in pushing neoliberal globalization.

There are times to focus on issues against US imperialism. And there are also times to focus on issues against Chinese imperialism. Thus, there is currently a focus on the issue of the West Philippine Sea vis-à-vis China. This is an urgent issue that cries out for a patriotic stand and action. Otherwise the corrupt Duterte regime would have a free hand in selling out Philippine sovereign rights to China. It is even permissible to avail of US-Sino contradictions in order to uphold the Filipino people's sovereign rights.

It is safe to predict that the Duterte regime will meet an ignominious end as a result of its gross and systematic human rights violations, its acts of treason in puppetry to two imperialist powers, unprecedented corruption, economic plunder and so many grievous crimes that are now inciting the people to rise up in defense of their national sovereignty and democratic rights and in pursuit of social justice and all round development.

As in the fall of the fascist dictator Marcos in 1986, the disgraceful end of Duterte is bound to come when gigantic mass actions of the people shake the ruling system from base to rafters and his own military subordinates withdraw support from him either upon instruction of the US and/or upon their own sense of patriotism and desire to shake off the indignity of being the instrument of Duterte's tyranny.

On Duterte's Scheme of Fascist Dictatorship

and the Growing People's Resistance

July 29, 2019

Friends among academics, journalists and political activists have repeatedly asked me whether Duterte is proceeding to establish a fascist dictatorship as a result of successfully rigging the 2019 midterm elections and obtaining overwhelming control of Congress and the local governments.

I have dared to say that Duterte is stubbornly on the road of establishing a fascist dictatorship through charter change and ensuring that he is succeeded by someone who can protect him from prosecution for his grave crimes against the people. Duterte is publicly saying ad nauseam that there must be charter change to give him absolute powers or else he would proclaim a “revolutionary government”.

My friends abroad have also asked me how the Filipino people are responding to Duterte's scheme of fascist dictatorship. I am quick to point out that Duterte is truly hated by the people despite his incredible popularity ratings by paid poll surveys and the recent rigged elections. The people will certainly rise up as soon as Duterte pushes charter change to give himself absolute powers.

The people despise Duterte for waging a “war on drugs” that has murdered 30,000 poor people and that has installed himself as the supreme protector of drug lords and smugglers who continue to benefit from the expanded and thriving illegal drug trade. Close friends and relatives of Duterte have been

exposed as key players in the illegal drug trade.

In considering his role in the illegal drug trade alone, Duterte has become the biggest crime lord and has converted the military and police as his private killing machines. Aside from the lopsided official transactions of his dummies with Chinese banks and corporations, he connives with Chinese criminal triads in the illegal drug trade, casinos and other criminal enterprises.

He has become the No. 1 corrupt official. He is the chieftain of his alliance with the biggest plunderers in the previous regimes of Marcos, Estrada and Arroyo. He has been in connivance with them in the 2016 and 2019 elections and in various major types of corruption involving his presidential office. He has caused the Supreme Court to junk the plunder cases and convictions of his allies and has let them go scotfree.

The Filipino people have gone through the historical experience of the 14-year Marcos fascist dictatorship. They remember that it was a time of unprecedented oppression and exploitation by a Filipino tyrant but it was also the time that the revolutionary forces grew from small and weak to big and strong.

The Filipino people are thoroughly disgusted with the tyrannical, treasonous, brutal, corrupt and mendacious character of the Duterte regime in the last three years. They hold Duterte responsible for the aggravation of the crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system.

The crisis conditions abet and yet limit his capabilities for either coercing or deceiving the people.

The broad masses of the people and even the overwhelming majority of government employees are outraged by the militarization of Duterte's cabinet and civilian functions and the colossal amounts of public funds for intelligence, military equipment, military campaigns of suppression and doubling the salaries of soldiers and policemen under the slogan of "whole-nation approach" to end the revolutionary movement.

The social economy remains underdeveloped and stagnant, ever exploited by foreign monopoly capitalism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. The people are groaning under the weight of soaring prices of basic commodities, joblessness, landlessness and low incomes perpetuated by the absence of genuine land reform and national industrialization, the system of landgrabbing,

short-term work contracts and the rapid population growth.

The escalating acts of brutality and mass murder are driving the people to greater open resistance to the Duterte regime. Those who are most threatened by red-tagging, arrests and summary execution by the regime are finding their way to the urban underground and onward to the ranks of Red fighters in the people's war in the countryside.

The revolutionary movement is now far more extensive and deeper and is far more experienced and tempered than during the period of the Marcos fascist dictatorship. The armed revolutionary forces can actually move freely in 90 percent of the Philippines and can strike at will any weak point of the enemy forces.

In contrast, the size and strength of the military, police and paramilitary forces of the Duterte regime cannot cover even only ten percent of the Philippine population and territory at any given time. Wherever they are, they engage in all kinds of abuses and atrocities, including extortion, mass murder, torture, arson and forced evacuations, and thus they incur the ire of the people.

The forces of the reactionary military are overconcentrated in Mindanao due to prolonged martial law. They can focus on only a few areas in the Visayas and Luzon. Their combat strength is further reduced by psywar and intelligence operations under the pretexts of "peace and development" and "community support program" and by staging fake localized talks, fake surrenders and fake encounters.

The reactionary military officers take over civilian functions and civilian structures, including public schools, clinics and barangay halls. They are hated most when they red-tag people and murder them to be able to collect cash rewards and merits for fake encounters. They lay open and vulnerable to the tactical offensives of the people's army the deployment of small detachments, checkpoints and patrols. They cannot avoid traveling single file on the highways and country roads.

In any particular area, where the reactionary military or police can concentrate and advance in superior strength, the targeted units of the people's army retreat and observe the deployment of enemy units in order to determine their weak points. The enemy units ultimately become the targets of ambushes, raids and

other guerrilla offensives. Thus they unwittingly transport and supply arms to the people's army.

When the reactionary armed forces seek to encircle the forces of the people's army, the latter have the options of counter-encircling the weak points of the former within the contested area or shifting to another area where the enemy forces are far weaker. Retreat for active defense and shifting of forces are tactics available to the people's army to evade a superior enemy force and seek better circumstances for launching tactical offensives within the shortest span of time.

It is publicly well-known that while the people's army gives full play to tactical offensives in order to seize weapons from the enemy, it can also engage in a wide range of actions that compel the enemy to be on the defensive, merely doing guard duty. Such actions include punitive missions against tyrannical and corrupt officials, harassing enemy camps, sniping, use of command-detonated explosives and the sabotage or destruction of enemy facilities.

Should the Duterte regime proclaim nationwide martial law as in 1972, outlaw all urban-based legal democratic forces critical of it and inflict violence on them, the revolutionary movement can be expected to intensify the people's war and administer justice by arresting and punishing all human rights violators and plunderers, thus forcing the military and police to deploy more armed personnel for protection of these brutal and corrupt officials.

Common sense tells us (sharpened by theoretical and practical support from Marxism-Leninism-Maoism) that the Duterte regime cannot engage in red-tagging and acts of terror without facing fiercer responses from the armed revolutionary movement. Duterte cannot engage in the most brutal acts of butchery and bloodletting without facing the risk of drowning in the same sea of blood that he creates. This is a point that is easily understood by anyone from the developing situation in the Philippines.

So far according to published reports, the people's army has carried out competently guerrilla warfare within the current strategic defensive of the people's war. It has shown determination to wage only the battles that it is capable of winning. It is also increasingly heeding the clamor of the broad masses of the people for accelerated punitive actions against those reactionary officials who have incurred blood debts and plundered the economy and public resources.

Duterte's threat of imposing a fascist dictatorship on the people through a nationwide martial rule and suppressing all democratic rights does not frighten the revolutionary forces of the people but pushes them to undertake punitive actions against the fascist dictator and his brutal and corrupt subalterns. The declaration of nationwide martial law in 1972 by the fascist dictator did not frighten the people and the revolutionary forces but emboldened them to strengthen their ranks and intensify the people's war.

Duterte Regime's Scheme of Mass Intimidation and Murder against Critics and Opponents

August 22, 2019

The tyrant Duterte and his political military and police agents are labeling the critics and opponents of his regime as “communists” and “terrorists”, that they are the biggest problems afflicting the country and that they deserve to be subjected to all kinds of measures to intimidate, silence and even kill extrajudicially or under flimsy legal pretenses.

Of course, the biggest problems plaguing the Filipino nation are imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, which he despot Duterte wishes to preserve through state terrorism. And the world's No.1 terrorist is US imperialism with the assistance of terrorist puppets like Duterte and his armed minions. All of these real terrorists are driving the people to fight for national liberation and democracy.

The criminal methods of labeling and then killing drug suspects extrajudicially by using death squads are now being increasingly used against critics and opponents of the regime in the countryside and even in urban areas. Duterte himself no less has instigated his death squads to red-tag, discredit and then kill them under the pretext that they “resist arrest” (nanlaban) or that they kill each other.

The perpetuation of martial law in Mindanao and the actual implementation of martial law nationwide (without formal proclamation) are being used by the

Duterte regime to subjugate the entire Filipino nation and murder those labeled enemies of the state and thus allow the regime to engage in the most brazen acts of treason, corruption and rigging of the 2019 elections and other criminal acts.

Not satisfied with his “nanlaban” doctrine of killing any one on the pretext of resisting arrest, Duterte is trying to reinforce this license to kill by seeking to amend the Human Security Act or the Anti-Terrorism Law in order to facilitate his political and military agents in labeling his critics and opponents as “terrorists”, allow his armed agents a period of two months to make anyone disappear temporarily or permanently and remove any liability of his armed minions for the arbitrary detention of people.

There is also the move of Duterte’s agents to revive the old discredited Anti-Subversion Law as if the Anti-Terrorism Law and other repressive measures were not enough. The purpose of reviving the latter is to terrorize the people with the provisions for outlawing democratic organizations and suppressing democratic rights and imposing the death penalty on those who are deemed as criminals on the basis of guilt by association, even before they are tried and convicted by any court.

The Anti-Terrorism Law if amended and the Anti-Subversion Law if revived amount to overkill in view of the law on rebellion whose penalty has been raised to reclusion perpetua of 40 years. But this law has been either set aside or augmented by charges of common crimes against suspected political offenders in violation of the long-established Hernandez political offense doctrine, which prohibits complexing the charge of rebellion with charges of common crimes.

While Duterte’s political and armed agents are drawing attention to amendments in the Anti-Terrorism Law and revival of the Anti-Subversion Law, the regime is actually engaged in mass murder under the “nanlaban” doctrine and under the cover of fake encounters. Duterte's armed minions also use the method of planting firearms and explosives in making arbitrary arrests to detain indefinitely or kill extrajudicially those targeted.

Many people wonder why the US, which is still the dominant imperialist power in the Philippines, has tolerated the Duterte regime in boasting that it is becoming independent of the US and is becoming closer to China, in fact going to the extent of selling out Philippine sovereign rights in the West Philippine Sea and favoring China in infrastructure-building and technology agreements.

The reason is that Duterte and his pro-US military officers have assured the US that they will end the Communist Party of the Philippines and the Filipino people's democratic revolution and that the US can continue to ride roughshod over the people and can get bigger gains through charter change

But Duterte can be undone by his failure to end the CPP and the people's democratic revolution and by his success in aggravating the crisis of the ruling system and inciting greater numbers of the Filipino people to join the revolution. Duterte can end up like Marcos who became more of a liability than an asset to the US and was junked in 1986.

China has delayed the implementation of infrastructure projects as a way of pressuring Duterte to declare in more explicit terms his sell out of the sovereign rights over the exclusive economic zone in the West Philippine Sea, especially with regard to the exploration and exploitation of oil and gas resources and the several islands built and militarized by China in the area.

Duterte can be dumped by a combination of pro-US military officers and patriotic elements in the Armed Forces of the Philippine who are opposed to Duterte's traitorous dealings with China as well as his notorious collaboration with Chinese criminal triads in the smuggling of illegal drugs, rice and other commodities and the operation of casinos and offshore gambling.

On the Philippine Electoral System

Interview by Michael Beltran, May 17, 2019

MB1.: How do you see the system of elections as a whole in the country?

JMS: The system is preconditioned and predetermined by the political and economic dominance of foreign monopoly interests, big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists. These have economic and political resources to keep the conduct and results of elections within the confines of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system.

You cannot expect such elections as the means to change the system in order to bring about full national independence, democracy for the working people, social justice, economic development through genuine land reform and national industrialization, ascendance of a patriotic and progressive culture and independent foreign policy.

As it is, the electoral system in the Philippines can at best allow a few patriotic and progressive candidates from the intelligentsia and the toiling masses of workers and peasants to win a few seats, to draw some advantages from the factional competition among the ruling class politicians, develop alliances against the worst reactionaries and obtain bits of reforms that may improve the conditions of national and class oppression and exploitation.

But such electoral system of the exploiting classes can be worse than usual when a tyrannical regime like that of Duterte seeks to monopolize the political system and rigs the electoral system and even the entire political system with the criminal control and use of public and private funds, the Comelec, the military and police in order to predetermine and preprogram the results of the elections.

MB2.: How do you think it will affect NPA guerrillas and the masses when they are constantly being tagged as terrorists by the Duterte government?

JMS: Most vulnerable to red-tagging are the unarmed patriotic and progressive individuals, groups and the masses who are subjected to mass intimidation, surveillance, harassment, injury and even extrajudicial killing by those in power and their agents. Red-tagging is an instrument of state terrorism, tyranny and fascist dictatorship.

Within the framework of armed counterrevolution under the national task force headed by Duterte to end the people's revolutionary movement and preserve the evil forces of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, red-tagging is vainly aimed at terrorizing the people and their patriotic and progressive forces and inducing them to speak and act against the revolutionary movement of the people.

But because the overwhelming majority of the oppressed and exploited people cannot follow the dictates and inducements of the tyrannical regime, they would rather resist in so many legal and practical ways beyond the control of the regime and even better allow or encourage their best sons and daughters of fighting age to join the New People's Army and the underground.

If we learn from recent history, red-tagging and other repressive policies and acts under the Marcos fascist dictatorship did not result in the complete pacification of the people but instead incited so many young men and women to join the NPA. Ultimately, the legal democratic mass movement was stimulated by the steady growth in strength and advance of the NPA. Red-tagging by the enemy unwittingly benefits the armed revolutionary movement.

MB3: What can you say about the results of the latest election?

JMS: The main thing about the latest election in the Philippines is that it was rigged not only through Duterte's control of Comelec and its computer or electronic system but also through institutional coercion; and the results are of course rotten. The anti-people results are most manifested in the crucial senatorial race by the fake election of notorious plunderers, including Duterte's chief bribe collector and chief butcher in his bogus war on drugs.

The senatorial race is crucial because the vile purpose of Duterte is to obtain a two-thirds majority in the Senate in order to railroad charter change to a bogus

kind of federalism, which actually centralizes governmental powers in the hands of a fascist dictator who handpicks his regional and provincial agents among the dynasties and warlords; and allows the same fascist dictator (like Marcos) to benefit most from the sell-out of national sovereignty and patrimony to the imperialists.

The seven-hour information blackout allowed Duterte's Comelec agents to monopolize the transmission of electoral results and engage in large scale dagdag-bawas by changing the votes in favor of the anti-Duterte senatorial candidates as well as party-list candidates into votes for pro-Duterte candidates.

There is a relative "free play" in the election of Lower House candidates and local executive officials because Duterte was confident that in general pro-Duterte candidates would win because of their advantages in pork barrel and public and private funds for campaigning and vote-buying. The "free play" at the level of local candidates was intended to cover the centralized computer rigging for the benefit of pro-Duterte candidates at the level of the senatorial race and the party lists.

MB4: Even if you are engaged in revolutionary activity, what is your view on candidates considered opposition to the Duterte administration?

JMS: Candidates opposed to the Duterte regime are conscious or objective allies of the people's movement for national and social liberation, in certain issues and by some measure, whether they have a formal alliance or not with the revolutionary forces. It is good enough for the Filipino people and their revolutionary movement that there are alliances at whatever level or scale among legal democratic forces of whatever party or group in opposition to the Duterte regime.

By itself, the legal democratic mass movement of the toiling masses and the urban petty bourgeoisie cannot oust Duterte's the tyrannical and terrorist regime. It has to develop a broad united front with the antifascist sections of the upper classes and likewise with antifascist elements in the reactionary armed forces and police. That was how Marcos was overthrown in 1986.

MB5.: How do you think the NPA will respond given that now the Duterte admin is poised to pursue more counter-insurgency plots with the likes of Bato in the senate?

JMS: I think that the NPA has no choice but to intensify the people's war and advance the people's democratic revolution because the Duterte regime has in the first place terminated the peace negotiations within the framework of The Hague Joint Declaration and has been escalating its vicious attacks on the people and the revolutionary forces.

It is in the criminal interest of Duterte to escalate the armed counterrevolution in order to realize his ambition of establishing a fascist dictatorship by scrapping the 1987 constitution under the pretext of shifting to a bogus kind of federalism, as I have pointed out before. He can probably be dissuaded from his evil ambition only by powerful mass protest actions and by the advances of the NPA in field of armed revolution.

Duterte's greed for power and plunder is the main motivation for the series of issuances such as Proclamation Nos. 360 and 374, Memorandum Order No. 32 and Executive Order No. 70 and the all the repressive and murderous actions being undertaken by the regime against the people and their revolutionary forces in order to prevent serious and sincere peace negotiations between the GRP and NDFP and to enable the traitor, tyrant, terrorist and plunderer Duterte to realize fully his fascist dictatorship.

On the May 13 Elections

Interview by J. V. Ayson, May 19, 2019

JV1: What is your overall analysis of the recent mid-terms national and local elections? Would you say that the elections were fair, free, honest and peaceful?

JMS: The Duterte regime and its instruments, the Comelec, military, police and other henchmen of Duterte engaged in flagrant intimidation and cheating. My prediction came true that Duterte would manipulate the conduct and result of the elections to his overwhelming advantage because he has the power, the criminal mind and motivation to cheat.

The elections were no level field for the opposition candidates vis-à-vis those of the regime. They were not free and peaceful, especially in most of Mindanao and other areas designated as trouble spots in Luzon and Mindanao where the military and police conducted red tagging, threats and some killings among the opposition. The elections were extremely dirty due to the threats, vote buying, pre-shading of ballots and vote addition-subtraction through the computers of the Comelec automated electoral system.

JV2: It is noticeable that no independent and opposition candidate won in the senatorial race. Do you believe that the high popularity of the present administration and the so-called bad image of the Liberal Party have something to do with it? Or maybe the result of the elections has been planned if you based this on the warning of massive cheating of Atty. Glenn Chong in November 2018.

JMS: Duterte focused on cheating at the level of senatorial candidates because he wanted to ensure getting the two-thirds or a bigger majority in the Senate to fully obtain support for his fascist dictatorship through chacha for fake

federalism, accomplish 100 percent foreign ownership of natural resources and all businesses in the Philippines and to avoid arrest for his crime of mass killings of suspects under Oplan Tokhang and Oplan Kapayapaan.

It is not true that Duterte is very popular. He stinks because of high taxes and the soaring prices of basic commodities. The masses despise him for the massive killings of suspected addicts and drug pushers and suspected revolutionaries, for being the supreme protector of illegal drugs, for his traitorous sellout to China of the West Philippine Sea, national sovereignty and patrimony, for the rapid and massive corruption of the Duterte family and his collusion with their co-plunderers like the Marcoses, Arroyos and others.

Duterte's high popularity is fabricated by paid poll survey firms, columnists, broadcasters, trolls and bots. Certainly, there are still those among the yellows that stink. But Duterte is far stinkier. Most of the candidates of Otso Deretso and other oppositionists are good. Not one among them won due to the flagrant cheating. Even the best senatorial candidate, Neri Colmenares, was flagrantly and massively cheated. The cheating was planned. The truth is clear. That is what is being said by large numbers of people. Not only by Chong and Gadon who were dropped from the group of Duterte's favorite candidates. They feel bad because even their votes were probably added to those of Duterte's favorites or they were not given a share of the huge fake votes. It does not mean that because they suck-up to Duterte, they would be in the Senate.

JV3: From your estimate and point of view, how severe was the widespread cheating and manipulation and the dirty, anomalous and questionable holding of elections this year? Was it more severe than the widespread cheating, conduct and results of the elections of 2010, 2013 and 2016 under the automated election system?

JMS: In my estimate and based on the people's knowledge, the cheating and manipulation of the elections were systematic, widespread and severe. The cheating done by Duterte was dirty, anomalous and disgusting. Duterte's cheating was more severe than the widespread cheating during the elections of 2010, 2013 and 2016 under the automated election system. Duterte's cheating became automated, faster and more widespread than what Marcos did during the elections under his fullblown nationwide fascist dictatorship.

JV4: Aside from the loss of former BAYAN MUNA Part-list Rep. Neri

Colmenares for senator, is it a possibility that the number of progressive lawmakers decreased? Is there any connection to the apparent campaign of government agencies against progressive parties? How intense was the desire of the present administration to remove the representation and voice in Congress of the poor and oppressed? Does this mean that the Philippine political system is not ready for a “pro-left” senator or president if go by the electoral track record of the progressives?

JMS: Neri Colmenares’ votes should have increased and he should have been a sure winner because he is the most steadfast, sharpest and adept at fighting the criminal policies and actions of the Duterte regime. The people rejects Duterte and his candidates because of his tyranny, treachery, massive killings of suspects, suppression of critics, activists and opposition, plunder, lies and mockery of the poor, women and Christians.

The red tagging and other slanderous actions of the government agencies against the progressive parties were ineffective. The people saw through the lies of the bureaucrats and armed stooges of Duterte, their electioneering and violation of the democratic and electoral rights of the progressive candidates and the people. Only a few were fooled. The Duterte regime was dogged and determined to remove the representation and voice of the poor and oppressed from Congress. Therefore, Neri and Anakpawis were cheated and the votes for progressive party lists were massively reduced. Had there been no automated cheating, the patriotic and progressive candidates in the senatorial and party list races would certainly have increased. Watch out for the coming suppression as mandated by the result of the cheating in the elections by the Duterte regime.

JV5: Low regard for the masses reflected by such terms as “bobotante” (stupid voter) have again come up due to the imminent victory of most of the pro-Duterte candidates for senator. Should personality politics be blamed for this? Or is the social and political system is so rotten that the masses have no choice but cling to the blade when it comes to voting? What really is the relevance of elections for the masses when it comes to their social conditions?

JMS: The Duterte regime should be held accountable for the cheating and not blame the Filipino masses and mock them as “bobotante”. Do not blame the victims of Duterte’s cheating. Those who blame the people are closet pro-Duterte and a few genuine anti-Duterte who think so highly of themselves, especially among the ranks of petty bourgeois who do not trust in the toiling

masses.

It is not only the Duterte regime that should be blamed but the entire ruling system of the puppets of foreign monopoly capitalists, the big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists like Duterte. The voice of the toiling masses are suppressed because of the oppression and exploitation by the entire system and whichever reactionary regime. From this truth is what is known as personality politics among the ranks of the competing mostly reactionary politicians.

The use of Smartmatic-TIM automated electoral system should also be an issue. It is too expensive and easily manipulated by any criminal regime or president like Duterte. Compare the said system with the automated system in Germany or Netherlands. Manual count open to the view of the public and competing parties at precinct level and secure transmission of vote results by ordinary computers are followed. This is far cheaper and easily guarded. The corrupt politicians in the Philippines chose Smartmatic-TIM automated electoral system because it is expensive and is a source of corruption and is more easily manipulated.

JV6: Due to emerging reports on serious allegations of widespread cheating, is there a possibility to establish a broad alliance that will condemn the widespread cheating and denounce the dirty, anomalous and questionable conduct and result of the elections? The conditions are slowly becoming clearer for a broad alliance at this time because of the statements of condemnation on the widespread cheating by different personalities, groups and organizations like Atty. Glenn Chong, Atty. Larry Gadon, BAYAN, KONTRA-DAYA, MAKABAYAN, BMP, CARITAS-NASSA and MMDM.

JMS: Due to flagrant cheating by the Duterte regime, there is far more basis for a broad alliance and broad mass protest movement to condemn, denounce and oust the Duterte regime. It is clear that the leaders and masses of BAYAN, KONTRA-DAYA, MAKABAYAN, BMP, CARITAS-NASSA, MMDM and others want to strengthen the alliance and manifest the potency of people's power against a tyrannical regime. I do not know if Gadon and Chong would make good their criticism of the cheating.

A broad united front and militant mass protests are urgently needed to promptly counter even more evil policies and actions of Duterte due to his successful cheating in the elections. Big gatherings and marches must be launched in public places and inside and around Christian churches. In the long run, there should be gigantic gatherings of people's power to topple the evil regime of a monster like Marcos.

JV7: Would the Senate, Congress and local government be independent and patriotic when most of the winning candidates are pro-Duterte? Is there a chance that there will be public official who will oppose the policies and programs of the present administration?

JMS: The Senate, Congress and local governments which are pro-Duterte and benefited from the cheating and is benefiting from the continuing attacks of the Filipino masses and pillage of the country's treasury, cannot be independent and patriotic. But as long as there is oppression and exploitation, especially if these intensify, stronger masses and pro-people and heroic leaders would arise to fight the evil policies and programs of the Duterte regime. Some public officials won despite Duterte's intense and widespread cheating.

JV8: What can the masses expect from the last three years of the present administration? Is there a chance that the present administration would be pushed to uphold policies and programs that are patriotic and pro-people? Do you see a possibility of a trend toward reforms, legal struggles, armed revolution, reaction, and even campaign to oust the present administration in the coming years?

JMS: The Filipino masses cannot expect anything from the last three years of the Duterte regime except more oppression and exploitation. It is difficult and incorrect to expect that this regime would change and uphold policies and

programs that are patriotic and pro-people. There is no, not even a distant possibility, that the regime would change nor that it would agree to meaningful socioeconomic and political reforms.

This regime plans to establish a fascist dictatorship and serve the foreign monopolies, the big compradors and landlords and the narrow clique of plunderers and killers. This regime is determined to suppress and rout the broad united front, the legal mass movement and the armed revolution. Thus, the people and the patriotic and progressive forces have no choice but to fight until victory in ousting Duterte from power.

Even if Duterte presumes that he can kill the legal democratic movement which is exposed in the cities, he really cannot possibly do so. He would only succeed in pushing the Filipino masses to rise up. It is even more distant for Duterte to be able to kill the people's armed revolution. Armed revolutionaries are bound to increase due to the suppression of patriotic and progressive forces and people in the cities and the countryside.

The armed revolution has a national scope and is deeply rooted among the toiling masses. They are capable of fighting and defeating a rotting regime that has limited strength and resources and many weaknesses due to the worsening economic and political crisis of the ruling semicolonial and semifeudal system.

State Terrorism on the Pretext of Anti-Terrorism

February 27, 2020

The Philippine Senate, now dominated by an overwhelming number of pro-Duterte senators as a result of the rigging of the 2019 mid-term elections, has approved Senate Bill 1083, otherwise known as the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020, seeking to amend the Human Security Act of 2007.

The bill aims to legalize and aggravate the already rampant state terrorism of red tagging, arbitrary arrests and extrajudicial killings on the pretext of anti-terrorism. It is meant to further entrench the de facto fascist dictatorship of Duterte without need of any formal declaration of martial law as Marcos did in 1972.

Like the term subversion during the Cold War and martial rule under Marcos, terrorism is vaguely defined to make it a catch-all term for any concerted action or any common crime and for taking punitive measures against the broadest range of opposition, critics and social activists in violation of basic democratic rights and fundamental freedoms.

The bill seeks to penalize those presumed by the authorities to propose, incite, conspire, participate in the planning, training, preparation, and facilitation of a “terrorist” act; as well as those presumed to provide material support to “terrorists”, and recruit members for a “terrorist” organization.

It enables the police or military personnel to arbitrarily place individuals and organizations under surveillance; compel telcos to divulge calls and messages; arrest these people without warrant, and detain them for an extended period up to 14 days.

It allows the preliminary proscription of suspected “terrorist” organizations prior to their being given an opportunity to be informed of the charge and avail of counsel and judicial review. It lowers the standard for warrantless arrest and detention.

It removes from the Human Security Act of 2007 the compensation for persons wrongfully detained. Without any liability, the hounds of the state will violate human rights with impunity and on a wider scale than ever before.

Regional trial courts can outlaw individuals and organizations as “terrorists” on the mere say so of the regime, the police or military as well as upon the request of foreign or supra-national agencies. The imperialist masters will also benefit from the state terrorism of the Duterte puppet regime.

We can be certain that the regime and its military and police agents will engage in surveillance, warrantless arrests and arbitrary detention, cruel and disproportionate punishments, and violations of the right to freedom of association, free expression, right to privacy, mobility, and to due process.

The Lower House of Congress, also dominated by the pro-Duterte supermajority united by pork barrel corruption, is also in the process of passing a so-called anti-terrorism bill like that of the Senate. Such bill is synchronized with bills for changing the charter and extending the terms of elective government officials.

The Duterte regime and its followers know no limits in their escalation of the oppression and exploitation of the broad masses of the people. They are closing every possibility for peace negotiations with the NDFP. They are inciting the people to wage all forms of resistance in defense of their national and democratic rights.

As did the Anti-Subversion law in the past, the current “anti-terrorist” legislation by the running dogs of Duterte in Congress will not deter the people’s revolutionary movement but will persuade more millions of Filipinos to take the road of armed revolution in order to achieve their national and social liberation from the semicolonial and semifeudal conditions that have been made more intolerable than ever by the tyranny of the Duterte regime.

Duterte Regime Is Culpable for Allowing Covid-19 to Spread for more than Two Months in the Philippines

March 15, 2020

Since the public report on the outbreak of Covid-19 in China in early January this year, the Duterte regime has downplayed it for more than two months and allowed more than half a million of travelers from China, including thousands from Wuhan to enter the Philippines. Until now, travelers from China can freely enter the Philippines as tourists and POGO employees.

It is unbelievable that only a few scores have been afflicted by Covid-19 in the Philippines. The number is probably much higher. As admitted by Department of Health (DOH) officials, no systematic testing and counting have been made due to lack of personnel and resources. The virus has spread nationwide, as reports come from various provinces about fatalities due to the virus.

The Duterte regime is totally unprepared to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic and to safeguard the health of the Filipino people because it has cut the meager DOH budget by Php 16.6 billion for 2020 in order to favor the regime's military overspending and other graft-laden programs and projects.

There is gross absence of public health personnel and resources over wide areas. This abets the further spread of the pandemic. There is no testing for Covid-19 infection at the community level. In more than 95 percent of communities at the barangay level, there are definitely no testing kits for use by health workers.

Provisions are absent for bed spaces in hospitals, clinics and improvised places for patients. There is a scarce supply of masks, thermal scanners, disinfectants, medicines and oxygen tanks. Those already infected with pneumonia due to

Covid-19 are certain to die in most cases.

In his recent press conference concerning the pandemic, Duterte exposed his utter lack of serious concern for the health and livelihood of the people by concentrating on the deployment of armed 40,000 soldiers and police at so many check points in order to enforce lock-down on Metro Manila, which he euphemistically called community quarantine.

He failed to mention how a sufficient number of health workers are to be deployed at the community level in order to check symptoms, test and treat those infected with Covid-19. In fact, his sole or main consideration is to use his armed minions to intimidate the people, deprive them of medical attention, prevent people from earning their daily bread and hamper the production and distribution of basic goods.

The Duterte regime is weaponizing the Covid-19 pandemic to intimidate and coerce the people to submit to the scheme of fascist dictatorship and perpetuation of the Duterte dynasty beyond 2022 despite the tyrant's deteriorating health, which is conspicuously indicated by his ashen face and incoherent speech.

Duterte is completely out of his mind by failing to see the far-reaching consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic in relation to the rapidly worsening crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system due to his own anti-national, anti-democratic and anti-people policies and actions as well as due to the rapid deterioration of the world capitalist system.

The Covid-19 pandemic is threatening the public health and national economy and is exposing how foul and inimical the Duterte policies and actions have been to public interest. The broad masses of the people are outraged and desirous of ousting Duterte from power.

The Duterte regime has aggravated the conditions of underdevelopment, unemployment and mass poverty by militarizing and making the government fascist in the name of anticommunism and by having no sense of development but to obtain onerous foreign loans in order to maintain the infrastructure for exporting raw materials and importing manufactures.

But abroad, Covid-19 has also some major damaging effect on the world capitalist system in terms of disrupting production and causing a financial crash

and is exposing fundamental weaknesses of the system like over-accumulation by one percent of the population, inflation of assets, the crisis of overproduction, the aggravation of the prolonged depression since 2008 and the onset of a deeper round of depression.

The Duterte regime is now confronted by a situation similar to that faced by the Marcos fascist dictatorship from 1979 to 1986. The bankruptcy of the ruling system and the tightening of international credit due to the worsening crisis of global capitalism will drastically reduce the ability of the regime to buoy itself up by obtaining foreign loans and enlarging the entire public debt.

The rapidly worsening economic, social and political crisis is further debilitating and discrediting the Duterte regime and is outraging the people and making them desire revolutionary change. As a result, the revolutionary movement of the people is growing stronger than ever before. The persistence of the tyrannical, traitorous, genocidal and corrupt regime can only serve to generate favorable conditions for the advance of the new democratic revolution.

On the Threat of Martial Law and Military Junta

Interview by Raissa Robles, April 24, 2020

May I ask you the following questions:

1) Duterte has formed an Inter-Agency Task Force to fight the corona virus and most of its members are generals whom he had appointed Armed Forces chief-of-staff and then retired. In a number of speeches inside military camps and a military hospital, he has urged the military to take over and form a junta in case anything should happen to him or they simply want him out.

Can this IATF body be turned into a similar one like Ferdinand Marcos' Rolex 12 which planned and operationalized the imposition of Martial Law?

JMS: The Inter-Agency Task Force of Duterte is quite similar to the Rolex 12 of Marcos which planned and operationalized the imposition of Martial Law. It consists of Duterte loyalists who owe to their commander-in-chief their previous promotions in the military service and opportunities for corruption in and out of the military service. The IATF is also a coordinate of the National Task Force-ELCAC which was earlier formed under Executive Order 70 to militarize the government and establish a fascist state.

Duterte is using the IATF to undertake a de facto martial law regime in the name of fighting the corona virus and to prepare the way for the formal declaration of martial law and the full imposition of a Marcos-type fascist dictatorship. There is also an added threat by Duterte that in case he dies because of his physical and mental illnesses or because of assassination by any of his many political enemies and rivals in the drug business the IATF becomes a military junta to rule the Philippines beyond the bounds of the 1987 Constitution.

2) Duterte has a draconian law in the works— a revised Human Security Act that could stamp down on political dissent, surveil and arrest dissenters for longer periods. On top of this, he is still trying to change the 1987 Constitution. Today, he controls Congress through his political allies and is packing the Supreme Court with his appointees. Given all these, do you think he can do a

Marcos?

JMS: Duterte can do a Marcos by imposing a full fascist dictatorship on the Filipino people. Aside from having turned the military and police forces as his instruments for tyranny, he can change the 1987 Constitution to make himself fully a fascist dictator. For the purpose, he can use his supermajorities in the Lower House and Senate which he obtained through pork barrel corruption and rigging of the Comelec count in 2019. He can also use the Supreme Court to further legitimize his illegal and immoral acts, as previously done in the junking of the plunder cases of his allies and the removal of the sitting Supreme Court justice.

As I said previously, there is already a de facto martial law regime in the Philippines. Executive Order No. 70 has set the policy for such a regime under the pretext of anticommunism. It is being buttressed by a revised Human Security Act that can suppress by military force political dissent and can surveil, harass, arrest without judicial warrant and detain dissenters for longer periods. Duterte has already used both houses of Congress to obtain emergency powers and use public funds as he pleases under the pretext of fighting the Covid-19 contagion.

There are preparations for changing the 1987 Constitution to pave the way for the full establishment of a fascist dictatorship as the main objective in conjunction with such objectives as to establish a pseudo-federal system of government under a highly centralized fascist dictatorship and favor foreign investors with the right to have 100 percent ownership of land and enterprises engaged in natural-resource exploitation, public utilities, media and other types of businesses previously reserved to Filipino citizens 100 percent or at least to the extent of 60 percent.

3) What is the biggest difference between Duterte and Marcos?

JMS: In terms of personal characteristics, the biggest difference between Duterte and Marcos is that the current president is already old and sickly both physically and mentally. When Marcos set out to become a fascist dictator, he was much younger, more agile physically and mentally and more articulate in deceptive rhetoric about “saving the republic and building a new society”. Duterte comes out as merely a crazy thug and a farcical copy of Marcos.

In terms of crisis conditions to exploit in order to realize fascist dictatorship, Marcos still had plenty of allowance to take foreign loans, raising the foreign debt from USD 500 million in 1965 to more than USD 28 billion in 1986 and he was faced with a still small armed revolutionary movement that had only 9 automatic rifles in 1969 and only 6,100 automatic rifles in 1986. Now, Duterte is hampered by a more lopsided underdeveloped economy, by far bigger trade and budgetary deficits and far bigger local and foreign public debt, now aggravated by the deleterious consequences of the Covid-19 crisis.

And of course, Duterte is faced with an armed revolutionary movement of the people with plenty of experience in frustrating strategic enemy campaigns of military suppression, a people's army with around 10,000 fighters and people's militia with hundreds of thousands of members in more than 110 guerrilla fronts in 74 out of 81 provinces, mass organizations of different sectors with millions of members and local organs of political power that constitute the people's democratic government.

I have been informed by AFP insiders that Duterte and his generals are having nightmares over the potential of the NPA guerrilla fronts in launching tactical offensives even only at the rate of three to five offensives per guerrilla front per month as the socioeconomic and political crisis will further deepen and worsen.

4) Do you think he will declare Martial Law or just continue threatening to?

JMS: It is in the personal and political character of Duterte to make threats of formally declaring martial law and butchering many people. But I am not absolutely sure that he will carry out his threats. As described by Waldy Carbonell and Homobono Adaza, Duterte is an extreme coward in physical and moral terms but who is always trying hard to show off that he is a killer and a strong man. Most of the time, he merely orders his armed minions to butcher the victims who are already hogtied, as in the mass murder of 30,000 drug suspects. And according to himself, he himself as mayor of Davao City killed some individuals extrajudicially, while he was in the secure company of his armed minions, supposedly for the purpose of inspiring them to kill people upon his orders.

What can deter or prevent Duterte from formally declaring martial law and establishing a fascist dictatorship is a combination of various organized forces similar to those that concurred and moved towards the overthrow of Marcos in

the years following the assassination of Ninoy Aquino, 1983 to 1986. The broad masses of the people keep on rising in protest mass actions until they inspire the anti-Duterte groups within the armed forces and police to junk Duterte. The churches already so much abused and insulted by the Duterte regime can support and encourage the broad masses of the people and the various anti-Duterte groups to fight for democracy and human rights. Duterte will be in deeper shit if he exposes himself as seeking or enjoying the protection of any foreign power, the US or China or both, in order to keep him in power against the popular demand for his ouster.

For Marcos to be overthrown, the New People's Army did not have to be in Metro Manila in any significant number. But with their relatively smaller size then, it could carry out many tactical offensives which pressured the Marcos regime and which persuaded the US to junk Marcos as a liability prejudicial to the persistence of the pro-US Philippine ruling system. Now, the NPA has a far bigger and more widespread strength than ever before. There are estimates that in due time soon the NPA can inflict serious blows to the Duterte regime in the countryside, whether to help discourage the regime from the project of fascist dictatorship or become the main fighting force against an already installed full fascist dictatorship.

On the Current Character of the Philippine Economy

April 26, 2020

Economists and statisticians of the Philippine reactionary state and the IMF claim that the Philippines is a “newly-industrialized country” or an “emerging market”. The illusion of industrial development is conjured mainly by understating the share of agriculture in production output and employment and overstating the shares of industry and services, especially the latter, which are not founded on Philippine industrial development.

Underdevelopment, unemployment and mass poverty

In fact, under the neoliberal policy for the last four decades, the underdeveloped pre-industrial and semifeudal character of the Philippine economy has been aggravated and deepened by making it more consumption-oriented and dependent on imported equipment and consumer manufactures, mounting foreign debt, volatile flows of portfolio investments, foreign exchange remittances of migrant workers and the income of call centers.

The GDP for 2019 is USD 376 billion. Divide this with the population of 109 million to get the GDP per capita. The GDP shares by sectors as of 2018 are supposedly as follows: agriculture 7.4 percent, industry 34 percent and services, 58.6 percent. The labor force of 45 million is distributed as follows: services 58.9 percent, agriculture 22.0 percent and industry 19.1 percent. These figures for sector outputs and employment are unreliable to say the least and need to be corrected by further research.

Dividing the GDP by the population to get the GDP per capita and understating the number of poor people at 16.6 percent by using only USD 3.20 per day to set

the poverty line are a sneaky way of covering up the gross inequality in which the foreign monopoly corporations take their superprofits and the less than one percent of the population, who are the big compradors and landlords, take most of the pie at the expense of more than 90 percent of the population.

The reactionary government claims that the rate of unemployment is only 4.5 percent. But some of the officials admit that around 10 million of the labor force is unemployed. That's 22 percent of the total labor force of 45 million. Add those 10 to 12 million migrant workers (excluding the undocumented or noncontractual) who have gone abroad to look for jobs. We can say that nearly 50 percent of the labor force is unemployed.

The agricultural sector and the peasantry

The share of agriculture at only 7.4 percent of the estimated GDP for 2020 is too small. The peasants, landlords and the merchants do not declare fully the market value of the agricultural product. Statisticians work mainly on estimates, aerial reconnaissance of farms and limited precise data. It must also be taken into account that most of the food crop does not reach the market because it is consumed by the peasants themselves. Swidden farming, backyard animal husbandry, localized fishing, handicrafts, carpentry, intra-community peddling and other sideline occupations are also not taken into account.

The share of agriculture in employment is supposed to be only 22 percent of the labor force of 45 million. Even by the official statistics, employment in agriculture still accounts for more than 53 percent in relation to that in the industry sector as the other basic productive sector. There are supposed to be only 10 million Filipino farmers. It is unclear as to how this figure has been arrived at and whether it refers only to heads of farming households. It is obviously a false figure because it is surpassed even by the number of migrant Filipino workers abroad who are estimated at 10 to 12 million. We know for a fact that peasant households, including children who are 10 years old or even younger, work as a productive unit on the farm.

The average size of the peasant family or household is larger than the national average of 4.4 members per family. There should be at least 44 million peasants. The peasants cannot be counted as if they were workers formally employed individually and then put to assembly line work in factories. It is a matter of necessity that a peasant household works as a collective and attends to farming and some sideline occupations.

Entire peasant households or families fall under the category of a social class on the basis of their means of livelihood and other related criteria. That is also true in the case of families belonging to other classes, unless the individual member leaves the class in a certain way.

This is an important point in the class analysis of the population in view of the systematic attempt to reduce the number of peasants. A member of a peasant family remains in the peasant class even if he or she works as a seasonal farm worker or is labeled as unemployed or underemployed, unless such peasant

shifts to another class, such as a peasant who becomes an industrial worker or a rich peasant becomes a small landlord through merchant-usury operations or his son gets high formal education and joins the urban petty bourgeoisie. In big numbers, poor and lower middle peasants double as seasonal farm workers on the land of others as or seasonal odd jobbers in urban areas to augment their inadequate farm income.

Industry and service sectors

In combination with the big foreign banks and firms, the comprador big bourgeoisie and the bureaucrat capitalists have profited most from construction booms, accelerated mining and semi-manufacturing in the industrial sector. What is passed off as Philippine industry does not produce machine tools and most metals and chemicals of strategic importance. Even semi-manufacturing dependent on imported equipment and components has declined.

All subsectors of Philippine industry are dependent on the importation of equipment, fuel and other components and on the export of mineral ores, some semi-manufactures, fruit crops, rubber and palm oil. Mining has been extremely profitable for the big compradors and their foreign partners because the values of mineral products are extremely underdeclared to reduce tax payments. There are gross disparities between the declared values at the Philippine ports and those at the foreign destinations.

The kind of service sector that exists in the Philippines is not the extension of an industrial economy or so-called post-industrial economy in an overdeveloped country but that of a pre-industrial and semifeudal economy. The wholesale and retail trade, banks, hotels, tourism, recreation, education, media, communications, computer services, handicraft and repair shops, city, gas and water supply are founded on the subordination of the Philippines as an underdeveloped country to the industrially developed countries.

The big comprador enterprises thrive in the service sector with their big service enterprises. The output values of and the employment in these enterprises are rated to the extent of more than 58 percent, far higher than those of the basic productive sectors amounting together to 42 percent. The service sector is bloated enough by the big enterprises but is further bloated by estimates of the output values and employment in the small and medium service enterprises, petty peddling, oddjobbing and various sorts of self-employment.

Worsening conditions of unemployment

The surplus population or reserve army of labor has rapidly increased in both the urban slums and rural areas. The previous accumulation of unemployed and odd jobbers in slum areas generate their own kind. And continuously the rural areas provide the urban areas with new waves of unemployed and odd jobbers aside

from those who choose to remain in the countryside to compete for the dwindling odd jobs on allotted farms and plantations or to engage in slash and burn farming in forest regions and on mountain slopes.

Because of the lack of genuine land reform and national industrialization and stagnation and decline of the basic productive sectors of agriculture and industry, the semifeudal and pre-industrial character of the economy has been aggravated and the surplus population or unemployed has increased rapidly from the population growth in both rural and urban areas.

In the wake of the global economic stagnation since the financial crash of 2008, the demand for Philippine exports has weakened. The trade and budgetary deficits have grown. Servicing the accumulated foreign debt and getting new loans are becoming more difficult. The conditions of underdevelopment, unemployment and mass poverty are worsening.

In the months previous to Covid-19, the Duterte regime boasted of making the highest rate of economic growth in Asia at 6 to 7 percent and keeping the unemployment rate low at only 4.5 percent, better than the unemployment rate in a number of more developed countries. But the impact and consequences of the pandemic have unmasked and aggravated the crisis of the world capitalist system and that of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system in the Philippines.

Unraveling of neoliberalism and probable consequences

After four decades of dominance, neoliberalism is unraveling even for the imperialist countries. It has caused more frequent and worse economic and political crisis. This 2020 a crisis worse than the Great Depression has come on top of the prolonged global stagnation since the financial crash of 2008. We can be certain that the basic semifeudal and pre-industrial character of the Philippine economy and the peasant majority of the labor force will become more exposed.

The illusion of the Philippines becoming a newly-industrialized country with a dwindling peasant population will be dispelled by the global depression, the drying up of international credit, the withdrawal of hedge funds and the decreased incomes of OFWs and call center employees.

There will be a dwindling of funds to sustain private construction and some public works; maintain the consumption-oriented and debt-dependent economy;

and cover the ever growing trade and budgetary trade deficits and the worsening international balance of payments.

What will happen to the Philippines as the global capitalist economy goes into a worse state of stagnation and depression and the demand for cheap raw materials, cheap semimanufactures and cheap labor from the Philippines goes down, international credit becomes tighter and the problem of maintaining a consumption-oriented and debt-dependent country worsens?

The Philippine social volcano will erupt more violently than ever before. As the socioeconomic and political crisis worsens, the reactionary government and the ruling classes will become ever more exploitative and oppressive. As a consequence, the broad masses of the people are driven to resist along the line of new democratic revolution through people's war.

Tsikahan with Tito Jo

Questions on the Anti-Terror Bill (ATB)

June 7, 2020

1. Tito, in layman's term, what is the anti-terrorism bill and how is it different from the Martial Law imposed by Marcos?

JMS: The so-called Anti-Terrorism Bill is actually a bill to carry out state terrorism against the people, without any constitutional restraint and with absolutely no respect for the right to due process and for the rights to free speech and assembly. Anyone can be surveilled, framed up and arrested without judicial warrant and detained without charges for as long as 24 days on mere suspicion of being terrorist or associated with terrorist or for speaking or joining any assembly to make a criticism, complaint, protest and demand against a policy or action of the Duterte regime.

The so-called Anti-Terrorism Council exercises the powers and roles of the executive and judiciary. It decides all by itself who is a terrorist that must be subjected to red-tagging, vilification, surveillance, arrest or detention. In violation of the constitution, it issues the orders for the arrest those labeled as terrorists and for their detention far beyond the three-day limit to detain anyone without any charge. The Anti-Terrorism Council plays the role of the Inquisition in medieval times in Europe.

The so-called Anti-Terrorism Bill gives those in power the license to abduct and kill people with the unlimited latitude of time and opportunity for them to torture

and kill their victims extrajudicially and erase the evidence of their crimes. It removes all liability for illegal arrest and detention. It emboldens the military and police to commit crimes with impunity against those who are tagged as terrorists just because they criticize the regime and make demands on it in the exercise of their freedom of speech and assembly.

If Duterte approves and signs the bill, he achieves fully his goal of full-blown fascist dictatorship without having to formally declare martial law nationwide. A law of this kind for the purpose of state terrorism practically junks the Bill of Rights in the Constitution and replaces it with a Bill of State Terrorism. It would make Duterte a far worse and more brazen fascist dictator than Marcos.

Marcos did not junk the Bill of Rights outrightly but went around it by invoking the commander-in-chief provision on martial law and invented the factual grounds for the martial law declaration. With the brazenness of Duterte and his servants in Congress in putting forward this sort of unconstitutional and anti-democratic bill, we can expect the worst acts of state terrorism surpassing those of the Marcos fascist regime and also those of the Duterte regime which have earned the condemnation of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights.

2. Now that Duterte said that there is no urgency and that he would review the ATB before signing it, what should be our next steps?

JMS: The people should remain vigilant and militant. Duterte railroaded the passage of the bill in the Senate and Lower House. Now, he is play acting that he is being deliberate and prudent because of the massive critical response of the legal, constitutional and human rights experts and the broad masses of the people in the Philippines and abroad who have condemned the brazenly unconstitutional and anti-democratic provisions of the so-called Anti-Terrorism Bill.

Duterte is very capable of suddenly declaring a fake revolutionary government to scrap the 1987 constitution in the same manner as Cory Aquino scrapped the 1973 constitution in 1986 or he can push through charter change and adjust the new constitution to the provisions of the so-called Anti-Terrorism Bill. After all, he controls the Comelec and the TIM-Smartmatic vote count and use a quick referendum to railroad his bizarre kind of constitution. The Filipino people are now confronted with the diabolical and criminal political brutes in power and must be ready to wage all forms of resistance to fight the worst kinds of state terrorism.

3. It is said that ATB is greatly related to or influenced by the US regime, in what way?

JMS: US imperialism, especially its so-called deep state, actually supports Duterte's vow of destroying the revolutionary movement of the Filipino people by any means and his promise of charter change to allow the US and other corporations 100 percent ownership of enterprises owning land, exploiting the natural resources, operating public utilities, mass media and all kinds of businesses.

Duterte has pleased Trump since their conversation in 2017 by terminating the peace negotiations with the NDFP and continuing to wage an all-out dirty war of state terrorism against the revolutionary movement. And he has assured Trump that he has been merely humoring China to get infrastructure loans.

But in fact, he has emboldened China to build and militarize seven artificial islands in the West Philippine Sea and has allowed China to make major inroads in the telecommunications and energy sectors of the Philippines economy. And certain major US officials are not happy about these as well as the drug smuggling by the Duterte drug syndicate.

4. How will the people's struggle advance or move forward now that ATB is in place? What can you advise migrant organizations and revolutionary forces abroad? How can we prepare and support the people's movement in the Philippines?

JMS: While the ATB is not scrapped, the Filipino people in the motherland and abroad must remain vigilant and militant against it. As I have already explained, Duterte is capable of doing anything to use the ATB to his own advantage. At the least, while he does not sign it, he can use it for mass intimidation and for pressuring the social activists, his critics and the opposition.

Duterte is a man without any principle and moral scruple. He has been certified as a psychopathic narcissist, who is boundlessly obsessed with self-interest and self-satisfaction and who gloats over the humiliation, suffering and death of other people. He likes to pull surprises. One day he said that he wished to junk the Visiting Forces Agreement, then ultimately he would say he loved it.

5. Is it true that the revolutionary forces in the countryside are decreasing? What will be the effect of the ATB to the number of revolutionaries and their strength?

Can you say that they will be pulverized?

JMS: Based on the daily fake news circulated by the Duterte regime and military in the commercial mass media about fake surrenders, fake casualties, fake raids and fake community support projects and the like against it, the NPA has ceased to exist as early one or two years ago. So, there is no need for the ATB. But the problem for the state terrorists of the Duterte regime is that the NPA enjoys the deep and wide support of the people, keeps on growing because of worsening conditions of oppression and exploitation and carries out tactical offensives nationwide.

The NPA is obviously alive and kicking and is growing in strength. That's why Duterte and his armed minions are going crazy unleashing all kinds of psywar and dirty acts of state terrorism. They find it necessary to push the ATB which is brazenly unconstitutional and anti-democratic. They are unwittingly exposing their desperation and frustrations. And they seem not to realize that all the repressive laws and actions that they unleash serve to outrage the people and goad them to join armed revolution.

The ATB will not decrease the strength of the NPA or pulverize it. Look at how all the people concerned with human rights and the entire Filipino people are condemning the ATB. This kind of terrorist law merely calls attention to the human right violations that have been committed and will be further committed by the Duterte regime on a wider scale. It arouses the people and inspires the most advanced activists to join the revolutionary underground and the New People's Army. As a result, the ranks of the NPA are rapidly expanding.

6. It is timely how Duterte suspended the termination of VFA while at the same time railroading the passing of ATB. Few weeks before that he also bought a new naval ship, are these all connected? How?

JMS: Duterte is a big liar. At no time has he been against the Visiting Forces Agreement and other military treaties with the US. Duterte and long-time US intelligence DND secretary Lorenzana have always been pushing their shopping list of military equipment to Washington and the Pentagon. All the time they have been begging for weapons from the US, wasting public funds on these and getting bribes from the private US military suppliers.

It is obvious that the US officialdom, from Trump to the so-called deep state, is

happy with the ATB and Duterte's glee in receiving new military deliveries from the US, including attack helicopters, planes, a naval ship, artillery and bombs. These are profitable for the US military industrial complex and a huge financial burden for the Filipino people.

7. What can we expect from Duterte in the upcoming days? Can the Filipino people finally oust him or will he last until the end of his term?

JMS: It is possible for Duterte to be ousted any time before the end of his term in 2022 because the people are undergoing terrible suffering and are eager to rise up and oust him because he has been responsible for aggravating the economic and political crisis of the ruling system and for using the Covid-19 crisis to grab emergency powers, steal colossal amounts of public funds in the hundreds of billions of pesos and escalate repressive measures. He has failed to provide the medical solution to the Covid-19 epidemic and to deliver the promised food and economic assistance to the people.

The ouster of Duterte depends on how the patriotic and progressive forces can generate militant mass actions and build a broad united front with all opposition forces, including the conservative political groups and anti-Duterte groups within the AFP and PNP and among retired military and police officers. As in the dying years of the Marcos fascist regime, the armed revolutionary movement can also intensify their tactical offensives to gain strength and undermine the Duterte tyranny and persuade Duterte's imperialist backers that he has become more of a liability than an asset to them and to the Philippine ruling system.

But let us say that Duterte survives the ouster movement before the end of his term and becomes a full-fledged fascist dictator ala Marcos through charter change or a fake revolutionary government or he opts for his daughter Sara or Bong Go to succeed him because he controls the Comelec and TIM-Smartmatic vote count. The conditions will be even better for the overthrow of no less than the entire ruling system by 2022 and thereafter. By then the crisis conditions in the Philippines and the world shall have become far worse than now. And the people will become even more desirous of struggling for a revolutionary change of system.

8. If we indeed, oust the Duterte dictatorship, who or what will replace him? Won't there be another historical mistake such as the election of Cory Aquino that is in one way or another, the same as Marcos?

JMS: Whoever will be the president to replace Duterte before 2022 will depend on the balance of forces among those who can oust the regime. The important thing for the patriotic and progressive forces is to get rid of a terrorist regime and to gain democratic mass strength in the process. Certainly, the people's democratic government in the countryside will become stronger and the ruling system will become even weaker.

I have learned from relatives, province-mates and friends within the military that they can support the oust-Duterte mass movement if it comes out with mass uprisings as large as those in 1986 against Marcos and are willing to install Vice President Robredo as the constitutional successor to the physically, mentally and morally deranged president. Should the patriotic and progressive forces reject a priori such a prospect? Is it not better to oust Duterte in the easiest way possible than to allow him to stay on in power?

It is wrong for anyone to think that it was an error to fight Marcos and thereby pave the way for the presidency of Cory Aquino. The national democratic movement and the armed revolutionary gained strength by fighting the Marcos fascist dictatorship and causing his ouster and his replacement by Cory Aquino. The most important thing for the revolutionary forces to do is to keep fighting and on gaining strength and taking advantage of the conflict among the reactionaries.

It is not an alternative to cease fighting the Duterte regime for fear that the revolutionary movement will only pave the way for the ascendance of another reactionary leader. For the revolutionary movement to topple the entire ruling system depends on its own strength and the balance of forces. The full range of the united front policy is to strengthen the basic alliance of workers and peasants, win over the middle social strata and take advantage of the splits among the reactionaries in order to isolate and destroy the power of one enemy after another.

9. Tito, we are observing that in Europe, second-generation Filipinos are very vocal against the anti-terror bill, in fact, they are actively campaigning against it and even conducting discussions. What can you say about this? How do we in Anakbayan-Europa maximize the opportunity to build chapters in various European countries and what can be our important role in this time?

JMS: I welcome and appreciate the fact that in Europe, second-generation

Filipinos are very vocal against the anti-terror bill, in fact, they are actively campaigning against it and even conducting discussions. Indeed, the Duterte tyranny has become so notorious because of its crimes of treason, brutality, corruption and dishonesty. It is now even more notorious than ever before because of the recent release of the report of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights condemning the Duterte regime for grave human rights violations.

In view of the growing notoriety of the Duterte regime and the desire of the Filipino youth and people abroad to help the Filipino people's struggle for national freedom and democracy, Anakbayan-Europa should intensify its efforts to build chapters in various European countries. With the use of the internet and the video conference, you can form chapters even at the level of cities consequent to the formation of country chapters. Your most important role is to arouse, organize and mobilize the Filipino youth in Europe. You can also develop solidarity relations with non-Filipino youth organizations and team up with them in exposing and opposing the Duterte regime.

10. Anything else, you would like to add?

JMS: I am happy to be able to converse with you and our listeners through this forum. I hope that a forum like this can inform and enlighten and even more importantly inspire us to act resolutely and militantly for the purpose of arousing, organizing and mobilizing our compatriots and developing solidarity relations with all foreign friends who are interested in a better and brighter world of greater freedom, democracy, social justice, all-round development and international solidarity of peoples. Thank you. I look forward to being with you in the next web forum.

Basic Problems of the Filipino People

Initial Questions and Answers on Chapter 2

of Philippine Society and Revolution

Anakbayan-Europe NDLine Online School

Answers by Jose Maria Sison to questions from Anghelo Godino,

June 21, 2020

1. The Philippines has three basic problems: imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism. Let's start with imperialism. What is it? How did it develop to be a problem of the Philippines? Why is it a problem?

JMS: Imperialism is monopoly capitalism. It is the highest and final stage of capitalism. It dominates the economy in the industrial capitalist countries. It involves the merger of industrial and bank capital to form the financial oligarchy that is very parasitic. It exports not only surplus goods but more importantly surplus capital in the form of direct investments and loans.

It uses combines of monopoly corporations as cartels and syndicates within particular imperialist countries and within one bloc of imperialist countries against another bloc. It is the motive force of the imperialist countries in their competition to obtain sources of cheap raw materials, markets of surplus goods, fields of investments and spheres of influence. Such a competition involves a struggle for a redivision of the world, leading to wars of varying scales.

US imperialism engaged Spanish colonialism in a war starting in 1898 in order

to grab the colonies of the latter in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines. Then in its Treaty of Paris with Spain on December 10, the US bought the Philippines from Spain and proceeded to wage a war of aggression against the Filipino people who had earlier declared national independence on June 12, 1998, liberated the whole country except the walled inner city of Manila (Intramuros) and basically defeated Spanish colonialism.

US imperialism became a problem to the Philippines and the Filipino people because it violated their national sovereignty by waging a war of aggression that killed at least 1.5 million Filipinos, suppressed all patriotic and popular forms of resistance and turned the Philippines into a colony for exploitation. The US took superprofits from the Philippines as a source of cheap raw materials, as market for surplus goods, as field of investment and as a base for US participation in the partitioning of China for exploitation by several imperialist powers.

The US ruled the Philippines as a colony from 1902 onward. It trained Filipino politicians to become US puppets and also allowed them to serve the local exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords. During its direct colonial rule, the US developed a semifeudal economy in which the biggest Filipino landlords owning haciendas for producing crops for export became big compradors by becoming the chief trading and financial agents of the US monopoly firms. Most prominent examples of such big comprador-landlords were the Roxas, Ayala, Zobel and Soriano families of Spanish ancestry. Eduardo Cojuangco is a more recent prominent example of the big comprador-landlords.

2. What are the ways that it was able to take a firm hold of the material base or the economy of the Philippine society?

JMS: First, US imperialism succeeded with its war of aggression by using superior military might and taking advantage of the incompetent leadership and the lack of correct strategy and tactics of the Aguinaldo government. At the same time, the US complemented its superiority in military weaponry with the deceptive policy of “benevolent assimilation” and the false promise of self-rule in order to generate capitulationism within the Aguinaldo government and among the landlords who occupied key positions or had great influence in the localities.

US imperialism cleverly induced the landlords to withdraw support from the revolution and to convert them into puppet leaders at various levels of the

bureaucracy and society. The landlord class became the political and economic base of US imperialism in imposing itself on the entire Filipino nation and making the Philippines a US colony for decades until the Japanese fascists came to occupy the Philippines during World War II.

During its direct colonial rule, the US steered the feudal economy towards promoting the role and operations of the big comprador-landlord class in a semifeudal economy by expanding the production of agricultural, timber and mineral products for export in exchange for imported manufactures. The expanded financing and trading operations stimulated the growth of the comprador big bourgeoisie as a distinct class.

3. Please give some examples of unequal treaties that ensured US control of the Philippines after its so-called independence in 1946. Are these treaties still relevant today?

JMS: On the very day that US pretended to grant independence to the Philippines on July 4, 1946, it required the Philippine government to sign the US-RP Treaty of General Relations, which provided for US control of Philippine foreign policy, continuance of the US military bases in the Philippines and the perpetuation of the property rights of US corporations and citizens.

Under the Bell Trade Act of 1946, the US continued to control foreign trade of the Philippines. The Philippine Constitution was also amended in 1946 in order to allow US corporations and citizens to have rights equal to those of the Filipinos in owning operating businesses in the Philippines. That was the infamous Parity Amendment. The Quirino-Foster Agreement was signed in 1949 to ensure that the US retained control and influence in the Philippine bureaucracy.

The US-RP Military Bases Agreement was signed in 1947 to further ensure the continuance of the military bases for 99 years. The US-RP Military Assistance Agreement was also signed in 1947 to ensure that US control of reactionary armed forces of the Philippines by making them dependent on US military indoctrination, planning, training, intelligence, military supplies and so on. The US-RP Mutual Defense Treaty was signed in 1951 to further bind the Philippines as a puppet state of the US. Further the Philippines became a key member the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), a regional military alliance which the US controlled and used for wars of aggression in Southeast Asia.

The aforesaid treaties are still relevant today because they laid the foundation and built the structure and mechanisms of US economic and military hegemony over the Philippines even as new treaties and agreements have taken their place of earlier treaties and agreements.

The Laurel-Langley Agreement of 1955 amended the Bell Trade Act and expired in 1974. But the US continues to control the Philippine economy with the dominant position of US monopoly banks and firms in direct investments and under the US-controlled agencies like the IMF, World Bank and WTO.

The SEATO was dissolved in 1977 and the US-RP Military Bases Agreement expired in 1991. But a series of agreements have served to perpetuate US military control of the Philippines, including continued direct military presence and use of military facilities within the national territory. I refer to the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement, the Visiting Forces Agreement of 1998 and the Enhanced Development Cooperation Agreement of 2014.

4. Does the US still have a monopoly control of the Philippines? How about other countries, for example China?

JMS: The US monopoly capitalism is still dominant in the Philippines if you take into account all US interests in the form of direct investments, loans and foreign trade on a bilateral basis as well as US control of Philippine economic policy and patterns of investments directly and through the multilateral agencies like IMF, World Bank and WTO. Aside from being No. 1 imperialist power in control of the Philippine economy, US imperialism has military dominance over the Philippines and the armed apparatuses of the reactionary state. China is merely an upstart in this regard, although it has made a dramatic aggression in the West Philippine Sea by building and militarizing artificial islands.

Japan has served as the secondary partner of the US in dominating the Philippine economy. It remains the biggest “official development assistance” lender but it is still second to the US in terms of investment. China has become the Philippines’ top trading partner, serving as destination of Philippine mineral and semi-manufacture exports, especially after it became the giant manufacturing platform of the US-dominated global value chains in the wake of the Asian financial crisis of 1997. Chinese state loans in Duterte’s Build Build Build program are just 17percent of the indicative amount of the flagship projects. Japan still accounts for the largest.

China has had the distinct advantage in having Filipino-Chinese big compradors in the Philippines collaborating with Chinese monopoly banks and firms. But they are more focused on trading and expanding their market share than on gaining control over the Philippine financial system, although China has also made key investments, such as in the national power grid and telecommunications. Certainly, China has benefited from serving as the main partner of the US in carrying out the neoliberal policy of imperialist globalization in the Philippines and on a global scale for several decades already.

But the long-time partnership of the US and China is now breaking up. Let us see how the increasing contradictions between the two since 2018 will affect their respective standing and operations in the Philippine economy. Let us also consider how such contradictions and the overall worsening crisis of the world capitalist system would adversely affect the economic and trade relations among the US, China and the Philippines.

5. What is feudalism? What are the social conditions that exist in the Philippines that prove feudalism is present there? What are the forms of feudal and semifeudal exploitation that farmers suffer from?

JMS: Feudalism is a mode of production whereby a few landlords own under torrens title or effectively control (under tax declaration, homestead, logging and mining concessions and lease agreements with government corporations) vast tracts of land and the big number of peasants who do not own land have to work as tenants and have to pay rent to the landlords in kind or cash at exorbitant rates and other varying terms. Some landlords have also adopted some amount of mechanization in plantations for export crops and big livestock or aquaculture farms producing for domestic consumption and export and have hired farm workers at subhuman wages on a year-round basis and on a seasonal basis.

The feudal form of exploitation is mainly and basically the payment of rent to the landlords by the tenants. It co-exists with such semifeudal forms of exploitation as hiring farm workers at subhuman wage levels by hacienda owners and rich peasants and the traditional practice of usury by merchants, rich peasants and landlords and the rampant practice of underpricing the farmers' produce and overpricing their inputs and consumption goods. The latter practice has been worsening due to import liberalization and pass-on consumption taxes. There are also relatively more recent forms of semifeudal exploitation such as lopsided contract-growing arrangements with trading companies and so-called

“community-based forest management agreements” wherein the land is supposedly owned by small farmers or the entire community.

The landed assets of the landlords are of far lesser value now than the capital assets of the big compradors and big comprador-landlords based in the cities. The output value of Philippine agriculture is grossly understated due to customary landlord evasion of taxes and consumption by most peasants of what they retain after paying rent.

Even then, the landlords still constitute the most numerous and widespread exploiting class in the country. And the poor and middle peasants who often double as farm workers and nonfarm odd jobbers are still the most numerous exploited class in the Philippines. The Philippines is not yet an industrially developed country and the industrial proletariat is still far smaller than the peasantry.

In looking at the entire Philippine economy, it is no longer a feudal economy but a semifeudal one in which the comprador big bourgeoisie is the more dominant exploiting class than the landlord class although many of the big compradors are also landlords because they continue to acquire land, using it as guarantees or collateral for loans, as source of agricultural surplus for capital accumulation and as an instrument of speculation, especially in real estate development.

In terms of the value of their assets in finance, trade, services and some amount of import-dependent manufacturing, the big compradors are more wealthy and far more politically powerful on a national scale than the landlords who are mostly stuck in the localities, exploiting tenants and engaging in municipal-level merchant-usury operations. Unlike the more numerous landlords who depend mainly on land rent, the big compradors enjoy high liquidity for business and political operations at the national center of power because they own the big banks and trading companies.

But as a distinct class, the landlords continue to carry a high degree of national clout because they have organizations for lobbying purposes and they are still a decisive factor in the elections of local government executives and representatives of the Lower House. They get themselves elected, entrench themselves in power with the captive votes of tenants and farm workers and with a bodyguard force or private army to complement the police and military. Thus, quite a number of them are known as local tyrants and warlords. And they are a

still major factor in deciding who is the president and who are the senators.

6. Is feudalism a necessary ground for imperialism?

JMS: In the classical development of capitalism in the industrial capitalist countries, the agricultural surplus provided by feudal lords and then by capitalist farms, was a major factor of capital accumulation and industrial development. Ultimately, there was a political and economic clash between the rising manufacturing bourgeoisie and the feudal lords, resulting in the liberal democratic revolution and land reform, as in the French revolution. The full development of capitalism involves the liquidation of feudalism, even when a constitutional monarchy remains as a vestige of feudalism, as in England.

But there is a difference between the previous development of free competition to monopoly capitalism in imperialist countries on the one hand and the imperialist power dealing with feudalism in colonies, semicolonies and dependent countries on the other hand. In these dominated countries, the imperialist power is more interested in extracting superprofits from extractive operations and the backward or less developed economic conditions than developing them to become industrial capitalist countries themselves.

Imperialism is against the comprehensive industrial development of a colony, semicolony or even a dependent country with some amount of manufacturing. It is happier that the dominated country remains poor and ever willing to sell cheap raw materials from its natural resources, serve as the market for imported commodities and take direct investments and loans for natural-resource exploitation rather than for industrial development in the client-state. Thus, imperialism is happy with the persistence of feudal and semifeudal conditions here.

But the commodity system, development of some amount of manufacturing and foreign trade have also unavoidably arisen and eroded feudalism and resulted in semifeudalism and the rise of the comprador big bourgeoisie as the class more dominant than the landlord class. In the Philippines, the US carried out some amount of land reform to respond to land hunger, wean away the peasant masses from the old democratic revolution (which was led by ilustrados from landlord, merchant and bureaucratic families) and break up feudal controls to allow peasants to become resettlers, hacienda workers and mining workers. At any rate, the erosion of feudalism in the Philippines has fallen far short of the

complete dissolution of feudalism because of the absence of genuine land reform and national industrialization.

7. What is the meaning of bureaucrat capitalism? How are the big bureaucrats in the Philippines?

JMS: In the simplest way, one can say that bureaucrat capitalism is the use of high public office for self-enrichment. But it can be more amply defined as a form of capitalism in which the highest public officials use their government powers and control of government agencies and enterprises, public funds and natural resources in the public domain to serve their capital accumulation in collaboration with their families and cronies in the private sector as already accomplished big compradors or wannabe big compradors.

In the history and current circumstances of the Philippines, the accumulation of great wealth in land or capital has been enabled by family members occupying high government positions and using their bureaucratic power to the advantage of their families and cronies. They personally benefit from the grant of concessions to exploiters of natural resources in the public domain, alienation of public land, franchises for the operation of public utilities, contracts in infrastructure building and related speculation in real estate, purchase contracts of the government, loans from state banks and insurance systems, endless perks and privileges through multiple positions and directorships in fund-rich government corporations, and so on and so forth.

In the Philippines, the highest and most powerful bureaucrat capitalists, including the president and some of his cabinet members, are big compradors in public office because the semifeudal economic conditions and imperialist domination prevent them from becoming industrial capitalists. Contrary to the notion of the revisionists that Marcos used his political power to promote national industrialization, all the enterprises that he and his cronies grabbed or built were big comprador enterprises dependent on imported equipment, construction materials, components and consumer manufactures as well as agricultural production and mining for export.

8. Is it possible to eliminate graft and corruption under the current system in the Philippines?

JMS: It is impossible to eliminate graft and corruption under the current system

of government in the Philippines. Many of the standard modus operandi of corrupt bureaucrats I have mentioned are brazenly facilitated, legalized, and institutionalized throughout the bureaucracy, through countless links with the foreign monopoly capitalists and the local exploiting classes and various pork barrel mechanisms, political dynasties, widespread nepotism, and bribery of all kinds to satisfy or silence subordinates or even intrasystemic critics and oppositionists.

It is in the very nature of the ruling system of big compradors, landlords and high bureaucrats to help each other out in exploiting the broad masses of the people. Defenders of the ruling system argue that high officials can be restrained from graft and corruption because of the freedom of the people to criticize the misconduct of officials, there are rival political parties that criticize each other and there is a check-and-balance system among the three branches of government.

But we know too well how the ruling clique arises from generally friendly and peaceful competition during elections where groups of the exploiting classes finance their respective groups or parties of their political agents who vie for elective state offices during the elections. Whichever political party or group wins, the elected officials and their campaign financiers conspire to favor themselves and satisfy their drive for more wealth through the abuse of power and exploitation of the working people.

The acts of graft and corruption involving the violation or circumvention of the law or even the legalization of what is illegal and immoral can be restrained to some extent and within a certain period by criticisms from the opposition party that has loyalty to the ruling system and expects to take its own turn at engaging in graft and corruption. But very often, the competing factions of government officials can compromise among themselves and take their shares of the bureaucratic loot at the expense of the people. Even the biggest plunderers already convicted and in prison know how to pay for their freedom and proceed to gain more power and wealth.

9. What does it mean when you state that bureaucrat capitalism is the basis of local fascism?

JMS: Bureaucrat capitalists are already in power. More than any other section of the capitalist class they are in the best position to take initiative in acquiring

despotic powers in fascist dictatorship in order to protect the wealth that they have already accumulated and to increase it further through the exercise of said powers. The only restraint on a president from becoming a fascist dictator is the potentially effective resistance of the people, opposition within government, from the churches and other powerful institutions and nonapproval and probable disapproval from the imperialist master.

In the semicolonial history of the Philippines, presidents have stayed in power according to the constitutionally-set term of office. But Marcos, the chief bureaucrat capitalist, dared to become a fascist dictator from 1972 to 1986. Ultimately, he would be overthrown by a convergence of diverse political forces.

But before he was overthrown, US imperialism consistently supported him for a long a time, at least up to 1983 and allowed the US-controlled reactionary armed forces the fascist dictatorship because he favored and assisted US economic and military interests. The US junked Marcos only after he made himself more of a liability than an asset to US interests when the broad masses of the people kept on rising up against him, especially in the years of 1983 to 1986.

Now, Duterte is imitating Marcos and is trying to become a fascist dictator. He is trying to retain US support for himself by promising to destroy the armed revolutionary movement of the people and make charter change to give US and other foreign companies unlimited rights of ownership of Philippine land, natural resources, public utilities and all other businesses. He has pushed his political minions in Congress to pass bills for amending and making the 1987 constitution anti-national and anti-democratic and for carrying out unlimited state terrorism that trashes the Bill of Rights.

Because he is physically, mentally and morally deranged, he has become overdependent on retired and military officers, keeps on militarizing the government and threatens to yield power to the military if he cannot keep it. He has been pampering his favorite generals with the rewards of bureaucrat capitalism and with impunity for the bloody crimes that he orders them to commit. He is promoting bureaucrat capitalist ambitions among the generals and setting the stage for the possible rise of a fascist military bureaucrat capitalism similar to that of Suharto in Indonesia.

The example of Marcos succeeding in imposing a full-blown fascist dictatorship on the Filipino people shows that this can be done again in view of the

persistence of imperialist domination and the exploiting classes, the impunity that has been enjoyed by the Marcos family and its cronies, the rapidly worsening crisis of the ruling system, the brazen campaigns of state terrorism and warlordism of provincial and regional ruling dynasties collaborating with the Duterte dynasty. But their problem is that the revolutionary movement of the people has grown much stronger nationwide than during the time of Marcos fascist dictatorship.

10. What is the basis of a semifeudal, semicolonial society? How do the three basic problems combine to create this kind of society?

JMS: The Philippines is semicolonial because while it has nominal independence and the trappings of that, US imperialism continues to dominate the country politically, militarily economically and culturally and violate the national sovereignty and independence of the Filipino people. Now the Duterte regime has practically surrendered to another imperialist power China the sovereign rights of the Filipino people over the West Philippine Sea and is eager to make the Philippines a debt vassal of China.

The Philippines is semifeudal because the comprador big bourgeoisie is the chief ruling class and no longer a purely landlord class as in the 19th century. It acts as the principal economic, financial and trading agent of US imperialism, profits most from such role even as it is still involved in the ownership and operation of farms for export crops and supports the landlord class as its closest ally, especially in the provinces outside the major urban areas.

I think that we have already sufficiently discussed how each of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism look after their respective distinct interests and at the same time collaborate with each other to keep the kind of semicolonial state and semifeudal economy that they can use to oppress and exploit the toiling masses of workers and peasants and the middle social strata.

11. How can this kind of society stay in place for decades? Is it possible to change it?

JMS: The ruling system is already rotting. Its chronic crisis is rapidly worsening. That is why the current ruling clique is desperate and knows no solution to social problems but to escalate the oppression and exploitation of the people. It has terminated the peace negotiations with the NDFP because it wants to scapegoat

the CPP and NPA for fully realizing his scheme of fascist dictatorship.

A ruling system becomes more oppressive and exploitative before it can be overthrown by the armed revolution. But it can stay for as long as the revolutionary forces of the Filipino people (the revolutionary party of the proletariat, the people's army, the mass organizations and organs of political power) are not yet strong enough to overthrow the reactionary state and achieve the victory of the people's democratic revolution.

Fortunately for the Filipino people, their revolutionary forces keep on growing in strength and advancing nationwide. They are strongest and most secure from enemy attacks in more than 110 guerrilla fronts. Conditions for them to achieve greater victories are favorable because of the worsening chronic crisis of the Philippine ruling system and the world capitalist system. The worsening crisis has been generated by neoliberal greed, state terrorism, fascism and wars of aggression. It inflicts more suffering on the people but it weakens the ruling system and drives the people to fight and win victory in the revolution.

The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the worst forms of oppression and exploitation under the ruling systems in the Philippines and the world and has contributed significantly to aggravation of the crisis of the world capitalist system to a point that this crisis will be even worse than the Great Depression and will have far-reaching consequences, such as the intensified struggle between revolutionary and counterrevolution.

Ultimately, the crisis conditions will generate the resolute and militant forces and movements to carry forward the anti-imperialist and democratic revolutionary struggles of the people for socialism. The people's revolutionary movement in the Philippines will certainly advance with greater strides towards the final resolution of the three basic problems of the Filipino people and the building of a truly independent, democratic, socially just, progressive, prosperous and peaceful Philippines.

On the Question of Fascism

in Relation to the Duterte Regime

Interview by Prof. Regletto Aldrich D. Imbong

Department of Philosophy, University of the Philippines Cebu,

June 23, 2020

I am currently writing a paper on fascism in relation to the Duterte regime. I want to explore the arguments that would support the oftly used label of fascism to apply on said regime. I have several questions in line with this research, especially those that concern the Philippine left.

1. Not so many intellectuals in the Philippines develop a strong theoretical argument on Duterte's fascistic tendencies. Many assume rather than argue that Duterte is a fascist. What conditions should be met for one to be considered a fascist?

JMS: Any individual, group or movement can be fascist or have fascist tendencies in mentality, advocacy and behavior and is usually motivated by rabid anticommunism, a key factor that is ingratiating to the big bourgeoisie, especially the imperialists. But for an entire government or regime like that of Duterte to be described as categorically fascist and not merely having fascistic tendencies entails certain considerations and requirements.

To be fascist, the government or regime must be rabidly anti-communist and rule

by open terror in the service of the big bourgeoisie (be it the comprador big bourgeoisie in the Philippines or the industrial monopoly class as in Hitlerite Germany) even as it uses demagogically patriotic, racist or even pseudo-socialist slogans to deceive the people. Most importantly, it has promulgated fascist laws to carry out the violent suppression of any opposition and prevent it from any recourse to the democratic rights guaranteed by a liberal democratic or socialist constitution.

The Duterte regime commits acts of state terrorism on behalf of the worst part of the Philippine big bourgeoisie but it has not yet reached the point of getting rid of the Bill of Rights and other relatively democratic provisions of the 1987 Constitution. However, Duterte is now on the verge of making his regime categorically fascist by enacting the so-called Anti-Terrorism Bill which practically gets rid of the Bill of Rights and is worse than the Marcos martial law proclamation in 1972. He can also make charter change to formalize and entrench fascist dictatorship as Marcos did in fixing the 1973 Constitution and faking the referendum to ratify it.

2. In several interventions, Walden Bello argued why Duterte is a fascist. His claim is that Duterte is a fascist original. By this I understand that right from the start Duterte is a fascist and that the (extreme) Left, being an initial ally of Duterte helped in Duterte's ascension into the heights of fascist power. Classical fascism, however, is essentially an anti-communist movement (as pointed out by Enzo Traverso), a reaction or mobilization of the middle class and patriotic bourgeoisie against the internationalist working class. In this case, Duterte's early presidency would not count yet as being fascistic. Could you give a comment on this claim of Bello and the role of the Philippine Left, in general, concerning Duterte's fascism?

JMS: You are correct in saying that Duterte could not have been described as fascist or fascistic within the first six months of his presidency, especially if you evaluate him or his regime according to Enzo Traverso's definition of classical fascism as being essentially an anti-communist movement that is a reaction or mobilization of the middle class and patriotic bourgeoisie against the internationalist working class. Duterte had to unfold himself first as a fascist or fascistoid in contradiction with his avowals of being "Left" and "socialist".

You are correct in saying that Walden Bello is wrong for claiming that he knew Duterte as a fascist even before any manifestation of his being a fascist by word

or deed. Before becoming president, Duterte never manifested himself as an adherent of fascism and was never the leader or member of a self-proclaimed fascist group or movement. As mayor of Davao City, he never declared himself a fascist. He had become vice mayor at first by being appointed by Cory Aquino. At the same time, he maintained close relations with the Marcos crony Floirendo of Tadeco and used him to become mayor.

In the course of his mayorship, Duterte used Dirty Harry tactics to impress the electorate that he was a law-and-order leader and also used violence to kill or silence his political opponents in the course of conflicts among the various political agents of the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class. Among the competing reactionary leaders, he sought to ingratiate himself with the revolutionary movement. In response, the revolutionary movement considered him at the most as an unreliable and unstable ally against those reactionary leaders deemed worse than him on a certain scale of political and tactical reckoning.

Even though Duterte claimed to be a close friend of the late Comrade Parago and helped in public events to honor him after his martyrdom, there have been questions within the revolutionary movement about Duterte's close relations with top intelligence officers in the AFP and whether the report from inside the ISAFP that it was he who gave the A-1 information about the whereabouts of Comrade Parago to General Año. The rapid promotions given by Duterte to Año when he became president have aroused further the suspicion and investigation of his betrayal of Comrade Parago.

3. Since the Philippine Left initially started as an ally of the Duterte regime, I believe it initially did not recognize the latter to be fascist. At what particular point did the Philippine Left begin recognizing and labeling Duterte as a fascist? What were the triggers behind the redefinition of a former ally?

JMS: There was never any alliance between the Duterte regime and the revolutionary movement. In fact, the people's war along the line of the new democratic revolution has proceeded, despite limited ceasefires to promote the peace negotiations. Warring parties can never be construed as allies until they can conclude at least a long-term truce for the purpose of alliance and other purposes beneficial to the people. The rabid anti-communist Walden Bello makes conclusions that are not based on the facts.

At the beginning of his presidency in 2016, Duterte presented himself as the first “Left” or “socialist” president of the Philippines, wishing to have peace negotiations and a just peace with the NDFP and the Filipino people and promising to amnesty and release all political prisoners. But within a few weeks after assuming his presidential office, he was in effect declaring himself a rabid anti-communist, he was reneging on his promise to amnesty and release the political prisoners and was carrying out the massacre of the poor as suspected drug users and peddlers.

Ka Oris as spokesperson of the CPP promptly criticized and condemned the aforesaid massacre of the poor within June 2016 and I also called Duterte a “butangero” on June 29, 2016 to his face when he was talking tough and reneging on his promise to amnesty and release the political prisoners. He wanted to trick the CPP into recommending certain personalities for four cabinet posts but he appointed them anyway on the basis of their individual merits.

He revealed himself categorically as an incorrigible enemy of the revolutionary movement when he included the CPP and NPA as targets of his martial law proclamation for Mindanao in May 2017. So, since early on, the revolutionary movement has considered Duterte as a rabid enemy and a rabid puppet of US imperialism by surrounding himself with generals who are notorious assets of the CIA and DIA of the US, carrying out immediately an all-out war policy under the cover of continuing Aquino’s Oplan Bayanihan until he launched his own Oplan Kapayapaan in early 2017.

Eventually, the NDFP came to know that when he met Trump in November 2017 Duterte promised to wipe out the revolutionary movement and give US corporations the right to own to the extent of 100 percent any enterprise owning land, exploiting natural resources and operating public utilities and other businesses. He was proving to Trump that he was a loyal puppet to the US despite his posturing as a close friend of China.

4. Enzo Traverso claims that some of the current populist and rightist movements the world over are irreducible to the classic definition of fascism. These have developed features that do not anymore fit into the classic definition of fascism. He rather called these movements as postfascism. In Brazil also, Jeffery Webber acknowledges the current Jair Bolsonaro regime as a neofascism. Do the current political and economic manifestations of the Duterte regime still fit into the classic definition of fascism? Or is his regime more of what is called as

postfascism or neofascism?

JMS: Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War in 1991, US imperialism has increasingly used the term “terrorism” as the *bete noire* (black beast) for targeting by the most extreme forms of reaction, including fascist movements, official repressive measures, state terrorism, full blown fascist regimes and wars of aggression. The term “terrorism” is so broad as to encompass not only Islamic jihadists that the US intelligence agencies create but also the communists and other anti-imperialist and democratic forces that are supposed to be the target of “classical fascism”.

The imperialists, the ultra-reactionaries and the fascist movements still vilify their enemy as “communist”, “terrorist” or “communist terrorist” wherever the communist parties and working class movements are relatively strong in the legal struggle and/or the armed struggle and are regarded by the big bourgeoisie as imminent threat to the ruling system. Anticommunism is still a major element in the ideological and political line of fascism, fascist regimes and movements, notwithstanding the imperialist propaganda that communism died in the years of 1989 to 1991. Duterte points to the CPP as the main enemy of his regime and the main target of his state terrorism. In this regard, he is no different from Mussolini and Hitler and the fascist dictators of China, South Korea, Indonesia and Vietnam after World War II.

In looking at social and political phenomena, I am guided by the laws of contradiction and uneven development. There are generally similar phenomena that at the same time have distinctive dissimilarities or differences. Even at the time of Mussolini the original fascist, Hitler, Franco, Tojo and others, the fascist regimes had generally similar characteristics but also had distinctive dissimilarities. I do not like to play with prefixes like post and neo as some academic pedants do to claim any kind of new and unique discovery.

In my study of fascist movements and fascist regimes that arose before and after World War II, I have observed the following elements in their character and conduct:

- 1) The fascist groups and movements are ideologically and politically anti-communist and seek and get support from the big bourgeoisie (be it the industrial and financial big bourgeoisie in imperialist countries or the comprador big bourgeoisie in underdeveloped countries).

- 2) They use xenophobic, chauvinist and racist slogans and target certain racial and ethnolinguistic minorities as the enemy to blame for the suffering and grievances of the people and deflect attention from the exploiting classes.
- 3) They use the biases of the politically backward section of the masses in order to create the base for their “mass movement”. From this base, they try to influence and win over the middle section of the masses; and try to counter and ferret out communists and other revolutionary forces from the advanced section of the masses.
- 4) They collaborate with the big bourgeoisie and with the armed apparatuses of the reactionary state in breaking up demonstrations of democratic forces, assaulting workers’ strikes and attacking the persons and properties of people who are communist or progressive in their stand or who belong to any minority deemed as enemy and target of hatred.
- 5) They ascend to absolute power through elections by taking up the grievances of the people and at the same time enjoying the support of the big bourgeoisie. They can also take power through a military coup against a discredited and weak civilian government. When in power by any degree, they can stage a series of false flag operations to scapegoat the communists and to justify the adoption and implementation of fascist laws.
- 6) They use the open rule of terror (fascist laws and actions) to suppress any criticism of or opposition to the fascist regime through the adoption and enforcement of laws that comprehensively and profoundly dissolve and violate the basic democratic rights and fundamental freedoms of the people which have been defined and guaranteed by the liberal democratic or socialist constitution.

All the above elements in varying forms and degrees of gravity have characterized the fascist movement and regimes that are employed and supported by the big bourgeoisie upon the failure of conservative and reformist parties, institutions and movement to contain and appease the exploited classes and counter the rise of the revolutionary party of the proletariat and the mass movement that it leads.

Duterte Seals his Political Doom

by Signing Law of State Terrorism

July 4, 2020

At the peak of his narcissistic arrogance and greed for political power and ill-gotten wealth, Duterte has signed into law the bill of state terrorism that he had railroaded together with his servants in both houses of Congress, mostly beneficiaries of the rigging of the 2019 elections. This law of state terrorism nullifies the basic democratic rights of everyone and anyone of the social activists and critics of his regime whom he targets as his opponent and whom he can arrest, torture, kill or detain and dispossess on the basis of mere suspicion.

We are now in the last act of a tragedy in which a local tyrant gets elected to the presidency and becomes a hubris-afflicted national tyrant, a traitor trying to serve two competing imperialist powers, a mass murderer of tens of thousands of the impoverished people, a gangster who has gained a monopoly of the drug trade and a plunderer stealing more public money than any of his predecessors in four years of sitting as president.

Duterte is driven to realize his scheme of fascist dictatorship by his fear of trial and punishment either by the people's court of the revolutionary movement for his so many grievous crimes against the Filipino people or by the International Criminal Court for his brazen violations of human rights and for his bloody crimes against humanity. He seeks to enjoy impunity without end by either keeping himself in power beyond 2022 or picking his successor and protector.

The law of state terrorism that he has signed exceeds the qualified powers of the commander-in-chief in the 1987 Constitution and practically nullifies the Bill of Rights and all related human rights provisions. By signing this unconstitutional and anti-democratic law he has already obtained unlimited powers, exceeding those in the martial law declaration of 1972 which enabled Marcos to impose fascist dictatorship on the people for 14 years.

Duterte has done the worst at the expense of the Filipino people. But it is fine that he does so at a time when the broad masses of the people and the broadest range of patriotic forces of the people have manifested their resolute and militant opposition to the accumulated crimes of tyranny, treason, butchery and plunder committed by the Duterte ruling clique and at a time when the people are outraged by the regime's militarist and repressive lockdowns, the nondelivery of food and other forms of assistance, the gross malversation of public funds and the railroading of the law of state terrorism during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Duterte could not have chosen a better time than now to seal his political doom. He and his ruling clique are thoroughly isolated as the enemy of the people. He has become notorious as a physically, mentally and morally deranged person, addicted to Fentanyl and now subject to dialysis treatment three times a week. But in terms of ability to rule, even with the use of his subalterns, he is already cramped now and in his remaining years by the unprecedentedly worsened crisis of the domestic ruling system and the world capitalist system.

He has bankrupted the economy and his own government. All the ills of the semicolonial and semifeudal society, including unemployment and mass poverty, are rapidly worsening. The regime does nothing but to escalate oppression and exploitation. Thus, there is widespread and deepgoing social discontent among the workers, peasants and the middle social strata. This is fueling the people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war.

With the crisis of the US and world capitalist surpassing that of the so-called Great Recession that started with the financial crisis of 2008 and that of the Great Depression of the 1930s, the Duterte regime cannot borrow enough resources and time from foreign banks to cover the widening budgetary and trade deficits and mounting foreign debt service. There is no way for Duterte to fulfill his promise to Trump on November 13, 2017 that he would destroy the revolutionary movement of the Filipino people.

The signing of the law of state terrorism is quite similar to the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus in 1971 in serving as conclusive proof that Duterte now, like Marcos in 1971, was on an incorrigible and irrevocable course of fascist dictatorship and as clear signal for the revolutionary movement as well as the legal democratic forces of the Filipino people to be ready for a life-and-death struggle against such a monstrous regime.

The Duterte regime and its loyalists try to disarm the people by blaring out that the law of state terrorism would be applied selectively by the Duterte-led civilian-military with executive and judicial powers. But it is a law of unlimited state terrorism, which guarantees absolute power and absolute corruption for the benefit of the fascist dictator and his clique of cronies and generals. We can expect that the law will be used for mass arrests and mass murder and for the grabbing of properties of the Duterte rivals within the oligarchy as well as the properties of the lower classes who are vulnerable to extortion by military and police officers at all levels.

If the Filipino people and the broad range of patriotic and democratic forces are to learn from the preparation and realization of the Marcos fascist dictatorship, they must intensify all legal and political efforts to oppose the law of state terrorism which has practically installed and entrenched the Duterte fascist dictatorship. At the same time, those who are in imminent danger of arrest, detention or murder are expected as in 1971 to retreat into the underground in the cities and in their home provinces and be ready for integration with the armed revolutionary movement in the countryside.

The Kabataang Makabayan is a prime example of legal mass organization making an orderly retreat from legal struggle to armed revolutionary struggle when it was the prime target of state terrorism in 1971. This orderly retreat resulted in the increase of the membership of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the Red fighters of the New People's Army from the level of a few hundreds to 4,000 by the 1974. The state terrorism of Marcos inflicted great suffering on the people but unwittingly goaded the people to strengthen and intensify the armed resistance of the people.

The anticommunist terrorists headed by Duterte have boasted that they could destroy both the CPP and NPA by launching bloody campaigns of suppression in both cities and countryside against all persons suspected of either being members or allies of these revolutionary forces. They do not understand certain

points like the armed revolution thriving because of oppressive and exploitative conditions and because the revolutionary forces can grow far beyond the knowledge of enemy spies by means of revolutionary education, mass work and campaigns of mass struggle.

The counterrevolutionaries and even their US imperialist masters do not understand that the CPP under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is completely different from the Communist Party of Indonesia which was an open and legal party thoroughly exposed to the enemy intelligence services from 1951 to the year 1965 of anti-communist massacres. And right now, to kill just one communist the armed thugs of Duterte would have kill 100 to 1000 suspects, including some of their own relatives who like to study in the University of the Philippines and join the patriotic and progressive organizations.

The current strength of the patriotic and progressive organizations, which is now at least in the hundreds of thousands, is a far cry from the much smaller strength of KM in 1971, which had only 15,000 members nationwide. The anticommunist terrorists are acting like idiots by trying to compel an already huge legal democratic movement to go underground and wage armed resistance and satisfying themselves with false claims of having decimated the revolutionary forces by forcing or bribing them to surrender or get killed under the law of state terrorism and actually using such false claims to corrupt themselves by stealing public money for fake surrenders, fake projects and fake operations.

In 1971 the CPP had only 2000 members and increased from only a few scores in 1968 to hundreds in the course of small-scale people's war in Tarlac and Isabela in 1969-1970, a period when the Task Force of 5000 troops could not nip in the bud the few squads and armed propaganda teams of the NPA. But the police and military breaking up peaceful mass demonstrations in Manila and other cities in effect delivered thousands of mass activists to the CPP and NPA from 1969 to 1972. By 1974 the CPP had 4000 members who were educated, trained and deployed as revolutionaries on a nationwide scale.

Now, the CPP has many tens of thousands of members and the NPA has thousands of full time Red fighters, assisted by the people's militia and self-defense units of revolutionary mass organizations, in thousands of barangays, hundreds of municipalities and 74 provinces in more than 110 guerrilla fronts. They have well-developed mass organizations of various types and have organs of political power which constitute the people's democratic government.

Definitely, they have a bigger and wider welcoming capacity for the integration of the urban mass activists compelled by the law of state terrorism to join the armed struggle and mass work in the countryside. These activists trained in armed struggle in the countryside can be sent back in the short run to the cities to operate against the enablers and enforcers of state terrorism in every branch of the reactionary government and in the long run as cadres and commanders leading regular mobile forces to seize power in the cities.

Before and soon after becoming president, Duterte boasted of wishing to become the “first Left and socialist president of the Philippines”. But he was being duplicitous, he was already under orders by US imperialism through his pro-US military advisers to unleash an all-out war against the armed revolutionary movement.

He was completely impervious to the good advice given to him by his peace-minded advisers that he could engage the NDFP, the CPP and NPA in a just peace agreement with a substantive agreement on genuine land reform and national industrialization to be financed by the trillions of US dollars’ worth of oil and gas that can be extracted from the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines in the West Philippine Sea.

But what has Duterte, the bloody and greedy moron, done against such good advice. He preferred to stay in the good graces of Trump by promising to destroy the armed revolution with strictly military means and deliver charter change allowing US and other foreign corporations the unlimited right to own land, natural resources, public utilities and all other businesses.

At the same, he preferred to monopolize the illegal drug trade in collaboration with the Chinese criminal triads and to beg from China high-interest loans and overpriced infrastructure projects in exchange for cuts for himself and his Davao-based Chinese cronies and for laying aside the 2016 judgment of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in favor of the Philippines against China.

The last four years of Duterte’s rule has been characterized by treason, tyranny, butchery, plunder and bankruptcy of the economy and his government. The last two years of every one of his presidential predecessors were normally lameduck years for proven failure to solve the problems of foreign monopoly capitalism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism and the inadequacy of time to make up for lost time.

Now, this traitor, tyrant, butcher, plunder and incompetent Duterte thinks he can use his last two years in power to use state terrorism and fascist dictatorship to rule beyond 2022 and pick his own successor. The Filipino people and all patriotic and progressive forces — including those who uphold the 1987 Constitution of the reactionary government against state terrorism — ought to rise up, fight for the national and democratic rights of the people and oust the Duterte regime as soon as possible.

On the Land Problem, Peasant Class and Agrarian Revolution in the Special Course on the Peasant Movement

Anakbayan-Europe NDLine Online School, Mga Serye ni Tito Jo,

July 5, 2020

1. Who are the farmers and what is their significance in the Philippine society?

JMS: In English, one can play loose with synonymous terms like peasant, farmer or planter for someone who tills the land or in Tagalog, magsasaka, magbubukid or magbubungkal, in the same manner as you may alternately use the word worker, laborer or wage-earner for someone who sells his labor power and gets wages.

But from the time of Marx to the present in class analysis, in the English language, the word peasant is used instead of farmer. The word peasant has the nuance of being serf in medieval or feudal times or being in the main landless and poor tillers of the land. The word farmer carries the nuance of being the owner of the land he tills or farms. Even landlords and farm capitalists sometimes call themselves farmers or planters but never do they call themselves peasant.

We notice that the Philippine reactionary government uses the word farmer to conjure the illusion that its bogus land reform program is a success and that the predominantly poor peasants, among the peasants of various social strata, have disappeared and have become owner-cultivators or owner-farmers. There is a deliberate attempt to diminish drastically or even make the peasant class

disappear not only linguistically but also statistically.

In an earlier study session, I have pointed out that the Philippine reactionary government has reduced the peasantry to only 22.9 percent of the labor force of 45 million being in agriculture and the rest are in the service sector at 58 percent and in industry at 19.1 percent. With 77.1 percent considered as working class, that makes the peasant class quite a small minority. The truth is that the industrial proletariat is far smaller than the peasant class but the reactionary economists and statisticians detach the traditional seasonal farm workers and odd jobbers from their peasant base.

The understatement of the size of the peasantry and the undervaluation of the share of agriculture at only 7.4 percent of GDP are calculated to conjure the illusion that the Philippines has become a newly-industrializing economy and that the diminution of the peasantry has drastically reduced the ground for maneuver in the protracted people's war in the new democratic revolution. We cannot rely on the false categories and false estimates of the reactionary government. Original social research must be done to establish the facts.

The Philippine reactionary government takes advantage of the fact that the neoliberal policy has bloated the service sector with extreme and unsustainable debt financing for private construction and the importation of nonreproducing equipment and consumer manufactures and dishonestly counts as employed in the service sector the great mass of odd jobbers from the surplus rural population in the so-called informal economy. And practically those recognized as peasants are merely the family heads as if they were workers individually registered and employed by nonagricultural enterprises, as the diminished number of regulars and the far greater number of casuals or 5-month contractuels.

The peasant class, mainly the poor and middle peasants, is highly significant in the Philippine society because it comprises the biggest socioeconomic class and provides the food for itself and for the whole country and certain products for local processing and for export. It is the largest bloc of the most exploited and oppressed people and it is still the base of most of the urban and rural oddjobbers and unemployed who have increased in number due to the lack of industrial development and the dwindling of regular employment in every sector of the economy. The peasant class is so important because it is the main force of the people's democratic revolution through people's war in the countryside until the revolutionary forces become strong enough to seize political power in the cities.

2. Can you discuss the different strata within the peasantry? There are farmers who have managed to own a few hectares of land and who have a more comfortable life than the poor farmers. How did these different strata emerge?

JMS: There are three strata of the peasant class: the poor, middle and rich peasants. The poor peasants do not own land or have inadequate land and have to become tenants of the landlords and augment their income by being farm workers seasonally for the upper strata of the peasantry and for the plantations or do odd jobs in the urban areas. The middle peasants in the main own and till enough land for their own subsistence, although the lower middle peasants also serve as farm workers for others or do urban odd jobs. The rich peasants own more than enough land for their subsistence but they still till the land and hire farm workers as well as use their surplus income to engage in trading or small-scale enterprise or buy additional land.

The fact that the poor peasants are the majority of the peasants indicates that they have originated from the feudal system and that they continue to exist because of the persistence of feudal and semifeudal relations of production and conditions in the countryside. Even when the landed estates of landlord families become fragmented from generation to another, the landlord class persists because some of the heirs expand their inherited shares and new landlords keep on arising and expanding their estate through purchase and the alienation of land from the public domain. The middle and rich peasants exist for various reasons but are generally manifestations of the transition from feudal to semifeudal conditions or the combination of both. The rich peasants are sometimes called the rural bourgeoisie for owning property and using its surplus income to hire labor and engage in some small enterprise and side occupation or in money-lending.

3. One of the main problems that the peasants face is the problem of land ownership. They don't own the land that they till. What is the origin of this land problem and how bad is it?

JMS: Even before the coming of Spanish colonialism, aside from communal land ownership, there was already private ownership of land by the ruling families in the Islamic sultanates in southwestern Mindanao and in the patriarchal slave system in other parts of the archipelago. The aliping sagigilid and aliping namamahay were put to work on the land by their owners. There were those who acted as tenants as well as those who worked on certain lands

for the benefit of landlords in exchange for rations or crop share.

But the Spanish colonialists were the ones who systematically imposed feudalism on the widest scale. It started with the *encomienda* system, which was a grant of extensive lands to the Spanish conquerors and bureaucrats for the purpose of tribute collection. The churches also accumulated land where they were established. But the largest church lands owned by the Spanish religious orders arose in connection with the production of export crops, such as tobacco, hemp, sugar, indigo and so on. At the same time, the domestic ruling class of landowning families called the *principalia* increased their landholdings as domestic and foreign trade expanded from the late 18th to the 19th century.

The system of *haciendas* was established during the Spanish colonial period. The land reform undertaken by the US colonial regime against friar estates was just enough to promote a semifeudal economy and allow the peasants to move freely. Although the land reform was carried out with the avowed purpose of distributing land to the tenants, who could not afford the redistribution price, the land ownership shifted only to the landlords and certain corporations. And the money paid to the religious corporations were invested in the big comprador Bank of the Philippine Islands.

4. What forms of exploitation and oppression do the farmers experience through this land problem?

JMS: The main form of exploitation in the feudal system was the exaction of rent by the landlords from the tenants and making the latter perform menial service to landlord families and unpaid labor on certain occasions, such as church and community festivities. Because the arable lands were already designated or titled as private property of the church or certain families, the impoverished landless peasants had to become tenants or farm workers on the land of the landlords and the rich peasants.

The religious corporations and the landlords were notorious for abusing their political power by grabbing the land even of the freemen or freeholders of land. The colonial state also required the peasant masses to render *polo y servicio* (public works) or else pay fines. And the triumvirate of the parish priest, *gobernadorcillo* and the civil guards made sure that the landless peasants could escape their service of forced labor.

5. Who are the main feudal landlords and how did these feudal landlords accumulate and monopolize these lands?

JMS: First, among the native population, the religious corporations and native landlords had political power and could arbitrarily grab land from the powerless peasants. Second, the landlords bought more land at dirt cheap prices with the rent paid by tenants. Third, they engaged in merchant-usury operations by which the indebted peasants lost their land. The feudal forms of exploitation have extended to current times.

The gobernadorcillos always came from the landowning families (principalia). They could arbitrarily claim, title and put under tax declaration any large area of land legally considered as royal or public domain. This practice of landgrabbing has continued until now under various guises, such as pasture leases preparatory to privatization, logging concessions, forest management agreements and so on.

6. The agriculture in the Philippines is still backward. Why are the landlords and the government not interested in developing tools and machinery to improve the way of farming? And how does this affect the farmers?

JMS: So long as there is no genuine land reform or agrarian revolution and no national industrialization, the landlords will continue to exist, keep on accumulating land with the rent paid to them and retain the backward technological level of agriculture. There is no other way for most landlords to do but keep on collecting rent and practicing usury and using their income to accumulate land. They have no interest in raising the technological level of agriculture as the landless peasants abound as cheap source of labor power.

However, the biggest landlords engage in export-crop production in plantations and become big comprador bourgeois by performing the role of trading and financial agents of foreign monopoly capitalism. They own haciendas as well as export-import companies and banks like the Ayalas and Cojuangco. You will notice that the biggest comprador bourgeois are also the biggest landlords or have huge interests in haciendas.

They adopt some amount of mechanization but they do not go so far as to use harvester combines because there is an abundance of the traditional seasonal farm workers, they thus save on capital outlays by using the extremely cheap labor power of the farm workers and they are also afraid that social discontent

would burst out if these farm workers are displaced by machines without any industrialization to absorb the displaced.

7. How do Landlords, Big Business Owners and Imperialist Agri-Corporations team up to further profit from the exploitation and oppression of the peasants and farm workers?

JMS: The teaming up of the landlords, the big compradors or big business owners and the imperialist agrcorporations is most amply manifested in the operation of haciendas by the landlords for the production of export crops for sale to the imperialist agrcorporations. The landlords get their profits from the exploitation of the peasants and farm workers. They have big comprador export-import trading firms to realize profits from trade with the foreign agrcorporations. With their foreign exchange income from the sale of export crops, they import to the Philippines foreign manufactures for profitable sales to domestic wholesalers. They also own the big comprador banks for making the letters of credit in export-import transactions and thereby earning interest.

8. What ways do the landlords use to maintain their monopoly of land?

JMS: In the history and current circumstances of the Philippines, the landlords acquire and maintain their monopoly of land by having political power in localities and higher levels of the reactionary government. First, they can gain control over vast tracts of land from the public domain under various legal pretexts and then acquire private ownership of the land under the pretext of having developed them. Second, they have devised inheritance laws so that land ownership is passed on from generation to another within the same family and through inter-marriages of cousins and with other families. Third, the income drawn by the landlord from land is used to acquire more land.

9. How do imperialists benefit from feudal exploitation of the farmers and what is its role in preserving feudalism?

JMS: The imperialists benefit from the feudal exploitation of peasants and farm workers by buying the cheap export crops from the landlords and selling the manufactures to the big comprador-landlord trading firms. Aside from collaborating economically, the imperialists and landlords also do so militarily. The imperialists provide military support to the big comparator-landlord-bureaucrat-capitalist state and the landlords rule the localities and provide the

political base for said state. The imperialists are the sources of the weapons used by the reactionary state in the futile campaigns to destroy the revolutionary movement and preserve the feudal and semifeudal system of exploitation.

10. What kind of policies and attitude does the government have in resolving the land problem?

JMS: The reactionary state or government is the class rule of the big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists. They are fundamentally against genuine land reform aimed at solving the land problem. They keep on carrying out one bogus land reform after the other but it is because the land expropriated from certain landlords is overpriced and the poor peasants cannot afford to pay for the exorbitant price of the land. The land usually end up in the hands of landlords and other entities who acquire the land for real estate development and other non-agricultural purposes.

11. The Republic of the Philippines have created policies and institutions that they say will help the farmers. For example, the CARP and CARPER, DENR, DAR. Do these policies and institutions really help farmers?

JMS: These policies and institutions do not carry out or promote genuine land reform and rural development for the benefit of the peasant masses. They benefit the landlords, big compradors and bureaucrat capitalists.

Follow up Question: Does this mean the government of the republic of the Philippines are part of the problem of the Farmers that further oppress and exploits them?

JMS: The reactionary government belongs to the landlords and other exploiting classes and is therefore a big problem to the peasant masses because it is the instrument of the landlord class for ensuring the oppression and exploitation of the peasant masses.

12. How is the struggle of fisherfolks related to the struggle of the farmers?

JMS: The struggle of fisherfolks is related to the struggle of the peasants. The fisherfolks are subject to exploitation and oppression by owners of fishpens who play a role similar to that of the landlords and by owners of fleets who act like hacienda owners and farm capitalists. Sometimes, peasants also augment their income as fisherfolks in rivers, lakes and marine coasts and suffer the same

exploitation and oppression suffered by fisherfolks.

13. Can you discuss how the a. Military b. Church c. Justice System d. Reactionary Associations contribute to the exploitation of the peasant class?

JMS: a. The military and the police are bound by the state to protect the landlords against the peasant demanding genuine agrarian or land reform or fighting for agrarian revolution. They target the peasant leaders and activists in counterrevolutionary campaigns of suppression.

b. The church is an institution that owns land and is socially close to the landlords who are its big donors. Many of the church leaders are conservative and support the landlords even as many of them are progressive and support the peasant masses because these are poor people who deserve social justice.

c. The justice system is based on laws designed to serve the interests of the big comprador-landlord state and the exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords.

d. Reactionary associations are instruments of the landlord class and other exploiting classes. They uphold the privilege of the landlord class to exploit the peasant masses.

14. The Farmers in Hacienda Luisita for example have exhausted all their means to fight for their lands. They have filed cases in the Supreme Court, conducted mass protest, joined dialogue even with the late Danding Cojuangco, and have also suffered a terrible massacre called Hacienda Luisita Massacre. Despite of this, almost all of them still do not have their own land. These struggles are experienced not just by the Hacienda Luisita Farmers but also Farmers all over the country. What choice do you think they have left and how can we, regular citizens, help them with their struggle?

JMS: The farmers in Hacienda Luisita must continue to fight for their rights and interests legally and politically. I would not be surprised if some of them join the armed revolutionary movement in order to be able to undertake effective actions against those who frustrate or violate their rights. The revolutionary movement can be expected to support the struggle of the peasants and farm workers in Hacienda Luisita and elsewhere. We can and should support their struggle by exercising our freedom of speech and assembly in their favor.

15. What is the solution to the land problem?

JMS: The revolutionary movement offers the best solution to the land problem in the Philippines. The Communist Party of the Philippines declares in its Program for a People's Democratic Revolution that the main content of the democratic revolution is to satisfy the peasant hunger for land through agrarian revolution. It provides two stages in the agrarian revolution.

The first stage is to carry out the minimum land reform program where the revolutionary movement has just started to take roots among the peasant masses. It means reducing the land rent, eliminating usury and reducing interest rates, raising farm wages, setting fair prices for farm products at the farm gate and raising production in agriculture and sideline occupations. However, whenever already possible, the land grabbed by landlords and corporations can be seized and returned immediately to the peasants and indigenous communities. The land of despotic landlords can also be confiscated and distributed free to the peasants.

The second stage is to carry out the maximum land reform program where the revolutionary forces, especially the people's army, and the organized masses through their local organs of political power have the capability to do so on a wide scale. It means realizing the agrarian revolution. It consists of confiscating the land, distributing it free to the peasant masses and raising production by rudimentary cooperation among the households in a community. The reaction of the landlord is expected to rise. And the people's court is ready to try despotic landlords with blood debts.

16. How do we unify the different strata under the peasant class?

JMS: There is a general revolutionary line for the antifeudal united front to unify the peasant class. It is for the working class and the CPP to rely mainly on the poor peasants and farm workers who need the agrarian revolution most, win over the middle peasants and neutralize the rich peasants in order to isolate and destroy the power of the landlord class, especially the despotic ones who use violence against the peasant masses.

Care is taken not to offend but not to kowtow to the rich peasants. They are allowed to keep their extra land if they comply with fair requirements. A distinction is also made between despotic landlords who commit crimes against the people and enlightened landlords who comply with the policy of land reform

or agrarian revolution of the revolutionary movement.

17. What is the agrarian revolution and how is it being waged?

JMS: At the moment, the first stage of the agrarian revolution is being carried out in most areas of the revolutionary movement. But land grabbed by landlords and corporations from the indigenous communities and the poor peasants are returned to them. And the land of despotic landlords is confiscated from them and distributed free to the poor peasants. It is in the second stage of the agrarian revolution when the land is confiscated from all landlords and is distributed free to the poor peasants and the lower middle peasants.

The agrarian revolution is made possible by the people's war along the line of the people's democratic revolution.

On the Current Character of Philippine Society

Ang Bayan interview with Jose Maria Sison, August 31, 2020

Introduction: The question of the character of Philippine society is a key ideological question for the Party and the revolutionary movement. In recent months, there is marked increase in intellectual and political discourse on the matter especially among the Filipino youth.

Such interest is the natural outcome of the rising demand for fundamental solutions to the increasingly conspicuous crisis of the ruling system. At the same time, anti-Party elements including Trotskyites, social democrats and others have begun stepping up their anti-Party discourse to question the basic social analysis of the CPP with the aim of stemming the rising tide of new Party adherents.

The people's socioeconomic conditions continue to worsen brought about by more than three decades of neoliberal policies. These have further sharpened recently by the massive destruction of productive forces due to the lockdowns related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

To discuss this matter, we have decided to interview Prof. Jose Ma. Sison, the Party's founding chair, and who as Amado Guerrero, authored "Philippine Society and Revolution." In this special issue, Ang Bayan puts forward some critical questions surrounding the Party's analysis of the semicolonial and semifeudal social system in the Philippines.

We hope that this interview will help our members in further sharpening their grasp of the issues and help in study and research efforts to deepen our understanding of the mode of production. We invite our readers to send their

feedback. Additional questions, as well as information, can also be submitted as these may help in future interviews and articles.

1. When you wrote *Philippine Society and Revolution* in 1969, you described Philippine society as semicolonial and semifeudal. What did you mean then?

JMS: By semicolonialism, I meant that the Philippines had been nominally independent since the US formally ended its colonial rule and formally granted independence to the Philippines in 1946. Instead of US colonial officials running the government from the national level downwards, politicians serving US monopoly capitalism and representing the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class have become responsible for the entire Philippine government.

But the US made sure with the US-RP Treaty of General Relations of 1946 and subsequent treaties, agreements and arrangements, that it would continue to dominate the Philippines economically, socially, politically and militarily. The US retained their property rights, their military bases, control over the economy and military and other means of dominating the Philippines. Semicolonialism means that the Philippines is not fully independent but is subject to the dictates of an imperialist power.

By semifeudalism, I meant that the Philippines was no longer fully feudal and was no longer ruled by the landlord class chiefly but by the comprador big bourgeoisie as the chief trading and financial agent of foreign monopoly capitalism that owns large tracts of land and extractive enterprises to serve as base for exporting raw materials in exchange for equipment and other manufactures from abroad.

The natural economy of feudalism began to be undermined when the commodity system of production and the use of money as medium of exchange began to prevail as the production of export crops developed significantly in the first of the half of the 19th century, especially after the Suez Canal opening, and when crop specialization arose with some regions producing export crops and other regions producing food crops for domestic consumption.

But it was during the US colonial period, when the semifeudal economic system became dominant in the Philippines, with the US colonial rulers opening the mines, granting logging concessions and expanding the plantations for the production of raw-material exports in exchange for larger imports of equipment

and other manufactures. The comprador big bourgeoisie arose as the native and mestizo ruling class seated in the major cities and became more powerful than the landlord class ruling in the provinces. In the Spanish colonial period, the big compradors were the colonial officials, Spanish merchants and religious orders.

2. Are the terms semicolonial and semifeudal still valid? Can we not use the term neocolonial for semicolonial and capitalist for semifeudal?

JMS: The terms semicolonial and semifeudal to describe Philippine society are still valid. Semicolonialism is a distinctly political term that refers to the lack of full national independence of the Philippines and to the continuing control of the Philippines by the US and its imperialist allies. This term has been widely accepted and has not been the target of questioning or objection. It is a longstanding term from Lenin who spoke of colonies, semicolonies and dependent countries being subordinate to the imperialist powers.

Like other people, I sometimes use the term neocolony to refer to the Philippines to express the nuance that the Philippines is under a new form of political control by economic and financial means rather than by outright bureaucratic and military control by a colonial power. It was Sukarno and Zhou Enlai who were best known for using this term in connection with the Bandung Conference of African and Asian peoples against imperialism, neocolonialism and colonialism. I find nothing wrong with using neocolony as synonym for semicolon.

Like the term semicolonialism, semifeudalism comes from Marxist-Leninist literature describing the Chinese economy before the victory of the Chinese revolution in 1949. It is used to describe economies that have long been dominated by the commodity system of production and no longer by a natural economy of feudalism. But it is a merchant bourgeoisie rather than an industrial bourgeoisie that is the chief ruling class based on land ownership or in partnership with the landlord class.

Semifeudalism is a precise term with a definite content. It is a big comprador type of capitalism that is based on feudal and semifeudal conditions and thrives on a lopsided colonial exchange of raw material exports and manufacture imports. It is a term for a nonindustrial or pre-industrial and agrarian economy in which the comprador big bourgeoisie has arisen as the wealthiest and most powerful exploiting class from feudal haciendas as resource base for exports and in combination with the landlord class. Influenced by bourgeois economists,

right wing social democrats and Trotskyites, some people think that it is a term that has never been valid or has outgrown its validity.

They think that an economy has to be exclusively feudal or capitalist. They do not understand that in its world history capitalism grew out of the womb of feudalism, first in the form of the handicraft business, some light manufacturing and the merchants trading between town and country before industrial capitalism surged forth as the dominant form of capitalism with the steam engine and then with the electro-mechanically powered machinery for the mass production and largescale circulation of commodities.

Semifeudalism is a term that refers to a kind of economy that evolved from feudalism and became starkly conspicuous in the 20th century in the Philippines with the rise of the comprador big bourgeoisie as the chief exploiting class in collaboration with the landlord class. Big compradors have long been big landlords because they base themselves on large landed estates and use these to produce crops for export in exchange for the importation of finished products from abroad. Prior to the rise of the native and mestizo comprador big bourgeoisie during the US colonial regime, the Spanish colonial bureaucrats, merchants and religious orders played the role of big compradors in the Manila-Acapulco trade and then in the direct Manila-Europe trade in the 19th century.

The big comprador Ayala family and related families have owned banks and trading companies but have also owned or managed big landed estates in Calatagan and Nasugbu, Batangas and elsewhere since the beginning of the 20th century. In recent times in the 21st century, the recently deceased Eduardo Cojuangco owned the United Coconut Planters Bank and came to own the gigantic big comprador firm San Miguel Corporation but he also owned some twenty haciendas in various provinces in the Philippines (Tarlac, Pangasinan, Isabela, Negros, Palawan, Agusan, Albay and so on).

3. How do you explain the Philippine economy as semifeudal at the present time?

JMS: The Philippine economy is still dominated by the comprador big bourgeoisie in combination with the landlord class. It has no industrial foundation of its own. It does not produce the industrial equipment but imports these with income mainly from the export of agricultural products and mineral ores. It does not have an independent steel industry. It has no machine-building

industry nor the capacity to produce machine tools, vehicles, computers, basic chemicals, medicines and other capital goods and major manufactures.

Local manufacturing is dependent on imported machines and raw material inputs. So-called export processing zones of multinational firms are detached from the domestic economy and are engaged in semiprocessing and assembly. They are mere appendages or segments of the international assembly line of multinational firms.

The so-called service industries serve as adjuncts, not of an independent industrial capacity for the country, but of comprador-type operations in export and wholesale domestic trade, finance, tourism and travel, and the whole gamut of media, communications and infotech-based businesses that merely skim their share of profit from these basically commercial operations with some globalized character. Such industries may impart a glossy, capitalist-like sheen on the Philippine economy at first glance, but are simply unsustainable outgrowths of the semifeudal economy.

In spite or because of the long running bogus land reform program of the agrarian state, agriculture remains a major base of the economy but it is in the main afflicted by traditional feudal relations of production, by backward, non-mechanized, non-irrigated, and with low output. However, there is the noticeable phenomenon of the scattered use of harvester and thresher combines from China and Japan in small to medium landholdings, displacing farm workers. Large-scale agricultural production with some amount of mechanization and hiring of seasonal farm workers is carried out in foreign-owned and big comprador-owned plantations producing export crops.

4. Can you explain the impact of the economic policy shifts of the US and world capitalist system on the Philippine economy since the 1950s? Have these policy shifts, which have been followed by the Philippine government, promoted the industrialization of the Philippines?

JMS: There have been conspicuous and superficial phenomena in the Philippines attendant to shifts in the economic policy of US imperialism and the local reactionaries. Up to the 1950s, US surplus consumer goods poured into the Philippines to exhaust US war damage payments and loans from the US Export-Import Bank. By the 1970s upon the rehabilitation of Japan, the Philippines was being swamped with all sorts of Japanese goods and Marcos went into showy

infrastructure projects, using up Japanese reparations and availing of loans from the World Bank.

Some shallow-minded bourgeois economists thought that the Philippines could become a newly-industrializing country when the export-processing zones were launched. But the Filipino rulers proved incapable of overcoming limitations imposed by the Japanese creditors on the Iligan Integrated Steel Mills which were established during the time of Macapagal and would be sold away to Chinese Malaysians in the time of Ramos.

The multilateral consensus among the industrial capitalist countries in IMF, World Bank and the Asian Development Bank was to keep the Philippines nonindustrial and agrarian, a dumping ground of surplus manufactures and cheap source of raw materials, restricted to infrastructure building to enhance the export of raw materials and import finished manufactures.

The share that the Philippines got in the imperialist recycling of petrodollars in construction projects in the Middle East was the desperate shift of Marcos' crony construction companies to this region, the deployment of Filipino construction workers and the start of a significant amount of remittances from migrant workers to keep up the importation of consumer goods under the auspices of the Filipino comprador big bourgeoisie.

But the bigger phenomenon of exporting cheap Filipino labor in far larger numbers has arisen under the neoliberal policy framework to earn foreign exchange and augment foreign loans for covering the growing deficit due to the increased dumping of surplus consumer goods by the imperialist countries and by the neighboring newly-industrialized countries in East Asia.

The US instigated the neoliberal policy of imperialist globalization in a futile attempt to override the worsening crisis of overproduction within the US and among its industrialized allies from 1979 onward. This policy has been awesome because it brazenly calls for the unbridled aggrandizement of monopoly capital, the deliberate reduction of the wage income and social services, the denationalization of weaker economies and the abuse of international credit for private construction and the provision of consumer goods.

In the neoliberal framework, the Philippines never had a chance to make its own national industrialization, until now when neoliberalism has become bankrupt

and the public debt is already in the process of exploding in the face of both industrialized and non-industrialized countries.

Such new facets of the local economy as the significant rise in remittances of overseas Filipino workers since the late 1970s, expansion of so-called free economic zones, large-scale land-use conversion for real-estate, production of new commodity crops, have only served to aggravate and deepen the backward and nonindustrial character of the domestic forces of production in the Philippines.

Significant external changes like the complete restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and China, the rise of China as a manufacturing giant, technological developments in communications, robotics, and so on have only served to aggravate the crisis of overproduction in the world capitalist system and have not provided the Philippine reactionary government the opportunity to undertake the industrial development of the Philippines, especially because there has been a lack of political will for such purpose.

5. What is the composition of the Philippine population in terms of socioeconomic class and urban-rural dichotomy?

JMS: Based on the false statistics of the reactionary government, the employees in the industry sector (19.1 per cent) and those in the service sector (58 percent) now total 77.1 percent of the labor force against the measly 22.9 percent in the agriculture sector. There are two points missed in the understatement of employment in agriculture: first, almost the entire family of peasants and farm workers, including women and children, do farm work and other productive activities in the natural economy; and second, most of the surplus population and the rural odd-jobbers and many of the urban odd-jobbers are still connected to their peasant families.

In considering the class composition of the Philippine population, one must in general count as members of a definite socioeconomic class those family members who are dependent on or assist their parents in work. This is especially in the case of peasants and farm workers because they take part in production and get a definite share of the social product. By this reckoning, the poor and middle peasants are still the overwhelming majority of the people employed in the two basic productive sectors of agriculture and industry. At the least, 60 percent of the population are still peasant and based in the rural areas.

Even the false statistics of the reactionary government admit that there are still more people employed in agriculture than in industry, although the difference has been made incredibly small. The mechanical and superficial definition of “urban” in these statistics have the overall effect of bloating further the number of non-rural employment, where in fact these are typically members of peasant families engaged in sideline occupations in nearby town centers, such as drivers, haulers, vendors, shop assistants, and other casual laborers in the informal economy.

There is a noticeable degree of rural semiproletarianization, due to the limits of agricultural land, and widespread land-use conversion for real estate, tourism, energy and infrastructure projects. This results in the increasing number of surplus peasants and farmworkers who are displaced from the land and could no longer be absorbed in agricultural production.

But they have scant opportunity to become productive since there are limited industries in the cities and the labor export market can only absorb so much, large amounts of rural labor are being displaced from the land and forced idle. To feed themselves and their families, they resort to all sorts of productive work from serving as habal-habal transport drivers, engaging in small retail, seasonal swidden farming, collecting firewood for sale, and so on, which are intrinsically tied to the rural economy.

The big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalist families comprise fractions of 1 percent of the Philippine population, the stunted middle bourgeoisie cannot exceed 2 percent of the population, the urban petty bourgeoisie still ranges from 6 to 8 percent of the population. The workers and peasants comprise at least 90 percent of the population, with the nonagricultural workers no more than 30 or 40 percent. There has been no significant advance of industrial capitalist development to change radically the social pyramid and rural-urban distribution of the population since the writing of “Philippine Society and Revolution.”

The Philippines is extremely underdeveloped if we consider the extent of unemployment as an indicator of development. According to 2019 official statistics, 12 million people or more than 26 percent of the 45 million labor force cannot find work in the Philippines and have to seek jobs abroad. Another 10.6 million or 23 percent of the labor force remain in the Philippines and are admitted by the reactionary government as unemployed. A total of 22.6 million

people or more than 49 percent of the labor force are unemployed.

The National Statistics Authority of the government admits that of the almost 70 million Filipinos counted as working-age population (as of the 2017 Labor Force Survey), more than 27 million are categorized as “not in the labor force” (NILF). These include overseas workers, who are even excluded in the NSA’s labor data collection. Other NILF include those who are “not looking for work” for various reasons. This point alone proves the severity of the country’s unemployment problem.

Aside from exporting raw materials for foreign monopoly capitalism, the Philippines has exported huge amounts of cheap labor since 1980. It does this in two ways with huge increases:

1) in overseas Filipinos (with for instance OFW deployment increasing from just 214,590 in 1980 to over two million annually since 2016; the stock of overseas Filipinos meanwhile increased from 7.0 million in 1997 [earliest available data] to 10.3 million in 2013 [latest available data, although Migrante estimates at least 12 million today]); and

2) in employment in special economic zones (increasing from 91,860 in 1994 to over 1.5 million today; this is from how the number of economic zones increased from 16 to 395 and of enterprises [mainly foreign TNCs] in them from 331 to 4,341 over that same period). This grossly affirms how our lack of an industrial base means that foreign monopoly capital is able to exploit Filipino raw materials and cheap labor.

6. In 1983 you and Ka Julie, your wife, analyzed the Philippine mode of production and countered the wrong line that the Philippines was no longer semifeudal but capitalist? What was the basis of that line?

JMS: Yes, we thought in 1983 that it was our duty to counter the erroneous line that the Philippine economy was no longer semifeudal but capitalist. The implication of the term capitalist was that the Philippines had become industrial capitalist. There would have been no problem if the homegrown capitalism were described as semifeudal capitalism or big comprador capitalism or big comprador-landlord economy.

Certain cadres of the Communist Party of the Philippines were quite awed by the Marcos fascist regime’s infrastructure projects and propaganda that the

Philippines was becoming industrial capitalist because of “eleven industrial projects” connected to the infrastructure projects and the promotion of universal banks so-called, no longer merely commercial banks but banks for industrial investment, as in the merger of bank and industrial capital in the emergence of monopoly capitalism in Europe.

Julie and I thought those CPP cadres I have mentioned were under the influence of bourgeois economists and even of Trotskyism. They were short of knowledge about political economy and were lacking in critical ability. They even claimed that the peasantry in Central Luzon was rapidly disappearing because of industrialization and did not recognize that the number of peasants persisted but the surplus rural population was increasing and desperate even for odd jobs on the farms and in Metro Manila. They were also dazzled by the prospects of export processing zones and semiprocessing enterprises.

They failed to recognize that the bureaucrat capitalist Marcos and his cronies were big compradors who were benefiting from infrastructure projects which were grossly graft-laden and dependent on onerous foreign debt as well as on imported construction equipment and structural steel. The so-called eleven industrial projects and universal banks were all balderdash and were subordinate to the infrastructure projects and export-import trading. The export-processing zones were not at all the cutting edge of industrialization but fringe-processing or assembly of finished components.

The errant comrades were completely unaware that Marcos had already exhausted the Japanese war damage payments and that the neo-Keynesian lending under the auspices of the World Bank for the purpose of enhancing the colonial exchange of raw materials from the hinterlands and finished goods from the metropolis was under strain and severe criticism from 1979 onward. The Marcos fascist regime was already in financial trouble due to the dwindling of international credit from 1979 to 1982.

7. What were the consequences of the wrong line of those who practically praised Marcos for transforming the Philippines from semifeudal to industrial capitalist?

JMS: The subjectivist line that Marcos had transformed or was transforming the Philippine economy from semifeudal to industrial capitalist bred Right and “Left” opportunist lines. It reinforced the reformist Right opportunist line of the

so-called popular democrats. It also whipped up the Left opportunist and Trotskyite line that the Maoist line of protracted people's war was invalid and that victory in the armed revolution could be accomplished through urban uprisings and/or rapid regularization of the people's army. The Left opportunist line manifested Trotskyite notions and did the most damage to the armed revolution from 1986 until 1992, prompting the Second Great Rectification Movement in 1992.

The critique of the wrong subjectivist line about the mode of production in the Philippines in 1983 did not stop the Right opportunists and "Left" opportunists in having their way and inflicting damage to the revolutionary forces at various times in various regions but it reinforced the Marxist-Leninist foundation of the CPP and gathered the support of most cadres and members for the Second Great Rectification Movement. This was an educational movement to repudiate, criticize and rectify the erroneous subjectivist line and the Right and "Left" opportunist errors as well as consequent crimes. It saved the CPP and the revolutionary movement from disintegration.

8. Now, there are again claims that the Philippines is no longer semifeudal but capitalist. Why? What is the basis for these claims? Has the neoliberal policy really developed beyond what you call the semifeudal economy?

JMS: As Lenin has taught us a long time ago about the law of uneven development, modern imperialism or monopoly capitalism can make spasmodic investments in colonies, semicolonies and dependent countries but these do not result in an even economic development from one level to a new higher level. The kind of foreign investments that flowed into the Philippines during the time of Marcos did not lift the Philippines from semifeudalism to industrial capitalism but to a worse kind of semifeudalism that resulted in the downfall of Marcos and the stagnation of the economy during the time of Cory Aquino.

Then from 1992 onward Ramos as president pushed hard the neoliberal policy, privatised state assets to use the sales income for buoying up the budget and to get neoliberal credit for a private construction boom and larger importation of finished manufactures. The Philippine economy actually degenerated and then was adversely affected in a big way by the Asian financial crisis of 1997. The export-oriented processing enterprises collapsed and became subordinated to China as final assembly platform.

The Estrada regime could not last long because of corruption and depressed conditions of the economy. But despite continuing difficulties, the subsequent Arroyo and Aquino regimes seemed to be able to fix the Philippine economy because of low-interest international credit by way of reviving the world capitalist economy, the inflow of speculative portfolio funds which did not build any productive enterprise, the foreign exchange remittances of overseas contract workers and the shift of business processing operations from the imperialist countries to the Philippines.

Philippine economic “progress” since the 2000s is equated or made to appear with the glossy high-rise buildings due to neoliberal funding and a big amount of import-dependent consumption due to a rising level of foreign debt in combination with the remittances of the OFWs which have not been enough to cover budgetary and trade deficits. Thus, there is now an unsustainable public debt of Php 9 trillion without any solid kind of industrial development. The backward nonindustrial character of the Philippine economy when the public debt bubbles of neoliberalism will be exploding in both industrial capitalist countries and in nonindustrial countries like the Philippines.

But there are those who think that the grotesque distribution of employment and outputs in the agriculture, industry and service sectors spells the rise of the Philippine economy, from semifeudalism to capitalism which is implied to be industrial capitalism. According to latest government statistics, agriculture is supposed to account for 22.9 percent employment and 7.4 percent share of the GDP, industry for 19.1 percent of employment and 34 percent share of GDP and service sector for 58 percent of employment and 58.6 of GDP.

These figures are patently false by understating the proportion of those employed in agriculture and disregarding the fact that entire families of peasants and farm workers (including children below the age of 10 years) participate in farm work and overstating employment in the service sector which obviously includes estimates of the big number of odd-jobbers and unemployed. The service sector is not a basic productive sector, unlike agriculture and industry.

Nevertheless, the service sector is highly significant because it is where the comprador bourgeoisie reigns with its big financial, trading and other service corporations. These determine the semifeudal and big comprador capitalist character of the Philippine economy in line which lacks an industrial foundation. But the statisticians of the reactionary government also crowd the service sector

with small and medium service enterprises and the far more numerous income-earners working as jeepney drivers, market stall proprietors, gasoline station attendants, sari-sari store owners, street vendors, cooks, waitresses and others involved in the so-called “informal economy.”

That the service sector dominates the economy indicates a grossly disfigured non-industrial state of the economy. The proportions of employment and output ascribed to the industry sector clearly do not make the Philippines industrial capitalist, especially if we consider that the Philippine industry sector is entirely dependent on imported equipment, fuel and other major components and raw materials.

What has been passed off by the reactionary rulers and economists as industrial capitalist development in the Philippines consists of pockets of large-scale industrial capitalist production dependent on imported equipment and components which include electronic parts, electrical wiring production and other export commodities inside the export processing zones. These zones of cheap Filipino labor and tax evasion form part of the international assembly line (now more fashionably called “global value chains”) of multinational corporations.

There are also large-scale extractive industries such as mining operations which make use of giant earth moving machines, high explosives, open pits and heavy doses of cyanide and other lethal chemicals, and international shipping vessels which often avoid customs with the complicity of corrupt officials. Large numbers of the Filipino proletariat are concentrated in these areas of economic activity. The question, however, is whether these form part of, or contribute to domestic capitalist development. The processing of the mineral ores is done abroad beyond the primary stage.

Except for the low wages they pay to workers, the mining enterprises, in fact, do not contribute anything fundamental to domestic capitalist development. In fact, they prevent local capitalist factors from developing industrially by sucking in domestic resources, and influencing economic policy to the detriment of the national bourgeoisie. The independent local capitalist sector is limited mainly to small and medium-scale manufacturing, with significant numbers in the local food manufacturing.

9. What are the possible consequences of not describing Philippine politics and

economy in the most precise way possible?

JMS: If the thinking gains ground that the Philippines has become industrial capitalist from being semifeudal, there would be an obfuscation of the three basic problems of foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, with the big compradors and bureaucrat capitalists serving as the bridge between foreign monopoly capitalism and feudalism consisting of traditional rent-taking landlords and export crop landlords, and leasehold contract growers (including commercial livestock and poultry growers for niche markets) who combine some amount of mechanization and the use of seasonal farm workers.

Worst of all, there can be again the illusion that the peasantry is a dwindling or even disappearing class through capitalist development, agrarian revolution is no longer the main content of the people's democratic revolution and that the protracted people's war has lost the wide social and physical terrain for maneuver and growth in stages. The subjectivist line can again be whipped up for the Right and Left opportunist lines that arose from 1981 to 1992 and became very damaging to the revolutionary movement from 1985 to 1992.

Those who spread the aforesaid subjectivist line eventually exposed themselves as Trotskyites. They are again loudly attacking the characterization of the Philippine economy as semifeudal in order to push the long-discredited Trotskyite line that there ought not to be two stages in the Philippine revolution because socialism is already the immediate issue, that there is no need for the people's democratic revolution, that the peasantry and the middle bourgeoisie are reactionary forces that should be kept out of the national united front, that the strategic line of protracted people's war by encircling the cities from the country should be discarded and that the workers must do all the revolutionary struggle and share no power with the peasant masses.

However, the semifeudal character of the Philippines will become even more conspicuous as the crisis of the world capitalist system and that of the domestic ruling system worsen, especially after the aggravation of the crisis and large-scale disruptions of global and domestic supply chains wrought by COVID-19. The liberalized trade and investment policies of the reactionary government have favored foreign monopoly capitalists and smugglers through the ports and free economic zones at the expense of local production.

The Philippine economy remains dependent on imported equipment and many kinds of consumer manufactures, foreign debt and investments. It suffers from a rapidly worsening chronic trade deficit and mounting public debt. The people suffer high rates of unemployment, job insecurity, low wages, rising prices of food and other basic commodities, mass poverty and homelessness.

The export-oriented, import-dependent and heavily indebted economy is already reeling from the global economic slowdown and the aggravation done by the destruction of productive forces due to the Covid-19 lockdowns. The private construction boom, real estate development and tourist enterprises are likely to suffer a collapse as they did after the Asian financial crisis of 1997.

The GDP growth last year which slowed to 5.9percent, the lowest in eight years, is set to be wiped out with the unprecedented contraction of the economy. Sure to further deteriorate are all sectors of the economy in terms of output and employment. Overseas remittances and BPO operations will slow down. The Philippine economy and government have gone bankrupt and will have no way whatsoever to claim any kind of economic development from the underdeveloped and impoverished conditions of semifeudalism.

The Semifeudal Mode of Production in the Philippines in the Light of International and National Developments in the Past Three Decades

**Address to a webinar co-sponsored by the Congress of Teachers
and Educators for Nationalism and Democracy (CONTEND)
and Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), October 3, 2020**

Dear fellow educators, peasant activists and all webinar participants, warmest greetings of solidarity to all of you! Thank you for inviting me to speak in this webinar on the semifeudal mode of production in the Philippines in the light of national and international developments. I appreciate most highly the Congress of Teachers and Educators for Nationalism and Democracy (CONTEND) and the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) for co-sponsoring this webinar and inviting me as speaker.

It is timely and fitting to discuss the subject of semifeudalism and focus on the major role of the peasant masses and agriculture in the Philippine economy and society within the Peasant Month. The peasant masses are still the most numerous class in the Philippines and they work on the country's principal means of production, the more than 13.5 million hectares of agricultural land. They are a decisive factor in the economic development and fundamental social transformation of the Philippines. The main democratic content of the new democratic revolution is the solution of the land problem, the satisfaction of the peasants' hunger for land.

I propose to describe the semifeudal mode of production in the Philippines, the

national and international factors that have caused this basic character of the Philippine economy, the crucial importance and consequence of describing this economy and the prospect of changing it through social and economic reforms or the revolutionary overthrow of the ruling system.

The question of semifeudalism is not a new one. Filipino national-democratic activists have been seriously studying the country's basic problems of imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism since the late 1950s and early 1960s. Inspired and guided by Marxist-Leninist theory, particularly by Mao's works on Chinese society and revolution, and being mindful of the Philippines' own history and current circumstances, many of us undertook in-depth research and published essays on the country's long-standing agrarian problem and its links with neocolonialism.

These were reflected in my essays compiled into the book *Struggle for National Democracy*, and later in *Philippine Society and Revolution*, which helped activists grasp the crucial role of semifeudalism and the peasantry as the main force in the people's democratic revolution. Throughout the 1970s, this understanding was further validated and deepened through regional and rural social investigation reports, and thus served to guide the national-democratic movement in expanding and consolidating nationwide, especially among the peasantry.

But as the Philippines entered the decade of the 1980s, there emerged the erroneous line among certain CPP cadres that the Philippine economy was no longer semifeudal but industrial capitalist. Thus, although I was still in Marcos prison, Julie and I collaborated to update our knowledge of the Philippine economy, debunk the Marcos-inspired and Trotskyite-driven notions about the country being already industrial capitalist, and reaffirm the basic conclusions about the semifeudal mode of production.

I. The semifeudal mode of production in the Philippines

We call the economy or mode of production in the Philippines semifeudal because it consists of certain forces and relations of production. The forces of production include the people in production and their means of production. The relations pertain to the ownership of the means of production, the organization of production and the distribution of the product.

As used by Marxists in the materialist study of history and political economy, these are precise terms and categories that describe the level of socioeconomic development of particular societies. But as these are verifiable and measurable by social science, I am confident that many historians and political economists in the bourgeois academic milieu have also become familiar with these, and use them to some degree to better understand the Philippines' historical and current conditions.

The agriculture, industry and service sectors of the Philippines are all dependent on the importation of capital goods as well as intermediate goods in varying degrees in order to operate. These include mechanical, electro-mechanical and electronic equipment, fuels, chemicals and agricultural inputs. They are required to optimize production in the semifeudal economy.

The importation of these capital goods is paid for by the exportation of certain agricultural crops, mineral ores, semi-manufactures and cheap labor in the form of live men and women. These exports are however never enough and there is a perennial and growing trade deficit which is paid for with mounting foreign debt and direct investments which only entrench and worsen the problem.

So long as the aforesaid capital goods at the core of the Philippine forces of production are not reconstituted and harnessed to produce capital equipment, do not regenerate themselves and build a robust domestic capital goods industry, then there could be no genuine industrialization that will emerge from the present neocolonial pattern of trade.

The Philippines lacks an industrial foundation and cannot be considered industrial capitalist, despite the baseless claim of bourgeois economists that it has become a newly-industrialized country. It has rich mineral resources but these are merely extracted and exported to industrial capitalist economies. It has not developed metallurgy beyond the stage of primary processing or the mere extraction of mineral ores and it has no capacity for producing steel and other basic metals, machine tools, precision instruments and other basic means of industrial production.

All subsectors of the industry sector (mining and quarrying, construction, refining of imported crude oil, assembly of cars and ships, electronic assembly, production of cement, chemicals and fertilizers, garments, industrial food and beverage processing, reshaping of imported plates, tubes and rods of steel and

other metals, and so on) are grossly dependent on imported electro-mechanical equipment, fuel and components prefabricated abroad. In recent decades, imported industrial inputs began to include digital-tech tools dependent on expensive software and other heavily protected “intellectual property” such as patents, which are controlled by imperialist firms to prevent unauthorized technology transfer.

What is passed off as manufacturing in electronics and transport equipment (cars, trucks, motorcycles and ships) is merely assembly of finished parts and components from abroad. What is passed off as shipbuilding is mainly welding of parts prefabricated abroad. What is passed off as steel industry is merely the reshaping of imported metal plates, tubes and rods.

All these kinds of semi-manufacturing or processing are run by foreign monopoly firms. These are privileged to have export processing or special economic zones, which are used for tax evasion and for smuggling not only knockdowns but also complete products, especially cars and motorcycles. The tax privileges are granted to foreign investors as incentives for them to reexport their products and sell a certain amount of seconds to the local market.

The imperialists, their puppets and other apologists of neoliberal policy also make the superficial and false claim that globalization is opening up alternative paths to industrialization by allowing backward countries to jump-start economic growth by leveraging their local advantages in labor, services, strategic natural resources and location, and even as tourist and tax havens — all in partnership with imperialist countries.

Since the Asian financial crisis of 1997, there has been a sharp reduction in the assembly of semiconductors for reexport. Recently, the so-called shipbuilding by Hanjin in Subic has been closed down. The reassembly of Japanese cars and motorcycles has also been drastically reduced. The crisis of overproduction in the entire world capitalist system is relentlessly assaulting this floating kind of industrial enterprises that have their foundation outside of the Philippines.

The imperialists have increasingly relied on digital speed-ups in product redesign, rapid retooling, and use of robotics in automated handling and containerization in endless attempts to reconfigure their “global supply chains.” But with the use of the digital equipment from the most developed countries the crisis of overproduction becomes worse on a global scale, further discouraging

the Filipino puppet leaders to take the path of national industrialization.

But to conjure the illusion of the Philippines as a newly-industrialized country, the World Bank statistics for 2019 understate the Gross domestic Product (GDP) share of agriculture at 7.4 percent and its employment share at 22.9 percent; overstate the share of industry at 34 percent and its share of employment at 19.1 percent; and the share of the service sector at 58.6 percent and its employment share at 58 percent.

However, the GDP share of the industry sector has supposedly declined despite its rise relative to the GDP share of agriculture. This decline is due to the reduction of semi-manufacturing of semiconductors and assembly of vehicles as a result of global overproduction and stagnation, the rampant smuggling out of mineral ores and logs, and the smuggling of all kinds of manufactures through the export processing zones, customs and the Philippines' long coastline.

The shares of GDP and employment of what are the basic productive sectors of agriculture and industry are supposed to have declined since 1980. But the shares of GDP and employment of the service sector are supposed to have grown rapidly due to increased activity in trading and finance, business processing operations (BPO), tourism, the export of cheap labor amounting to 12 million or 26 percent of the total labor force of 45 million and the "employment" or odd-jobbing of 40 percent of the labor force in the informal sector of the economy.

The extremely bloated service sector of the Philippine economy is not the outcome of an industrial capitalist economy. Rather, it is the extension of an agriculture-based comprador capitalism exporting some commercial crops, mineral ores, prettified handicrafts and cheap labor by the millions; and always begging for foreign loans to cover the deficits in trade and balance of payments due to the inadequate income from raw-material exports and the foreign exchange remittances of the documented and undocumented Filipino migrant workers.

In the other direction, the same comprador capitalism extends its import operations into consumer-driven local commercial and real estate operations, including tourism and travel. What we see is the grotesque image of an agriculture-based and big comprador-oriented economy with an extremely bloated service sector induced by imported consumer goods, neoliberal credit and public debt. This pattern of a semifeudal economy is not peculiar to the

Philippines but is seen in many other backward countries as confirmed by UN statistics.

The share of agriculture is easily understated by the bourgeois economists and statisticians because the reactionary government does not take into account what the peasants and farm workers consume from their own labor and what they produce in handicrafts, forestry, swidden farming, hunting, backyard animal husbandry, fishing and other sideline occupations to augment their incomes from tilling the soil. The peasant products remain within the household or within informal local markets, and thus circulate beneath the radar of bourgeois statistics.

The number of peasants is also understated. Only the family heads and the children of 15 years and above are merely estimated, disregarding the fact that the entire family (except the toddlers) work as a productive force. In the statistics of the reactionary government, family members other than the family head are lumped together under the supra-class category of “unpaid family workers.” In fact, the traditional seasonal farm workers who are not attached to any degree of farm mechanization are still members of poor and lower middle peasant households even as they are discounted as peasants in the estimates of the reactionary government’s statisticians.

Despite the misrepresentation of the Philippines as a newly-industrialized country and the deliberate understatement of the peasant population, the reactionary government’s bourgeois economists and statisticians admit that the rural population is more than 60 percent of the total Philippine population and that the Philippine economy is still agriculture-based but in the process of becoming newly-industrialized. The urban areas of Manila-Rizal, Central Luzon and Southern Luzon swell with most of the country’s odd-jobbers either dwelling in urban slums or commuting daily from nearby rural villages.

This official estimate of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) that the rural population is 54.7 percent of the total population is most questionable and requires ground-level validation and recomputation, because the Philippine Statistics Authority uses a mechanical definition and superficial criteria for classifying barangays as “urban.” According to government guidelines, for example, a barangay with at least five establishments employing at least 10 employees each — say, a rice mill, two agricultural supply stores, and two poultry farms — and at least five facilities (e.g., a trading post, a plaza, a chapel,

a school, and cellphone signal) two kilometers or less from the barangay hall is already considered an “urban barangay.”

The gravity of the underdeveloped, agrarian, pre-industrial and semifeudal character of the Philippine economy is well manifested by the chronic severity of unemployment, underemployment, and overseas work as shown by official government statistics. Based on 2019 annual labor and employment estimates, 72.9 million of Filipinos are considered “of working age” (15 years old and over), but only 44.7 million is counted as the labor force. Thus, over 28 million are of working age but “not in the labor force.”

Among those excluded from the labor force are an estimated 9 million of these who are at school and another 19 million of working age and fully unemployed, including those working overseas, officially estimated at only 2.2 million. Most are out of school youth, housekeepers (mostly women), and others who have stopped looking for work for various reasons. In the formal labor force, some 2.23 million are fully unemployed, and another 5.9 million are underemployed (defined as “employed but looking for more hours of work”).

Thus, the total unemployment, including underemployment, reached more than 27 million as of 2019. This is 60.4 percent of the total labor force of 44.7 million. This is even worse than the other internationally circulated official figures of 10 million or 22 percent of the total labor force of 45 million are unemployed and another 12 million of documented and undocumented migrant workers or 26 percent, amounting to 48 percent. All types of unemployment have further spiked to higher levels this year due to the COVID-19 lockdowns.

The gravity of the underdeveloped and semifeudal character of the Philippine economy is underscored by the fact that a huge chunk of the labor force have to separate from their families to seek jobs abroad. It can be assumed that those who seek and take jobs abroad do so because of job scarcity in the Philippines. They are as much unemployed by the Philippine economy like those many employables who take odd-jobs in the so-called informal economy or who have given up looking for a job in their own country.

If the Philippines were truly a newly-industrialized country, as South Korea and Taiwan and some Southeast Asian countries had been in the 1970s and 1980s, there would even be a labor shortage in the Philippines. It is not possible for the Philippines to have become industrial capitalist or newly-industrialized economy

because never has the reactionary government implemented genuine land reform and national industrialization in any period, be it in the period of foreign exchange controls and acclaimed promotion of import-substitution industries in the 1950s or in any later period in which the economic policy would become even more adverse to national industrialization in the Philippines.

As the basic productive sectors, agriculture and industry decline and the population grows, the reserve army of labor (the unemployed) grows and struggles for odd-jobs in both rural and urban areas and those who can speak English hanker for jobs abroad. Frustrated with failure to get adequate employment, the growing mass of unemployed can also be an abundant source of revolutionary activists and Red fighters. The revolutionary movement can never run short of recruits in the face of the worsening crisis of the domestic ruling system and the world capitalist system and the declining opportunities for employment.

The relations of production describe best the semifeudal character of the Philippine mode of production. The chief ruling class is no longer the traditional rent-collecting landlord class of feudal times. It is the comprador big bourgeoisie, which is the chief financial and trading agent of foreign monopoly capitalism and owns the big banks, export-import companies, shopping malls, construction, real estate companies and the like. At the same time, it owns the largest haciendas and related agribusinesses, including livestock and poultry farms, fishing fleets, agroforestry schemes and stocks in mining companies to assure itself of primary commodities for export in exchange for the manufactures that it imports.

The comprador big bourgeoisie is often called the big comprador-landlord class to emphasize its semifeudal character, its hybrid character as merchant capitalist and feudal owner of haciendas. It engages in manufacturing but it imports the majority of its means of production, the fuel and most major components of the total product. It uses some amount of mechanization in its haciendas but continues to use the cheap labor of seasonal farm workers and collects from the widespread traditional rent-collecting landlords a large amount of agricultural surplus for local processing, domestic trade and export. It has the biggest amount of bribe money to determine the big comprador character of the high bureaucrat capitalists as well as the results of elections at the national, regional, provincial and city levels.

According to the latest figures, the 30 biggest of the comprador big bourgeois in the Philippines are as follows with their corresponding amounts of wealth in billions of US dollars:

- 1 Sy siblings with 13.9
- 2 Manuel Villar with 5
- 3 Enrique Razon Jr. with 4.3
- 4 Lance Gokongwei & Siblings with 4.1
- 5 Jaime Zobel de Ayala with 3.6
- 6 Andrew Tan with 2.3
- 7 Lucio Tan with 2.2
- 8 Ramon Ang with 2
- 9 Tony Tan Caktiong with 1.9
- 10 Lucio and Susan Co with 1.7
- 11 Mercedes Gotianun with 1.5
- 12 Ty Siblings with 1.4
- 13 Vivian Que Azcona & Siblings with 1.34
- 14 Isidro Consunji & Siblings with 1.3
- 15 Roberto Ongpin with 1.2
- 16 Soledad Oppen-Cojuangco with 1.15
- 17 Ricardo Po, Sr. with 1
- 18 Iñigo Zobel with 990 M
- 19 William Belo with 900 M

- 20 Robert Coyiuto, Jr. with 890 M
- 21 Edgar Sia II with 700 M
- 22 Dennis Uy with 650 M
- 23 Campos Siblings with 600 M
- 24 Dean Lao with 500 M
- 25 Jacinto Ng with 490 M
- 26 Tan, Jr. with 350 M
- 27 Delfin J. Wenceslao, Jr. with 340 M
- 28 Tomas Alcantara with 300 M
- 29 Manuel Zamora with 280 M
- 30 Carlos Chan with 260 M

As individuals, the biggest compradors show only the tip of the immense wealth accumulated by their families and family-based business blocs. They have interlocking interests and interlocking directorates in the biggest comprador firms. They engage in syndicates, mergers, swaps and intermarriages.

The biggest of the comprador firms are as follows:

- 1 SM Investments Corp. and Subsidiaries
- 2 Ayala Corp. and Subsidiaries
- 3 Top Frontier Investment Holdings, Inc. and Subsidiaries
- 4 San Miguel Corp. and Subsidiaries
- 5 Ayala Land, Inc. and Subsidiaries
- 6 SM Prime Holdings, Inc. and Subsidiaries

- 7 BDO Unibank, Inc. and Subsidiaries
- 8 Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc. and Subsidiaries
- 9 San Miguel Food and Beverage, Inc. and Subsidiaries
- 10 JG Summit Holdings, Inc. and Subsidiaries
- 11 Aboitiz Power Corp. and Subsidiaries
- 12 Alliance Global Group. Inc. and Subsidiaries
- 13 Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. and Subsidiaries
- 14 Bank of the Philippines Islands and Subsidiaries
- 15 Manila Electric Corp. and Subsidiaries
- 16 Metro Pacific Investments Corp. and Subsidiaries
- 17 Lopez Holdings Corp. and Subsidiaries
- 18 Tangent Holdings Corp. and Subsidiaries
- 19 LT Group, Inc. and Subsidiaries
- 20 First Philippine Holdings Corp. and Subsidiaries
- 21 DMCI Holdings, Inc. and Subsidiaries
- 22 PLDT Inc. and Subsidiaries
- 23 Globe Telecom, Inc. and Subsidiaries
- 24 GT Capital Holdings, Inc. and Subsidiaries
- 25 First Gen Corp. and Subsidiaries
- 26 Land Bank of the Philippines and Subsidiaries
- 27 Megaworld Corp. and Subsidiaries

28 Filinvest Development Corp. and Subsidiaries

29 International Container Terminal Services, Inc. and Subsidiaries

30 Semirara Mining and Power Corp. and Subsidiaries.

While the big compradors are based in Metro Manila and other major cities, the far more numerous rent-collecting traditional landlords and related merchant-usurers, land speculators and promoters of contract growing are based in the countryside, including the minor cities and less urbanized poblaciones. The traditional landlords retain their dominance in the localities with their ownership of most of the agricultural land and related agro-based assets (e.g. rice mills, warehouses, trucking and the like); their command over the votes of their tenants, farm workers, other employees and their dependents; and consequently their pre-eminence in the local reactionary governments. They are the base of most of the dynasties at the regional, provincial and municipal levels.

All land reform programs undertaken by the US colonial regime and by the Philippine semicolony or neocolony have proven to be bogus because of loopholes in the law for landlords to evade expropriation and because the redistribution price for the expropriated lands is unaffordable to the tenants because the reactionary government officials connive with the landlords to raise the expropriation price for their corrupt mutual benefit at the expense of the tenants. Eventually, the expropriated land falls into the hands of old-running or newly-rising landlords (from the ranks of bureaucrats, rich peasants, merchant-usurers and professionals) when the land is auctioned off.

At any rate, any kind of bourgeois land reform goes back to renewed land accumulation by a few in the absence of national industrialization as outlet for investing the landlord income from the agricultural surplus. In semifeudalism, there is a vicious cycle of comprador capitalism and feudalism in the absence of a determined and systematic policy of implementing genuine land reform and national industrialization in combination and coordination.

II. Factors against industrial capitalism in the Philippines

The natural economy of feudalism characterized by local or regional self-sufficiency was eroded in the 19th century, especially in the transition from the Manila-Acapulco galleon trade to the more expanded Philippine-European trade after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. The capitalist commodity system of

production and exchange with the use of money spread as a result of crop specialization in either export crops (hemp, tobacco, sugarcane, coconut and the like) or food staples (rice and corn) for domestic consumption and the accelerated growth of towns and inter-island trade.

In the period of its direct colonial rule and with such devices as the Payne-Aldrich Act, the US made sure that the Philippines paid taxes for its colonial status and remained a profitable source of raw materials and market for surplus manufactures. It developed further the semifeudal character of the Philippine economy by expanding agricultural production for export, opening the mines, building more roads and bridges and establishing the public school system. It carried out land reform to break up the large Spanish friar estates but the poor tenants could not afford the redistribution price and these estates passed on to the native and mestizo big comprador-landlords and to the many more traditional landlords.

In the transition from feudalism to semifeudalism since the 19th century, it was inevitable for handicrafts and pre-industrial manufacturing based on the processing of local raw materials with the use of hand tools to develop further under the stimulus of inter-island trade. In the US colonial period, machinery for large scale production in food and beverages, textile and shoe manufacturing, cordage, paper and others were imported and inspired the small national bourgeoisie and its advocates to aspire for national industrialization and nationalization of the economy.

Up to the Commonwealth period, Quezon did not engage in genuine land reform but promoted the resettlement of the landless as well as the land speculators from the land-scarce regions to the frontier regions, especially Mindanao and the Cagayan Valley. There were merely token land expropriations where landlord-tenant conflicts were intense. Palliative laws against usury and excessive rents in tenancy on rice land were also enacted but carried loopholes or impossible requirements (e.g., the landlord-dominated municipal councils had to approve local application of the law) that prevented implementation and were easily circumvented.

Never has there been any serious plan or effort by the US colonial regime nor the semicolonial puppet Filipino regime, from Roxas to Duterte, to build the industrial foundation of the Philippines and complement it with genuine land reform. There has never been any plan to develop metallurgy, especially of iron

and steel, beyond the level of extracting the mineral ores of the Philippines for export or to build the machine tool industry for the industrialization of the Philippines beyond the level of repairs, reconditioning and producing minor parts of imported machines. There has also been extremely limited processing of locally available materials to produce construction materials (aside from cement, logs and bricks), industrial chemicals and pharmaceuticals.

After World War II, the Philippines became a semicolony. The US made sure to grant nominal independence only if the Filipino puppet leaders headed by Roxas signed the US-RP Treaty of General Relations making the Philippines subservient to the US economically, politically, culturally and militarily. US corporations and citizens retained their property rights and were guaranteed so-called parity rights or equality with Filipinos in the exploitation of natural resources and in the operation of public utilities and all types of businesses. The US made the overt threat that it would not pay for war damage compensation if it did not get its so-called parity rights.

The reactionary government officials, academics and press pundits hoped that the Philippines would be rehabilitated and developed with the use of US and Japanese war damage payments. They spoke of building new and necessary industries especially under the auspices of the Rehabilitation Finance Corp. (RFC), other state banks, and the National Development Corporation. But the larger fact was that the US companies became the main beneficiaries of war damage payments and loans from the US Export-Import Bank which were used to rebuild their trading firms and their subsidiaries, manufacturing household consumables from locally available raw materials.

The US monopoly firms swamped the country with its surplus goods and pushed the national bourgeoisie to the margins. When the rehabilitation funds were depleted by paying for the reconstruction of US firms and for imported consumption goods by 1949, the US allowed the Philippine puppet government to adopt a policy of foreign exchange controls within the framework and control of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the US Export-Import Bank.

The foreign exchange control was later prettified at best by President Garcia as an instrument for favoring Filipino businessmen in the name of developing the Philippine economy with “import-substitution” industries under the so-called “Filipino First” policy. He renamed the RFC the Development Bank of the

Philippines in 1959. He had economic nationalists in his cabinet. However, the declared good intentions of Garcia did not result in the industrialization of the Philippines.

At best, the efforts of patriotic economists and business groups created some space for certain light and intermediate local industries to supply some domestic needs but were still dependent on imported machinery and subject to licenses and patent rights held by foreign companies. Even beyond the Garcia regime, the “Filipino First” policy also inspired the Filipino big comprador takeover of the Meralco in 1962 and the PLDT in 1967 from their US owners. But of course the equipment and fuel for generating power would continue to come from US companies.

Soon enough the US scrapped the foreign exchange controls by having Macapagal elected President in 1961 and using him to adopt the decontrol policy, reaffirm the Laurel-Langley Agreement and promote “free enterprise.” At the same time, Macapagal still wanted to present himself as being interested in the industrial development of the Philippines. Thus he launched his land reform program and the showpiece Iligan Integrated Steel Mills Inc. (IISMI) in northern Mindanao with funding mainly from Japanese banks and steel monopoly firms.

The Agricultural Land Reform Code of Macapagal was touted as surpassing the land resettlement programs and token expropriation of feudal estates undertaken by all previous regimes supposedly for the purpose of land reform. It was even hyped as the final death blow to feudalism. Despite the brave words of declaring land tenancy as anathema to public policy and economic development and formally abolishing land tenancy, the land reform program proved to be bogus as it carried loopholes, limited to rice and corn land, was underfunded by Congress and required the land reform beneficiaries to pay the redistribution price that they could not afford, especially when crop failure occurs due to natural disaster or serious illnesses hit the peasant family.

Macapagal promoted the entry of foreign investments, especially in mining, logging and plantations for the purpose of export. The IISMI flopped eventually as the Japanese creditors and steel makers made the firm import finished steel plates, rods and tubes from Japan for mere reshaping. The Iligan project became known eventually as a beauty parlor that merely curled metal plates to make galvanized iron sheets for the roofs of Philippine buildings and homes.

The economic technocrats of Macapagal echoed the US economist Walt Rostow and boasted that the Philippines was already on the “take-off stage” of economic development. They were most enthusiastic about the designs and feasibility studies for infrastructure projects under the auspices of the World Bank. With Macapagal failing to win a second term, it would be Marcos taking advantage of the said designs and feasibility studies.

By the 1960s, Japan had recovered from the devastation of its industries and was enjoying an industrial boom. It was brimming over with surplus goods to dump on the Philippines, which received these, together with the surplus goods from the US. The reactionary wisdom then was not to industrialize the Philippines because its so-called comparative advantage was in selling mineral ores, logs and bananas to Japan. The same anti-industrial thinking persisted even when the US and Japan agreed in the 1970s to allow capitalist-style land reform and on that basis industrialize Taiwan and South Korea as front-liners and show windows against the socialist industrialization of China and North Korea.

The Marcos regime showed no interest in land reform but allowed the so-called reform program of Macapagal to run on until he put forward his own bogus agrarian reform program to replace it in 1971. Marcos made it appear that his program would also sweepingly transfer all the rice and corn land of the landlords to the tenants with the simple formula of determining the average production of the previous three years and letting the tenants pay by installment to the Land Bank 25percent of such average production for a number of years to acquire the land. But as in the Macapagal land reform program, the government bureaucrat and landlord connived in the computation of production values against the tenants.

The Marcos regime was blatantly against land reform and national industrialization. It was mainly interested in pork barrel corruption of unprecedented colossal proportions. It seized on the neo-Keynesian line of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to build roads, bridges and ports to enhance the infrastructure for exporting mineral ores, logs and plantation crops and importing construction equipment and materials and consumer goods. The infrastructure projects were overpriced and were contracted to Marcos’ crony corporations. The war damage payments from Japan were exhausted and huge amounts of foreign loans were incurred from Japan, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank.

The Marcos regime touted the infrastructure projects and some eleven corporations supplying financial and engineering services and some local construction materials like cement, rocks, wood products and the like as instruments and outcomes of national industrialization. Major banks were hyped as universal banks providing not only commercial credit but also loans for industrialization. In the late 1970s, the export processing zones for reassembly and fringe processing were also celebrated as the “cutting edge” of industrialization.

The Marcos regime started to fall into financial trouble in 1979 because of excessive spending and borrowing for infrastructure projects and tourist facilities. His crony construction companies were also scrambling for a share of contracts in the construction projects fueled by petro-dollars in the Middle East. Exactly at this time, when Marcos was in trouble with his pork barrel economics, some elements headed by Ricardo Reyes within the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) concurred with the Marcos propaganda misrepresenting the Philippine economy as industrial capitalist and spread the subjectivist line that the Philippine economy was no longer semifeudal.

This subjectivist line resulted in undermining the general line of people’s democratic revolution through protracted people’s war and in bringing about Right opportunism in the so-called New Katipunan program of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and much worse in several “Left” opportunist lines which were pushed by Trotskyite elements in Metro Manila and Mindanao and touted urban insurrectionism as the lead factor in the armed revolution, without the necessity of protracted people’s war.

Where the biggest damage to the revolution occurred, the line of people’s strikes in urban areas and intensified city partisan warfare was pushed in combination with the premature formation of larger New People’s Army (NPA) units to serve as mere adjuncts of the urban actions in certain regions. The line prematurely and unnecessarily exposed the urban underground of the revolutionary movement and pushed the people’s army to create too many military companies and to neglect the deployment of enough platoons and squads for keeping and expanding the mass base.

After the downfall of Marcos in 1986, the Cory Aquino regime (1986-1992) was overburdened by the foreign debts that had been incurred by Marcos. And yet, following US and IMF diktat, it preserved the dictator’s onerous Presidential

Decree 1177 imposing automatic appropriation for debt service payments and adopted the policy of paying for odious foreign debts, like those incurred for the showy but ill-conceived Bataan nuclear power plant that had been canceled for gross anomalies in financial, technical and environmental calculations.

The Aquino regime shifted to increased domestic public borrowing. It also complied with the neoliberal policy of the US by adopting the policy of import liberalization; meaning to say, expanded importation of foreign manufactures. With much less foreign loans to finance grandiose infrastructure projects and conjure the illusion of development, the semifeudal character of the Philippine economy became more exposed than ever under the presidency of Cory Aquino.

Despite the strong clamor from an unprecedented alliance of peasant organizations with strong support from middle forces, the hacendera Cory Aquino preserved the reactionary tradition of imposing a bogus land reform law. The constitutional commission that she created put into the 1987 Constitution the provisions making expropriation of land subject to the prior voluntariness of the landlord and offering stock options to farm workers in incorporated export-crop haciendas like her Hacienda Luisita.

And of course, as in the case of all reactionary regimes, the reactionary Congress of big landlords and comprador bourgeois, limited the appropriation of funds for land reform and worsened the exploitation of the masses of peasants and farm workers. Since the end of the Cory Aquino regime, there has been no substantially different land reform program initiated by any of her successors. Land grabbing by agri-corporations, bureaucrat landlords and traditional landlords has become worse from year to year at the expense of the indigenous communities and poor peasants.

It was during the term of Ramos (1992 to 1998) when the US and its imperialist allies, especially Japan decided to loosen up commercial credit for financing private construction in an unprecedented way in the whole of Asia, including the Philippines. In the same period, the US further ensured to take hostage of the Philippine central bank by the US-dominated global private central banking cartel via Republic Act No. 7653, the New Central Bank Act in 1993.

The money flowed to the construction of high rise office and residential buildings and tourist facilities from 1994 onward until the Asian financial crisis of 1997. In conformity with neoliberalism and with the supposed comparative

advantage of the Philippines in raw-material production, the Ramos regime did not undertake any basic or heavy industrial project that had any semblance of building the industrial foundation of the Philippine economy.

Instead, in line with privatization under the neoliberal policy, he sold off the productive assets of state corporations, including the already decrepit Iligan Integrated Steel Mills to a Malaysian-Chinese company, just to finance housekeeping operations of his government, increase military appropriations in the name of “modernization” and reduce the budgetary deficit. Public assets like the former US military bases (Clark, Subic and John Hay), the Fort Bonifacio reservation, and the Manila Bay reclamation projects were also thrown wide open to real-estate development for tourist and other non-industrial business facilities.

The Asian financial crisis of 1997 devastated not only the erstwhile private construction boom but even the semi-manufacturing of semiconductors and garments. These would be revived after a few years later but this time subordinated to China as the final platform of reassembly prior to the export of the products to the US and other Western markets. The “economic tigers” of Southeast Asia became emaciated kittens. The succeeding Estrada regime (1998-2001) was unstable for lack of public funds and was overthrown for raiding the social insurance systems for government and private employees in corrupt lending schemes to his cronies.

China became the main partner of US imperialism in promoting and taking advantage of the neoliberal policy of imperialist globalization. Once more there was a rising industrial capitalist country, a gigantic one at that, which made it easy for the reactionary policy makers and economists in the Philippines to invoke so-called comparative advantage as a reason to stay underdeveloped and semifeudal and to shun national industrialization. Sure enough Chinese manufacturing firms as well as US, Japanese and other foreign companies in China would enjoy dumping their manufactures in the Philippines.

The Arroyo (2001-2010) and Noyonoy Aquino (2010-2016) regimes were bound by the neoliberal policy of imperialist globalization. They did not undertake any project for the industrialization of the Philippine economy. But they “improved” the financial standing of their administrations by benefiting from quantitative easing of credit by the US Federal Reserve System and the consequent flow of portfolio investments or speculative capital from the US and other foreign hedge

funds, raising the value-added tax, by taking more foreign loans and of course by taking advantage of the growing foreign exchange earnings from overseas contract workers and call centers.

Since Duterte became president in 2016, the Philippine economy has deteriorated from year to year. Certainly no genuine land reform and national industrialization have been undertaken. Duterte has boasted that he can distribute land to the landless peasants all by himself but in fact land grabbing by agri-corporations and landlords has worsened under his regime. Worse, the victims of land grabbing are subjected to bombardments and violent eviction. At the same time, neither the US nor any other imperialist power has offered anything to the tyrant that would result in industrialization of the Philippines as was done decades ago in Taiwan and South Korea.

Duterte himself admits that he knows best how to kill people to solve problems and that he knows nothing about economics except the pork barrel kind of economics of which his idol Marcos had a mastery for plundering the economy. Thus, the center piece of Duterte's economic plan is to beg China for high-interest loans for overpriced infrastructure projects to be undertaken by Chinese contractors, Filipino-Chinese subcontractors and a predominantly Chinese work force.

But now, wonder of wonders, there is a new campaign by counterrevolutionary elements, including Trotskyites and pseudo-socialist clerico-fascists, to claim that the Philippines is industrial capitalist rather than semifeudal or big comprador capitalist. Their ulterior motive shows when they claim that the people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war is a futile exercise and might as well be liquidated.

But the CPP and the entire revolutionary movement assure them that easily more than 60 percent of the Philippine population is still in the countryside. This is a far cry from the less than 30 percent peasant population of a definitely industrial capitalist country. The poor and middle peasant masses as the big ally of the working class are still there to provide the widest possible social and physical terrain for maneuver in a protracted people's war.

***III. The people's democratic revolution or reforms
through peace negotiations***

Since its founding on December 26, 1968, the CPP has put forward the Program for a People's Democratic Revolution on the basis of the critique of the Philippine society as semicolonial and semifeudal. The US granted nominal independence to the Philippines in 1946 but retained it as a semicolony through the US-RP Treaty of General Relations and subsequent treaties, agreements and arrangements subordinating the Philippines to US hegemony economically, politically, culturally and militarily.

The Philippine economy remains semifeudal, dominated by US monopoly capitalism and its major allies and subordinated to the world capitalist system but run directly by the comprador big bourgeoisie, the landlord class and the bureaucrat capitalist class. The comprador big bourgeoisie is the chief financial and trading agent of the foreign monopolies but has its own landed, mining and manufacturing interests, keeps an alliance with the traditional rent-collecting landlords and casts its influence on bureaucrat capitalists that have never decided at any time to carry out genuine land reform and national industrialization.

The national bourgeoisie has weakened from its relatively stronger position before World War II. This is because of the flood of surplus consumer products from the US, dependence on US trade policies and the depletion of foreign exchange by 1949, the neo-Keynesian policy of foreign borrowing for infrastructure projects, the flood of surplus manufactures from Japan and the newly-industrialized countries elsewhere in East Asia, the neoliberal economic policy and another flood of surplus manufactures from China. The national industrialization of the Philippines has been effectively stopped within the framework of the IMF, World Bank, WTO, ADB, Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The Philippine Chamber of Industry (previously formed to promote the goal of industrialization) has been dominated by big compradors. The spokesmen of the national bourgeoisie in the Philippine Senate (like Senators Lorenzo Tanada and Jose W. Diokno) have disappeared. Both Houses of Congress have become entirely pork barrel-minded, limited to thinking of economic development only in terms of graft-laden infrastructure projects. With the enactment of laws favoring foreign investments since the late 1960s, the enterprises of the national bourgeoisie were squeezed out. They persevere to a limited extent in the processing of food, tobacco, cotton, plant fibers, wood, leather and other locally available materials.

On behalf of the Filipino working class, in basic alliance with the peasantry, the CPP has taken the lead in advocating agrarian revolution and national industrialization within the context of the people's democratic revolution with a socialist perspective. This revolution seeks to break the grip of foreign monopoly capitalism on the Philippine economy and to deprive the exploiting classes of big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists of the power to control the economy.

It is timely and of decisive importance that the CPP and the revolutionary movement are underscoring the need for genuine land reform and national industrialization because the neoliberal policy of the imperialist powers and client states is unraveling. This policy has let loose the unbridled greed of the monopoly bourgeoisie of the imperialist powers and has subjected the proletariat and peoples of the world to the worst forms of exploitation and oppression and wars of aggression in certain parts of the world. This is generating one crisis of overproduction after another on a worsening scale.

The imperialist powers, their magnates and wizards have failed to solve the ever worsening crisis of overproduction and the prolonged stagnation of the world capitalist system that followed the global financial crash of 2007-2008. Before they can solve this crisis, another one that is worse has come on top of it. It has been further aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This health crisis has triggered lockdowns and social panic across the world. It has devastated economies and has thrown people out of their jobs and other means of livelihood. And worst of all, counterrevolutionary states have taken advantage of the crisis to repress the people and the monopoly bourgeoisie to take multi-billion dollar giveaways from central banks, couched as "bail out loans" and "stimulus packages," and evade responsibilities to their mass of employees.

The crisis of the world capitalist system has become so severe that the US and China, who were main partners in the implementation of the neoliberal policy of imperialist globalization, are increasingly at odds with each other. The US accuses China of having cheated it with its two-tiered economy of state capitalism and private capitalism, use of state planning to achieve strategic economic and military goals. The US also decries China's use of state subsidies and currency manipulation to favor Chinese enterprises and the theft of US technology from US companies and research laboratories. The two biggest

imperialist powers are in a process of decoupling and entering a new Cold War.

In all imperialist countries, the monopoly bourgeoisie is shaken by the worsening crisis of the world capitalist system. It is worried to death by its own inability to overcome the crisis and its fear of the rise of revolutionary mass movements among the workers and the people against escalating austerity measures and repression. Desperately, it is encouraging and supporting ultra-reactionary movements of fascist, chauvinist, racist, anti-migrant, misogynist, militarist and anti-environmentalist character. It is actively trying to coopt people's initiatives and movements and even fleshing out a strategy of tension and distraction through its long-leash sleeper assets among the Al-Qaeda /Abu Sayyaf/Daesh/ISIS-type terrorist cells to outflank, hijack, deflect and emasculate the growing revolutionary outrage of the world's peoples.

Millions of Filipino migrant workers in more than 100 countries are now threatened by the worsening crisis of global capitalism and by the rising ultra-reactionary movements, especially in the imperialist countries. Many of them have already been thrown out of their jobs because of the tightening of rules by host governments against them and by the lockdowns and shutdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There is now a drastic reduction in the foreign exchange earnings of the migrant workers and their repatriation in increasing numbers is becoming a major problem.

Meanwhile in the Philippines, the semifeudal economy is reeling from the decline of both the agriculture and industry sectors and the unsustainable bloating of the service sector and the public debt. The service sector and public debt bubbles are already in the process of implosion. The tyrannical Duterte regime aggravates the situation by mishandling its response to the COVID-19 pandemic and by taking advantage of it to grab more powers. Duterte and his fellow crooks in the top echelon of the bureaucracy and military engage in the most brazen and outrageous forms of plunder. Thus, the crisis of the ruling system has worsened rapidly and is generating the most favorable conditions for mass protests and the people's war for national and social liberation.

As the inter-imperialist contradictions of the US and China are sharpening, the Duterte regime is desperately trying to serve two conflicting imperialist masters. It is still keeping the treaties, agreements and arrangements that make the US the most dominant imperialist power in the Philippines in an all-round way. In return, the US is relying on the Duterte regime to carry out an anticommunist

military campaign of suppression against the revolutionary movement and to make a charter change to allow US corporations unlimited ownership of Philippine land, natural resources, public utilities and all types of businesses.

At the same time, Duterte has allowed China to build seven military bases in the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines in the West Philippine Sea in violation of the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea and the 2016 final judgment of the Permanent Arbitration Court in favor of the Philippines against China. It has allowed China to own a number of Philippine islands through Chinese casino operators, control the national power grid, erect cell towers in Philippine military camps and assist the reactionary armed services (AFP and PNP) in developing its communications system.

Duterte commits all these acts of treason in exchange for bribes for taking out high interest China loans for overpriced infrastructure projects to be undertaken by Chinese contractors and their own work force. He tries to benefit not only from official transactions with China and its state banks and corporations but also from shady relations with Chinese criminal syndicates engaged in the smuggling of illegal drugs and other contraband, in online gaming and casino operations and in illegal Chinese immigration under the cover of casino employment and tourism. Corrupt Chinese officials are also using these criminal operations of Chinese triads for laundering and stashing their bureaucratic loot abroad.

In the face of two conflicting imperialist powers trying to dominate the Philippines, with the collaboration of the exploiting classes of big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists, the CPP and the revolutionary movement of the Filipino people expect the chronic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system to worsen at an accelerated rate. They are therefore more than ever determined to carry out the people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war. They are resolved that the people's democratic revolution can be completed and the socialist revolution can be started only upon the overthrow of the imperialist-supported big comprador-landlord class dictatorship.

In the course of the people's war, agrarian revolution can be carried out in substantial areas in the country. But the agrarian revolution and other socioeconomic transition measures can be completed and the socialist transformation of the economy can be carried out in earnest only after the nationwide seizure of political power by the proletariat in alliance with the

peasantry and other democratic social strata.

By wielding state power, the proletariat shall be able to take over the commanding heights of the economy; meaning to say, take out the Philippine central bank from the global private central banking cartel of the big banksters and transform it into a genuine public central bank, control the existing industries, the sources of raw materials and the communications and transport lines, carry out socialist industrialization and complete the agrarian revolution in conjunction with the collectivization and mechanization of agriculture.

But while the people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war is still in progress, the CPP has agreed with its revolutionary allies within the NDFP and with further allies and peace advocates outside of the NDFP frame to engage, whenever possible and advantageous to the people, in peace negotiations with the reactionary government to address the roots of the civil war with basic social, economic and political reforms in order to lay the basis for a just and lasting peace.

The main purpose of peace negotiations, the substantive agenda and the methods of negotiating and agreeing have been set forth in The Hague Joint Declaration of 1992. More than ten agreements have been mutually approved, including the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG), the Joint Agreement on Reciprocal Working Committees and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL). Even the GRP and NDFP versions of the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER) have been fully drafted and have led to substantial tentative agreements by the Reciprocal Working Committees of both sides.

But the US imperialist officials and the most reactionary economic and military interests have been behind the scenes prompting the Philippine president to use the demand for indefinitely prolonged ceasefire in order to block the progress of the peace negotiations, to paralyze the revolutionary movement and to stop the negotiations altogether. It is now obvious that every president has used the peace negotiations to consolidate his or her political position within the first year of rule and to try to wangle an indefinitely prolonged ceasefire to paralyze the revolutionary movement and steer the wider public discourse away from addressing substantive issues.

But why do the CPP and NDFP continue to entertain the offer of peace negotiations by every incoming president of the reactionary government? Were the CPP and the NDFP to rebuff such offer they would appear as the bellicose party in the eyes of a great number of people and the broad range of peace advocates. They would be playing the role of the ultra-Leftist, infantile communist or the crazy Trotskyite who poses as pure and perfect proletarian revolutionary, isolated from the masses and helping the enemy appear as the lover of peace. It is the wise policy of the CPP and NDFP to avail of the peace negotiations as a way of presenting the program for a people's democratic revolution, urging all patriotic and democratic forces to explore the paths to a just and lasting peace, and letting the enemy side unfold its anti-national, anti-democratic and anti-people character.

But is it entirely impossible for the adversaries in a civil war to negotiate and agree on a truce? It is not impossible. It has been demonstrated twice in the history of the Chinese revolution that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Guomindang (GMD) could negotiate and agree on a truce in order to fight a third party, first against the northern warlords and then against the Japanese invaders. The CCP and the GMD even tried to negotiate in order to avert the resumption of the civil war after the defeat of Japan. But goaded and backed by the US, the GMD reactionaries decided to carry out a civil war which they lost in 1949.

Is it possible for the Philippine reactionary government to be led by a president or party that is patriotic and progressive enough to engage in serious peace negotiations with the NDFP to address the roots of the armed conflict, agree on social, economic and political reforms and thereby lay the basis for a just and lasting peace? Such a possibility depends on the objective conditions (especially certain domestic and international factors that would hinder or enhance the peace process) and on the character and ability of said president to persuade the big compradors and landlords to take the chance of carrying out land reform and national industrialization as done previously in certain countries.

Among the presidents of the reactionary governments, Duterte was the most loud-mouthed about seeking a just peace with the revolutionary movement. But he was merely pretending. If not for his small-mindedness and short-sightedness, if not for his sheer stupidity and cowardice to stand his ground against a rabidly pro-US and anti-people AFP, he could have proceeded with the NDFP in forging the CASER in order to carry out land reform and national industrialization on a

self-reliant basis with the further assurance of income from the oil and gas resources, with an estimated value of USD 26 trillion, in the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines in the West Philippine Sea.

But he has preferred to “lay aside” in his own words the 2016 judgment of the Permanent Arbitration Court in favor of the Philippines in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. His recent posturing at the UN General Assembly does not change this fact. Instead of playing his cards well to advance national sovereignty, he has acted as a traitor by letting China violate the sovereign rights of the Philippines and build seven artificial islands to serve as military bases, destroy the marine environment and claim the marine and mineral resources that belong to the Filipino people. He is still hoping to get huge amounts of bribes from the overpriced infrastructure projects and high-interest loans amounting to USD 24 billion, that were promised by China.

There are ultra-reactionaries, especially those with a militarist mind-set, who say that they do not need any peace negotiations with the NDFP to achieve peace and to develop the Philippine economy through genuine land reform and national industrialization. But indeed, if left to themselves, they will continue to follow the dictates of their imperialist masters and the local reactionary interests and they will only drive the broad masses of the Filipino people to wage armed revolution and overthrow the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system.

The CPP and the NDFP have always given a fair chance to every reactionary government from that of Cory Aquino to that of Duterte to prove that the revolutionary movement is seriously interested in peace negotiations for the benefit of the Filipino people. Peace negotiations have always been broken because US imperialism and the local ultra-reactionaries have always wanted to turn these into surrender negotiations at the expense of the revolutionary movement and the people or at least to cause confusion among the ranks of the revolutionary movement and the people.

But they cannot break the revolutionary will of the CPP and the NDFP and the Filipino people. This will is well expressed in the Program of the People’s Democratic Revolution and is further applied in the documents and drafts already made in the interest of the Filipino people in the course of the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations. The CPP and NDFP are always open to joint agreements with any force so long as these do not violate revolutionary principles and they spell out mutually agreeable policies for basic social,

economic and political reforms that improve the situation and lives of the Filipino people and lead to the goal of a just and lasting peace in a Philippines that is independent, democratic, socially just, developing in an all-round way, prosperous and in solidarity with the people of the world against imperialism and all reaction.

“Oppressors tell people to bow their heads.

Now they are raising their fists.”

Interview with Marco L. Valbuena, Chief Information Officer, Communist Party of the Philippines, October 27, 2020

1. How does the CPP define terrorism?

For purposes of current discourse, we can define terrorism as the systematic infliction of violence by an entity engaged in armed hostilities against civilians or unarmed people to sow fear among them and force them to submit to the will of the terrorist entity.

In legal terms, you can say that terrorism is the willful disregard of international humanitarian law and rules of war as stipulated in such instruments as the Geneva Conventions which were framed for the protection of civilians and those who are not taking part in armed hostilities. Recall that these international conventions were forged in the 1930s by the international community in the hope of preventing the kind of brutality and sufferings suffered during the Holocaust and abuses during World War I.

2. What is your stand on terrorism?

The Party and the New People's Army (NPA) are firmly opposed to terrorism. Terrorism or violence against unarmed civilians goes against the fundamental principles of the Party.

Terrorism oppresses the people. It runs against the Party's aims of empowering the masses. It is contrary to the aims of national and social liberation. One cannot unleash the revolutionary potential of the people through terrorism. Terrorism is antithetical to revolution. It is counterrevolutionary.

If the CPP and NPA believed otherwise, they could not have struck deep roots among the workers, peasants and other democratic sectors, raised their social and political consciousness, built their mass organizations and organs of political power and mobilized them in their numbers.

The Party and the NPA continue to draw its strength from the wellspring of support of the masses because they steadfastly uphold the interests and well-being of the broad masses.

3. Does not bearing arms against the government make the CPP/NPA terrorist?

No. It is not terrorism for the oppressed masses to take up arms against their oppressors. The right of people to bear arms against an oppressor or foreign aggressor is universally recognized. It is a just and necessary course of action recognized since ancient times. Oppression leaves the masses with very little recourse other than to bear arms to defend themselves.

The people's war being waged by the New People's Army is a continuation of the peasant uprisings and armed resistance of the Katipunan and armed revolutionary movements since then. The aim is to achieve national and social liberation. These aims are wholeheartedly embraced by the poor peasant masses, workers and other oppressed classes and sectors.

In the countryside, the peasant masses are left with no choice in the face of massacres, killings and gross rights abuses by the AFP who serve the interests of the despotic landlords, as well as foreign big economic aggressors. The Party and the NPA help them discover their strength in unity. They were told to bow their heads. Now, they have learned to raise their fists.

4. But isn't it against the prevailing laws to take up arms?

The ruling class oppressors and exploiters and their foreign masters, of course, will invoke their legitimacy and denounce the armed struggle. In the country's history, revolutionaries and freedom fighters have always been vilified by all sorts of names—bandits, thieves, insurrectos, and terrorists.

Today, the reactionaries wish to downplay the existence of a national civil war. They refuse to recognize the CPP/NPA and NDF as a belligerent force, even if they contradict themselves in demanding the NPA to measure up to standards of international rules of war.

But to the eyes of the oppressed classes, it is the ruling reactionary regime that is illegitimate because it does not represent the interests of the majority of the people. In large areas in the countryside, there is practically no presence of the reactionary government except for the military which equal oppression. Here, the masses recognize and support the laws and policies of their own government which they themselves have established on the foundations of their organizations.

5. The NPA is known to take military action against mining corporations and plantations? The military claims this is terrorism as it causes injury to non-armed entities.

To protect the people and the environment, the Party and organs of political power require that economic enterprises that operate within revolutionary territories abide by policies which prohibit large-scale destruction and extraction of resources for commercial export or capitalist superprofits. These policies also seek to ensure the conservation of resources for future industrial development under the people's democratic government.

These policies are enforced mainly through persuasion. Businesses are allowed to operate and earn reasonable profits as long as they comply with revolutionary policies. Coercion or the use of armed might come in only when these operations show complete disregard of the policies for the protection of the environment and interests of the people.

Over the past years, the NPA has carried out sanctions against companies who refuse to comply with these policies and for causing gross destruction to the environment and the people's socioeconomic well-being. Such actions are on orders of the concerned organs of political power. In essence, these are an exercise of state power comparable to how other governments seize, confiscate or destroy property and other assets of enterprises that violate laws.

Let me also mention that while economic in nature, mining operations, as well as other logging, energy, tourism, road projects and other "development projects,"

are typically combined with military force. They violently aggress into agricultural and ancestral lands to drive away peasants and minority people from their land and to keep them oppressed. In 2008, the AFP formed the so-called Investment Defense Force (IDF) which receive large funding from these capitalists.

6. Have there not been incidents in the past where civilians were hurt in NPA military actions? Is this not terrorism? Do you consider this as collateral damage?

There have been past incidents where civilians were wounded or killed during NPA military actions. These result mainly from failure of last-minute intelligence on the part of the NPA.

The NPA does not target civilians, nor does it consider civilian casualties as collateral damage. On the contrary, it is the highest priority of the NPA to ensure that no civilian will get hurt in the course of a firefight. The NPA does not target civilian vehicles and respects humanitarian symbols such as that of the ICRC, in accordance to international rules of war.

Before mounting an ambush against a military unit, the NPA takes effort to ensure that there are no civilians are in the vehicle. Countless ambushes have been called off after receiving information that a civilian is in the vehicle.

When errors do occur and civilians get hurt, the NPA takes extra effort to correct its mistakes. In addition to internal self-corrections and disciplinary actions, the NPA makes public self-criticism and tries to recompense the family of the victims.

The CPP and NPA, however, distinguish civilians from paramilitary forces, vigilantes and other organizations armed and supported by the AFP. The AFP duplicitously described them as "hapless civilians." In fact, these elements are armed and are active in counterinsurgency operations, and are thus legitimate military targets.

7. What is your view of the Anti-Terror Law?

Duterte's Anti-Terror Law is a law of state terrorism. It overturns universally accepted norms of due processes. It breaks down the bourgeois liberal principles in jurisprudence, threatens civil and political rights, undermines the judiciary,

and gives way to fascism and tyrannical arbitrariness and caprices. It is anti-democratic and anti-people. It sets forth the "legal" framework for large-scale suppression of democratic rights. It has emboldened the militarists.

The extraordinary powers it gives Duterte and his cabal further reinforces the reign of terror of this murderous regime. We anticipate the ATA to be used to intensify the campaign against the progressive and democratic forces, as well as the conservative opposition forces, especially in conjunction with Duterte's schemes to perpetuate himself in power.

Duterte's military officials are itching to use the ATA against activists and critics of the regime. Their tactic is plain to see: designate and proscribe the CPP/NPA as terrorist, and red-tag or label legal organizations and individuals as supporters, members or allies of the CPP/NPA in order to justify their suppression.

Duterte has elevated "anti-terrorism" and "ending the local communist armed conflict" to key state policy giving the military a central role in running the affairs of the state. The tenet of civilian control of the military, stipulated in the 1987 constitution, is set aside. Civilian agencies are compelled to march to the military's baton lest they be accused of siding with the "terrorists."

8. How will the ATA affect the CPP/NPA?

I don't see how the ATA will adversely affect the NPA and the revolutionary armed struggle. The AFP claims it will stem NPA recruitment from the cities. How will they do that? By suppressing the rights of activists to espouse the people's national democratic cause and their work of organizing and serving the masses? These fascists ignore history. You cannot defeat a revolution by suppressing the idea of revolution and concealing the rotten social realities that spur people to take up arms.

I see that the ATA will prove to be self-defeating for the reactionaries. While we cannot discount the intimidating and paralyzing effect of illegalization, the masses are bound to resist and push back. Even now, people are pushing back against AFP red-tagging against the progressive and democratic forces and their allies, friends and associations.

Instead of stemming NPA recruitment, the suppression of the national democratic cause under the ATA will only spur more workers, youth, the unemployed, women, and other sectors to join the revolutionary armed struggle.

The more you suppress, the more that people rebel.

9. The regime has declared plans of including the CPP/NPA in the list of designated terrorists. Are you planning to challenge this?

The Party and the NDFP do not recognize the juridical processes of the reactionary government and has no plans to participate in court proceedings especially under a law that was designed primarily to suppress the Party and the people's democratic rights. Any such process under the ATA will be a farce and must be rejected by the revolutionary forces and the people.

The Party and its allies in the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, however, must continue to vigorously question the bases for designating the CPP and NPA as terrorists. Lawyers and other interested parties can also question plans to designate the CPP in line with the legal opinion that the crime of "terrorism" as defined by the ATA cannot be applied to the "rebellion" being waged by the CPP/NPA. This view was expressed recently by former Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonio Carpio.

10. Under the ATA, the government can designate organizations listed as terrorist by the United Nations, by another country or other international entity. Will this affect the CPP and NPA?

As we have pointed out earlier, the CPP and NPA, in fact, are not included in the list of terrorist organizations of the United Nations Security Council. Contrary to the repeated claims of the AFP and the Duterte government, neither are the CPP and NPA included in the list of terrorists of Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia.

The CPP and NPA are included in the list of "terrorist organizations" of only three foreign entities, namely, the United States, New Zealand and the European Union. The inclusion of the CPP and NPA in these lists is baseless. We urge these countries and entities to urgently remove the CPP and NPA from these lists. Otherwise, they might be used by the Duterte regime under the ATA to justify the further suppression of democratic rights. I'm sure these countries and entities would not want to be construed as having connived with the fascist Duterte.

The inclusion of the CPP/NPA in the US "list of foreign terrorists," furthermore, is being used by the State Department to justify military intervention in the

country and the annual military financial assistance for the AFP for the purchase of US surplus war matériel. It is now used to justify military support for the Duterte regime's dirty war.

11. Duterte claims the NPA is terrorist because soldiers are being killed. What can you say?

The CPP and the NPA is engaged in a war against the reactionary state, specifically with its armed forces. The NPA conducts itself in accordance with international rules of war, as well as its own rules of discipline.

In the course of a civil war, armed combatants on either side get killed or injured. This is the inevitable outcome of armed conflicts. However, to the NPA, killing enemy combatants is not in itself the objective of the war; the aim rather is to erode and take away the capacity of the enemy to wage war in defense of the ruling oppressors and exploiters.

This has been repeatedly demonstrated by the NPA where it achieved victory without even firing a single shot or killing an enemy combatant. Enemy armed combatants who surrender, have been subdued, or rendered incapable of fighting are always treated leniently. Wounded combatants are given medical treatment on the spot. At the current stage of the armed conflict, the NPA's immediate aim is to take away the enemy's weapons in order to arm more people and build more NPA units. This is the reason why in battle, NPA fighters are often heard calling on AFP soldiers to just surrender their weapons.

The NPA's lenient treatment of wounded, surrendered or subdued AFP combatants is in stark contrast to the brutal and cruel treatment that Red fighters receive when they are wounded in action. It is only fair that NPA combatants be accorded the rights that they inherently possess under the Geneva Conventions and which the NPA afford wounded or killed AFP soldiers.

12. What can you say about the claims of the AFP that the NPA's use of land mines are terroristic or violate international laws?

The command detonated explosives (CDX) employed by the NPA are allowed under international treaties, specifically the Ottawa Treaty. This treaty prohibits only anti-personnel land mine that explode upon contact. The aim of the treaty is to prevent civilians being accidentally killed or maimed. As an aside, let me point out that the United States actually did not sign this treaty, likely because

US companies are among the manufacturer of these type of unlawful weapons.

While the NDFP is not a signatory to the Ottawa Treaty, the CPP and NPA have repeatedly assented that it opposes the use of contact-detonated landmines. In practice, the NPA only employ explosives which are deliberately detonated only during battle with an enemy armed unit. The NPA is willing to subject these weapons to inspection by international humanitarian agencies to determine its compliance with existing treaties.

13. What is your reaction to AFP claims the NPA is losing support of the people? What about the "surrenderers"?

These AFP claims are not new and are simply not true. Successive AFP leaderships have sung the same tune for the past several decades. But all these claims fall flat on their face by the growth of the NPA indubitably manifested by the steady rise in the level of the people's war in the course of several years.

The thousands of peasants and minority people paraded by the AFP as "surrenderers" are, in fact, victims of AFP deception, intimidation and coercion. Their civil rights have been systematically violated by the military's tactic of arbitrarily labeling people as "NPA supporters" without actually filing charges them in court where they could defend themselves. People condemned by the military are required to "clear" their names by submitting themselves and "cooperating" with the military under pain of AFP reprisal.

These methods adopted by the AFP are causing deep resentment among the people because their simple way of life is disrupted and their rights curtailed. In many areas, people are prevented from purchasing and storing rice and other supplies in their household. Checkpoints are set up which prevent people from freely moving around. Peasants are prohibited from working in their fields. The military uses civilian structures including schools and barangay centers as barracks in violation of international rules of war. Undisciplined AFP soldiers are seen as bad influence as they encourage pornography and drug use among the youth. They disturb the peace with late-night drinking sessions and indiscriminate firing of weapons.

The AFP intimidate local officials to steer the priorities of village and town councils towards counterinsurgency. Government councils have been compelled by the AFP to issue "persona non grata" resolutions against the CPP/NPA for

fear they will earn the ire of the military and be accused of “welcoming the terrorists.” They are disgruntled that military officers are meddling in all aspects of civil governance. Funds for so-called “community integration programs,” “housing” and other projects are being diverted to the pockets of military officers leaving the people hanging dry.

The question that should really be asked is: “Why the AFP and Duterte’s NTF-ELCAC continue to fail to earn the support for its campaign against the NPA?”

At the most basic levels, these tactics of coercion and intimidation applied by Duterte and the AFP show the inability of the reactionary classes to rule without resorting to brazen fascist methods of suppressing the people. However, these tactics of relying on military suppression, rather than political persuasion, are unsustainable and are counterproductive in the long run.

12. Do you think there is a problem of terrorism in the Philippines?

Yes, there is a problem of terrorism in the Philippines, that is, state terrorism under the Duterte regime.

For more than four years now, Duterte has subjected the Filipino people to untold brutalities and cruelties. Duterte’s state terrorism is marked by mass killings in the sham drug war, the extrajudicial killings of peasant activists, human rights workers, trade union organizers, environmentalists and other political personalities, surveillance and red-tagging, hamletting of villages in the countryside, indiscriminate aerial bombardment and use of artillery, forcing people to “surrender” without due process, and so on.

The terrorism of the Duterte regime has resulted in gross violations of human rights. State terrorism is being used by Duterte to silence his critics and intimidate the opposition in the vain hope of securing his power and continuing his reign of corruption and national treachery.

Duterte Regime Engages in Red-Tagging and Setting Up Victims for Mass Murder

October 30, 2020

The Duterte terrorist regime and its rabid military running dogs in the National Task Force-ELCAC and the so-called Anti-Terrorism Council are trying to red-tag and malign as “communist terrorists” the many Filipino patriotic and progressive organizations that have joined the International League of Peoples’ Struggle (ILPS) and have formed the Philippine chapter of the ILPS since the beginning of the 21st century.

Using the malicious notion of “guilt by association”, the state terrorists of the Philippines like Generals Año and Parlade and the anti-communist asset Rigoberto Tiglao claim that the aforesaid Philippine organizations must be “communist terrorists” because they joined the ILPS while I was the chairperson of the ILPS from 2001 to 2019 and that I myself exposed and in effect red-tagged them by inviting or letting them to join the ILPS. The fascist rascals make the numbskull innuendo that the ILPS and I are “communist terrorists” and that any organization joining the ILPS and me is likewise automatically “communist terrorist”.

It is the height of stupidity and malice for the state terrorists headed by Duterte to slander as “communist terrorists” organizations and individuals that are legally, peacefully and democratically engaged in political and social activism and work together to deliberate on major issues, make decisions and launch legal campaigns and actions along the anti-imperialist and democratic line. This line is

in consonance with the Filipino people's aspirations for national and social liberation.

The Duterte regime is today carrying out state terrorism in the name of anti-terrorism. Taking advantage of the Covid-19 pandemic, it has railroaded the enactment of the so-called Anti-Terrorism Law which violates the civil and political rights of the Filipino people and denies them the democratic right to think and speak freely, to assemble and make petitions, to due process and to be presumed innocent until proven guilty before a court of law.

Under the so-called Anti-Terrorism Law, which is a fascist law, any organization or individual can be arbitrarily tagged and listed as communist terrorist by the political agents of the regime, the military, police and paramilitary. And they become subject to arrest without judicial warrant, deprived of bank account and detained for as many 24 days without access to lawyer and family. This is enough time to torture and murder the captives and destroy the corpses and any evidence of wrongdoing by the captors.

The same methods used in Oplan Tokhang in the bogus war on drugs to kill tens of thousands of drug suspects are being used under the so-called Anti-Terrorism Law. The "law enforcement agencies" and the political agents of the regime in the local communities and at various levels of government list down the names of organizations and individuals who are social activists, critics and opponents of the regime. Then the mass murder follows with impunity emboldened by presidential protection for the murderers in authority and by rewards in cash and promotion in rank.

On Red-Tagging in the Philippines and Abroad

Tsikahan with Tito Jo under the auspices

of Anakbayan Europe NDLine Online School, November 15, 2020

1. What is red-tagging?

JMS: Red-tagging means labeling a person or organization as communist and at the same time as terrorist. The Duterte regime and its political and military agents misrepresent communists as terrorists through propaganda and by the enactment of a fascist law like the Anti-Terrorism Law which targets the Communist Party of the Philippines and the revolutionary movement of the Filipino people for national and social liberation.

2. What makes red-tagging dangerous and deadly?

JMS: Red-tagging is dangerous and deadly because it works like the arbitrary listing of drug suspects in the bogus war on drugs. For the Red-tagging or listing alone, the military and police officers pocket public money under the guise of intelligence operations. And then they use the list of those red-tagged for intimidation and extortion, for staging fake surrenders and worst of all for extrajudicial killings. They further pocket the reward money for fake surrenders and for the extrajudicial killings.

What is called military pork barrel keeps on growing under the pretext of anticommunism and anti-terrorism, whereas in fact it is the Duterte regime's state terrorism that reigns in the Philippines. At the expense of economic development and social services as in health, education and public housing, huge amounts of money are appropriated for the military, police and intelligence

services.

Duterte and his favorite military and police officers engage in graft and corruption through overpriced local and foreign purchases of equipment and supplies, imaginary intelligence, psywar and combat operations, fake surrenders and fake community projects. Military pork barrel is now competing with infrastructure pork barrel as big rackets of those in power.

3. How do you think legal activists differ from actual Red Fighters?

JMS: The difference between legal activists and the Red fighters of the New People's Army is very obvious. The Red fighters carry firearms and are with units of the NPA in the countryside. They are committed to wage the armed revolution and are prepared to make sacrifices in the battlefield. They are ready to make the supreme sacrifice of martyrdom.

The legal activists do not belong to the NPA and still go home to their families, go to school, their offices or workplaces aside from speaking up and holding mass actions on issues of public interest. They express views that reflect the needs, demands and aspirations of the people for their own good against the oppressive and exploitative conditions and against the Duterte regime's reign of greed and terror.

4. Reactionary government tags national democratic organizations as recruiters of New People's Army, and defenders of CPP-NPA-NDF, is this true? What really pushes people to join the revolutionary groups then?

JMS: It is perfectly legal for national democratic organizations to assert and exercise their civil and political rights to express themselves and assemble, to make protests and demands in the interest of the people. If they manifest patriotic and democratic ideas and views like those of the CPP, NPA and NDFP, it does not mean that they are recruiters and defenders of these revolutionary organizations.

Those who join the revolutionary organizations are driven to do so by the oppression and exploitation that they suffer from imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. These are problems suffered by the more than 90 percent of the people. Thus, there is widespread desire among the people to rid the country of these.

And it is therefore not surprising that there is a sharing of ideas, views and aspirations among a broad range of people, including the toiling masses of workers and peasants, the middle social strata and even among those who have social conscience in the upper classes.

5. What is really the objective of the Duterte regime in terminating the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations, designating the CPP and NPA as terrorists and engaging in red-tagging and in enacting the Anti-terror Act during the time of the Covid-19 pandemic?

JMS: Duterte's real objective is to impose a fascist dictatorship on the Filipino people. By engaging in state terrorism and all-out war, he can freely engage in intimidating the people, kill people who oppose him and plunder the natural and social wealth of the country in collaboration with foreign monopolies and the local exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords.

He wants to rule beyond 2022 or install his daughter as presidential proxy and ensure that he is not haled to the International Criminal Court to account for his gross and systematic violations of human rights, especially the extrajudicial killing of tens of thousands of people.

6. What do you think of the Senate hearings by the committee headed by Panfilo Lacson? How come General Parlade and a certain Jeffrey Celiz are star performers in these hearings? What are the Senate hearings for?

JMS: The Senate hearings are for the purpose of red-baiting and anti-communist witch hunt. It is a cheap revival of the long-discredited McCarthyism in US history. Senator Lacson who is head of the committee is the principal author of the Antiterror Bill. He wants to imitate Senator McCarthy. Thus, wild characters like General Parlade and the impostor Jeffrey Celiz have free play to red-tag people.

They do not have evidence to bring to court against those whom they malign for any act of terrorism and so they use the Senate hearings in order to engage in an anticommunist witchhunt and subject their victims to trial by publicity and to threats of punitive measures, indefinite detention, freezing of bank accounts, torture and murder.

7. Is red-tagging really effective in preventing dissent? Why do you think government invest in such propaganda?

JMS: Red-tagging is not really effective in preventing dissent. It is so absurd and abusive that that it actually provokes or challenges people to resist. In my own youth in the 1950s, I became an activist precisely because the red-tagging demonstrated how anti-national and how antidemocratic were the imperialists and the local reactionaries in using it.

Currently, the organizations and individuals that are being red-tagged are fighting back to expose the red-taggers as antinational and antidemocratic reactionaries in the service of imperialism and the local exploiting classes. More people will become activist and more people will become revolutionary because of the red-tagging. In this sense, Duterte and his reactionary agents are the best recruiters of the CPP, NPA and the NDFP.

8. Is red-tagging evident even outside the country?

JMS: Yes, of course. The Duterte regime has dispatched psywar and intelligence agents like General Parlade and Lorraine Badoy to foreign capitals in order to red-tag and malign people opposed to the regime. There are also psywar and intelligence agents posted in various foreign countries to surveil the overseas Filipinos and to red-tag those they consider as critics of the regime.

These psywar and intelligence agents of Duterte are paid from the intelligence and discretionary funds of the Office of the President and various departments and agencies of the reactionary government. The Duterte agents who call themselves DDS use the social media to slander and threaten the critics and opponents of the Duterte regime.

9. The National Task Force-ELCAC and its highest officials are circulating the propaganda that you yourself red-tagged Filipino organizations and called them “front organizations” of the CPP. How true is that claim?

JMS: That is a big lie of Duterte and his political and military agents. What I did exactly in a speech in Belgium in 1987 was to differentiate the legal democratic forces and the armed revolutionary organizations. Whenever I speak of national and democratic forces among the people, I do not say that they are members of the National Democratic Front.

The 18 member-organizations of the NDFP are well-known. The NDFP table of organizations is well-publicized. The propagandists and military minions of Duterte pretend not to know it or they really do not know it because they are too

lazy to know. Certainly, I do not refer to any legal democratic force as a “front” or facade organization of the CPP or NDFP. I do not use that kind of language. It is the language of the red-baiters.

10. There is also one patently ridiculous claim against you. How do you react to the attack on you that in effect you red-tagged Philippine organizations by inviting them to join the International League of Peoples’ Struggle when you were the chairperson from 2001 to 2019?

JMS: Indeed, that is a patently ridiculous claim. It is absolutely clear that the ILPS is not neither a communist nor a terrorist organization. It is an international united front formation of anti-imperialist and democratic mass organizations. It has hundreds of member-organizations in several scores of countries. Anticommunists like General Esperon and others of the NTF-ELCAC and the Anti-Terrorism Council and hirelings like Rigoberto Tiglao are absolutely stupid in red-tagging the ILPS or slandering it as terrorist.

11. How do we stop and fight red-tagging?

JMS: In the Philippines, the organizations and individuals being red-tagged are fighting the red-taggers in every possible legal way and have been successful despite the enactment of the Anti-Terror Act and the growing threat of fascism. They can serve as examples for the overseas Filipinos in fighting back. You have relatively more democratic space in Europe even if there are also chauvinist, racist and even fascist currents here.

You have to strengthen your patriotic and democratic Filipino organizations and develop solidarity with the host people and other foreign minorities in order to assert and exercise your democratic rights abroad. At the same, you and other people in solidarity with you can support the struggle of the Filipino people for national independence democracy, economic development, cultural progress and peace.

12. The CPP and NPA are never known and have never been accused of committing any act of terrorism abroad, why are they listed as terrorist organizations by the US, EU and some other countries?

JMS: It was upon the request of Gloria M. Arroyo, General Esperon and Norberto Gonzales that the US designated the CPP and NPA and even myself as “terrorist” in 2002. And other countries followed the US in designating the

aforesaid as “terrorist”. In my case, I have succeeded in having my name removed from the EU terrorist list since 2009 by filing a court case before the European Court of Justice.

It is indeed anomalous that the CPP and NPA are designated as terrorists despite the fact that they have never been known or have been accused of committing any act of terrorism abroad. They adhere to the international conventions on human rights and humanitarian conduct as co-belligerents in the civil war in the Philippines. They are also bound by the GRP-NDFP Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law.

But they have been unable to undertake legal action like I have done. They are preempted from making representations before authorities abroad by certain factors and conditions. Filipino organizations abroad and those organizations in solidarity with the Filipino people should expose the injustice done to the CPP and NPA and demand their removal from so-called terrorist lists. After all these lists are administrative acts by executive entities. They are subject to inquiry and changes upon the demand of the people.

They have emboldened the Duterte regime to terminate the peace negotiations with the NDFP and to make its own designation and listing of the CPP and NPA as terrorists since 2017. With their baseless listing of the CPP and CPP as terrorists, they are practically encouraging Duterte to engage in anticommunist witchhunts and engage in state terrorism.

13. The newly-elected US president Biden has expressed interest in promoting human rights and democracy in countries that the US supports and has referred negative trends towards authoritarianism specifically in the Philippines, Turkey and Hungary. What can the Filipino people expect and demand?

JMS: The Filipino people expect Biden to keep his word. Somehow Duterte should be advised to give up his scheme of fascist dictatorship and ruling the Philippines beyond 2022 as well as his scheme to rig the 2022 presidential elections to install his daughter or any of his stooges as his proxy. Especially now Duterte has bankrupted the Philippine economy and his own government, he has become more dependent on the US for the military and economic assistance and on pro-US military and police officers. The US can actually tell him to stop being a tyrant or else he loses the US assistance that he begs for from year to year.

The US can also advise Duterte to stop selling out the sovereign rights of the Filipino people over the West Philippine Sea and favoring China's political and economic interests in the Philippines. China has now seven military bases in the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines, controls the national power grid and erects communications towers in the same military camp where the US has its own personnel and facilities under the Visiting Forces Agreement and the Enhanced defense Cooperation Agreement. Both imperialist powers violate the national sovereignty of the Filipino people.

14. By all indications, the Duterte regime has failed to destroy the CPP, NPA and the revolutionary movement in accordance with the promise he made to US President Trump when he was in the Philippine on November 13, 2017. Now, he is trying to intimidate the urban populations with state terrorism. Will it be helpful to the people if calls for the resumption of GRP-NDFP peace negotiations are made? Will such calls help to discourage from carrying out his scheme of fascist dictatorship?

JMS: Duterte is already too deeply involved in his own scheme of fascist dictatorship. He has committed so many grave crimes of treason, tyranny, mass murder and plunder against the people that he knows the people will never believe any pretense that he makes at negotiating peace with the revolutionary movement. He is hell-bent on attacking the revolutionary movement and the people. And there is too little time for him to step back from his lurch to an ignominious end.

But it is good for the peace advocates to call for peace negotiations as a goal for the broad united front and the broad masses of the people against the Duterte tyrannical regime. Such a call can rally the entire people, unite them for bringing about a change of administration and encourage the incoming administration to engage in peace negotiations and lay the basis for a just and lasting peace by addressing the roots of the armed conflict.

The Armed Revolution Will Continue to Grow in Strength as Imperialism, Feudalism and Bureaucrat Capitalism Persist

December 26, 2020

When the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army were still small and weak from 1968 to 1972, Marcos exaggerated their size and strength and referred to them as his pretext for imposing fascist dictatorship on the Filipino people. He was supposed to nip them in the bud. But instead, the fascist dictatorship became the biggest stimulus for the armed revolution to gain strength and spread nationwide.

All successors of the Marcos regime have boasted of being able to destroy the armed revolution with campaigns of military suppression and deception. All have failed miserably. Now the Duterte regime is trying hard to surpass the state terrorism and brutality of the Marcos fascist dictatorship. He will continue to fail in his futile attempt to destroy the armed revolution and will continue to drive more people to take the road of armed revolution.

The armed revolution continues to grow in strength

As long as the root causes persist, the conditions for the growth of the armed

revolution will be fertile and the reactionary government and its imperialist masters will fail to destroy it. The root causes are imperialism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. They are accountable for the gross underdevelopment, high unemployment and mass poverty. They determine the semicolonial and semifeudal character of the ruling system and are responsible for the brutal and corrupt government that tries to preserve the status quo.

The people and their revolutionary forces are determined to fight for national and social liberation. They will continue to carry out the people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war until they achieve total victory. The revolutionary movement is the direct opposite to the tyrannical, traitorous, mass-murdering, plundering and swindling Duterte regime. The crimes of this regime drive the people to take the road of armed revolution.

The people can never accept suffering forever the worsening chronic crisis of the ruling system and the escalating conditions of oppression and exploitation. The armed revolutionary movement has been tempered by thousands of battles and has already spread nationwide and taken deep roots among the people, especially the workers and peasants. The reactionary armed forces have admitted that the New People's Army has wiped out more than 13,000 of their troops, while they have killed more than 40,000 civilians in blind actions of reprisal since 1969.

According to the publications of the Communist Party of the Philippines, the point now is to develop the guerrilla fronts in every region to become revolutionary base areas, bring about the maturation of the strategic defensive and enter the stage of the strategic stalemate in due course. The frequent tactical offensives by NPA platoons and companies in the strategic defensive will pass to frequent tactical offensives by NPA companies and battalions in the strategic stalemate. The time will surely come when NPA battalions and regiments will accomplish the strategic offensive on a nationwide scale.

In every guerrilla front today, the Communist Party, the New People's Army, the revolutionary mass organizations, alliances, the National Democratic Front and the people's democratic government are thriving. There is no way that the brutal and corrupt Duterte regime and its armed minions can destroy the armed revolution for so long as the people condemn them as instruments of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

Under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, the universal theory of the

revolutionary proletariat, the CPP has correctly set the program and general line of the people's democratic revolution through the strategic line of protracted people's war. It started with only some 80 Party members and candidate-members on December 26, 1960 with an urban mass following of some 10,000 workers and youth with political education in the new democratic revolution with a socialist perspective. Now, it has tens of thousands of Party members and a mass following in the millions.

Every day the CPP recruits and develops a large number of new cadres and members through theoretical and political education, mass work in various classes and sectors, armed struggle and establishing Party branches and groups in localities and various types of organizations. It is simply impossible for the Duterte regime and its armed minions to stop the growth of the CPP. Their military, police and paramilitary operatives are too limited to spy on the accelerated and widespread recruitment, education and training of CPP candidate-members.

In fact, they are goading more mass activists in the urban and rural areas to join the CPP and the armed revolution, especially because of the red-tagging, arbitrary arrests, torture and murder, which are being perpetrated with impunity. Reminiscent of the Marcos fascist dictatorship, there is an upsurge of mass activists who wish to join the New People's Army. The Red commanders and fighters are striving to launch more tactical offensives in order to provide arms to the increasing NPA recruits.

The CPP has absolute leadership over the NPA. It has set the strategic line of the protracted people's war, which is to encircle the cities from the countryside and accumulate strength until conditions become ripe for the seizure of the cities. The NPA has grown self-reliantly through tactical offensives from a force of only 60 Red fighters with only 9 automatic rifles and 26 inferior firearms to nearly 10,000, augmented by tens of thousands of members of the people's militia and hundreds of thousands of self-defense units of mass organizations.

The CPP leads millions of people in the countryside because the revolutionary armed struggle is integrated with agrarian revolution and with mass base-building through the mass organizations and the local organs of political power which constitute the people's democratic government. There are more than 110 guerrilla fronts in the rural areas of 17 regions and in 73 provinces. The people's democratic government being developed in the countryside aims to overthrow

the reactionary state in due time in the strategic offensive.

The CPP is determined to solve the problem of conservatism by having two-thirds of the NPA devoted to mass work and one third devoted to armed tactical offensives with short rest periods. The Red commanders and fighters are rotated to carry out mass work and armed tactical offensives. But all the time the entire NPA is alert to adopt the correct defensive and counter-offensive measures. Whenever advantageous, without the risk of decisive engagement at the expense of any guerrilla front, the highest possible concentration of the NPA strength in a guerrilla front can be used in a planned series of tactical offensives against the enemy.

The flexible tactics necessary for a people's war of fluid movement are made possible by knowing the strong points and most vulnerable points of the revolutionary and enemy side and by using concentration, dispersal and shifting the strength of the NPA in order to frustrate and defeat the enemy. The constant surveillance of the enemy by the NPA and the people provides the knowledge of the limits of enemy strength and capabilities on varying scales and allows the CPP and NPA to take the initiative in carrying out tactical offensives. The strength and capabilities of the enemy are not limitless. In fact, they have become extremely limited by the nationwide development of the revolutionary movement in the last 52 years.

When the enemy attacks in superior force, the NPA can retreat to deprive him of a target but he is given a fair share of land mines, sniper fire and even a lightning ambush on any column of his that is isolated. While in retreat from any guerrilla front, the NPA and the people observe the weak points of the enemy for the purpose of soonest possible tactical counter-offensives. Elsewhere, NPA units can take full initiative to launch tactical offensives against the most vulnerable points of the enemy, which include small-unit detachments of the military, police stations, paramilitary units, and the security guards of plantations, logging sites and mines.

The leading organs of the CPP and the commands of the NPA are well aware of the continuous US military support for the Duterte tyranny and the total strength and deployment of the reactionary armed forces, police and paramilitary forces. They are determined to avoid decisive engagements which put at risk the entire strength of any guerrilla front. But they are well determined to seize the initiative in launching counter-offensives against the weakest points of the enemy. The

NPA has learned positive and lessons in the course of overcoming and frustrating the various scales and sizes of enemy operations (intelligence, psywar and combat) and the use of drones and bombings.

Around 124 battalions or 40 brigades of the reactionary armed forces are deployed in the eight priority regions of Southern Tagalog, Southern Mindanao, Eastern Visayas, North Central Mindanao, Bicol, Northeast Mindanao, Negros and Far South Mindanao. Around 23 battalions have been spread thinly in Western Mindanao, Cagayan Valley, Ilocos-Cordillera, Central Luzon, Panay and Central Visayas. While they fail to destroy the armed revolution, the fascists are out to enrich themselves and beat themselves in the civil war by wasting public money on military overspending. The military budget for 2020 is more than PhP 200 billion, overshadowing the budget for any of the vital social services, especially education, health, public housing, disaster relief and so on.

The main foundation of the revolutionary united front is being developed by the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, with its comprehensive range of 18 allied organizations. This is the united front for armed struggle. At the same time, there is the broad united front of the legal democratic forces of the basic toiling masses, the middle social strata and the conservative opposition that are not engaged in armed struggle. The conservative opposition continues to be weak because of the tendency of the traditional reactionary politicians to join whoever is the new president until this move into his lame duck years and it becomes increasing isolated and weak.

The Duterte regime is going crazy by using anti-communist witchhunts, spreading guilt by association and equating the CPP with the NDFP as the revolutionary united front as well as with the broad united front of legal democratic forces of the toiling masses, middle strata and the conservative opposition. Any individual, organization or institution can be accused of being “communist” and therefore “terrorist”.

The regime is engaged in blind red-tagging, slander, extortion, arbitrary arrests, torture and murder. All these are being done to realize state terrorism and fascist dictatorship under the so-called Anti-Terrorism Act. But they grievously offend the people and drive them in general to engage in various forms of struggle and the most threatened young militants to join the NPA.

On the enemy's rejection of peace negotiations

To the disgust of the social activists, peace advocates, human rights defenders and the broad masses of the people, the Duterte regime has terminated the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations and designated the CPP and NPA as “terrorist” organizations since 2017. It has nullified all previous agreements and engaged in a rampage of brutal murders directed against NDFP consultants and against the CPP and NPA with the clear objective of ending the peace negotiations once and for all time and allowing Duterte to become fascist dictator.

Since then, the Duterte regime has engaged in “localized peace talks” for the purpose of psywar and intelligence against those known as close relatives and friends of suspected revolutionaries, has compelled local units of the reactionary government to issue persona non grata declarations against the CPP and NPA, stage fake surrender ceremonies and fake military encounters with those killed extrajudicially and issue press releases about payments to the fake surrenderers and fake community development projects. But in fact, public money is openly being pocketed by the corrupt military officers.

Duterte no less has put to shame the retired and active military and police officers by declaring publicly that he maintains their loyalty to him because he literally feeds them with money. To ingratiate himself with them, he has engaged in unprecedented military overspending, militarized his cabinet and allowed the active military and police officers to engage in corrupt practices in the acquisition of local and foreign officers and in the implementation of the bogus war on drugs and the so-called counterinsurgency plans.

For as long as the tyrant Duterte and his loyalist military and police officers are hell-bent on continuing the civil war between the reactionary state and the broad masses of the people, there will be no more peace negotiations between the GRP and NDFP. The CPP, NPA and the NDFP have no choice but to continue the armed revolution as the sovereign right of the people to fight tyranny and state terrorism.

The CPP, NPA and the NDFP are not terrorists because they adhere to the international law on human rights and humanitarian conduct in the civil war and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law. And they have always been willing to engage in peace negotiations in accordance with The Hague Joint Declaration of 1992. They are willing to negotiate with a future regime that will reject state terrorism and seek peace negotiations.

For as long as it is clear to the people that it is the reactionary government which rejects the peace negotiations with the NDFP, it is just and advantageous for the armed revolutionary movement to continue and intensify the people's war against the reactionary ruling clique and the entire ruling system. The armed revolutionary movement has grown in strength in long periods of intensified people's war, with no distraction and with no exposure of cadres and their connections by peace negotiations, such as in the long period of no negotiations with the Marcos regime from 1969 to 1986 and during long breakdowns of peace negotiations with the post-Marcos regimes.

The rapidly worsening crisis of the world capitalist system and of the Philippine ruling system are exceedingly favorable for the armed revolution of the Filipino people. The global economic depression that has beset the world since the financial meltdown of 2008 has resulted in less demand for the raw materials and semi-manufactures produced by the Philippines, in less foreign exchange income for paying the manufactured imports, in rising trade and budgetary deficits and in a rapidly rising public debt.

The Covid-19 pandemic has aggravated the crisis of the world capitalist system and that of the Philippine ruling system. The lockdowns have drastically brought down the demand for the raw material and semi-manufacture exports of the Philippines as well as the demand for the cheap labor of Filipino men and women. Millions of overseas Filipino workers have returned home, greatly reducing the foreign exchange remittances to pay for the import of consumer imports and servicing the foreign debt.

Worst of all the Duterte regime has taken advantage of the pandemic to engage in massive corruption, escalate focused military operations and enact the law of state terrorism. The tyrant Duterte took emergency powers supposedly to realign this year's budget and next year's. He promised to provide mass testing, adequate medical services and economic assistance to those who have lost their jobs and other means of livelihood.

But more than 590,000 billion pesos for such purposes are unaccounted for and have been pocketed by Duterte and his gangster clique. He has increased the budget of the military and police for the purpose of repression and the enactment of the law of state terrorism to realize his scheme of fascist dictatorship even before expected charter change and proclamation of national martial law.

The tyranny and thievery of the Duterte regime have combined to bankrupt the Philippine economy and the reactionary government. The conditions for the armed revolution have become far more favorable than before the pandemic lockdowns. The broad masses of the people detest the regime for bringing about far worse conditions of mass poverty and misery and for scandalously imposing on them state terrorism and wasting huge amounts of public funds on military overspending.

The Duterte ruling clique has undermined its own economic and political position and has dug its own grave by engaging in flagrant plunder and repression. The broad masses of the people are now on the verge of coming out to the streets in gigantic numbers to condemn and oust the fascist tyrant. Even within the reactionary armed forces and police, there is a rapidly increasing number of groups of officers who have long resented the sell-out of sovereign rights over the West Philippine Sea to China and the favoritism bestowed by Duterte on the so-called Davao boys who have engaged in all kinds of criminality and corruption.

It is widespread within the reactionary armed forces and police that Duterte is physically and mentally sick and that he keeps himself most of the time in Davao for his dialysis after every few days. But he still pretends to be physically and politically strong enough to take all powers and become a fascist dictator or else to handpick a presidential stooge by using his power to rig the Comelec vote count as he did in the 2019 mid-elections to gain overwhelming control over both houses of Congress.

At the same time, it is well known that he bought a presidential jet to be able to escape to China at any time. He knows that his end is coming near with every month that passes. He has only one year and six months left of his six-year term. And several judicial systems are after him. If the International Criminal Court fails to arrest him, the people's court of the people's democratic government is expected to run after him and all his principal accomplices in gross and systematic violations of human rights.

We know exactly the broad range of forces that converged against the fascist dictatorship from the assassination of Benigno Aquino, Jr. in 1983 to the downfall of Marcos in February 1986. The Duterte ruling clique is trying desperately to manipulate the rabid anti-communist and militarist elements in the conservative opposition to disrupt the broad antifascist united front by red-

tagging the legal patriotic and democratic forces and slandering them as having “enabled” Duterte to become president and consolidate his presidency.

In fact, the biggest enablers of Duterte have been the traditional politicians who made an exodus to his regime as soon as he became president and turned overnight the previous ruling party into an emaciated and weak minority. The armed revolutionary movement has never stopped, despite short periods of ceasefires on grounds of promoting peace negotiations. And the legal patriotic and democratic forces have condemned the Duterte regime as soon as it terminated the peace negotiations in 2017. The regime is now angling that it can retain power by separating the entire conservative opposition from the impending gigantic mass actions.

Whether Duterte will succeed to rule the people beyond 2022 as a fascist dictator or to handpick his successor by rigging the 2022 presidential elections, there will be a highly explosive political situation from day to day. The broad masses of the people and the broad united front against the tyrant Duterte will be outraged and angered by the brazen violation of their sovereign will and by the rapid worsening of the socioeconomic and political crisis of the ruling system. As of now, the broad masses of the people are already seething with just anger over the rapidly deteriorating conditions of oppression and exploitation.

In order to ensure the realization of the gigantic mass actions on a nationwide scale for the ouster of the Duterte fascist regime or its successor regime, the toiling masses of workers and peasants, the middle social strata of the urban petty bourgeoisie and middle bourgeoisie and the allies in the conservative opposition must be aroused, organized and mobilized to protest against the rapidly deteriorating socioeconomic and political conditions and the intolerable conditions of escalating oppression and exploitation.

They must protest and condemn the puppetry, brutality and corruption of the Duterte fascist regime and demand respect for the sovereign rights of the people, justice for the victims of human rights violations, return of the stolen public funds, economic and social assistance to all who have lost their jobs and means of livelihood and who have been victimized by the regime during the pandemic and aggravated crisis of the ruling system.

In the meantime, the armed revolution will continue. The CPP will continue to wage the people’s democratic revolution through protracted people’s war and

will aim for the bright future of socialism. The struggle for national and social liberation coincides with the worldwide anti-imperialist and democratic struggles and the foreseeable resurgence of the world proletarian-socialist revolution. The advance of the revolutionary mass movement has a direct bearing on the prospects of realizing a just peace in the Philippines.

That there is once more a brazenly brutal and corrupt regime reminiscent of the Marcos fascist regime proves that the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system continues to rot and has never been fixed by the pseudo-democratic regimes preceding the fascist regime of Duterte to remove the root causes of the armed revolution. Once more the worst of the ruling system comes out in the form of the traitorous, fascist, genocidal and plundering Duterte regime and generates the conditions and opportunities for accelerating the advance of the people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war.

Political and Economic Crisis in the Philippines

Related to Duterte's Scheme of Fascist Dictatorship

January 11, 2021

The perfect storm swirls in the Philippines. The political and socioeconomic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system has become extreme and has made the reactionary state and the ruling classes of big compradors, landlords and corrupt bureaucrats once more incapable of ruling in the old bourgeois-democratic way.

Reminiscent of the period of the Marcos fascist dictatorship from 1972 to 1986, once more an incumbent president, an openly brutal and corrupt reactionary politician, is hellbent on imposing a fascist dictatorship on the people.

Taking advantage of his rigging of the 2019 mid-term elections and the Covid-19 pandemic, Duterte has used his compliant Congress to grab emergency powers to steal enormous public funds for himself and his clique, railroad a fascist law of state terrorism and is now pushing charter change in the style of Marcos.

The reemergence of fascism even before charter change and the formal declaration of martial law nationwide through the fascist law of state terrorism manifests the rottenness of the ruling system and its ripeness for revolutionary change.

At present, Duterte stands as the most detestable representative of the ruling system and is exceedingly vulnerable to ouster. Extremely greedy for power and

plunder, he has surpassed already in a few years the brutality and other despicable features of the fascist regime of his idol Marcos.

He has a cunning criminal mind, proud of manipulating the reactionary government and law to commit crimes of treason, tyranny, butchery and plunder but is stupid enough not to discern that a fascist dictator like him cannot last long because of his frail health and under current circumstances of rapidly worsening crisis.

Despite the adulation conjured by paid poll surveys and troll armies in the social media, he has already become isolated from the people by escalating his crimes against them and by devastating the Philippine economy and bankrupting his own government.

He uses in vain the revolutionary movement of the people as pretext for seizing absolute power for the purpose of absolute corruption and he overestimates his ability and chances of destroying the revolutionary movement of the people and satisfying further the US and other foreign monopolies in order to retain their support for his fascist scheme.

Recently, his fascist running dogs in the National Task Force-ELCAC have invented the lie that I have ordered the New People's to deploy armed propaganda teams to punish the worst human rights violators and most corrupt officials in their urban lairs in order to have a pretext for escalating acts of state terrorism in both urban and rural areas.

I have repeatedly denied the lie and declared that I am not in any position to make such order ascribed to me. But I acknowledge the fact that the escalating murder of unarmed urban poor and peasants, social activists, critics, human rights activists and other people have generated a public clamor for the people's army to punish the criminals in authority.

Like the many peace advocates, I look forward to the ouster of the tyrant and fascist Duterte or stepping down in 2022 so that the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations can be resumed if the succeeding regime is willing to negotiate. It has been absolutely clear that Duterte has been responsible for the termination of the peace negotiations.

In trying to enrich his own family, his business cronies and top military minions, Duterte has bankrupted his own government through bureaucratic corruption and

military overspending on top of the devastating consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic and the rapidly worsening crisis of both Philippine economy and the world capitalist system.

The global depression, which has been aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic, has drastically reduced the foreign exchange income from the export of raw materials and semimanufactures and from the remittances of overseas Filipino workers who are now returning to the Philippines by the millions and rejoining the ranks of the socially restive unemployed.

The growing trade and budgetary deficits, the mounting debt burden and heavy debt service payments have constricted the importation of consumer goods upon which the regime has made the underdeveloped Philippines dependent. The scarcity of imported and locally produced consumer goods has begun to generate a spiral of inflation.

Food production has been sabotaged by the Duterte regime by pursuing import liberalization at the expense of the local farmers and allowing the agricultural land to be reduced by landgrabbing and real estate speculation and chemical pollution from mines and monocrop plantations, the typhoons and floods. The Philippines has become the world's No. 1 rice importer. It has also become a big importer of sugar.

Under the present conditions of rapidly worsening political and socioeconomic crisis, the tyrant Duterte is out of his depths for thinking that his fascist dictatorship would last long like that of Marcos.

The Filipino people are fed up with the brutal and corrupt Duterte regime and are highly desirous of revolutionary change. And the revolutionary party of the proletariat, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), has proven its strength in leading the revolutionary movement in more than 52 years. It is far stronger than when Marcos started his fascist dictatorship in 1972.

Precisely because of the Marcos fascist dictatorship, the CPP, the New People's Army (NPA), the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), the revolutionary mass organizations, the antifascist alliance and the local organs of political power constituting the people's democratic government grew from small and weak to big and strong by leaps and bounds.

The fascist dictatorship of Duterte will only serve to arouse the people to wage

all forms of resistance and will certainly result in the further strengthening and rapid advance of the revolutionary movement not only against such dictatorship but against the entire unjust semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system.

Crisis, State Terrorism

and Revolution in the Philippines

Interview by Steve Sweeney, International Editor, Morning Star, January 28, 2021

Before we get into the main questions, could you explain a bit about your background i.e., how you became politically active and describe your later arrest in the Philippines, detention and the subsequent case in the Netherlands.

JMS: While I was a graduate student and instructor in English language and literature at the University of the Philippines in 1959, I opposed the McCarthyite witchhunt being conducted by reactionary members of Congress. Faculty members and students were accused of violating the Anti-Subversion Law because they published supposedly pro-communist articles. These were actually critical of US imperialist domination and the ruling system of big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists in the Philippines.

I felt challenged to defy the witchhunt and thus I took the initiative of forming the Student Cultural Association of the U.P. (SCAUP). Its general line was to defend academic freedom and the separation of church and state against the combined threats of anticommunism and religious bigotry and to promote the study of and struggle for the national and social liberation of the Filipino people against the semicolonial and semifeudal conditions in the Philippines. At the same time, we studied Marxism-Leninism discreetly for guidance in the current struggle in the direction of socialism.

The SCAUP was historically significant for being able to organize a demonstration of 5000 students which walked into Congress and literally scuttled the anticommunist hearings of the Committee on Anti-Filipino Activities on March 15, 1961. After this event, I was among the student activists who proceeded to promote the line of anti-imperialism and democracy in national student organizations. I was able to go to Indonesia on a scholarship grant to study the Indonesian language and the mass movement led by the Communist Party of Indonesia in the first half of 1962.

After I returned to Manila in the second half of 1962, I joined the research and education staff of the Workers' Party (Lapiang Manggagawa). I organized the seminars and edited publications for major labor federations as well as for the national peasant association MASAKA. I became the Vice Chairman for Education of the Workers Party from 1964 onward. I edited the Progressive Review from 1963 to 1967.

I was one of the founders and became the chairman of the Kabataang Makabayan (Patriotic Youth), a comprehensive youth organization of students, workers, peasants and professionals, from 1964 onward. I was a professorial lecturer in political science at the Lyceum of the Philippines from 1964 to early 1968. It was during this period that Duterte became one of my students.

It was in December 1962 when I was invited to join the old Communist Party of the Philippines and became in 1963 a member of the Executive Committee directly under then General Secretary Jesus Lava. The old CPP had a few active members and no branches. Thus, we built the branches among the workers, peasants and youth through ideological, political and organizational work.

Ideological and political differences arose in 1966 over the history, the circumstances and direction of the old party as well as over the Sino-Soviet ideological debate. The majority of party cadres and members joined me in the reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines on December 26, 1968 and in the founding of the New People's Army on March 29, 1969.

We adopted and carried out the general line of people's democratic revolution under the leadership of the proletariat and with a socialist perspective and waged the people's war in accordance with the strategic line of encircling the cities from the countryside. The people's war grew in strength and advanced as the Marcos regime increasingly used brutal methods of suppression from 1969

onward and imposed fascist dictatorship on the people from 1972 to 1986.

I was captured by the military minions of the Marcos fascist regime on November 10, 1977. I was subjected to physical and mental torture and I was in solitary confinement for more than five years out of nine years of imprisonment. The fascist dictatorship unwittingly drove the people to wage both armed and legal forms of resistance. I was released from prison on March 5, 1986 some 10 days after the downfall of Marcos. All the charges against me for subversion and rebellion were nullified.

I went back to the University of the Philippines as visiting fellow with the rank of associate professor at the Institute of Asian Studies. At the end of August 1986, I left the Philippines for an international university tour that brought me to several countries in Asia, Europe and Latin America. I could not make it to the US because the McCarran Internal Security Act banned foreign communists from entering the US. Thus, I stayed on in The Netherlands until I was overtaken by the Aquino regime's cancellation of my Philippine passport and I was compelled to apply for political asylum by the threat of military re-arrest in the Philippines.

It was in November 2001 that then Philippine president Arroyo while on a working visit to the US requested the US government to designate the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army and myself as "foreign terrorists". It would be in August 2002 that the US would designate all the aforesaid three as "terrorists" without citing any evidence of any act of terrorism abroad by any of the three.

The Dutch government mechanically followed the US designation of the CPP, NPA and myself as terrorists. It withdrew its designation of me as terrorist after I asked for evidence of "my terrorist act" and it could not produce any, except a press clipping about the CPP threatening US military personnel. Still the Dutch government became the prime movant in putting my name in the EU "terrorist" list. It took me more than seven years of legal struggle to have my name removed from said list by final decision of the European Court of Justice in 2009.

In 2007 the Arroyo regime also caused my arrest and detention in The Netherlands by making false charges that had used Dutch territory to order the murder of certain persons in the Philippines. My Dutch legal counsel easily

proved that the charges were false and these were dismissed by the district court of The Hague and then by the Dutch appellate court. But it would only be in early 2009 that the Dutch National Prosecution Service ceased to do any further investigation of the false charges.

You can visit my website www.josemariasison.org to read my short biographies and my legal case files. You can also find out from this website my biography in the Biographical Dictionary of Marxism by the British author Robert A. Gorman and book length biographies of me by Dr. Rainer Werning, *The Philippine Revolution: The Leader's View*; and Ninotchka Rosca, *At Home in the World: Portrait of a Revolutionary*.

1. The Duterte government recently designated the CPP and the NPA as terrorist organizations, claiming its hand was forced by the international community.

How do you evaluate this and why did the Duterte government make this move? Is it a sign of weakness and a bid to crush all opposition forces?

JMS: Duterte is lying by claiming that it is the international community that has forced his hand to designate the CPP and NPA as terrorist organizations. It is his own emulation of the Marcos fascist dictatorship and his own desire and scheme of imposing fascist dictatorship on the Filipino people that have motivated and driven him to designate the CPP and NPA as terrorists.

It is relevant to cite the fact that retired general Esperon is now the national security adviser and top hatchetman of Duterte in the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) and was previously the chief of staff of the reactionary armed forces during the Arroyo regime that requested the US to designate the CPP and NPA as FTOs in 2001. But since then, one regime after another until Duterte's has avoided designating the CPP and NPA as "terrorist" in order to keep the door open for peace negotiations.

There is cold-bloodedness in the decision of Duterte to terminate the peace negotiations and designate the CPP and NPA as "terrorists" in quick sequence on November 23, 2017 and December 5, 2017, respectively. It is to scapegoat the CPP and NPA and give him the license to grab absolute power and enable absolute corruption.

It is obvious that from the subjective of Duterte he was acting as a "strong man" in terminating the peace negotiations, designating the CPP and NPA as

“terrorists” and publicly vowing to destroy the revolutionary movement as well as all opposition forces. US President Trump saw a kindred spirit of the same meanness in Duterte when he instructed and emboldened the puppet to terminate the peace negotiations and destroy the CPP and NPA by purely military means when they met on November 13, 2017 or thereabouts.

Because the objective of Duterte is to grab absolute power and become a fascist dictator, he uses state terrorism to attack the CPP and NPA as the same means to suppress all opposition forces. The terms of the so-called Anti-Terrorism Law can be used to red-tag, frame up, arrest, torture, seize the bank account and kill anyone that criticizes and opposes Duterte’s crimes of treason, tyranny, mass murder, plunder and prevarication.

There is one more overwhelming reason for Duterte to aim for full fascist dictatorship or at the least retain the power to rig the 2022 presidential elections in favor of a hand-picked successor. It is to preempt his arrest by authority of the International Criminal Court or even more plausibly by authority of the Philippine court system under an anti-Duterte regime or by authority of the people’s court of the people’s democratic government.

2. You recently described a perfect storm for fascist dictatorship in the Philippines. Can you explain what you meant, particularly regarding the classical Marxist definition? Does this need to be reevaluated?

JMS: I use the meteorological term “perfect storm” to describe the calamitous convergence of extreme crisis conditions in the world capitalist system and the Philippine ruling system that can be taken advantage of by Duterte, as he is doing, in order to realize fascist dictatorship but can also serve as the exceedingly favorable conditions for the accelerated growth in strength and advance of the revolutionary movement, like the Marcos fascist dictatorship stimulated the revolutionary movement in the past from 1972 to 1986.

Having explained my metaphorical use of the phrase “perfect storm”, I can focus now on what I mean by fascist dictatorship. It is a bourgeois kind of tyranny, despotism or open rule of terror that throws out of the window the pretenses, legal niceties and procedures of bourgeois democracy. In semicolonial and semifeudal Philippines, the comprador big bourgeoisie is the chief ruling class in combination with the corporate and traditional landlords. It is the class that was behind the Marcos fascist dictatorship and it is the class that Duterte depends on

to fully realize fascist dictatorship.

In industrial capitalist countries, the fascist dictatorship like that of Hitler is used by the monopoly bourgeoisie when the social democrats fail to keep the social order. The worst form of pogroms and wars were perpetrated by fascist dictatorships in the 1930s to the end of World War II. Thus, the term “fascist dictatorship” has been construed by many Marxists as a phenomenon arising in industrial capitalist countries, with the industrial monopoly bourgeoisie behind the fascist dictatorship like that of Mussolini, Hitler and Tojo even as this bourgeois kind of tyranny also played on feudal, racist, xenophobic and other reactionary prejudices and institutions to their fascist advantage.

In class terms in semifeudal societies, the accomplished fascist dictatorships of Chiang Kaishek down to Ferdinand Marcos have been anchored on the big comprador bourgeoisie with strong necessary links with the monopoly bourgeoisie of the imperialist powers like the US. They have appeared in history as bourgeois tyranny or bourgeois open rule of terror doing away with all pretenses, niceties and procedures of bourgeois democracy, especially where these had previously existed.

But let us shift back to Europe, Lenin used the term “social fascists” and “social imperialists” to refer to social democrats who had no basing in bourgeois ownership of factories but who were subservient to the big bourgeois policies despite social democratic avowals of serving the proletariat. In one more sense, the Chinese Communist Party used to call the leaders of the CPSU as social fascists and social imperialists on the basis of state monopoly capitalism, especially during the time of Khrushchov and Brezhnev.

3. The CPP has committed itself to peace talks with the Philippines government but says that Duterte needs to be removed to get the stalled negotiations back on track. Can you expand on this and the future prospects for implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER)?

JMS: It is the evaluation of the CPP that Duterte is hell-bent on fully realizing fascist dictatorship through the so-called Anti-Terrorism Law and through charter change on top of what he has already done previously like the all-out war policy, Proclamation 360 to terminate the peace negotiations in 2017, Proclamation 374 to designate the CPP and NPA as “terrorists” and Executive Order No. 70 to form the NTF-ELCAC to destroy the revolutionary movement

for being “communist terrorist”.

But for the sake of argument, let us say that Duterte does away with all these obstacles to peace negotiations. Then, there would be no more reason for the CPP to say that Duterte is against peace negotiations between the GRP and NDFP. But Duterte has gone too deep into the tunnel of anticommunism, dirty war and state terrorism. It would be a miracle for him to reverse his trajectory to hell.

There are better prospects for GRP-NDFP peace negotiations to be resumed after Duterte is out of power in 2022 in accordance with the 1987 GRP Constitution and for the mutual approval and implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms. But there is no certainty for such better prospects because the usual ruling politicians in the Philippines are subject to the dictates of the US and other imperialist powers and by the big compradors and landlords.

4. What level of support does the NPA have among the people can you give an assessment of current strength and numbers and explain the concepts of new power and people's government? How are the guerrilla fronts organized and why is this an important and legitimate part of the revolutionary struggle? How does the protracted people's war relate to the armed struggle in the Philippines?

JMS: The NPA enjoys great support of the people in the millions, especially the peasant masses, because of the general line of people’s democratic revolution drawn up by the CPP. This line recognizes the peasant masses as more than 60 percent of the population and the peasant struggle for land as the main content of the democratic revolution. The organized mass base of the CPP and NPA is conservatively estimated at 20 million people out of the Philippine population of 109 million.

Without the support of the millions of peasant masses and the rest of the people, the NPA would have been wiped out a long time ago by the military campaigns of suppression unleashed by the big comprador-landlord state from the time of Marcos to the present. On March 29, 1969 we started with only nine automatic rifles and 26 inferior firearms, consisting of single-shot rifles and hand guns, in the second district of the province of Tarlac. And we started with an organized mass base of only 80,000.

Now, the armed strength of the NPA is in the thousands, proximate to 10,000 nationwide, although the reactionary armed forces underestimate it at being only 2000 to 4000 and in their most absurd psywar claim that they have already decimated it more than three times its underestimated size. The strength of the NPA is actually amplified by tens of thousands in the people's militia and hundreds of thousands in the revolutionary mass organizations. In building the NPA, the CPP has integrated armed struggle with agrarian revolution and mass-base building.

The strategy and tactics of guerrilla warfare have been applied in carrying out the ongoing stage of strategic defensive in the people's war. The NPA deploys two-thirds of its armed personnel for mass work and one-third for periods of combat within short rest periods. Currently, it launches most often platoon-sized and sometimes company-size tactical offensives. It hopes to accumulate 25,000 automatic rifles to move into the stage of strategic stalemate and launch company-size and battalion-size offensives in regular mobile warfare.

The minimum land reform program has been carried out on the widest scale, involving the reduction of land rent, control of interest rates and elimination of usury, raising of farm wages, improving the farm gate prices of farm products and raising production in agriculture and sideline occupations. The maximum land reform program of land confiscation and free land distribution to the landless peasants have been carried out wherever possible.

There are more than 100 guerrilla fronts, covering large portions of 73 provinces of the 81 provinces of the Philippines. In these guerrilla fronts are built the local branches of the CPP, the full-time fighting units and its auxiliary forces in the people's militia and self-defense units in mass organizations, the revolutionary mass organizations of peasants, farm workers, women, youth and cultural activists, the inter-organizational and cause-oriented alliances and the local organs of political power constituting the people's democratic government.

5. How do you view the so-called new Cold War between the US and China and what is your assessment of the Biden administration, particularly in terms of global imperialism?

JMS: Biden took an active role in supporting the Bush regime by having a major hand in the making of the USA PATRIOT ACT and in the carrying out of the so-called global war on terror. He is very much an active part of the facade,

operations and deep state of US imperialism. Thus, he has been able to outclass the more aggressive-looking but dumber Trump among the kingmakers within the US monopoly bourgeoisie, the mass media, think tanks and the so-called deep state of national security hard nuts.

With regard to the so-called Cold War between the US and China, Biden will try to pursue the same line that Trump took in starting the trade war with China in 2018. In the first place, it was Obama of the Democratic Party that was ahead of Trump in taking a position against China. He had adopted the so-called strategic pivot to East Asia in 2012 and pushed the TransPacific Partnership Agreement in 2016 (which excluded China) in order to counter the growing military and economic power of China and the accelerated strategic decline of the US due to the Bush policy of endless wars and the mortgage meltdown that brought about the Great Recession from 2008 onward.

After congratulating itself for a long time for helping China restore capitalism and integrate itself in the world capitalist system and become its main partner in carrying out the neoliberal policy of imperialist globalization, the US is now resentful about China having maintained a two-tiered economy of state and private monopoly capitalism and is regretful about having outsourced manufacturing to China in a big way and allowed it to earn large export surpluses and about having given to China all the opportunities to acquire higher technology from the US through direct investments on US plants in China and through Chinese academics gaining access to US research laboratories and R & D facilities of US companies.

The crisis of the world capitalist system will grow worse, especially after the aggravation by the Covid-19 pandemic. Even as there is a sharp fall in production, the massive losses of jobs aggravate the crisis of overproduction. The contradiction between capital and labor is sharpening rapidly. The inter-imperialist contradictions are intensifying. And the most intense of these is the one between the US and China. Biden has already indicated that he will stand for the interest of US imperialism against China. Like Trump, he has put forward the slogan, Made in America. His state secretary Antony Blinken has spoken bluntly about standing up for US interests against China in economic and national security matters.

It is interesting to watch whether the US can increase its military assets in East Asia to secure the Indo-Pacific route and to reduce such assets in Central and

West Asia and Africa. The US is now under a crushing public debt burden. It has to juggle its military assets and cannot simply increase them everywhere. To sabotage China's dream of reversing the maritime trade fostered by the West since the 16th century with a predominantly land route radiating from China, the US is now in the process of reducing China's export surpluses from trade with the US and is encouraging China's debtors in the Belt and Road Initiative to rise up against the onerous terms of their debt obligations.

6. Currently liberation struggles are being waged in many countries across the world. How do you view for example the Palestinian and Kurdish movements in the Middle East, in particular in relation to the national question?

JMS: The crisis of the world capitalist system will generate conditions of global depression worse than that in the 1930s as well as social discontent and various forms of popular resistance against capitalism and imperialism. Contradictions between labor and capital and among imperialist powers will intensify. The contradictions between the oppressed peoples and nations on one side and the imperialist powers and their client-states on the other side will intensify even more.

In this context, the Palestinian and Kurdish national liberation movements will rise more than ever before and will gain strength as the attention of the imperialist powers backing up Israeli Zionism and the Erdogan despotic expansionism will be compelled to further overextend themselves by so many national liberation movements rising up and waging armed struggle in various continents. Even within imperialist countries, the chauvinists, racists, fascists and other ultra-reactionaries are provoking the resistance of the people of color, the immigrants and their descendants.

7. How do you see the future of the Philippine revolution?

JMS: The future of the Philippine revolution is bright. At the moment, the Filipino proletarian revolutionaries are happy that their revolutionary movement is among those in the forefront of the worldwide struggle for national liberation, democracy and socialism and hope that they will be able to win greater victories self-reliantly and with the direct and indirect support from the expanding number of revolutionary movements of the proletariat and peoples in other countries.

I am confident that the rise of the anti-imperialist and democratic mass struggles

on a global scale will usher in the resurgence of the world proletarian-socialist revolution. This will create a much wider area for the Philippine revolution to defend itself against imperialism and build socialism.

The revolutionary movements for national liberation, democracy and socialism will be able to help one another more than ever before.

There were those who thought in the 1990s that the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and capitalist restoration in China, Russia and Eastern Europe spelled the death of the socialist cause.

But the increase of big imperialist powers upon the restoration of capitalism in Russia and China has sharpened inter-imperialist contradictions, is disturbing the balance of powers, accelerating the strategic decline of US imperialism and preparing the stage for the resurgence of the world proletarian-socialist revolution.

The US emerged as the winner of the Cold War and sole superpower after the collapse of the Soviet Union. But since the financial meltdown of 2007-2008, it has lost the crown of sole superpower in an increasingly multipolar world. The extent of industrial development in former socialist countries remains contributory to the worsening contradictions among the imperialist powers and between the social character of the forces of production and the monopoly capitalist relations of production.

8. Finally, how can people living in imperialist countries best support liberation struggles like that in the Philippines?

JMS: People living in the imperialist countries should develop the revolutionary movement where they are even as they are ready and willing to help the struggles for national liberation. By developing their own revolutionary movement, they enable themselves to extend moral, political and material support and assistance to the peoples waging struggles for national liberation in other countries. Whatever support that they are capable of extending at any given time will go a long way in inspiring other peoples in advancing their revolutionary struggles self-reliantly.

Acts of proletarian internationalism and anti-imperialist solidarity of people include sharing of experiences, views and publications, taking up issues for the benefit of the oppressed and exploited, exchange of personnel with various types

of concerns and expertise, transfer of technology that is useful for revolutionary struggle and other concrete forms of assistance. All these are beneficial not only to the revolutionary movements being supported but also to the supporting revolutionary movements. The spread and intensification of the revolutionary struggles on a global scale redound to the benefit of each and every revolutionary movement.

In Drive to Fully Realize Fascist Dictatorship,

Duterte Fuels Militarist Ambitions of AFP Factions

February 5, 2021

The following statement of Marco Valbuena, spokesman of the Communist Party of the Philippines is valid and true:

"Despite the precept of 'civilian authority is, at all times, supreme over the military being enshrined in the 1987 constitution, the political power of the military generals has grown under the Duterte regime. To establish himself as a strongman, Duterte expanded the powers of the military and police, enlarging the budgets of the AFP and PNP, mounting wars and appointing former military officers to key government agencies.

"Former and current generals of the AFP are actively invoking anticommunism to justify its interference in electoral politics, and its increasing role in dictating policy and budget priorities.

"The entire Duterte government is practically under the authority of the NTF-ELCAC. Wielding vast powers, the NTF-ELCAC is a Duterte-military junta that compels all agencies of government to follow its every dictate under pain of being tagged as sympathizers of the communists.

"The Filipino people must resist the growing powers of the military. If the military's expansion of powers continues, especially under the NTF-ELCAC, the Philippines is not far off from going down the bloody path of Myanmar's

military dictatorships."

Nevertheless, I wish to add the following observations to the above statement:

1. Duterte himself is not completely safe from the militarist monster that he has created and is using to fully realize fascist dictatorship. He is widely perceived among the rank and file of the reactionary armed forces as being generous to them even at the expense of the Filipino people but also as someone who is already physically and mentally weak and needs the military to replace him upon his incapacitation.

2. His faction of die-hard loyalists include firstly the military and police officers whom he befriended while he was mayor of Davao City and collaborated in corruption and murder operations, secondly the previous coup-makers (RAM and SFP) mainly against the Cory Aquino regime and thirdly the disparate elements who have been loyalists to Marcos and Arroyo. The most ambitious of these three types of Duterte loyalists are already in place in the NTF-ELCAC and ATC. The most ambitious of them is Esperon who is the vice chair of Duterte and brags to his closest subordinates that he is the Suharto to a sickly and wobbling Sukarno-type of president.

3. But there is a pro-China faction that has developed within the traditionally pro-US reactionary armed forces. They capitalize on the thinking of Duterte that China is a huge neighboring country and is bound to dominate the Philippines because of its rising economic and political power and that for military officers to rule the Philippines and benefit from such rule they must collaborate with Chinese businessmen on China and the Philippines in legal as well as illegal business operations (especially smuggling) like the Myanmar military officers.

4. Of course, the most formidable faction of military officers in the reactionary armed forces consists of the pro-US ones. The hard core of these officers are assets of the US intelligence agencies, the CIA and DIA. They believe in the continuing hegemony of US imperialism and are disgusted with the favoritism of Duterte of his die-hard loyalists and the aggressive inroads of China in the West Philippine Sea and the China Telecom cell towers inside AFP military camps.

These pro-US military officers are expected to heed new orders from US President Biden and might adopt a bourgeois-democratic facade to "normalize" the Philippine situation and counter the fascist course of Duterte, inasmuch as

the Philippine situation does not yet require a Suharto-type military fascist dictator. The Duterte regime itself claims that the armed revolution is almost wiped out, despite the self-contradictory drive for fascist dictatorship which is goading the people to wage armed revolution.

5. Notwithstanding the aforesaid three major factions of AFP military officers, there are inconspicuous AFP officers of the patriotic type of Crispin Tagamolila and General Raymundo Jarque who are in the minority within the AFP but who are conscious of the high potential of the people for mass mobilizations that occurred in the overthrow of the Marcos fascist dictatorship in February, 1986 and the corrupt Estrada regime in January, 2001.

It is important for the broad united front of patriotic and democratic forces to watch how the Duterte regime and its military support will crack up, as the socioeconomic and political crisis of the ruling system worsens. This will intensify all class contradictions and drive the broad masses of the Filipino people to rise up and overthrow the terrorist, corrupt and bankrupt Duterte regime as in the mass uprisings of 1986 and 2001.

Anticommunist Campaign of State Terrorism

Necessitates Intensified Resistance by the People

March 28, 2021

Dear Comrades and Friends,

As author of the book *Upsurge of People's Resistance in the Philippines and the World*, I wish to welcome all who are participating in this book launch and thank the renowned personages who have agreed to review the book.

Having expressed myself so much in the book, I have been asked by the organizers of this book launch to talk at some length about the New People's Army (NPA) by way of celebrating its 52nd founding anniversary tomorrow. Thus, I have decided to discuss Duterte's vow to destroy the NPA and consider why he will certainly fail to realize his objective. His anticommunist campaign of state terrorism cannot destroy the NPA but necessitates the intensified resistance by the people and the NPA.

Duterte's peace pretense and war obsession

Even before becoming president, Duterte tried in vain to hoodwink the Filipino nation and even the revolutionary movement that he wanted to be the first "Left" and "socialist" president and that he would bring about peace by negotiating with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) in order to form a coalition government.

But from the beginning of his rule, Duterte was already hellbent on conducting an all-out war policy against the revolutionary movement and the people under the guise of letting the reactionary armed forces continue his predecessor's Oplan Bayanihan.

The NDFP noticed that Duterte had no intention of fulfilling his promise to amnesty and release all political prisoners even as he tried in vain to prejudice the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations by appointing certain progressive individuals as "representatives" of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). The CPP rebuffed Duterte's shallow ploy but nonetheless he appointed said individuals on the basis of their own personal merits of integrity and competence.

The NDFP had an accurate evaluation of Duterte as a puppet of US and Chinese business interests and as an agent of plunderers like the Marcoses and Arroyos but continued to respond positively to the calls of a broad range of peace advocates and was ever ready to engage in peace negotiations with the Duterte regime if only to let it unfold publicly what really is its position on the question of a just peace within the framework of The Hague Joint Declaration of the GRP-NDFP.

Even while the four rounds of peace negotiations were going on, the reactionary armed forces and police of Duterte were attacking the forces of the NPA and at the same time Duterte was frequently complaining to the press against the NPA's acts of self-defense and misrepresenting these as offensive acts. But he never properly presented his complaints to the Joint Monitoring Committee under the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) like the NDFP was doing.

As early as September 2016, patriotic and democratic mass organizations were already complaining that the Duterte regime was acting contrary to Duterte's promises of making certain basic social and economic reforms and the amnesty and release of all political prisoners. The CPP issued on December 26, 2016 a statement criticizing Duterte's unfulfilled promises and his manifest adherence to the US-dictated neoliberal economic policy and all-out war policy.

In January 2017, Duterte launched his own strategic plan of anti-communist military suppression which he called Oplan Kapayapaan and from month to month he took an increasingly belligerent attitude towards the revolutionary movement until he issued Proclamation No. 360 to terminate the peace

negotiations on November 23, 2017 and then Proclamation No. 374 to designate the CPP and the NPA as “terrorist” organizations on December 5, 2017.

All the while the Duterte regime was acting according to US orders to trick and attack the revolutionary forces in exchange for US military assistance under Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines beyond US congressional oversight related to human rights. Duterte himself took this as beneficial to his own scheme of fascist dictatorship to carry out a policy of state terrorism against the CPP, NPA and the entire revolutionary movement.

It became obvious that Duterte never had any serious and sincere intention to negotiate a just peace with the NDFP. Since then, Duterte had been announcing that he could destroy the CPP and the NPA from year to year, trying to appear strong and brave but trying to obscure the fact that he was in fact failing to destroy the NPA. Just like his reactionary predecessors from Marcos onward, Duterte is already a proven failure after trying in vain for five years to destroy the armed revolution by sheer military force.

The certain failure of Duterte’s war objective

As his regime enters the last year of his presidential term, the tyrant Duterte boasts of being confident of being able to destroy the CPP and the NPA, especially after railroading the law of state terrorism and further concentrating resources on the military and police. But he cannot destroy the armed revolution. Instead, he is unwittingly favoring growth in strength and advance of the armed revolutionary movement because of his brutal campaign to preserve the ruling system and aggravate such basic problems of the people as foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

In a semicolonial and semifeudal country like the Philippines, the worsening conditions of chronic crisis and extreme exploitation and oppression of the toiling masses of workers and peasants are favorable for the growth in strength of the CPP, NPA and other revolutionary forces in the people’s war. The bankruptcy of the neoliberal economic policy and the rapidly worsening crisis of overproduction and depression in the world capitalist system, especially since 2008, has squeezed the Philippine economy.

During his presidency, Duterte has aggravated the chronic crisis of the ruling system and the exploitation and oppression of the people. He has been

subservient to foreign monopoly capitalism by keeping the Philippines underdeveloped and impoverished by its dependency on the export of raw materials, semimanufactures and laboring men and women; and on very onerous foreign loans to cover the ever widening trade and budgetary deficits.

He has no idea of developing the Philippine economy beyond “pork barrel” economics, using increased domestic taxation and foreign borrowing to engage in infrastructure-building projects. Worst of all, corruption has wrought havoc on the Philippine economy with the graft-laden infrastructure projects, military overspending and runaway imports of food and basic commodities and luxury manufactures.

From time to time Duterte has pretended to be forging an independent foreign policy. But he has merely succeeded in proving himself a traitor and a puppet of two imperialist masters. He assures the US of retaining its dominant position in the Philippines. And he has conceded to China the sovereign and maritime rights of the Filipino people over the West Philippine Sea and has given to China the license to plunder the natural resources in the various islands of the Philippines in exchange for a promised loan of USD 24 billion at extremely onerous terms.

He is tyrannical and genocidal. He has framed up his political opponents in order to imprison or kill them. He has ordered the abduction and murder of NDFP consultants who are supposed to be under the protection of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees. He has openly ordered the mass murder of so many people to tout himself as a strong man and to intimidate the broad masses of the people. His armed minions have murdered more than 33,000 poor people who are arbitrarily listed as drug suspects and now he has extended the policy and method of Tokhang mass murder to those who are tagged as “communists” and “terrorists”.

He pretends to be against the illegal drug trade. But in fact he has made himself the supreme drug lord. Thus, the smuggling and trading of illegal drugs have escalated in collaboration with Chinese criminal syndicates. He pretends to be against corruption. But he has allowed his own family and his military and bureaucrat cronies to plunder the public treasury and economy; and has absolved his plundering predecessors and allies, especially the Marcoses and the Arroyos, of their crimes.

Since early last year, he has allowed the Covid-19 pandemic to spread in the

Philippines, by welcoming more than 500,000 Chinese casino gamblers and tourists to enter the country from January to March last year. And he has used the pandemic as an opportunity to rob the people of promised funds for mass testing, medical care and economic assistance and to incur further massive foreign loans and raise the total public debt to an even more unsustainable level.

The Duterte regime is justly detested by the people. And yet, Duterte wants to perpetuate his rule by pushing charter change or by rigging the 2022 presidential elections to elect his hand-picked successor. The opposition has to pay attention to the fact that Duterte can easily rig the vote count as he did in 2019. Duterte conjures the false illusion of being popular by using public money to generate propaganda idolizing him and demonizing the opposition, the critics, social activists, human rights defenders and the various mass organizations and institutions.

Military overspending and corruption to carry out state terrorism and promote fascism in the name of the anti-communist campaign of military suppression has long backfired since the very started. The broad masses of the people are aware that the Duterte and favorite generals have pocketed huge amounts of public money by over-funding fake localized peace talks, fake surrenders, fake E-CLIP rewards, fake triad operations, fake community support and fake development projects. (E-CLIP stands for Enhanced Comprehensive Integration Program, an aspect of the Duterte regime's Counterinsurgency Program.)

Conditions are favorable for armed revolution

The rapidly worsening crisis conditions in the Philippines have come to the point that the broad masses of the people are outraged and are crying out for justice, freedom, ouster of the regime and system change against tyranny and treason, the widespread loss of jobs, homes and land, mass poverty and hunger, inflation of the prices of basic commodities, corruption at every level of officialdom and the brutality of the reactionary military and police.

Under the current circumstances, the CPP, NPA and other revolutionary forces of the people are thriving as they did during the Marcos fascist dictatorship. The longer Duterte stays in power, the more the ruling system weakens and the more the revolutionary movement gains strength and scores greater victories. The broad masses of the people desire revolutionary change against US imperialist domination and the local exploiting classes of big compradors, landlords and

bureaucrat capitalists.

The CPP is gaining prestige and strength in leading the armed revolution being carried out by the NPA and the masses. It upholds Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, as the correct theoretical guide to action, pursues the general political line of new democratic revolution with a socialist perspective and directs the strategic line of waging protracted people's war by encircling the cities from the countryside to accumulate strength until conditions ripen for the strategic offensive to knockout the counterrevolutionary state power in the cities.

In sharp contrast to the Duterte program of treason, tyranny, state terrorism, mass murder, plunder and mass intimidation and deception, the CPP, the NPA and the entire revolutionary movement of the Filipino people are fighting for full national independence and people's democracy, social justice, economic development through genuine land reform and national industrialization, a patriotic, scientific and mass culture and anti-imperialist solidarity and peace among all peoples of the world.