

On the United Front



jose maria sison

sison
reader
series **8**

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On the United Front



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Editor

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Preface

I am glad that the International Network for Philippine Studies is moving forward with its *Sison Reader Series* and is now publishing the eighth book titled *On the United Front*. Let me put in historical context the development of the concept and practice of the national united front from 1968 to the present.

Since the reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) on December 26, 1968, it has always been clear to CPP cadres and members that the three weapons of the Filipino people in carrying out the new democratic revolution are the Party, the people's army and the national united front in accordance with the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and the founding documents of the Party.

The CPP is the advanced detachment of the modern industrial proletariat and is the leading class in the people's democratic revolution and the consequent socialist revolution. The New People's Army is the main instrument, based on the worker-peasant alliance, for overthrowing the semicolonial and semifeudal state and establishing the people's democratic state. And the national united front is for arousing, organizing and mobilizing the masses in their millions.

In the concrete conditions of the Philippines, the Party assumed the duty of the building the basic alliance of workers and peasants as the foundation of the national united front, winning over the urban petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie and taking advantage of splits among the reactionaries in order to isolate, weaken and destroy the power of the worst reactionaries in a civil war or the imperialist aggressor in a war of national liberation.

At the base or foundation of the national united front, the Party is required to rely mainly on the poor peasants and farm workers, win over the middle peasants, neutralize the rich peasants and take advantage of the contradictions between the enlightened and evil gentry in order to isolate, weaken and destroy the power of the despotic landlords. The point is to accomplish the agrarian revolution as the main content of democratic revolution through a series of land reform measures and to mobilize the peasant majority of the people to engage in protracted people's war in concert with the working class.

The Party often finds it necessary to explain that the national united front is mainly for promoting and advancing the revolutionary armed struggle because of the common notion that it is mainly or solely for carrying out all legal forms of struggle, including commonplace expression of political views, electoral competitions and peace negotiations. But in carrying out the people's democratic revolution, the Party wields the national united front as a weapon for strengthening the armed struggle by gaining political allies who can deliver arms to the NPA or can coordinate with the NPA in military operations.

Despite enemy campaigns of military suppression against the armed revolution, soon after the founding of the New People's Army on March 29, 1969, the revolutionary cadres and members succeeded in three years' time to build in several regions Party branches, units and auxiliaries of the NPA, revolutionary mass organizations and organs of political power. There was ample basis for issuing the Guide for Establishing the People's Democratic Government in the countryside in 1972.

Also in direct response to the declaration of martial law of September 21, 1971, the National Democratic Front was established on April 24, 1973 by representatives of the Party, NPA and mass organizations who were forced by the enemy to go underground and join the revolution. The allied forces of the NDF helped greatly in the expansion of the armed revolutionary movement. The national united front was expressed in the combative terms of anti-fascism, anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism.

The Marcos fascist dictatorship was fully supported by US imperialism. But by 1976 the latter advised its puppet to "normalize" the situation and avoid human right violations which had become rampant. Despite the continuing fascist and martial law strictures, legal democratic groups in religious, academic and professional institutions became assertive of human rights. By November 1977 the NDF could anticipate the weakening and eventual overthrow of the Marcos fascist dictatorship and made an elaboration of the Ten-Point Program of the NDF to further rouse and rally the people.

But by 1980 there were Right opportunist elements in the Party who thought that Marcos had industrialized the Philippines and made the economy industrial capitalist and no longer semifeudal. This erroneous line of thinking led to attempts to revise the program of the NDF and turn the NDF into a reformist kind of New Katipunan with references to the working class deleted supposedly to attract more people. The same line of thinking deprecated the line of protracted people's war and favored various types of urban insurrectionism.

By 1981 Marcos pretended to lift martial law and staged a sham presidential election which he won. At any rate, new patriotic and progressive organizations and alliances arose among the workers, the students, women and the professionals. On August 21, 1983, Marcos committed the fatal mistake of having his chief political rival assassinated. This ignited gigantic anti-fascist mass actions and demands for overthrowing Marcos.

In the spirit of the anti-fascist united front, alliances were formed and activated, like the following: League of Filipino Students, Alliance of Concerned Teachers, Kilusang Mayo Uno, Gabriela, Justice for Aquino Justice for All, Congress for the Restoration of Democracy, Kongreso ng Mamamayang Pilipino (KOMPIL), National Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy, National Convention of the Muslim-Christian Alliance and other alliances. All of them condemned the propaganda of Marcos that he was irreplaceable. And the Kompil Congress listed Cardinal Sin and me among those capable of replacing Marcos.

The US became afraid that the persistence of Marcos would prejudice the entire ruling system and the US dominance over it. Thus, in 1984 it decided definitively to junk him and compel him to call for a snap presidential election by which to remove him from office. As expected, he cheated in the elections and he would be overthrown by the gigantic mass actions at Edsa, around the presidential palace and elsewhere in the Philippines in February 1986. You can read from the book in your hands contents that analyze and explain the overthrow and consequence thereof.

Since 1986, it has been proven that the legal united front tactics can rouse a broad range of forces to converge against a fascist dictatorship and overthrow it. This would be proven again in the overthrow of the corrupt regime of Estrada in 2001. But it takes more than legal united front tactics and gigantic mass actions to overthrow the entire semicolonial and semifeudal system. If the Party and the Filipino people were to win total victory in the new democratic revolution, they would have to combine the armed struggle and the united front in advancing the people's army from the current of strategic defensive to the further stage of the strategic stalemate and further on to the strategic offensive.

After the overthrow of Marcos in 1986, the Aquino regime went through the motion of having ceasefire negotiations and agreement with the NDF in representation of the revolutionary movement. But after consolidating its power and obtaining support from US imperialism, intrasystemic rivals, it followed the political, economic and military dictates of its master and unleashed a campaign of military suppression against the armed revolution.

All post-Marcos regimes have followed the path of armed counterrevolution even as each of them has used peace negotiations for a stretch of six months to one year in attempts to disorient, confuse, seek the capitulation of or draw intelligence from the revolutionary movement. There has yet been no regime that has sought alliance and truce against a bigger enemy or carry out social, economic and political reforms for increasing the national independence and development of the Philippines.

The NDF and the legal patriotic and democratic forces have always come to the conclusion that every post-Marcos regime is merely a tool of US domination and the local exploiting classes and have called for the ouster of the regime. Duterte has been so far the worst. In 2016 he proclaimed himself as a Leftist and socialist and pretended be interested in peace negotiations and in coalition government but turned out to be the worst as a traitor, tyrant, butcher and plunderer. In most of his six-year term, he has engaged in state terrorism and in the mass murder of revolutionaries and impoverished people.

In connection with the 2022 elections, Marcos junior wants to restore the brutal and corrupt regime of his father, Marcos senior, and the Duterte daughter wants to continue the same kind of rule by her father. They misrepresent themselves as the better versions of other political dynasties that torment the Filipino people. This book can explain further why the worst political dynasties in the Philippines have beset the Filipino people and why there is a recrudescence of the worst forms of human rights violations under the persistent dominance of imperialism, fascism and feudalism.

Fortunately, the people's democratic revolution continues to grow in strength and benefits from the ever worsening chronic crisis of the ruling system. The people can no longer tolerate the escalating conditions of oppression and exploitation. In increasing numbers, they are joining and supporting the building of the Communist Party of the Philippines, the advance of the New People's Army, the expansion of the revolutionary mass organizations, the strengthening of the National Democratic Front and the establishment of the People's Democratic Government in ever wider areas of the countryside.

The ruling system of big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists is truly rotten, anti-national and

anti-democratic, and deserve to be thrown into the dustbin of history by the full development of the people's democratic revolution with a socialist perspective. The intensifying inter-imperialist contradictions augur the resurgence of the world proletarian revolution and validate the people's aspirations for national liberation, democracy and socialism.

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Utrecht, Netherlands

April 23, 2022

Anticommunist Campaign of the US-Marcos Clique Brings About its further Isolation First published in Ang Bayan, Vol. IV, No. 1, January 15, 1972

At no other time was the national united front so broad as the months after the second Plaza Miranda massacre and the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus by the terrorist chieftain Marcos. Contrary to the designs of the US-Marcos clique, all attempts to isolate proletarian revolutionaries through the stepped-up propaganda campaign against communism and the Communist Party of the Philippines and to cow the masses into submission through white terror miserably failed. By the end of the year the US-Marcos clique itself had been isolated by an unprecedented revolutionary upsurge of the broad masses of the people.

The second Plaza Miranda massacre, the writ suspension and the Supreme Court decision were merely the culmination of all attempts to muzzle all kinds of opposition to the US-Marcos terrorist regime. These attempts were consistently carried out by the US-Marcos clique, with the special assistance of the Lava revisionist renegades who kept on harping with the ruling clique on the “anti-Maoist” theme. These attempts started as early as January 1971, when the offices of Esso and Caltex were bombed as a pretext to divert the people’s anger from the US imperialist oil cartel (which was then increasing oil prices) to some imagined “revolutionary” group (a so-called “Popular Revolutionary Front”) which has turned out to be merely an adjunct of the Lava revisionist gang.

Smear tactics were employed during the University of the Philippines student elections in June. With the blessing of the US-Marcos clique and under the direction of various CIA “psywar” experts, a veritable dry run of the second Plaza Miranda massacre was staged. Among the stage tricks used in this particular drama were fake manifestos, fake slogans, planted “evidences” of vandalism, and an assortment of goons with plaster marks. The aim of the drama was to blacken the prestige of the militant student radicals and thereby bring about the capture of the student council by the reactionary diehards on campus. The Lava revisionist renegades assisted the US-Marcos clique in this operation to obscure real fascism with outcries of “radical fascism.”

The military precision with which the UP scheme had been executed was repeated over and over in the months that followed. On August 21 the Liberal Party rally in Plaza Miranda was bombed, resulting in the death of ten onlookers, including several children, and injuries to scores of others. As if the terrorist chieftain had been afraid that he did not make his point clear, more bombings were performed the next day, this time on the Nawasa main pipe, various government offices and the gardens of two notorious Marcos running dogs. A few months after, eight towns in Ilocos Sur were raided with the ruthlessness and wildness of a shooting spree that could be mustered only by a counterrevolutionary clique out to terrorize the people. The modus operandi of the fascist criminals is too undeniably clear.

The obvious motive behind all these sinister acts of terrorism has been to create the “appropriate” atmosphere for the imposition of martial law. Barely three hours after the Plaza Miranda bombing and with all the secrecy of one with patently evil designs, the terrorist chieftain Marcos signed the papers proclaiming the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus and blaming the revolutionary mass movement for the heinous crime. The next day the reactionary armed forces started their rampage of arrests, in the process plucking a wide assortment of political prisoners. Four months later, after making a pretense of listening to the counsel for the political prisoners, the reactionary Supreme Court came out with the ludicrous decision that the terrorist chieftain had the right to his own opinions and therefore the right to take away the writ of habeas corpus. In an attempt to further sugarcoat its anti-democratic acts with a semblance of legality, the US-Marcos clique, through its hatchetmen in Congress, sought to revive the hated “Committee on Un-Filipino Activities” (CUFA), which in the 1950s became notorious for its witchhunting sorties.

To back up its incursions into the democratic rights of the people, the US-Marcos regime stepped up its propaganda campaign against communism and the Communist Party of the Philippine just before the bourgeois elections of November 8. A nationwide campaign in the form of radio-TV commercials was launched under cover of a counterrevolutionary veterans groups headed by a notorious running dog of US imperialism.

It is entirely correct to conclude that the campaign had the long-range purpose of preparing the minds of the people for the eventual imposition of martial law, considering that the radio-TV commercials cost a whopping one million pesos, were translated into the major dialects and widely disseminated all over the country, and vainly

tried to discredit the revolutionary mass movement by falsely picturing the militants as bomb throwers and dope addicts. In sum, the commercials provided the discordant background for such orchestrated acts of terrorism as the second Plaza Miranda massacre, the Ilocos Sur shootout, and even the Taytay kidnapping, in which two of the remaining henchmen of the Lava renegade gang, with the full blessings of the US-Marcos clique, shot a policeman and terrorized two families, most of whom were children.

As it is obvious now, only the fascist mastermind Marcos and his terrorist gang believed their own lies. After the spate of bombings and raids in 1971, even the reactionary press was compelled to reflect the raging public opinion against the “Reichstag fire” tactics and anti-democratic abuses of the US-Marcos clique.

Mass protest against the suspension of the writ started as early as August 24 and has been going on ever since. On September 12, 50,000 youths, workers and professionals gathered at Plaza Miranda to denounce the writ suspension. On October 1, 5 and 12, thousands of people, including notable civil libertarians, marched to Caloocan despite every manner of harassment dealt by the Marcos running dog Asistio. The dispersal of the rallies of October 1 and 5 by armed thugs wearing plaster marks, and the death of seven persons, including a seven-year old newsboy, in the second rally, only served to heighten the anger of the people and bring them marching resolutely back to Caloocan on October 12.

On October 20 the People’s Long March Against Poverty and Fascism started from two points, one in Angeles City, Pampanga, and the other in Los Baños, Laguna. A significant contribution to the national democratic cultural revolution, the Long March passed through several provinces and ended in Plaza Miranda on October 24 before a crowd of 30,000, thus reaching not only a substantial section of city residents, but also tens of thousands of peasants in the countryside. The Long March was synchronized with rallies and shorter marches in communities throughout the country.

It is quite clear now that there is no way of stopping the revolutionary upsurge of the broad masses of the people. Terrorism only aggravates the political and economic crisis of the ruling system and goads the people to rise up in revolt. Indeed, sinister acts of terrorism such as those committed in the north and in the south by the US-Marcos regime only serve to exacerbate the people’s sufferings brought about by the evils of US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

Thus, even as the US-Marcos clique and the Lava revisionist renegade clique engage in an anti-communist conspiracy, the prestige and strength of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People’s Army which it leads continue to rise vigorously. Within so short a period of time, it has been demonstrated how effective has been the application of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought on Philippine conditions. For this reason, the US-Marcos clique has become so terrified that it blames the Communists for every kind of opposition that emerges against it. When the fascist chieftain Marcos blames the Communists for the struggle of the Mindanao national minorities for self-determination or for the general strike of government workers, he merely succeeds in giving credit to the Communist Party of the Philippines for its indefatigable heroic efforts to overthrow US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

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 American 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.

Part I General Principles

Article 1. The People's Democratic Government is led by the proletariat and is based on the toiling masses of the proletariat and the peasantry. It has at the same time a united front character, with all democratic classes, including the petty bourgeoisie, the national bourgeoisie and others, supporting it and participating in it.

Article 2. The People's Democratic Government shall adopt all policies and carry out all measures which are necessary to bring victory to the people's democratic revolution against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. These policies and measures shall cover the political, economic, military, cultural and all other spheres of popular activity and shall pave the way for the establishment of a people's democratic republic embracing the entire country.

Article 3. The system of the People's Democratic Government shall be based on the principle of democratic centralism. Individuals are subordinate to the government and general welfare; the minority is subordinate to the majority; the lower level is subordinate to the higher level of government. Functionaries of the government shall either be elected by popular vote or be appointed according to law.

Part II. The System of Government

Chapter I The Central People's Government

Article 1. The National People's Congress shall be the highest governmental organ of the People's Democratic Government. It shall formulate and issue the necessary proclamation and laws to govern and shall delegate its authority to the Supreme People's Council which it shall elect.

Article 2. The National People's Congress shall be composed of delegates elected by the conference of the provincial people's governments and other leading representatives of democratic classes, parties and groups that may be recommended by the National Democratic Front and approved by the delegates of the provincial people's government.

Article 3. The National People's Congress shall be called as soon as possible after the liberation of a considerable part of the country or after the nationwide victory of the revolution.

Article 4. The National People's Congress or the Supreme People's Council shall create the necessary central organs and ministries of the People's Democratic Government.

Article 5. The National Democratic Front shall make recommendations regarding the reorganization and retention of personnel under the People's Democratic Government.

Chapter II The Local Organs of Government

Article 1. The basic unit of the People's Democratic Government shall be the barrio people's government. The highest authority at this level shall belong to the general meeting of the barrio people called either to elect the barrio revolutionary committee or the organizing committee or to discuss policies and projects undertaken by either committee.

Article 2. Between the general meetings of the barrio people, the highest governmental authority in a barrio in a stable base area shall be the barrio revolutionary committee or in a guerrilla zone, the barrio organizing committee. Either committee shall elect its officials from its own ranks. A barrio organizing committee shall cease to exist whenever a barrio revolutionary committee shall have been elected.

Article 3. The barrio revolutionary committee shall take general charge of all organizational, educational, economic, defense, cultural and health work in a barrio; implement land reform program; organize the people's militia; participate in the work of the people's court; collect taxes and voluntary contributions; and give all possible support to the revolutionary cause.

Article 4. Five subcommittees on organization, education, economy, defense and health shall definitely be established under the barrio revolutionary committee and as much as possible under the barrio organizing committee.

a. The subcommittee on organization shall take charge of creating and coordinating the mass organizations like those of peasants, workers, fishermen, merchants, youth, women, teachers, children and cultural activists. The

subcommittee on education shall take charge of developing revolutionary class consciousness, administering the schools (elementary schools and mass schoolings) and promoting various types of cultural activities.

b. The subcommittee on education shall take charge of developing revolutionary class consciousness, administering the schools (elementary schools and mass schoolings) and promoting various types of cultural activities.

c. The subcommittee on the economy shall take charge of the implementation of land reform, production and cooperation; and collection of taxes and voluntary contributions for the support of the People's Democratic Government and the New People's Army.

d. The subcommittee on defense shall take charge of organizing the barrio people's militia, keeping internal public order and security, and combating the people's enemies in coordination with the New People's Army.

e. The subcommittee on health shall take charge of public hygiene, local medical work and transport of the sick and wounded to medical stations or clinics.

Article 5. Above the barrio people's government shall be the municipal, district and provincial levels of local government. People's conferences shall be held at these higher levels of local government to determine policies and plans, enact rules and regulations of local application, examine reports of the various governmental organs and elect people's councils after deciding on the appropriate number of council members.

Article 6. Delegates to the municipal people's conference shall include officials of the barrio revolutionary committee and the barrio organizing committees. Delegates to the district people's conference shall include the chairman and vice-chairmen of the people's municipal councils. Delegates to the provincial people's conference shall include the entire or main part of the people's district councils.

The number of delegates as well as the time for a conference shall be decided by the people's council immediately responsible for such conference. These shall be subject to the approval of a higher people's council, except in the case of provincial people's conference before which the provincial people's council shall seek the approval of the Central People's Government or its current and effective equivalent.

Article 7. The people's council shall be responsible for governmental leadership and shall be the executive organ in its defined territory. Every people's council shall elect among its members a chairman and five vice-chairmen responsible for mass organizations, education, economy, defense and health. Plenary council meetings shall be held as often as necessary. However the chairman and the vice-chairmen shall compose themselves into a standing committee of the people's council and administer affairs on a collective basis and in accordance with decisions of the plenary council meetings.

Article 8. The term of office of the barrio revolutionary committees or barrio organizing committees and people's councils at every level shall normally be four years, unless a higher people's council or conference decides otherwise or the people make a petition that results in the dissolution and replacement of a council or committee. A committee or council may make appointments whenever vacancies arise in its ranks. These appointments shall be subject to the approval of a higher committee or council.

Article 9. National minorities shall be entitled to autonomy in provinces, districts, municipalities or barrios where they are in the majority. Autonomous governments shall be adapted to the wishes of the majority of the people of the nationality or nationalities but shall conform basically to the system of government herein presented. In areas where they are in the minority, the national minorities shall be entitled to proportionate representation in conferences and councils, with no prejudice to their representatives assuming positions higher than those held by others.

Article 10. All local organs of government, from the barrio to the provincial level, shall be established under the guidance of a higher political authority that has prior existence and with due regard to the need for maintaining the united front.

Chapter III. The People's Court

Article 1. The Central People's Democratic Government shall create the Supreme People's Court as the highest judicial authority. The People's Democratic Government may also create special courts as may be required by special circumstances.

Article 2. The provincial, district, municipal and barrio people's governments shall create people's courts at their respective levels. In minor and simple cases, there shall be a panel of at least three judges. In major and complex cases especially those involving the death penalty, there shall be a panel of at least nine judges.

Article 3. The people's court shall require specification of charges and sufficient investigation of the case prior to trial and shall always inquire into the side of the complainant as well as the accused. The opposite sides of any case shall be given ample hearing and shall be entitled to counsel as well as the presentation of witnesses and evidence.

Article 4. Trials shall ordinarily be held in public, with anyone from the ranks of the people free to stand up and give his opinion on the case. Whenever necessary, the people's court shall seek the assistance of any pertinent organ of the People's Democratic Government in order to shed light on the issue at bar.

Article 5. Decision on every case shall be arrived at through the process of voting among the judges. Each judge shall explain his vote to his colleagues. Ordinarily, a case may be decided by a simple majority of votes. However, a clear two-thirds majority shall be necessary in decisions meting out the death penalty. All decisions shall be announced and explained through the presiding judge.

Article 6. The decision of a lower people's court shall be appealable to a higher people's court. However, a people's court may accept a motion for reconsideration of its own decision. Cases involving the death penalty shall be automatically on appeal to the highest political or judicial authority in a region and if possible shall be automatically referred to the Supreme People's Court or its current and effective equivalent.

Part III. Fundamental Rights And Duties Of Citizens

Article 1. All citizens are equal before the law and are therefore entitled to equal rights.

Article 2. Citizens who have reached the age of eighteen have the right to vote and stand for election irrespective of sex, race, nationality, occupation, social origin, property status, education, religious belief, or length of residence. Only insane persons and persons declared by law as enemies of the people shall be excluded from this right.

Article 3. Citizens have the right to exercise the freedom of speech, freedom of association and assembly in order to advance the revolutionary cause of the toiling masses. The facilities necessary for the enjoyment of these freedoms shall be made available to citizens.

Article 4. Citizens have the right to enjoy the freedom of conscience and religious worship.

Article 5. Freedom of the person of citizens is inviolable. No citizen may be arrested without sufficient legal basis.

Article 6. The homes of citizens are inviolable and privacy of correspondence is protected by law. Citizens are entitled to the freedom of domicile and the freedom to change residence.

Article 7. Citizens have the right to work, to enjoy better working and living conditions, to have personal property and to keep, use or invest personal savings according to law. They also have the right to rest and leisure and the benefit of common welfare funds, social insurance, retirement pension and the like that shall materialize under the People's Democratic Government. The agrarian revolution and the nationalization of the economy are undertaken to change the relations of production and liberate the productive forces of the country and guarantee to the people the enjoyment of the fruits of economic progress.

Article 8. The right to free public education is guaranteed. Schools and other cultural institutions shall be maintained and expanded to undertake the physical and mental development of the people, especially the youth.

Article 9. The freedom of citizens to engage in scientific research, technological invention, literary and artistic creation and other cultural pursuits is safeguarded and promoted, with the end in view of developing a national, scientific and mass culture.

Article 10. Women have equal rights with men in all spheres of political, economic, cultural, social and domestic life. Marriage, the family and the mother and child are protected by law.

Article 11. Citizens have the right to bring complaints against any person in authority for transgression of law or neglect of duty. Anyone suffering damage or loss of anything due to infringement by persons in authority of his rights as a citizen has the right to compensation or indemnification.

Article 12. Citizens must abide by this Guide and all laws emanating from it. They must uphold discipline at work, keep public order and respect the rights of others.

Article 13. Public property is sacred and inviolable. It is the duty of every citizen to respect the property of the People's Democratic Government.

Article 14. It is the duty of citizens to pay taxes on the basis of their ability to pay and in accordance with the law.

Article 15. It is the sacred duty of every citizen to render military service according to law and make every possible contribution to the defense of the people against foreign aggressors and local oppressors.

Part IV. Flag, Emblem and Capital

Article 1. The national flag of the People's Democratic Government is a red flag with three great stars in gold to signify Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Article 2. The national emblem is similar to the national flag. Article 3. The capital of the People's Democratic Government shall be decided according to circumstances.

Unite to Overthrow the US-Marcos Dictatorship Manifesto of the Preparatory Commission of the National Democratic Front April 24, 1973

The present situation

A full-blown fascist dictatorship has emerged for the first time in the Philippines upon the instigation of US imperialism. The least expression of popular demand for national freedom and democracy is now subject to the most brutal repression by the tyrannical regime.

Since Proclamation No. 1081 (formally declaring martial law), events have clearly proven that the US-Marcos dictatorship is determined to keep itself in power by naked armed force only to perpetuate and aggravate the rule of the evil triad of US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. The long-term scheme of this new tyranny, masquerading as a "new society," is all written in the Marcos constitution. It is to maintain and promote the extraordinary privileges of US imperialism and its puppets in the Philippines.

There can be no end to the ever intensifying oppression and exploitation of the people, unless the people themselves unite to overthrow the US-Marcos dictatorship. It is now clear that the Filipino people have no recourse but to wage the most resolute revolutionary struggle. Marcos' high-handed proclamation and enforcement of his "new constitution" have closed every avenue for those who had hoped to end the fascist rule through parliamentary or legal means. Only the armed revolution of the broad masses of the people can defeat and eliminate the armed counterrevolution of the Marcos oligarchy.

A rightist coup d'etat

The US-Marcos dictatorship has come about through a rightist coup d'etat. The fascist dictator Marcos has taken advantage of his established reactionary position in order to eliminate whatever checks and limits there are to his powers, privileges and tenure within the ruling political system. He has manipulated the reactionary armed forces in order to suppress the basic democratic rights of the people, especially the freedom of the press, assembly and association, and do away with every possible opposition to his arbitrary rule. His ambition is to monopolize power and wealth and remain indefinitely at the helm of the comprador-landlord oligarchy.

Marcos is currently the key man of the clique of big compradors and landlords that is most servile to US imperialism. In the face of the rising tide of the revolutionary mass movement demanding national freedom and democracy, US imperialism has found in Marcos' autocratic ambition an instrument for maintaining and promoting its interests in the country. Thus, it has installed him as fascist dictator in a blatant conspiracy between imperialist master and puppet.

In the wake of the fake ratification of the Marcos constitution through the "citizens' assemblies," Marcos now stands as the absolute ruler without a definite line of succession by electoral process. He has proclaimed the dissolution of Congress, the suspension of the "interim national assembly," the suspension of elections for the next seven years and the continuation of martial rule. There has never been a worse example of political tyranny since the Japanese fascist occupation of the Philippines which saw the wholesale dissolution of previously elected governing bodies by brute force.

The broad masses of the people recognize fully that Marcos' "constitutional authoritarianism" is a cloak for fascist dictatorship. This is a horrible crime against the sovereign people, a vicious attack against democracy. However, the suppression of the basic democratic rights of the people has utterly isolated the US-Marcos dictatorship. What is most obvious to the people is a bankrupt government of terror and intimidation, resorting to massacres, assassinations, mass arrests, mass detention, torture, blackmail, extortion, "sonas" (midnight-to-dawn arrests and searches), and forced mass evacuations for making "free fire zones."

The toiling masses of workers and peasants, the student youth, low-income intellectuals, professionals and businessmen are more than ever pressed down by the big bourgeoisie and the landlord class under conditions of

fascist dictatorship. Any demand for relief or upliftment is subject to condemnation by the fascist clique as “subversion” and “rumormongering” and is considered a major crime. The fascist dictatorship keeps harping on “discipline” but its actual purpose is to instil fear among the people and demand submission to tyranny.

Under these intolerable conditions, the broad masses of the people are steadily rising up to resist the US-Marcos dictatorship. Revolutionary armed struggle is now raging throughout the archipelago. The New People's Army and the national minorities of Mindanao together with the poor settlers have intensified their armed resistance. Many political groups have started to form their own guerrilla units or extend substantial support to the New People's Army.

The dictatorship's economic scheme

The economic scheme of the US-Marcos dictatorship involves essentially the preservation of the semicolonial and semifeudal economy. Such an economy serves as a source of cheap raw materials and cheap labor, a dumping ground of imported finished products and an investment field for the surplus capital of US imperialists and other capitalist countries, especially Japan. What is being passed off as a development program by the fascist dictatorship essentially provides extraordinary privileges and incentives to the imperialists and induces inflationary spending for “infrastructures” financed by onerous foreign loans under an ever increasing tax burden. The peso continues to be debauched under the policy of “floating rate” dictated by US imperialism.

Through the Marcos constitution and a series of fascist fiat, the US imperialists not only retain their “parity rights” but in fact enjoy more privileges. To enable them to continue controlling strategic sectors of the economy they can simply pretend to offer equity to Filipinos and manipulate “service contracts,” “management contracts,” credit and the like. Their assets of \$2.0 billion to \$3.0 billion continue to dominate the Philippine economy while they are allowed to exact superprofits from the blood and sweat of the toiling masses. The US imperialists are guaranteed the privilege of unlimited capital and profit remittances. Turning the country into an open field for economic plunder by foreign investors, the fascist dictatorship is also encouraging the Japanese capitalists to enlarge their local operations.

Only the big comprador and landlord classes chiefly the clique headed by Marcos, stand to gain from collaboration with the imperialists. As the head of the National Economic and Development Authority, the fascist dictator exercises complete control over the national patrimony and social wealth of the country. He now monopolizes the bounty of bureaucrat capitalism—the graft and corruption in the reactionary government. The build-up of troops and equipment in the reactionary armed forces is necessarily a main component of the “development program” of the US-Marcos dictatorship. Military expenditures are rising steeply in line with fascist counter-revolution.

All the fanfare about the Marcos “land reform program is meant to cover up the scheme to incur more public debt, foreign and local, to improve the transport and communications facilities of the imperialists and their local puppets and also to raise the value of the landlords' estates. Presidential Decree No. 27 is worse than the “land reform” measure of any previous puppet regime in the Philippines. It compels the landless tiller to pay an exorbitant price for a piece of land that he wants to own. It dictates a formula artificially raising the value of landlord holdings to a level much higher than the “current fair market value.”

In the face of their worsening internal crisis, US imperialism and the entire world capitalist system are accelerating their extraction of superprofits from colonies and semicolonies like the Philippines. Thus, US imperialism and Japanese monopoly capitalism are increasing their direct investments and extending more onerous loans to the Philippines. Also, they are depressing the prices of most traditional Philippine exports and increasing the prices of manufactured imports. They have not hesitated to dictate on the reactionary government the continuous devaluation of the peso and the increase of taxes.

As a consequence, the cost of living is rising steeply and consistently. The income of the broad masses of the people is being depleted at an unprecedented rate. Those who are employed are subjected to worsening wage conditions. Theirs is a plight made more desperate by the suppression of their fundamental rights to freely organize and to strike. On the other hand, those who are unemployed and underemployed are rapidly increasing in number. Foreign monopoly capitalism is riding on feudal and semifeudal conditions. These conditions continue to restrict economic growth and enlarge the vast array of unemployed. These conditions are persistent as the fascist dictatorship deliberately retains and aggravates them in the service of US imperialism.

The US-Marcos dictatorship offers no real solution to the economic ills of the country. On the contrary, it daily

aggravates these economic ills. The toiling masses as well as all middle-income groups have no recourse but to participate in a revolutionary movement for better living conditions and economic emancipation.

Unabated militarization

Under the US-Marcos dictatorship, militarization continues unabated and is proceeding at an accelerated rate. This is in line with the “Nixon doctrine” demanding that puppet reactionary governments carry in the main the burden of launching ferocious armed counterrevolution against the broad masses of the people in defense of US imperialist and local reactionary interests. While it is assured of an “umbrella” by US military bases, the Philippine reactionary government is dictated upon to build up its troops at its own expense and to pay for weapons and technical aid from US imperialism.

Marcos has consistently taken advantage of the “Nixon doctrine” in order to set up his own fascist dictatorial rule. His regime has shamelessly increased the military budget and announced a policy of setting up a “military-industrial complex.” It has collaborated fully with the Joint US Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG) in manipulating the reactionary armed forces, and with the Office of Public Safety of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in manipulating the Philippine Constabulary and the local police forces. Within the ranks of the Marcos fascist gang are planted CIA agents who make sure that US military policy is implemented.

Under the pretext of engaging in “civic action” and introducing “military efficiency,” the reactionary armed forces have taken over more and more civilian functions. At the same time, the fascist dictator proffers secret military ranks to local officials. It is now clear that he is employing his military henchmen to rule the civilian bureaucracy. Taking over strategic functions in the reactionary government, the fascist military has involved itself in the worst forms of graft and corruption and has openly engaged in blackmail and extortion.

The military also has assumed control over certain businesses. The evil purpose is the aggrandizement of the private interests of Marcos the No. 1 bureaucrat capitalist. The military is being used for blackmail and extortion, either to enlarge the shareholdings of Marcos and his dummies in certain corporations or to grab shares of stocks and lands in instances where Marcos and his clique do not have any investment.

Living in constant fear of the people, the fascist dictator is frantically increasing troops and equipment and stepping up military operations. The main purpose is to repress the people, especially the toiling masses. The reactionary armed forces remain basically parasitic. More and more tax collections are diverted to military spending. While top military officers sit back to lap up what spoils they can get, it is the fresh conscripts who are made to risk their lives in the battlefield. Thus military trainees, including those of the ROTC and PMT, are being set up as cannon fodder against the just struggle of the Filipino masses to overthrow the dictatorship.

Fascist education and culture

The US-Marcos dictatorship is doing everything to spread an imperialist and fascist type of education and culture. It is requiring all schools at every level to ram down the throats of students the anti-national and antidemocratic Marcos constitution and the multifarious edicts of the fascist dictator. A massive propaganda campaign about the “new society,” “discipline,” and “fairness and justice” has been launched to brainwash the people into submission.

Schools, mass media, mass organizations, churches and various other institutions are under strict order to follow the dictates of the US-Marcos dictatorship. Every channel of communications is under censorship. And the Marcos press monopoly, while amassing profits at the expense of mass media closed down by armed force, fabricates the most obnoxious black propaganda against the anti-imperialist and democratic forces.

The scheme to reorganize and further orient the education system towards serving US imperialist policy is underway. This is done through the Department of Education and the Presidential Commission to Survey Philippine Education (PCSPE) which aim to convert schools into training grounds for skilled technical workers to assure US business monopoly firms of an abundant supply of cheap skilled Filipino labor.

Progressive and patriotic teachers and students have been forced out of the schools, often times detained and humiliated. The curricula have been perverted. Both public and private schools are being subverted by imperialist interests through loans from the World Bank and the International Development Association, and through “advisors” from the US foundations.

Fearful of the students, teachers and employees on campus, the US-Marcos dictatorship has converted many schools into virtual concentration camps. Checkpoints and spies are a common sight in schools throughout the country. And in schools noted for student activism, searches, arrests and other forms of harassment are everyday occurrences.

Servile foreign policy

Foreign policy cannot but reflect domestic policy. The main policy of the fascist dictatorship is to serve US imperialism. In this regard, the Marcos fascist regime has tightened its relations with such other US imperialist puppet dictatorships as those of Nguyen Van Thieu, Suharto, Lon Nol, Pak Jung Hi, and Chiang Kaishek.

On every world issue, the Philippine reactionary government continues to cling to the coattails of its imperialist master. It belongs to such reactionary regional associations as the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Asian Pacific Council (ASPAC) and Southeast Asian Ministers Economic Council (SEAMAC) which are all devoted to promoting subservience to the superpowers.

In line with the “Nixon doctrine,” the fascist dictatorship has also eagerly endorsed Japanese militarism as the regional leader among US puppet states in Asia. The “Asian Forum” project of the US-Marcos dictatorship is calculated to help counteract the impending doom of US imperialism in Asia, especially Southeast Asia.

Because of the powerful pressure of the people, the world anti-imperialist movement and the general crisis of capitalism, the US-Marcos dictatorship has talked about broadening the country’s diplomatic and trade relations to include socialist countries. Until today, however, it uses every flimsy excuse to delay the establishment of such relations.

The fascist dictatorship is following US imperialism to its doom. The world crisis of imperialism, especially that of its main pillar, US imperialism, is taking its heavy toll on the Philippines.

Program of revolutionary action

A three-fold task now faces the Filipino people: unite to oppose and overthrow the US-Marcos dictatorship; liberate themselves from US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism; and establish a coalition government based on a truly democratic system of representation. The main form of struggle in carrying out this task is armed struggle. This struggle, founded on the alliance of the workers and peasants, is already being waged in the countryside. The people are advancing from victory to victory even as the dictatorship is unleashing its armed forces to “wipe out” the people’s armed detachments and is desperately using every conceivable method of suppression.

The broad masses must unite to ensure the total success of the people’s armed struggle, together with all other forms of resistance. All revolutionary, democratic and progressive forces opposed to the US-Marcos dictatorship must unite under a broad united front in order to overthrow this hated fascist regime.

Only a broad national united front of all democratic sectors of Philippine society can provide an impregnable shield for the people’s revolutionary armed struggle. Such a united front can deal deadly blows against the dictatorship and hasten its downfall.

Only a broad national united front can lay the foundations of a coalition government based on a truly democratic system of representation that will supplant the evil regime of the fascist puppet clique. Such a united front can set up a new political and social institutions that shall be the sinews of a truly just and democratic society.

It is the aim of the Preparatory Commission of the National Democratic Front to develop and form this broad national united front. We are putting forth the following ten-point programme for revolutionary action as basis for unity of all forces opposed to the fascist dictatorship.

1. Unite all anti-imperialist and democratic forces in order to overthrow the US-Marcos dictatorship and work for the establishment of a coalition government based on a truly democratic system of representation;
2. Expose and oppose US imperialism as the mastermind behind the setting up of a the fascist dictatorship, struggle for the nullification of all unequal treaties and arrangements with this imperialist power, and call for the nationalization of all its properties in the country
3. Fight for the reestablishment of all the democratic rights of the people, such as freedom of speech, the press, assembly, association, movement, religious belief, and the right to due process;
4. Gather all possible political and material support for the underground and the armed resistance against the US-Marcos dictatorship;
5. Support a genuine land reform program that can liberate the peasant masses from feudal and semifeudal exploitation and raise agricultural production through cooperation;
6. Work for the improvement of the people’s livelihood, guarantee the right to work and protect national capital against foreign monopoly capital;
7. Promote a national, scientific and mass culture and combat imperialist, feudal and fascist culture;
8. Support the national minorities, especially those in Mindanao and the mountain provinces in their struggle

for self-determination and democracy;

9. Punish after public trial the ringleaders of the Marcos fascist gang for their crimes against the people and confiscate all their ill-gotten wealth; and

10. Unite with all peoples fighting imperialism and seek their support for the Philippine revolutionary struggle.

In the name of all the Filipino martyrs who have sacrificed their lives on the altar of national freedom and democracy, we appeal to all our beloved compatriots to rally to the flag of the resistance against the US-Marcos dictatorship. Support the revolutionary armed struggle for national freedom and democracy. Wage unremitting propaganda in order to arouse everyone. Organize guerrilla units and support the underground. Contribute funds, military materiel, food and medicine.

Patriotic workers: Continue to wage political and economic struggle with ever greater vigor. Deprived of your basic political rights, including your right to strike, you are at the mercy of the fascist dictatorship and your exploitative employers. Your livelihood will sink deeper and deeper under the heavy weight of US imperialism and its puppets. Those of you who are ready to join the revolutionary armed struggle in the countryside should do so.

Patriotic peasants: Smash the scheme of the US-Marcos dictatorship to deceive you with its bogus land reform program. Your emancipation from landlord tyranny depends on your own revolutionary struggle. Support the revolutionary armed struggle and let your best sons and daughters carry arms so that you will be emancipated and you will get your just share of land without having to pay a single centavo to the despotic and big landlords.

Patriotic teachers, students, journalists, professionals, businessmen and all those belonging to the middle social strata: Defy the enemy and raise your voices against it. If everyone of you speak up in his own place against the enemy, you will bring the truth to the entire country faster than the its vile propaganda. Whatever material support or special services you can give, give it without hesitation to those who bear arms. Certainly, many of you can also bear arms or perform definite tasks in the underground.

Patriotic political leaders and religious leaders: Arouse your constituencies and congregations to resolutely oppose the fascist dictatorship. In this way, you can participate in the just and noble struggle of the entire people.

Patriotic national minorities: Unite with all other Filipinos in overthrowing the US-Marcos dictatorship which has viciously deprived you of your ancestral lands and sent troops to quell your resistance. Fight with ever greater vigor.

Patriotic soldiers in the reactionary armed forces: Do not allow yourselves to become the tools of a power-mad dictator. Turn your guns against the people's oppressors. Join the revolutionary forces in the fold of the National Democratic Front.

Patriotic Filipinos abroad: Form your own anti-imperialist and antifascist groups and link up with the fraternal peoples in whose midst you are. Seek their aid and support for the Philippine revolutionary struggle for national freedom and democracy.

Beloved compatriots: Let us all unite and fight as one man against the US-Marcos dictatorship. Being just, the revolution will certainly triumph. Being unjust, the fascist counterrevolution will certainly fail. Let us shape our future with our own hands, with our own revolutionary efforts. Let us raise and resolutely carry forward the great red banner of the national democratic revolution.

Unite to overthrow the US-Marcos dictatorship!

Long live the Philippine revolution!

Long live the Filipino people!

Our Urgent Tasks This essay was drafted in May 1976, under the title "Our Urgent Tasks", and subsequently adopted as a final CPP Central Committee document and published in *Rebolusyon*, Vol. I, No.1, July 30, 1976

This is a statement of the urgent tasks of the Communist Party of the Philippines in the light of the Third plenum of the Central Committee and the most recent circumstances. Here included are the conditions, forces, methods, trends and reasons involved in carrying out such tasks.

We must united wholeheartedly and firmly to carry out these tasks for the single purpose of winning the life-and-death struggle against the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique and in the process carry forward the people's democratic revolution in the a comprehensive way.

Each one of us in the Party must take as much assignment and responsibility as possible, fearing neither hardship nor sacrifice and always devoting ourselves to serving the people. All of us must exert the utmost effort to lead our people towards national liberation and social emancipation.

1. Carry forward the antifascist antifeudal and anti-imperialist movement!

We must resolutely carry forward the antifascist, antifeudal and anti-imperialist movement. This is the current combative expression of our general line of people's democratic revolution against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

The Marcos fascist dictatorship is the main force of armed counterrevolution and is ruthlessly conducting a civil war. Thus, we must give first place to the antifascist movement. We must do everything we can to push forward the democratic armed revolution against the fascist armed counterrevolution.

Everywhere in the country we must focus on the abuses of the Marcos fascist dictatorship. In the entire semi-colonial and semifeudal history of the Philippines, there is no regime more infamous than this for the political tyranny and economic crisis it has unleashed against the broad masses of the people.

The "new society" (variably calling itself "constitutional authoritarianism", "crisis government" and now lately "new democracy") is but the old society gone far worse and far more intolerable. The reactionary state has shown itself of all its bourgeois democratic embellishments and is nakedly acting as the coercive instrument of the big comprador-landlord-bureaucrat clique of Marcos and US imperialism.

We have the Marcos fascist dictatorship as the narrowest and weakest target on which to concentrate the broadest and strongest possible attack by the people. But to achieve the most profound, most wide-ranging and most forward results in the antifascist movement, we must deliberately and clearly link it to the antifeudal and anti-imperialist movements. It is only thus that we can effectively strike at the very essence and main body of the reactionary state.

Otherwise, we would be merely calling for the restoration of formal democratic rights and worn-out processes of the ruling system. Like bourgeois democrats, and not proletarian revolutionaries, we would be going after forms and we would be missing the content of a people's democratic revolution.

To deepen the antifascist movement, we must vigorously wage the antifeudal movement. By doing so, we develop the main force for overthrowing or causing the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship. We respond no less to the main demand of the people's democratic revolution and win the abiding interest of the most numerous class, the peasantry, in the armed revolution.

To raise the level of the antifascist movement, we must vigorously undertake the anti-imperialist movement. We must make US imperialism pay the ultimate price for having masterminded the Marcos fascist dictatorship and having been the most aggrandized by it. The longer Marcos stays in power, the stronger the anti-imperialist movement should become.

So long as we pay comprehensive attention to the antifascist, antifeudal and anti-imperialist movement, there is no chance for US imperialism and the local reactionaries to confuse the people and derail the revolution one day by simply replacing the current fascist dictatorship with another.

The Marcos fascist dictatorship is a measure of the weakening and desperation of the entire ruling system, rather than of strengthening and stability. This open terrorist rule is the absolute proof that the ruling classes can no longer rule in the old way.

The political crisis continues to worsen. The split among the reactionaries has continued to widen and become more virulent. The revolutionary mass movement, under the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat, has proven to be resilient and has expanded and intensified, instead of being crushed by the fascist counterrevolution.

Though at first taken by surprise by the ultra-rightist coup, Marcos' political rivals have gone on to

disseminate anti-Marcos propaganda in their so-called bailiwicks and maneuver for influence in the very same reactionary armed forces manipulated and used by Marcos for his fascist autocratic purposes. In the years to come, the gun will become more important than ever in the conflicts of the reactionaries.

The alliance of the Macapagal, Aquino, Lopez and Manglapus groups is not idle. Though US imperialism continues to get what it wants from the Marcos fascist dictatorship, it has already assured this alliance that it should do what it can to stand in reserve in the face of Marcos' gross unpopularity. US public opinion and certain US business interests recognize the fact that even as the Marcos fascist dictatorship is a short-term asset for US imperialism, it is a long-term liability.

The Marcos fascist dictatorship has given no quarters to its political rivals. The ultrarightist coup of the executive against co-equal branches of the reactionary government, against the constitutional convention and against all kinds of opposition carried extremely vindictive measures. Properties have been extorted for the personal gain of Marcos and his henchmen. The Marcos press monopoly and other Marcos assets in far larger enterprises consist mainly of robbed property.

The series of fake referendums have in progression served to merely endorse the arbitrary martial law proclamation and the autocratic rule of Marcos. The "new" constitution, the indefinite nonconvening of the interim national assembly, the supplantation of national and local elections by presidential appointment and the projection of Imelda as second-in-command and successor of the fascist dictator close every peaceful avenue to political power for Marcos' political rivals.

The broad masses of the people have suffered most from the fascist counterrevolution. More than 95 percent of victims of illegal mass arrests and mass detention, massacres, assassination, torture, forced mass evacuation, illegal searches and looting, sexual molestation, bombardment, extortion and the like come from the ranks of ordinary people. Hundreds of thousands have become victims of direct physical abuse by the fascists.

At least three million people have been displaced, especially in the countryside, through fascist intimidation. People have been forced to abandon their homes, crops and small landholdings due to enemy "counterinsurgency" campaigns, expansion of corporate farming, "infrastructure" projects and real estate speculation.

The elimination or drastic diminution of political and economic rights and opportunities is causing incalculable suffering to the broad masses of the people. In such a situation, more people are liable to suffer oppression of the most direct and brutal kind.

The mass organizations of national-democratic character and the critical press are banned. The workers are deprived of their right to strike and the effective exercise of their trade union rights. The right of the peasants to selforganization is sabotaged by military operations and by the imposition of the "samahang nayon." The students, together with their teachers, are under close guard and even student governments and publications are prohibited.

Every means of democratic expression is shut off. All forms of mass action opposing fascist, feudal and imperialist abuses are expressly prohibited. Even private conversations are liable to be considered "rumormongering." Ownership and operation of even mimeographing machines and other minor printing equipment are also severely restricted. There are not only the written penalties but also the far more severe penalties imposed by the fascist torturers, murderers and extortionists.

Under the suffocating fascist martial rule, the broad masses of the people have no course but to fight back. They learn daily to resist their enemy. The Marcos fascist dictatorship has stood out as the best teacher by negative example. The learning process is so deep-going that the people increasingly detest not only the Marcos fascist dictatorship but also the entire ruling system.

The Marcos fascist dictatorship has, instead of effecting "peace and order," fanned the flames of armed resistance. The New People's Army, led by the Party, has only strengthened itself and expanded in the face of fascist abuses and barbarities. There are now tested guerrilla forces of the people's army in all regions outside Manila-Rizal.

The armed resistance for self-determination among the people of southwestern Mindanao has been ignited and fueled by the abuses of the Marcos fascist dictatorship. This has constituted a great though indirect support to the revolutionary armed struggle of the New People's Army.

A revolutionary underground is thriving all over the country. This is composed mainly of basic revolutionary forces led by the Party. Allied forces and other antifascist forces also have their own underground activities. In

time to come, a powerful groundswell will overthrow the Marcos fascist dictatorship.

The Marcos fascist dictatorship is extremely isolated and under fire from all directions. Contrary to its wishes, it cannot be at the center of a "balancing act" between left and right. It is the ultra-right. It has made itself the target of a broad antifascist movement.

The economic crisis has rapidly worsened, making the core of the political tyranny more rotten everyday. This crisis is generated by the Marcos fascist dictatorship through its own profligacy and corruption, and its subservience to US imperialism which is shifting the burden of its crisis to a semicolonial dependent like the Philippines.

All our Party cadres and members must be well acquainted with the fast changing economic data in the country as a whole and in the local areas where they are, so that they can give clear substance to their propaganda and agitation.

Prices have been soaring since 1970 but these have been soaring even more rapidly since the imposition of fascist martial rule. Price increases have been by several hundreds of percent since 1972. Imported commodities lead the way. The repeated oil price increases obtained by the US oil companies alone have been a major factor in pushing up prices in the country.

Severe scarcities of locally produced commodities have been occurring and have been pushing up prices because the main focus of the fascist regime is to encourage production of raw materials for export and build up the "infrastructure" for it. Domestic prices of exportable commodities have risen so fast because exports are being made without prior attention to local needs. Food production is also grossly inadequate and food requirements are dependent on imports.

The income of the toiling masses are forced down to yield high profits to the US and other foreign monopolies and the local exploiting classes. Wage levels have sunk too far below the price of basic commodities. The wage increases recently announced by the fascist regime do not correspond to the inflation since 1970 and can be completely circumvented due to the loopholes provided by the antilabor fascist regime.

It is openly admitted in watered-down statistics of the reactionary government that the purchasing power of the peso has gone down from 1965 to 1970 to 74 centavos and more rapidly from 1970 to 1975 to 33 centavos. This is bad enough. But the fact is that the purchasing power of the peso has certainly gone down to far less than 20 centavos.

According to no less than the National Economic Development Authority, the top economic agency of the fascist regime, a worker must earn P45.00 daily for his family to subsist. Another agency, the Private Development Corporation of the Philippines, has also arrived at the slightly higher figure of P46.00. Even when applied faithfully, the new minimum wage of P10.00, P9.00 and P7.00 for nonagricultural workers in Greater Manila, nonagricultural workers in the provinces and regular agricultural workers, respectively, are far below the level of subsistence.

Unemployment is more rampant than ever. Forty percent of the employable population is without employment. This exceeds the chronic level of 25 percent noted in 1970. Most of the unemployed are in the countryside, under the guise of being irregular farm workers. Many of the unemployed continue to flock into the cities to look for jobs that are not available.

There is no land reform whatsoever. It is a big hoax, obvious from the very start. The tenant masses have been merely offered to buy land from their landlords at prohibitive prices. The bogus land reform has been used as cover for divesting the tenant masses of their tenancy rights, for arranging high fixed land rent and promoting usury, for expanding corporate farming and for enriching the Marcos-controlled corporations on fertilizer, pesticide and farm equipment sales contracts with the reactionary government.

US and other foreign investors are encouraged to extract superprofits on their direct investments, loans and trade.

Restrictions that should have fallen on US investments upon the termination of the Parity Amendment and the Laurel Langley Agreement have been overridden by obnoxious antinational provisions of the Marcos constitution and presidential decrees enlarging those privileges already available to foreign investors in those foreign investments incentives laws before fascist martial rule.

US investments and assets amount to far more than the well-known figure of \$3.0 to \$4.0 billion and comprise 85 percent of all foreign investments. Ownership is often camouflaged by the various nationalities of US

multinational firms.

The US monopoly capitalists, followed by the Japanese, have increased their direct investments, especially in banking, investment houses, mining, oil exploration, foreign and local trading, plantations, repackaging and re-assembly, real estate and the like in accordance with their schemes of quick profit and misshaping the economy. The basic character of the economy remains as semifeudal as ever, restricted to being a producer of raw material and consumer of finished products from abroad. Foreign loans with usurious rates of interest and other onerous conditions are being rapidly unloaded on the Philippines by the imperialists. Whereas the foreign debt of the Philippines stood at \$2.2 billion at the end of 1972, accumulated through seven years of Marcos misrule, it now stands at more than \$5.0 billion after only three years of fascist rule. This is already far beyond the critical point. New and bigger loans have been incurred to pay old debts, thus, there is no end to the enlargement of the debts. What is most silly is that those who take most advantage of these loans are the foreign investors and the Marcos clique of big compradors and big landlords.

The deficit in the balance of trade has gone beyond the \$1.0 billion level in comparison to the few hundreds of millions of US dollars three years ago. It is still mounting. A greater volume of exports at lower prices is being made, while a greater volume of imports at higher prices is being made. With their tighter stranglehold on the local financial system, the foreign monopoly capitalists are using foreign trading more rapaciously than ever before to camouflage the remittance of superprofits.

The deficit on the balance of payments keeps on rising. It went beyond the level of \$500 million at the end of 1975 and is now approaching the level of \$1.0 billion. As usual, bigger foreign loans are resorted in order to cover the deficit. Taking aside the private foreign exchange deposits in commercial banks, the international reserve fund of the Philippines is composed almost entirely of foreign loans in the process of being rapidly spent and replenished by new borrowing.

A great deal of foreign loans incurred by the Marcos fascist dictatorship has been used to put up ill-planned and inflationary "infrastructure" projects beneficial essentially to the foreign investors and the local exploiting classes. The purpose is not only to make propaganda out of showy public works but also to enrich the fascist dictator and his henchmen through contract-pulling, kickbacks and real estate speculation. Marcos has controlled interests now in the major local construction firms and related companies.

The manipulation of public works is an old bureaucrat-capitalist method of self-enrichment which Marcos has indulged in an unprecedentedly colossal manner. "Infrastructure" projects are always priced high above the actual inflationary trend. A major part of the "cost" of every construction project represents the corruption of the fascist dictator and his top henchmen. The burden that is the fascist dictatorship's profligacy and corruption is always passed on to the people in the form of higher taxes and higher toll charges or service fees.

The tax burden has increased abruptly so many times. This increased from P6.6 billion in 1972 to P14.3 billion in 1974 and has continued to rise. And yet revenues of the reactionary government fall far short of expenditures. The budgetary deficit for fiscal year 1974-75 is P5.0 billion, almost equivalent to the total budget of only a few years ago. Aside from foreign borrowing, the fascist dictatorship has had to resort to heavy local borrowing. At P20.7 billion in fiscal year 1974-75, the local public debt is now rapidly approaching P30 billion, skyrocketing from the 1972 figure of P9.7 billion.

The new development in the budgeting of the reactionary government under fascism is the rapid increase of appropriations for the military and the number one position of military expenditures. Before fascist martial rule, expenditures for public education and public works always vied for the top position, with those for the military running a poor third. Out of the total 1974-75 expenditures of P18.5 billion, the share of the military is more than P4.0 billion, including some P1.0 billion for intelligence.

On the whole, the expenditures of the reactionary government has been mainly for beefing up the personnel and equipment of the reactionary armed forces, increasing salaries and privileges of military officers, purchasing office materials and vehicles, acquiring public works equipment, paying private contractors, maintaining the general payroll, servicing public debts and the like. In every money transaction involving the fascist dictatorship, there is the inevitable cost that goes for graft and corruption.

There is no economic development whatsoever. Deterioration is the precise word for it. The gross national product is no gauge for economic growth. The transactions of the reactionary government, the foreign monopoly capitalists and the local exploiting classes compose the bulk of this gross national product. Also, this can be no

basis for per capita income. More than 90 percent of the people live the lives of the exploited workers and peasants.

The broad masses of the people are suffering the worst kind of life since the end of World War II. They demand their democratic rights and the improvement of their livelihood. With the Marcos fascist dictatorship resorting to brutal methods to escape responsibility, the broad masses of the people have no choice but to engage in various forms of resistance.

The workers are clamoring for higher wages and their right to strike. They must lift themselves from the miserable life of extremely low wages and the rapidly rising prices of basic commodities. Benefits hard-earned through several decades of workers' struggle have been eliminated or drastically reduced. While opposing the workers' interests, the fascist regime subjects the workers' pay checks to withholding taxes and various kinds of special levies. There is no way out but to undertake the strike movement.

Despite the fascist prohibitions, the masses of workers have gone on to make strikes, slow-downs, sit-down, delegations, trooping the offices, demonstrations and other forms of mass protest. The more than seventy worker strikes and four street demonstrations between October last year and June this year is a signal for far bigger storms to come in Manila-Rizal and other areas. The workers have proven that they can stand firm against fascist intimidation and in many cases have actually won some of their demands.

The peasant masses are opposed to the rapidly rising costs of their subsistence and production, the military operations against them and the people's army, the higher land rent and loss of tenancy rights under the bogus land reform, the onerous conditions of the supervised credit system (Masagana 99), the heavy levies exacted under the samahang nasyon and the barangay, the depression of their real income, the loss of homestead rights and the expansion of corporate farming.

The soil for the revolutionary antifeudal movement and armed struggle in the countryside is more fertile than ever before. Everywhere the peasant masses welcome the people's army. Without this condition, the small and weak people's army would not have grown in strength and would have been crushed by the enemy. Even in cases where the Red fighters were forced out from an area by extremely large enemy forces, they immediately come upon a favorable situation in the area to which they shift.

The urban petty bourgeoisie are also hard pressed by the economic crisis and feel abused by the antidemocratic policies of the fascist dictatorship. Their limited and often fixed incomes are ravaged by inflation. Those who own some small enterprises or practice some profession resent the ever-increasing taxes. The intelligentsia resent the Marcos press monopoly and are steadily gaining courage to speak out their minds and act accordingly.

The student masses and some of their teachers are stirring. Being the most concentrated section of the intelligentsia, apart from those in the government service who have to act more cautiously, they are steadily manifesting their service against not only the repressive conditions in campuses but also the rampant evils of the fascist puppet dictatorship in society as a whole. They are an effective link of the urban petty bourgeoisie to the toiling masses.

The national bourgeoisie are discriminated against in favor of the foreign monopoly capitalists. They are being forced into bankruptcy or absorption by the foreign monopolies to which even retail trading has been given back. The fascist dictatorship keeps on increasing the tax burden on them. They resent the fact that while taxes are collected from them, there is no effective representation of their interests.

There are groups and groups among the national bourgeoisie opposed to the Marcos fascist dictatorship. They are steadily speaking out their minds in legal organizations, forums and pamphlets. Some of these groups are secret in nature and hanker for some solution like the assassination of Marcos and the convening of the interim national assembly and lay themselves open to manipulation by another set of puppets of US imperialism.

Though the Marcos fascist dictatorship has been put up avowedly in the interest of the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class, the economic crisis has become so serious that spoils are becoming more and more limited for division among them. There is a growing split between those who are satisfied with the Marcos fascist dictatorship and those who are not. This is fertile soil for the maneuvers of Marcos' political rivals. A case in point is the disenchantment of the bloc of sugar landlords after being deprived of a direct hold on exports and dollar earnings.

The objective conditions for making revolution are excellent more than ever before. The basic contradictions in Philippine society are intensifying. Instead of saving the ruling system, the Marcos fascist dictatorship has further

jeopardized its very existence. All that is needed is to resolutely strengthen such subjective forces of the revolution as the Party, the New People's Army, the mass organizations and the local organs of political power.

2. Further strengthen the party and rectify our errors!

We must further strengthen the Party ideologically, politically and organizationally. We have made some modest achievements on the basis of which we can advance further. But we have also had certain errors and weaknesses which we must rectify so that we will not be weighed down and dragged down by these and so that we will win more and greater victories.

The reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines on the theoretical foundation of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought constitutes a victory of profound and far-reaching significance in the Philippine revolution. We have set down and clarified the correct ideological and political line of the Party.

To set the Philippine revolution on the correct course, we have studied and researched into the history and circumstances of the Filipino people and the Party and put out the necessary documents and writings for the edification of all Filipino revolutionaries. In the process, we have successfully criticized and repudiated the long-standing revisionist lines of the Lavas and Tarucs which polluted and suffocated the old merger party.

We have disseminated the works and propagated the scientific revolutionary teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao and we have successfully criticized and repudiated Soviet modern revisionism and social-imperialism. Chairman Mao's works have been widely circulated, because they not only deal correctly and elaborately with problems of a people's democratic revolution in a semicolonial and semifeudal country but also because they contain the latest and most comprehensive summing-up of the experience of the world proletariat and people.

To propagate the Marxist-Leninist stand, viewpoint and method, we have undertaken study courses, put out analyses of current national and international events, promoted further researches of national and regional scopes and required social investigations and criticism and self-criticism as methods for raising our ideological level and improving our practical work.

In our ideological rebuilding, we have had to lay stress on studying basic Marxist-Leninist principles and combating the modern revisionism of the Soviet and local renegades. We have had to rely considerably on books dealing with successful revolutions led by fraternal parties abroad. We ourselves have had to go through more revolutionary experience than what we started with in order to deepen our grasp of Marxism-Leninism. And quite a number of our Party cadres are of petty bourgeois background who definitely have more book learning than experience.

Under these circumstances, the dogmatist tendency more than the empiricist has been most prominent among those ideologically in error. Instead of making concrete investigations and analyses in linking with the masses, there are some of us who would rather rest content with parallelisms, analogies, quotations and phrase-morgering. There is even the notion that we do not deserve to be called revolutionaries if we cannot copy a successful revolution abroad.

There are also those who seem to grasp the basic principles and lessons derived from our criticism and repudiation of the Lavas and Tarucs but fail to grasp our own course of development and the different concrete circumstances that we are in. They fail to understand that we can advance only step by step and that we cannot apply on ourselves completely the same course of thinking and action demanded of the Lavas and Tarucs on the basis of forces available to them and circumstances obtaining at the end of World War II.

While the dogmatist tendency prevails among those in error, there are also those who remain immersed in their own narrow and limited experience either because they are given no chance of developing ideologically or are merely browbeaten or they systematically react to the dogmatist tendency with their own avoidance of theoretical study.

After more than seven years, our reestablished Party has gained enough experience to be in a new stage of knowing clearly the specific characteristics and specific requirements of our revolutionary struggle in the whole country and in the various localities. It is in this spirit that we call for rectification of ideological errors.

Those who have an advantage in book learning must link themselves closely to and learn from the toiling masses of workers and peasants and from our comrades who have an advantage in experience. At the same time, comrades who are of worker and peasant status must not shirk the responsibility of relating their experience to theory and asking that theory must be disclosed in a language easy to understand.

There is paucity of exchanges of worthwhile experiences within the Party, especially between our several

regional Party organizations. to promote these, the Central Committee is putting out Rebolusyon as an internal and theoretical bulletin, exclusively for Party members. We intend to publish here, apart from statements and directives from the Central Committee, mainly documents emanating from regional Party conferences and articles that are the result of the application of Marxist theory in the course of concrete revolutionary practice, social investigations, study courses and criticism and self-criticism sessions.

We also intend to undertake conferences among representatives of various regional Party organizations and encourage the attendance in regional Party conferences of representatives of other regional Party organizations. In this way, the most detailed yet discreet exchanges of experience are made possible.

We urge all Party members to contribute to the general effort of giving Marxism a national form. We should disabuse ourselves of the idea that only a few theoreticians know theory and know how to apply it. We can triumph only if the entire Party consistently applies Marxist-Leninist theory on the concrete conditions of the Philippines revolution.

The Party has established its political leadership of the proletariat in the revolution by laying down, clarifying and carrying out the general line of people's democratic revolution. This is a great victory. We have made clear the character, the motive forces, targets and perspective of this revolution.

The character of the revolution is determined by its essential task, which is to liberate the people from foreign and feudal domination and establish an independent and democratic Philippines. Such a task can be accomplished only by waging armed struggle as the main form among the motive forces to isolate and destroy the target or enemy.

At the helm of the motive forces is the proletariat. It takes as its main ally, the peasantry whose demand for land is the main content of the people's democratic revolution and from which the main contingents of the people's army can be drawn. The basic alliance of the toiling masses of workers and peasants is the solid foundation for the united front which must win over the urban petty bourgeoisie firstly and the national bourgeoisie secondly.

The targets of the revolution are the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class. Our current revolutionary struggle against the Marcos fascist dictatorship is more than a struggle against the ruling clique. In the course of fighting this clique, we must develop the strength to weaken the entire ruling system and then topple it in the end.

The perspective of the people's democratic revolution is socialism. The socialist revolution must be won upon the completion of the people's democratic revolution. Though we are ready to give concessions to the petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie in a period of transition, we shall no longer pass through a full stage of capitalist development as in the case of the old democratic revolutions before the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution. In line with the people's democratic revolution, we have established the New People's Army and launched the revolutionary armed struggle. Our strategic line is to encircle the cities from the countryside and through a protracted period of time develop rural bases from which to advance to seize political power. Like the Party, the people's army started from scratch and immediately launched revolutionary armed struggle. The people's army has grown in strength step by step, won military victories against powerful odds and won the hearts and minds of millions by its heroic deeds.

The people's army has been the main instrument of the Party in organizing the peasant masses. Hundreds of thousands of people in the barrios have come directly under the barrio organizing committees organized by our guerrilla squads and armed propaganda teams. We have established small guerrilla bases and far more extensive guerrilla zones, carried out mass movements and initiated land reform.

In the face of the fascist enemy, we have continued to organize and lead large masses of people. Even when our barrio organizing committees collapse in one area due to a massive and prolonged enemy campaign, those in other areas increase to more than make up for the losses and even these losses are temporary, still open to recovery.

In support of the mass movement and armed struggle in the countryside, great mass movements have also been raised by the Party in the cities. The first quarter storm of 1970 and succeeding mass actions in Manila-Rizal and other urban areas have broadcast our revolutionary propaganda all over the country and have yielded to us a considerable number of Party and non-Party activists who have been shifted to the countryside or who continue to develop the revolutionary mass movement in the cities.

It is a matter of necessity in the countryside to expand at a rate fast enough to have a wide area for maneuver

for our guerrilla forces. For the purpose, we have been setting up the barrio organizing committees. While we have required the organization of these committees to follow the policy of the antifeudal united front, many of these are so haphazardly organized that unreliable elements creep in, prevail over the poor and middle peasants and flaunt their functions while the enemy is not yet around.

The error of haphazard organizing oftentimes characterized by lack or insufficiency of social investigation and by yielding membership in the barrio organizing committee to whomever are the initial contacts in a barrio, leads on to another error. The work of consolidation is not attended to. The basic mass organizations for peasants, workers, women, youth, children and cultural activists are not organized and mobilized to ensure sustained all-round mass support for the revolution. Thus, the surrounding waters may be wide but shallow.

When we cannot apply the principle of combining a few cadres from the outside with many local activists, it is even very likely that the scope of our political work is narrow. Thus, we must handle well the relationship of expansion and consolidation, of making the guerrilla zone and the guerrilla base a good fighting front for us.

In cases of errors with disastrous results, the principal tendency has been adventurism or "Left" opportunism. With mass support wide or narrow but shallow there are those who engage in military actions against enemy troops and then when enemy reaction rises, they do not know where to go or the enemy catches up with them. They fail to recognize that to support and ensure the success of any important action, military or otherwise, requires painstaking mass work.

There are petty-bourgeois elements who are still unremolded and who think that it suffices to beat the drum – make sweeping propaganda but forget to do solid organizational work among the masses – and who also think that the military action of a few courageous men must precede solid organizational work among the masses.

Relying on a mere committee dominated by unreliable but prestigious personalities has also spawned commandism. The chairman and the chief of defense of the barrio organizing committee often neglect to have any collective life within the committee. And in the absence of militant mass organizations, the trend is to order people around and make them do what is beyond their level of consciousness and organization.

While we oppose "Left" opportunism as the principal tendency among those of us in error, we must also be on guard against Right opportunism. Our insistence on taking the mass line, establishing the basic mass organizations and laying the foundation for a truly people's war should not be twisted to mean the indefinite postponement of tactical military offensives even when conditions for them are already ripe.

There have been manifestations of the Right opportunist tendency in the countryside. To consciously let in unreliable elements in barrio organizing committees and relax with the transitory advantages that they provide is one. To enjoy the conveniences of one barrio and fail to venture out and do mass work in another barrio is another. To remain fixed on going after local bad elements and fail to push forward the land reform and the armed struggle is still another.

In the cities, there is the "Left" opportunist notion prevalent among those of us in error that there can be no revolutionary struggle when there are no strikes, demonstrations and other conspicuous mass protest actions. They fail to recognize that it is perfectly revolutionary struggle to lay down the foundation for these higher forms of political action by doing solid organizational work among the masses.

There is also the notion among those of us in error that sweeping propaganda work suffices to mobilize the people. There is still another notion that the economic struggle of the workers can be slurred over, whereas we must grasp it at its own level and steadily raise it to the level of the political struggle.

There have also been instances of Right opportunism in a certain region. One is the proposal to superimpose the slogan demanding general election in the country on other slogans asserting the democratic rights and interests of the basic masses. Another is making flimsy demands to avoid even only basic trade union demands and the necessary preparations for pushing them forward.

While we have pointed out that sweeping propaganda does not suffice by itself in revolutionary work, we recognize that it is of great importance and that without it mass organizing is without an advance notice and also without direction. We need to step up our propaganda work if we are to enhance our all-round revolutionary work. Our capacity for propaganda and agitation will certainly rise as the basic masses are well organized and activists from their ranks increase.

The corrective measures that we need to undertake in our political work will be dealt with more thoroughly in succeeding sections of this statement.

The membership of the Party is drawn generally from the ranks of activists of the revolutionary mass organizations and Red fighters of the New People's Army. It is clear that our membership is closely linked with the masses and embedded in the revolutionary mass movement. But up to now, our Party is mainly a cadre party. We have thus remained a small Party.

The Party started with less than a score of Party members coming from the old merger party and 75 prospective members in late 1968. The membership increased to several scores in 1969, to a few hundreds in 1970 and close to a thousand in 1971. Since 1972, we have had a few thousand members. But since 1973, we have had a slower rate of growth.

Our Party has become nationwide. Directly under the Central Committee, there were groups of Party members in Manila-Rizal, Central Luzon, Cagayan Valley and Southern Luzon in 1969 and 1970 with most members in the first two regions mentioned. Following the Second Plenum of the Central Committee in 1971, we started to build the regional Party committees and organizations. Now, we have nine regional Party organizations covering the whole country.

The majority of Party members are now under the regional Party organizations outside Manila-Rizal. In turn, the majority of these are in the countryside developing the revolutionary armed struggle. But the Manila-Rizal Party organization still remains the single largest Party organization. Though this regional Party organization has been giving cadres to the other regions, it has continued to grow.

We realize that the growth of the Party is quite slow if we relate it to the large numbers of masses being led by the Party. At first it looks flattering that so few could lead so many and that strict standards are being applied on recruitment. But there are unflattering reasons for the slow growth.

Sectarianism, poor tasking and check-ups, irregular and ponderous study courses and lack of recruitment planning are problems both in the cities and in the countryside which have restricted the organizational growth of the Party. We must solve these.

The outstanding reason for the failure of regional Party organizations outside Manila-Rizal to outstrip the membership of the Manila-Rizal Party organization is the failure to build the mass organizations and the mass movement in the localities. Without these, there can be no sound basis for establishing local Party branches. The mass organizations, aside from the people's army, should be the vast reservoir of revolutionary activists and Party members.

The Manila-Rizal Party organization should not be flattered and should not remain complacent about being the biggest single regional Party organization. In the last two years, there has been a tendency here for the membership to stagnate and even decrease. Just as we demand that local Party branches be set up among the peasants in the countryside, we demand that local Party branches be set up among the workers.

The fascist martial rule cannot be used as the main reason for the slow growth of the Party. The strictures of this tyrannical rule has been more than compensated for by the deep-going hatred and growing resistance of the broad masses of the people. In no year has the enemy struck down more than five percent of the membership of the Party. The

Party should be able to achieve a high rate of growth because it is small but composed mostly of cadres, if only to grasp the necessity and importance of mass members of the Party from the ranks of the workers and peasants.

The Manila-Rizal based national bureaus served positively from 1971 to 1973 not only as administrators of the city based national mass organizations but also as schools for a considerable number of new party recruits. In the first year of martial rule, it also served positively to direct the orderly retreat of the mass organizations suddenly forced to go underground. But in 1974, it became very clear that the national bureaus had outlived their purposes.

It is admitted that the period of one year after the first year of martial rule and before their dissolution in July 1974 constituted a big delay which unduly restricted the disposition of good cadres for various regional Party organizations eager and ready to get them.

It remains our policy to expand the Party boldly on the basis of the revolutionary mass movement and without letting in a single undesirable. We must follow the reasonable standards set by the Party constitution and we must increase the number of Party members who are of worker and peasant status. In this regard, we must keep in mind that we do not wish to be an exclusively cadre party.

We want a large mass of Party members who are of worker and peasant status because these is a measure of

the effectiveness of our revolutionary work, because we want to accomplish gigantic tasks that mainly concern and involve them and because we want to counteract and dilute the negative influences that Party members coming from other classes are liable to bring into the Party.

The Party upholds democratic centralism as its basic organizational principle. This is centralized leadership based on democracy and democracy guided by centralized leadership. By this principle, we can stand and act united and well informed on any important matter. We must apply this principle consistently.

The committee system at every level of leadership, from the Central Committee down to the branch executive committee, is the most important tool of the principle of democratic centralism. The leading committee at a certain level is the point of concentration for an entire Party organization on that level and for lower organs and lower organizations; and within the collectivity of the committee democracy, is carried over from the lower ranks.

With so few Party members taking on large tasks, there is a tendency for a far fewer Party leaders to take on large tasks. When the Party leaders are often attending to large tasks in different places and have difficulties in often coming together, there is always the danger that single Party leaders decide matters that should be taken up in a committee.

Thus, there are conditions for the phenomenon of one-man monopoly of affairs to arise. Indeed it has arisen in the Party and we have been combating this for a long time. Until now, it persists because the conditions for it to keep on arising persist.

The standard organizational solution to this problem is to have a smaller standing committee more easily convened than the full and large committee to act and decide on matters under the guidance of standing policies. For instance, there is the Political Bureau of our Central Committee, then there is the Executive Committee and still there is the General Secretariat. There is the executive committee of the regional committee and then there is the secretariat.

It takes good judgment based on experience and full grasp of policies for a Party leader to make a prompt decision on an urgent matter. He could be like an army commander in an emergency military situation. But always as soon as possible he must submit his decision or action to a collective body.

Any Party leader can initiate or propose a draft or anything, though it is the chairman or the secretary who is expected to perform this leading role. But there must be some preparatory meeting in a smaller committee before presentation of matters before the plenary meeting of a larger committee. In this way, there is thoroughness in preparation and in the entire process of decision-making.

Bureaucratism is also an error contravening the spirit of democratic centralism. Our cadres should not limit themselves to merely receiving reports but they should go down for worthwhile periods of time to lower levels and to the grassroots to investigate for themselves the basis for policies, verify reports and study the correctness or incorrectness of policies.

Going down to the grassroots is good for the remolding of high and middle level Party cadres. We do not mean to say that they abandon their functions in the leading organs but for them to perform these better. And we do not mean that they dissipate their efforts in going around to many places. But they must go down to investigate typical or critical situations (whatever is the main problem that needs close attention) and link themselves closely with the masses.

The central leadership no less has undertaken certain special projects requiring special detachment of personnel, heavy fixed investments and special methods of work that are not assured of effective or sufficient support by the masses in the vicinity of operation. These should no longer be undertaken because these easily meet failure and unduly preoccupy the leadership with matters of secondary importance to a self-reliant revolutionary movement.

At lower levels of the Party, there have also been instance of business and other projects that tend to distract Party leaders from their fundamental tasks. If these projects are beneficial to the revolution, they should be undertaken by trustworthy personnel without wasting the time of Party leaders and without risking the resources of the Party which are much needed for other purposes.

All leaders and members of the Party must be diligent and thrifty. Every moment must be seized to advance the revolution. Every centavo must be sent wisely. Upon our diligence and thrift, we can fruitfully carry out the policy of self-reliance.

In this period of fascist martial rule, the Party must not only be vigilant but extra-vigilant. We must live

contempt for the enemy strategically but we must take serious, meticulous account of him tactically. The fact that the Party has always been underground and involved in armed struggle since the very beginning shows that it has always been prepared and equipped to face the worst of eventualities. But there are vulnerabilities that we must be aware of so that we can guard against them.

In the cities, we must be aware that the open activists of legal progressive organizations before fascist martial rule have been used by the enemy as unwitting tracers of the Party underground. Many of these activists have been apprehended and some of them are proven or merely suspected Party members. We must apply the policy of shifting or reassigning those Party members who can no longer effectively work in their present urban assignment.

In the countryside, the Party members on the manhunt list of the enemy should adapt to the fluidity of our guerrilla activity. The risks are also high in the countryside because we have mere guerrilla squads and at the most guerrilla platoons. But certainly, here we can rely on mass support that is bigger over wider contiguous areas than in the cities. Party members who cannot work freely in the cities can work here far more freely.

In both cities and countryside, a number of comrades have sacrificed their lives and limbs or have fallen into the hands of the enemy and have suffered the most excruciating torture and the torment of incarceration. These include some members of the Central Committee and various regional Party committees.

We honor and emulate our martyrs and heroes. And we convey to our comrades in prison to steel themselves further while in prison and turn the prison into a school. We should learn from their experience. So long as our regional Party organizations keep on growing through revolutionary struggle, there is always a basis for cadres to come forward and replenish as well as reinforce the Central Committee and the regional Party committees.

Only so few among those who have fallen into the hands of the enemy have become traitors or betrayers. There are also those few who cannot stand the difficulties of the struggle and drop out or surrender themselves to the enemy. All these renegades are only a handful and do not make even two percent of those who have fallen into the hands of the enemy. We should learn from their negative examples.

The Party reflects the iniquitous society outside. Thus, there are errors and weaknesses. And there are the few who go overboard completely, and become traitors. It is clear that within the Party the law of contradiction and the law of class struggle operate. But our Party members in general are certainly good. The Party stands united to further strengthen itself.

3. Build the revolutionary mass movement in the countryside!

We must build the revolutionary mass movement in the countryside; and we must build the basic mass organizations for the peasants, youth, women, children and cultural activists to be able to generate it. Not much can be accomplished in mobilizing the great masses if our propaganda teams and guerrilla squads limit their organizing to the barrio organizing committees and small local armed groups.

The key point in our rural mass work is to arouse and organize the peasant masses in the shortest possible time and carry out the land reform movement step by step. In the course of focusing attention on the organization of the peasant association in a typical farming barrio, to other basic mass organizations can also be organized. The peasant activists can easily move the youth, women, children and cultural activists of their own class to accomplish their self-organization.

The farm workers' association, the union of nonagricultural workers and fishermen's association are also basic mass organizations that should be organized wherever there is a basis. In cases where there are already mass organizations positively working for the people's interests, all that we do is to adopt them and transform them further into revolutionary organizations.

There is really no point in feeling sorry that there is a paucity of party cadres to attend to rural mass work. A propaganda team or a guerrilla squad can rely on the local mass activists and can cover so many barrios, even as many as twenty within six months. It is even possible for one, two or three experienced cadres from the outside to work initially with the local mass activists and cover several barrios within a relatively short period.

The local mass activists emerging at every stage of the process of developing the revolutionary mass movement are themselves prospects for recruitment into the Party. Through this process, new Party members keep on arising and local Party branches can be established.

We must rely on and trust the masses. So long as we grasp their interests, needs and demands through social investigation and close contact with them, we can arouse and guide them to set themselves into motion. They can very well organize and mobilize themselves along the correct path. There are always enough activists arising from

their own ranks to firm up the revolutionary direction of their movement.

There must be a series of careful steps in organizing the people in a barrio, especially under the present harsh conditions of fascist martial rule. There are four of these steps which culminate in the full organization of the basic mass organizations.

The first step is to get reliable contact men or liaison men in a barrio that we wish to organize. The number of these can range from three to ten. Within the shortest possible time, we should form them into what we may call the barrio liaison group. This has been called the "barrio organizing group" in Central Luzon and the "organized group of contacts" in Southern Tagalog. Usually, we can get the contact men in a barrio because of our preceding mass work in an adjoining barrio. This is advancing wave upon wave. It is inevitable that the people in one barrio have relatives and friends in the next barrio. Sometimes too, we can reach a barrio where work must be done and get the contact men or liaison men because a Party member, a Red fighter or activist or any reliable person has relatives or friends in that barrio.

Preliminary social investigation can be done on a barrio in a day or a few days, depending on the reliability and knowledgeability of our initial contact men. The shortcomings of some of these contact men can be made up for by further contacts. We must gather all the general and specific information we need to start political work in the barrio.

There is expediency in forming the barrio liaison group from out of the contact men that we initially come to know through reliable intermediaries. Although we try immediately to put the best available men in the group, it may not be possible all the time to get the best representatives of the people in the barrio. After all, it takes time to develop revolutionary activists. Sometimes, the contact men may all come from only one part of sitio of a barrio or from only one section of the barrio population.

But we must make sure that the members of the barrio liaison group are desirous of revolution, are elements of the exploited classes, are known to be honest and good people, have extensive relations in the barrio, are intelligent and resourceful and are conscientious in performing the tasks that we give them.

The functions of the barrio liaison group include assisting us in social investigation, conducting initial propaganda among the people, putting us in touch with the positive forces and elements in the barrio gradually and secretly, and making sure that we are secure in our entry into, stay in and exit from the barrio. All these functions involve the smoothing of our initial relations with the people in the barrio.

The barrio liaison group replaces the barrio organizing committee. Some similarities between the two are apparent. But there are basic differences between them.

The barrio liaison group is no longer empowered nor expected to act as an embryo of people's government in the barrio. Its members do not have the unwritten vested privilege to becoming automatically the chief moving force behind the mass organizations to be established. We depart from the old pernicious practice of giving initial contact men this privilege and therefore we remove or drastically reduce the condition for unreliable elements to creep into the mass organizations.

The group is also under strict advice not to expose themselves as the organizers of mass meetings. At the same time, we take care that it does not know more than it should about the actual widening and deepening of organizational and political work being done in the barrio. Of course, the members of the group receive political education from us and are tested through work and at least some of them can advance from being mere contact men. But the group as a whole does not enjoy any automatic privilege of knowing details beyond its liaison work.

The second step is for our guerrilla squad, propaganda team or cadres to move from one part of the barrio to another or fan out to several parts at one time to conduct deeper social investigation and carry out study meetings among the people, especially the poor peasants, farm workers and lower-middle peasants. We should do everything possible to link ourselves closely with the exploited masses.

Our mass work should bear fruit initially in the form of the people's organizing groups. These include the peasant organizing groups for the poor and lower-middle peasants, the youth organizing group, the women's organizing group and such organizing groups that have a basis. These are based on a division of territory (sitios and parts of the barrio center if much larger than the sitio).

The organizing groups should be able to win the majority of people in their respective fields and initiate activists to arouse and mobilize them. At this point, local activists should start to arise inside and outside the organizing groups. The cadres of the Party should make sure through propaganda and study meetings on the national

democratic revolution that politics takes command of all activities.

We must grasp the antifeudal class struggle as the key link of our rural mass work and we must uphold the poor peasants, farm workers and lower-middle peasants as the most reliable and resolute revolutionary force in a typical farming barrio. But we cannot go far in the antifeudal struggle if we fail to link it well with the antifascist and anti-imperialist struggle not only by way of providing the basic antifeudal forces with the most comprehensive political view but also by way of bringing into active play all other positive forces in the countryside for the revolutionary cause.

The third step can be taken soon after the establishment of the people's organizing group in all or most of the parts of the barrio. There is already a wide and deep basis for establishing the people's organizing committees on a barrio-wide scale.

We have already found out who is fit for what function within each committee. The basic functions to be apportioned are those that pertain to organization, education, economy, defense and health. The apportioning of functions should be settled well within the committee by the members upon our guidance. The committees should be capable of raising the enthusiasm of the majority of the people in their respective fields for the revolution and coming into coordination with struggles launched over areas that include several barrios.

Like the organizing groups based on the parts of the barrio, which must be retained as their support, the people's organizing committees should be an underground force. They must know how to cover their activities with whatever legal and traditional organizations there are in the barrio and must know how to dissemble, use revolutionary dual tactics, before the enemy or unreliable elements.

As early as the successful establishment of the peasant organizing committees over a large area in the countryside, even only some scores of barrios, it is possible to take such a simple and easy first step towards land reform as the reduction of land rent through the systematic withholding of a certain part of the crop without the landlords' knowledge. The campaign to reduce interest rates and eliminate usury; arrange fair prices with the merchants; promote savings, mutual aid and simple exchange of labor and nonpayment of debts under Masagana 99; raise production and productivity; and the like can be pushed.

In cases where the landlords have cunningly abandoned the old practice of sharecropping of the bases of the actual crop and resorted to "leasehold" system (the system of high fixed land rent) promoted by the Marcos fascist dictatorship and by the Lava revisionist renegades, the tenant masses should deliver only a part of the rent and claim bad crop or some plausible reason for the nonpayment of the full rent. If all the peasants claim the same reason, the landlords will be at a loss; they cannot threaten so many with eviction and they might as well simply write into their records the undelivered part of the rent as "debts."

Harvest after harvest, the process of peaceably outmaneuvering the landlords can be done until they come to terms with the peasants. The landlords' threat to deprive the tenants of credit for subsistence or production will be rendered naught by the peasants' gains from land reform their thrift, mutual aid and simple exchange of labor and alliance with the well-to-do peasants who come under persuasion not to engage in usury.

Any despotic landlord who abuses his tenants is liable to be punished by the people's army or secret groups of peasants. It would not pay for him to refuse to come to terms with the peasants. It would be difficult for his overseers and for scabs to show their faces before the peasant masses.

Depriving the landlord of a part of the land rent and demanding fair terms from merchants and moneylenders can be achieved only if the peasant masses are well organized, united and have a high level of political consciousness.

In a typical farming barrio, the majority of the population are poor and lower-middle peasants (most tenants belong to these strata). On this basis, the peasant organizing committee plus the other people's organizing committees can have their way through the barrio councils of the reactionary government. Using the tactics of the united front, peasant organizing committees can enhance their strength.

The peasant organizing committees can actually control the barangay councils or any legal organization for purposes of holding public meetings favorable to the peasant masses and for revolutionary dual tactics in the face of the enemy. In effect, they can function as the embryo of the people's governmental authority on their own strength, supplemented with cooperation of their allies who are often very much their own relatives and personal friends.

The fourth step in organizing the barrio people is to fully organize the basic mass organizations. It would

seem as if the people's organizing committees and groups are a skeleton taking full flesh. All members are enlisted and they elect the leading committees of their respective mass organizations. The peasant association includes mainly the poor and middle peasants.

Of course, like the antecedent organizing committees, the basic mass organizations cannot be fully organized all at the same time, say in one day or one night. There is the law of uneven development and differences of conditions. But we must strive that in one definite period in a barrio or group of barrios, all the basic mass organizations are fully organized. This requires planning and consistent work.

The fascist enemy has been more alert to peasant associations and far more intolerant towards them than the other mass organizations. We must be flexible in adopting legal forms for the peasant associations. We must use different names for them in different barrios. In handling them for the revolutionary cause, we must be good at combining illegal and legal methods. There must be open legal activities and clandestine illegal activities.

We should be fully aware of our strength and we should not overstep it. It is understandable if, for considerable period of time in a given group of barrios, the antifeudal movement is capable only of effecting rent reduction and other agrarian reforms in the manner that we have described in discussing the third step.

While experience has shown that mass organizations other than the peasant association are less suspected and less subjected to evil measures by the enemy, we must take the same precautions that we take in having the peasant association. Whenever the enemy comes to know that a mass organization is led by the Party, it is liable to be subjected to the most vicious attacks.

Even when we are still at the second step of organizing the people in a barrio, we should start to carry out Marxist ideological instruction and recruit into the Party the most advanced elements among the mass activists so that by the time we reach the third or fourth step, we shall have been able to establish the local party branch in the barrio, with a group in every sitio and major part of the barrio center. At the fourth step, we shall also have Party groups within the basic mass organizations.

Upon the establishment of the basic mass organizations and the local Party branch, it becomes possible to establish the barrio revolutionary committee as the organ of democratic political power. It shall simply be a matter of putting together the representatives of the Party, the basic masses and allied forces.

In our old areas where the barrio organizing committees are reliable and are of sound character, we should work as fast as possible for their dissolution by establishing the basic mass organizations, the local Party branch and the organ of democratic political power. We can speak of working fast here, at least faster than in new areas, because we have known the people and worked with them long enough.

When the basic mass organizations flourish, the revolutionary mass movement can make great strides. Revolutionary studies and propaganda become more widespread and vigorous than before. Land reform becomes firm. The able bodied volunteers from every mass organization can be formed into the local militia and given military training and duties.

The campaign for higher production becomes effective. Every mass organization has a special agricultural plot or cottage enterprise to support the revolution. Cultural activities blossom and raise the people's fighting spirit against the enemy. Health work is also attended to on a mass scale.

Under these circumstances, the foundation for greater military victories by the New People's Army is laid. The people's fighting spirit is ever rising. There is abundant material support for the revolutionary armed struggle because of land reform, higher production and special production. The local militia are a powerful reserve and auxiliary force of the people's army. the Party becomes will-rooted in the localities by taking into its ranks the most advanced local activists.

4. Further strengthen the people's army and carry forward the revolutionary armed struggle!

We must further strengthen the new People's Army as the main form of organization under the leadership of the Party and carry forward the revolutionary armed struggle as the main form of our people's struggle. We have established a good basis for the further strengthening of the New People's Army.

Our Red fighters have a high level of political consciousness and are closely linked with the masses. Every squad has a party group within it and oftentimes the majority of the Red fighters are Party members. The Party branch is at presently based on the platoon.

The people's army has grown in rifle strength from early 1969 to the eve of fascist martial rule and from the latter time to the present. What it is now in armed strength is a far cry from the 35 rifles and handguns that it started

with. The people's army now has guerrilla forces in all regions outside Manila-Rizal and has total of twenty guerrilla fronts.

Each regional army organization is led by a regional Party committee. The nationwide expansion of the people's army under the direction of the Central Committee is a far cry from its beginnings in the second district of Tarlac.

Our army has gained invaluable experience and has become tempered. It has undergone the acid test of massive and prolonged enemy campaigns. We recall Tarlac of 1969-71, Isabela of 1972-73, Sorsogon of 1974-75 and Aurora of 1975. At the peak of his campaigns, the enemy always employs a number of troops more than a hundred times bigger than ours, with the support of paramilitary forces, heavy weapons and the most modern means of communications and air and land transport.

Our heroic Red fighters and party cadres together with the masses have overcome tremendous odds. Despite all the enemy campaigns, marked by the most wicked forms of "population control," the people's army has on the whole grown in armed strength. We have suffered some setbacks. There is not a single regional army organization which has not suffered serious setbacks at varying times. But the expansion, shifting and recoveries by our guerrilla forces have more than compensated for the losses.

Because of the nationwide expansion of the people's army, the enemy cannot concentrate his combat troops on one region without risking the advance of our forces in other regions. So far, it has not had the pleasure of inflicting a total or

strategically decisive defeat on all our forces in any single region. Within a region, the existence of several guerrilla fronts tend to weaken the enemy campaign whether directed against all or any of these.

Despite all our achievements in building the people's army, our overall armed strength is still so small in comparison to that of the enemy who is several hundreds of times stronger. The course of historical development and the current balance of forces, particularly our level of armed strength, determine the mode of our warfare, which is guerrilla warfare.

There is no course for us but to grow in strength step by step. Our revolutionary armed struggle is just and enjoys abundant support from the people. So long as we adhere to a correct strategy and tactics, we shall grow from small and weak to big and strong. To repeat, we shall do so step by step.

Our people's war is protracted. It shall take a long period of time to change the balance of forces between us and the enemy. We must recognize further that at the back of the local reactionaries is US imperialism is at the moment hardening its position in the Philippines precisely as a result of its defeats elsewhere and, for a long time to come, only a deepgoing people's war can strike effectively at its foothold.

Friendly forces abroad cannot extend military assistance to us as much as we may need or wish. We must reconcile ourselves to the irony that when we need such assistance most it is most difficult for us to get it. The single imperialist power dominating the country is not yet an easy pushover in terms of the next few years, and his prior hold on our small archipelagic country is a serious factor to contend with.

We have to maintain a high degree of self-reliance in our people's war. We must rely on ourselves most certainly to a degree higher than many revolutionary armed movements abroad. There is no course for us but to always raise our determination to get all that we need for the armed struggle from our people and from the enemy himself in the battlefield.

Our strategic line in our people's war is to encircle the cities from the countryside until such time that we become capable of moving on the cities from stable revolutionary bases in the countryside. For a long time, we have to develop guerrilla warfare on a nationwide scale so as to convert into our advantage the disadvantage of fighting in a small archipelagic country, whose countryside is so vast in relation to the cities but fragmented into so many islands.

We are at the stage of the strategic defensive and we are precisely at its early substage of developing guerrilla warfare from almost nothing. From almost nothing because of the revisionist line of the Lavas and Tarucs that threw away all previous revolutionary gains of the people.

We have only to look at how much armed strength we have in each of the eight regions outside Manila-Rizal to know the magnitude of hard work that we have to do to further increase our squads and platoons. Again it shall take another magnitude of hard work to advance from the present phase of squads and platoons.

In the whole country or in an entire region, we are on the strategic defensive in the face of the large enemy

forces encircling us. But we are capable of tactical offensives. In parts and parts of the countryside, we can achieve local superiority. At a given moment and in a limited area, we can put a small enemy unit in the tightest bag and crush it.

We must launch tactical offensives as the most essential content of our strategic defense. We simply refuse to engage our small forces in any strategically decisive engagement with the far larger forces of the enemy. Not in any region or guerrilla front should this happen. Knowing that large forces of the enemy is divisible, as everything is from a Marxist viewpoint, we must take the initiative of maneuvering the enemy to divide his forces and then concentrating our small forces at only that part of the enemy which we are sure of wiping out at a given place and time.

We should accumulate the small victories from our ambushes and raids. Over a period of time, such victories should give birth to more guerrilla squads and platoons. Then our capacity to destroy the enemy will increase. The highest mark of initiative in our guerrilla warfare is annihilating the enemy and capturing his weapons. We should not waste our precious limited ammunition and we should plan well the disposition and intensity of our lines of fire on a given target. There is no point in killing enemy troops if it is not in the course of depriving them of the weapons which they would refuse to yield.

We must learn well the rudimentary tactics of guerrilla warfare. We disperse to do propaganda and organizational work among the masses. We concentrate a superior force to destroy the enemy. We shift or circle round to avoid a superior enemy force, learn more about it through the masses and through our own reconnaissance and move to an advantageous position politically and militarily.

We can apply our guerrilla tactics well only if we have the wide and deep organized support of the people and we have eliminated the enemy informers and bad elements who are incorrigible. With organized masses screening out the enemy, rendering him blind and deaf, we can foil his attempt to concentrate his forces on our small forces. Even when he is still preparing to attack us, we can learn through the masses his strength and movements and as a result we can act appropriately.

When the enemy is on some short-term offensive and wants to move in on us in superior force, we must deprive him of a target and we let him punch the air and thereby exhaust himself. We can remain on the active side either by laying an ambush on a weak part of the enemy disposition, attacking the enemy in an entirely different area or simply going elsewhere to do mass work. We should never accept or undertake any battle that we are not sure of winning. We may not be able to smash an enemy offensive but certainly we can frustrate it.

In all our experience, it is the massive and prolonged army campaigns, marked by forced mass evacuation and all kinds of barbarities, that have been our most outstanding problem in the battlefield. The enemy has launched such campaigns in areas where we are relatively strong over a wide area. At the early stage of such enemy campaigns, when enemy control is not yet tight, we must make him pay as much of a heavy price as we can exact from him, without prejudice to the prompt shifting of our main guerrilla forces to an alternative guerrilla front or area.

Enemy campaigns, whether short-term or protracted, are very costly to the enemy. That is why the military budget of the fascist dictatorship keeps on rising. Repeatedly frustrating them and depriving them of a target will undermine the resources of the reactionary government and also undermine the morale of enemy troops who also suffer some deprivations for nothing.

There is nothing wrong about shifting when faced with enemy forces ten or a hundred times stronger. This is neither accepting defeat nor flightism. This is preserving our forces to destroy the enemy another day. The areas that adjoin or are a short leap from the area being encircled by the enemy and under his heavy concentration are also fertile soil for revolution. Besides, we can always recover any "lost" area after sometime.

So as not to be merely forced to shift to an uncertain destination by an enemy campaign, we should be prepared long beforehand for such an enemy campaign by developing alternate guerrilla fronts and by deploying propaganda teams in areas where guerrilla warfare is to be developed from scratch or is to arise upon the shifting of guerrilla forces from elsewhere.

The unpopulated forest areas are good passageways and offer good points for schooling and temporary retreats. But to simply wait out a massive and prolonged enemy campaign of about one year to two years in the forests is to fall for the siege tactics of the enemy. It is also artificial to bring a considerable number of unarmed masses with you in this kind of retreat. Movement will be hampered. Food will soon run out and isolated kaingings are easily detected by the enemy.

When the masses are being forced to evacuate, legal mass struggle should be launched to oppose and stop the evacuation. Even when the forced mass evacuation is already done, these legal mass struggles can go on for the restitution of damage to their crops and homes, for better treatment and rationing at evacuation centers and for their early return to their evacuated homes.

Some of the masses or selected families can also be directed by us to shift mainly on their own and by different ways to the area where we are shifting. There are many of those who might have relatives and friends there. Or there are public lands there which they can open like other people do.

Whenever the time comes for us to recover an area previously abandoned by us and then abandoned by the enemy, we must disarm the "home defense units" left by the enemy and increase the weaponry of the people's army. We must clean up those who have blood debts. And we must be alert for spies planted in the midst of the masses.

We have insisted that for a start in every region we must develop our guerrilla fronts on favorable terrain, that is to say, forested, mountainous and hilly terrain with population. It is in this kind of terrain where enemy rule and influence are usually weak and where we can establish our guerrilla bases within the shortest possible time at this stage. Here we not only have a wide area for maneuver but also easily achieve depth in our maneuvers. Here we can best apply the tactics of "luring in" the enemy. He cannot come in without first exposing himself and alerting us. It would be easy for us to be on the look-out and prepare for his coming.

We have also directed that for a start in a region, two or three guerrilla fronts on such a terrain should be established. We have been concerned with the possible dissipation of our limited Party cadres and resources by a previous current that we should have a guerrilla force in every province. But any regional Party organization can have more than two or three guerrilla front, whenever development and conditions permit.

While we must take advantage of the most favorable terrain for our guerrilla warfare, we must strive to move forward from the mountain to the plains and coordinate the revolutionary forces in the mountains and the plains as well as those in the barrios and in the towns. In dealing with the islands, we should attend to the major islands first and then the minor ones.

This early, we must also pay attention to the coastal areas. This is important inasmuch as we are an archipelagic country.

Conditions are not yet ripe for having a well-known central revolutionary base, where the Central Committee of the Party and the general headquarter of the New People's Army are seated. We should keep the enemy guessing and ignorant where our principal leaders are in the countryside. But certainly at this stage, we should be firmly taking the steps towards creating such a base in the best possible location.

The emergence of the central revolutionary base presupposes the achievement of a higher stage in our people's war and takes into consideration the development of nationwide guerrilla warfare and international developments involving US imperialism. We still have a long road to traverse in this regard. Of all the regional Party and army organizations, the most directly concerned in bringing about the conditions for the emergence of the central revolutionary base are Northwest Luzon, Northeast Luzon and Central Luzon.

It remains the long-term strategic task of the revolutionary forces of Luzon to destroy the main forces of the enemy. The day is certain to come when the forces from the north and south of Luzon will converge on Manila-Rizal in a general offensive. It also remains the long-term strategic task of the revolutionary forces of Mindanao and the Visayas to draw the forces of the enemy and disperse them.

At certain times, the bulk of enemy forces can be drawn to Mindanao. The area for maneuver for us here is as wide as that in the three regions north of Manila-Rizal; and the people's army can either take advantage of or coordinate its efforts with the resistance of Bangsa Moro Army, if integration of the latter is not possible.

We have repeatedly pointed to the present low level of armed strength of the New People's Army. To amplify this strength, we must give full play to the participation of the people in the revolutionary armed struggle. We should not limit this participation to merely providing for the material needs of the full-time Red fighters and watching out for the enemy.

We must give political-military training to as many able-bodied men and women from the mass organizations and from time to time get the required number of volunteers from them to participate in well-planned military actions where their inferior weapons can blend with more advanced weapons of the full-time Red fighters. In the hands of some many people, inferior weapons can proved to be superior and yet we make sure that at the core of

such weapons as bolos, spears, bows and arrows and homemade explosives are good guns.

When the people's combative spirit is kept high by continuous political education and military training, they will make do with any weapon and will use every trick and ruse to disarm the enemy even with bare hands. The most important thing is the people's revolutionary determination and wisdom. In the future, popular uprising or insurrections will arise over extensive areas.

5. Build the revolutionary mass movement in the cities!

We must build the revolutionary mass movement in the cities by developing the trade unions, the community organizations, school organizations and others and engaging them in a broad democratic movement that is distinctly antifascist and anti-imperialist, a movement sympathetic to and supportive of the distinctly antifeudal movement in the countryside.

We must pay principal attention to the masses of workers and other urban poor. We must get the workers mainly through their workplaces and trade unions and also through the communities, where they are linked with other urban poor. We must also pay attention to the urban petty bourgeoisie, especially the student masses and their teachers.

In undertaking an open democratic movement in the cities, we can invoke the very laws of the reactionary state which contain hypocritical terms and reform concessions just to enable us to go into the midst of the masses. Among the masses, we can create a revolutionary underground and transform legal organizations or build new ones that can militantly yet legally carry forward the national-democratic line step by step.

Combining legal and illegal methods, we can develop the revolutionary mass movement in the cities. Our main tactic is to turn the table against the enemy or to use another metaphor, to take the enemy's fortress from within by stratagem (but preparations for this are protracted and cannot be separated from the progress of the revolutionary armed struggle in the countryside).

The open and legal democratic mass movement cannot be firm, vigorous and will directed without the illegal party at the core. The Party as an underground force must be the backbone of this movement. It must be the guide, nurturing the movement at every step and seeing to it that the next step is taken upon the ripening of conditions for it.

As in the countryside, there is nothing discouraging about the smallness of the party amidst the large masses in the cities. So long as the mass movement develops, activists emerge and make themselves available for recruitment into the Party. Thus, the Party is strengthened to achieve more and assume greater tasks.

It is only through a reinvigorated mass movement that we can raise the new forces to tackle the new situation created by fascist martial rule. There is no other way to solve such problems as the constrictions and unhealthy conspiratorial tendencies of a narrow underground and the enemy's cunning in looking out for the Party by merely tailing known activists of days before martial rule.

In this time of severe economic crisis, the masses of workers are stirring and pushing forward their economic struggle. We must get into this economic struggle and raise it to the level of the political struggle so that the entire working class will not only be able to fight most effectively for its own interests but also link itself fully with the rest of the people in the powerful flow of the of the people's democratic revolution.

There are immediate conditions and issues which make easy the transformation of the economic struggle into a political struggle. As previously pointed out, the wage and living conditions of the workers are extremely pushed down and benefits put into law by virtue of several decades of workers' struggle have been drastically reduced by the fascist dictator. And to top these all, the workers are prohibited from exercising their right to strike in most enterprises just because they are categorized as "vital industries" and "export industries" by the fascist dictatorship. In the main, these are enterprises owned by US and other monopoly capitalists and by the big comprador bourgeoisie and big landlords.

Whenever the employer gets wind of a plan among the workers to make a mass petition for the improvement of their conditions, the easiest thing for him to do is to make "preventive suspensions" and to call on the troops and police to show up and bully the workers. Of course, when the strike, slowdown, sitdown or any mass protest action is already on, the armed minions of fascism show up to make arrests and make all sound and fury about "subversives," "economic sabotage" and "national discipline."

The masses of workers have experienced the right to strike in times far better than the present. Their present experience of intensified oppression and exploitation is extremely intolerable to them. Thus, no amount of fascist

intimidation has deterred them from mass protest actions. These have already developed into concerted strikes and street demonstrations.

We must promote the strike movement and must make it so widespread and so intense to demonstrate to the entire nation and people that the fascist ruling clique and big bourgeoisie are so puny and weak and so rotten to the core. We must promote the economic strikes and transform them into political strikes and political demonstrations. We must hit the big bourgeoisie (and foreign monopoly capitalists and the comprador big bourgeoisie) the hardest. The rate of exploitation is highest in their enterprises.

We are presently at the stage of making the economic strikes more widespread. Even at this stage, the political dimension of such strikes is already coming into the force. We must make solid preparations to bring great multitudes of workers to the streets and plazas for political demonstrations.

In the face of fascist martial rule, yellow labor leaders have become more discredited than ever. The top labor aristocrats of the country have blatantly placed themselves in the payroll of the fascist dictatorship under the so-called Trade Union Congress of the Philippines. Others have been so cowed and discouraged by anti-union restrictions that they have turned to other occupations.

The trade union movement has become more than ever a fertile ground for the revolutionary work of the Party. The masses of workers are already aware that when the Party is in their midst their economic struggle becomes resolute and militant and they become equipped with a profound political understanding of their situation and with a wide range of tactics.

Our propaganda has had some effects. Normally, it should outstrip our organizational work. But our propaganda and prestige have too far outstripped what solid results there should be for our organizational work. We should solve the problem not by reducing our propaganda. On the other hand, we should ceaselessly increase and amplify it. We should intensify not only our written propaganda of a general character but also all forms of verbal and nonverbal agitation suited to the most specific conditions. But we must harvest the crop of propaganda and agitation.

We must conduct organizational work among the workers more vigorously than ever before in conjunction with our propaganda and agitation. Since long before the fascist rule, the Party has devised the workers' organizing committee as an underground force for organizational expansion among the workers. But learning from experience in the countryside, specifically in connection with organizing a trade union where there is none yet, we do not immediately form this committee from out of those workers whom we meet at the beginning.

We can go through a process akin to that in organizing the present masses. First step is to organize as a matter of expediency the workers' liaison group from out of those workers with whom we can have relations at the beginning. Second step is for members of this secret group to introduce to us more workers, coming from every major part of an enterprise, so that we can form a secret organizing group in every major part of the enterprise.

Third step is for us to draw representatives or the best elements from the organizing group to form the workers' organizing committee. At every step, we must deepen our social investigation and provide political education and appropriate instructions to the workers that we come into contact with and organize.

The workers' organizing committee retains the organizing groups as its subsidiaries and improves their composition whenever necessary. By the time that the committee is established, it shall have been ready to draw up the list of workers' demands to which the majority of the workers are to be won over before the employers and his agents get wind of it. It takes only one, two or three capable party cadres to work with the committee.

The workers' organizing committee can be formed ahead of the workers' organizing group only in cases where we are certain right away that reliable and capable members are on hand at the beginning at least for honest trade union work. Such cases occur whether the objective is to form a trade union where there is none, to transform an already existing one or to put up one trade union against a thoroughly discredited one.

In any case, the workers' organizing committee and its organizing groups are a good means for giving way to the emergence of worker activists within them and outside them.

The process of winning over the majority of workers to a list of union demands, creating the militant unity necessary to pursue such demands and developing the political consciousness of the worker masses are conditions for the emergence of a considerable number of worker activists.

Even only at the stage of the workers' organizing committee and organizing groups, our Party cadres should draw into the Party the advanced elements from the ranks of worker activists. Those who are through with the

mass course on the trade union work and the national-democratic revolution can be immediately introduced to Marxism, their very own class ideology to which they are very receptive.

The ideological, political and organizational work of the Party branch and the groups under it in the enterprise is the best guarantee that revolutionary politics is in command of trade union work. The Party branch forms and directs the party groups embedded in the leadership of the trade union.

The workers' organizing committee and its organizing groups are dissolvable upon the establishment of the party branch and groups within the enterprise and the absorption of all the workers activists into the structure of the trade union. The organizing groups can be converted into group stewards and certainly a number of their members can qualify to be members of the Party groups. More and more workers can be put into study circles organized by the Party.

It is necessary for some of our Party cadres to draw salaries and allowances from trade unions so as to devote their full time to trade union and political work. But party members should not monopolize the high posts in the trade union; and the members of the secretariat of the Party branch should not necessarily become the highest leaders of the trade union. We must allow the democratic broadness of the trade union; there can be good union leaders who cannot yet comply with the requirements of Party membership. And moreover, we do not want to let the enemy cripple the Party branch by simply clamping down on the trade union or its open leadership.

In further consideration of tactics in the face of the fascist enemy, trade unions under the effective leadership of the Party should not be replaced under only one chose legal labor federation. This is to prevent the enemy from singling out one nest for attack. Our trade unions can variably be independent or members of various labor federations. We must determine the best possible status of each trade union.

The Party secretly links and coordinates all our trade unions. Our "independent" unions can retain more income from membership dues and are somewhat saved from control by the reactionary trade union leaders. But when members of different labor federations, our unions have the advantage of enjoying close relations with other unions which the party can gradually get into.

The Party branch in an enterprise should see to it that Party members and other worker activists, with the help of the mass of their workers, do systematic revolutionary work in the communities. We must expand the workers' revolutionary movement by promoting contracts among workers of various enterprises not only within labor federations, along industrial lines or through factory areas but also through the communities.

In communities, workers from all kinds of enterprises reside. The workers already organized and politicized by us can form secret study circles and work closely in community work with other workers. The result is that the latter will bring us to so many more enterprises. Our Party cadres should take firm hold of this possibility for expansion.

In community work, we must rely mainly on the masses of workers and other urban poor. They compose the majority of the people in most communities in the cities. If we place the focus on them in establishing the community organizing committees and either transforming the previously established mass organizations where they predominate or building new mass organizations, especially where there are none yet, it becomes relatively easy to strike roots in the community and reach the youth, women and other sections of the community.

We must consign to a secondary position the old pattern of sending youth activists, mainly student activists, into urban poor communities and then letting them deal mainly with the youth in the community. We must advance from that situation before fascist martial rule in which there were more youth and student youth organizations than workers' organizations under our direction. We do not wish to diminish youth organizing and discourage activists from schools from participating in local community work. But we wish to give full play to the workers' role not only in trade union affairs but also in community affairs.

The community organizing committee can be immediately formed when we rely on workers or a combination of workers and youth who are themselves residents of the community and have proven to be good activists elsewhere. Of course, we assume that they are led by Party cadres. Then, community organizing groups can be formed to cover the various parts of the community.

The community organizing committee should continuously conduct social investigation and expand its contacts to be able to do well its work at every step. Since there are mass organizations existing prior to our organizational work, the community organizing committee can draw activists from these to form the community organizing groups. These organizations usually include the neighborhood associations, youth clubs, women's

associations, squatters' organizations, athletic clubs, groups of professionals, civic clubs, regional or provincial groups and the like.

The advantage in drawing activists from already existing organizations is that they are closely related to the people in the community and that we can cover effectively not only the parts of the community but also the already existing mass organizations. Though we can form new mass organizations with different names in different communities, there is a decided advantage, especially under conditions of fascist martial rule, to make use of the legality of already existing mass organizations and engage the soonest in activities by which we can go deep among the masses and gradually raise their political consciousness.

Because we rely mainly on the masses of workers and other urban poor and we take up their majority interests, it is not too difficult to transform certain already existing mass organizations. We develop a Party group within each of them and make political advances step by step. On this basis, we can maneuver or overwhelm even the "barangay councils" or "kabataang barangay" and other reactionary organs or institutions into becoming fora or channels for our revolutionary propaganda.

At every stage of the work of the community organizing committee and its organizing groups, we can draw into the Party the most advanced elements from the ranks of the revolutionary activists. In due time, the community organizing committee and its organizing groups can be dissolved because a Party branch has been established in the community and in the legal mass organizations. Mass work and party work can so advance in the communities that the Party branch will be based eventually on the street.

It is a matter of course that the party should be vigilant and look after its security all the time and everywhere, especially in the cities where enemy control and surveillance are tighter than in the countryside. But the Party should pay special attention to securing itself from infiltration by antisocial lumpen-proletarian elements though this be covered by our political work.

The urban petty bourgeoisie is a social stratum whose members are usually self-centered and dispersed. But their children are concentrated in universities and high schools and here they are receptive to revolutionary propaganda. The schools therefore merit the conscientious attention of the Party. These are next in importance to the factories and the urban poor communities.

The student masses and their teachers are an important force in bringing the intelligentsia and the entire urban petty bourgeoisie to the side of the revolution. They are the section of the urban petty bourgeoisie which has the most revolutionary potential. This fact has been proven repeatedly in our history; and the first quarter storm of 1970 and succeeding developments prove it. Students continue to join today's workers' struggles.

Quite a number of students and their teachers have gone so far as to strive remolding their outlook, engage deeply in revolutionary work and join the Party. Other students do not go as far but they accept the general line of the Party and spread this to the ranks of the petty producers and the professionals. The revolutionary fervor of the student masses could be such that even some children of the exploiting classes who are their schoolmates become attracted to the revolutionary movement.

In the course of community work, the owners of small stores and shops, professionals and white-collar employees are reached by our propaganda. Though they can render some service to the revolutionary movement, they are not as important as the student masses and teachers who are concentrated in great numbers in schools, are very capable of propaganda work and mass actions and are willing to coordinate their activities with the masses of workers.

The national-democratic organizations of the youth before fascist martial rule have done a great service to the revolutionary cause. Their work has been so fruitful in some schools and communities that there are now Party branches continuing revolutionary underground work here.

In schools where there are yet no party branch and no Party-led mass organization, Party cadres should establish school organizing committees and organizing groups to develop the initial activists from among the students, teachers and other school personnel, push for the establishment of genuine student governments and publications, promote revolutionary ideas in old student organizations or build new ones as means of promoting such ideas and help unions among teachers and other school personnel.

Student activists developed by the school organizing committee and organizing groups should be directed to create as many secret study circles as they can among friends and classmates; and teacher activists should do likewise among co-employees, students and friends. The efficacy of their ideological and propaganda work should

in due time result in political mass actions.

The student masses, teachers and other school personnel should link the issues on the campus with the deteriorating conditions of society in general. The progressive students of the University of the Philippines are showing the way to fight the Marcos fascist dictatorship, how to oppose antinational, antidemocratic policies and actions. They have started to make mass protests of their own and join those of the workers.

Even only at the stage of the school organizing committee and organizing groups, we can start to draw into the Party the most advanced elements from the ranks of the school activists. Eventually the Party branch should emerge in the school, and party groups in the various parts of the school as well as in the mass organizations there. In large universities, it is possible for a section committee of the Party to lead so many party branches that are based on the colleges.

We should continue carrying out the policy of deploying student activists for social investigation and mass work in factories and communities accessible to them. We should promote the closest links between the worker and student activists in the cities so that concerted mass actions of the worker masses and student masses will become possible.

The development of the democratic movement in Manila-Rizal and other urban areas constitutes powerful political support to the revolutionary struggle in the countryside. The people in the entire country become aroused and the enemy is shaken within his fortress.

The people in the cities should realize that the long-term development of the underground there and the steady growth of political mass actions and a preparation for the final day of reckoning for the ruling system, when their general uprising will come into coordination with the general offensive of the people's army. The Party should promote this revolutionary thinking and dispel notions that the people's army should now send its small but growing forces to the cities for some spectacular actions.

There are other kinds of support from the cities for the revolutionary struggle in the countryside. The Party organization in the cities can systematically dispatch cadres who still have legal status or who no longer have this to the countryside. Cadres of worker status or of student background can be sent to their native areas or where they are most needed. Funds, medicine, military equipment, medical equipment, communications equipment, clothes, revolutionary publications and other useful materials can also be collected and sent.

It is inevitable at the moment for our communication to pass through certain cities. For instance, communications between the Visayas and Mindanao on the one hand and the central leadership of the Party cannot bypass Manila-Rizal. There should be a reliable corps of couriers who can travel legally between the cities and the countryside and from one region to another.

There should be coordination between the revolutionary struggle in the cities and that in the countryside on so many things. The Party is the coordinator and should have special organs to attend to the requirements of coordination.

6. Realize a broad antifascist, antifeudal and anti-imperialist united front!

We must realize a broad antifascist, antifeudal and antiimperialist united front under the leadership of the working class through the its political party. As earlier pointed out, the foundation of this united front policy is the basic alliance of the working class and the peasantry.

Upon this foundation, we win over the urban petty bourgeoisie principally and the national bourgeoisie secondarily as additional allies. At the same time, we note well and take advantage of the splits among the reactionaries, the comprador big bourgeoisie and landlords who are now divided between the pro-Marcos and anti-Marcos sides.

The toiling masses of workers and peasants compose the overwhelming majority of the national population and, being the most oppressed and exploited, they are the most interested in a comprehensive antifascist, antifeudal and anti-imperialist movement. They constitute the main force of the united front. Only with such a force can we implement the policy of uniting the many to oppose the few and isolate and destroy the enemy.

Going deep among the workers and also among the peasants, the party links and coordinates both classes for a united revolutionary struggle. At the stage of the national democratic revolution, when armed struggle is the main form of struggle, it is of the highest importance that the party in representation of the working class must do painstaking mass work among the peasants and build a peasant army.

It does not suffice to say that the peasantry is the closest and most reliable ally of the working class. Further

analysis is required for the concrete application of the united front in the countryside. The peasantry is divided into three strata with various political attitudes on the basis of their economic status.

We must develop the antifeudal united front in the countryside. We must rely mainly on the poor peasants, win over the middle peasants and neutralize the rich peasants to oppose the evil landlord gentry. When we speak of the peasantry as the closest ally of the working class, we refer essentially to the poor peasants and middle peasants.

The barrio organizing committee was originally conceived as an organ of expansion and as the embryo of local people's government along the line of the united front. Now that we are laying it aside, it does not mean that we are dispensing with united front work in the barrios. We simply want to strengthen the poor peasants and lower-middle peasants together in their own mass organization and not simply mix them up with the rich peasants and other unstable elements in a committee.

Carrying out the united front policy and employing its tactics, we must deal properly with all those entities outside the peasant movement. We must step by step win over the entirety of the middle peasants into the association, we must deal with them properly as individuals or groups and still try to gain some support and cooperation from them.

The rich peasants are not so much interested in the antifeudal movement. But they resent the economic crisis, the arbitrariness of the fascist dictatorship and the increasing taxes and have some patriotic feelings. When the revolutionary peasant movement is strong and the people's army is around, they are quite a hospitable lot and may even offer to join the peasant association. It is upon the rise of reaction that their reactionary aspect comes to the fore.

There are usually traditional and legal organizations where peasants of all strata are mixed up. We cannot summarily ban or ignore these. We must study these carefully and apply the united front policy to make them truly beneficial to the poor and lower-middle peasants or helpful to the revolutionary struggle.

There are such associations or groupings as the elders' councils, the usually informal mutual aid and labor exchange groups, irrigation associations, farm workers' groups cooperatives, youth clubs, athletic teams, carpenters' groups, the parents-teachers association, 4-H club, women's club, religious sects and so on and so forth.

Even such tools of the reactionary government as the barrio or "barangay council", "kabataang barangay", "samahang nayon" and at certain times the rural police, ronda or "home defense" unit may be neutralized, transformed or broken up, depending on the circumstances. The names of these associations can often be used for revolutionary dual tactics specifically for covering up what is revolutionary.

In the countryside, there are many other kinds of possible allies. There are the teachers and other professionals, the small and middle merchants and entrepreneurs, certain relatively big businessmen and some enlightened landlords. The teachers and professionals are good medium for spreading propaganda in the towns. Doctors and nurses can give much-needed medical services and medicine. The businessman and enlightened landlords pay taxes or give contributions and sometimes provide facilities to us.

When conditions are ripe, we must establish the organ of democratic political power along the line of the united front. We have already pointed out that the full establishment of the basic mass organizations in the barrio is the precondition for the establishment of the barrio revolutionary committee. In the period before the establishment of the barrio revolutionary committee, the functions of local self-government can be performed with the peasant organizing committee or the leading committee of the fully-organized peasant association hewing to the party's united front policy. In the cities, we must continue the policy of winning the support of the student masses and their teachers by way of reaching and winning over the entire urban petty bourgeoisie. Upon the success of this policy, we can also win over the national bourgeoisie as they become aware that a strong anti-imperialist movement is advocating independence and national industrialization.

Elements of the national bourgeoisie in areas within the jurisdiction of the people's army have extended support to us. In the cities, there are also members of the national bourgeoisie who have extended support to us, especially through the student and youth movement.

In the principal conservative and reactionary organizations in the country, best exemplified by the political parties like the now dormant Nacionalista and Liberal parties, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie have been mere tails of the ruling classes, the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class.

This is true even in professional and civic organizations at the municipal, provincial and national levels. In the

chambers of commerce and industry, the national bourgeoisie are also reduced to being mere tails of the big bourgeoisie and big landlords. We must form groups within these associations to consolidate the ranks of the national bourgeoisie are also reduced to being mere tails of the big bourgeoisie and big landlords. We must form groups within these associations to consolidate the ranks of the national bourgeoisie and promote the national and democratic line.

The Preparatory Commission of the National Democratic Front and the regional united front commissions have projected and broadcast our united front policy; have succeeded in winning over groups and personalities who take the stand of the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie and have established progressive underground groups, called national-democratic cell, within the most reactionary institutions and organizations. Some of these groups have helped us reach the basic masses that would otherwise be difficult to reach.

The aforesaid commissions have the special task of winning over the middle forces of the revolutionary cause and bringing to the main organization of the party concrete assistance in reaching the basic forces of the revolution. Legal mass organizations and mass activities of a national democratic character should be well undertaken. Close attention must be paid to this urgent task.

The door continues to be open widely for cooperation with those who are against the Marcos fascist dictatorship who may vary in degree of anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism. We must unite with them but we must maintain our independence and initiative and we struggle with them on just grounds and with restraint all for the purpose of winning the hearts and minds of the people and advancing the revolutionary struggle.

The Lava revisionist renegades have long excluded themselves from the united front. By surrendering to the Marcos fascist dictatorship and actively participating in vicious counterrevolutionary actions, this handful of revisionist fascist criminals have become totally discredited even in the few small areas which they once boasted of as their bailiwicks. The Manglapus group, fancying itself as the "social democratic party", has also excluded itself from the united front by being no more than a tool of the Central Intelligence Agency.

As it is now taking shape, the main split among the reactionaries is between the Marcos fascist gang and an alliance ostensibly led by Macapagal. Though Marcos has a sizeable number of agents within the interim national assembly and has limited its authority, especially under fascist martial rule, he refuses to convene it and intends to explicitly abolish it because he is afraid that it would become a forum for popular opposition.

Aware of Marcos' scheme, especially with Imelda already emerging as second-in-command and successor, Macapagal has called on the officers of the reactionary armed forces to make a counter coup and rule for a short period to pave the way for the convening of the interim national assembly. Obviously, he has already gotten the assurance of US imperialism that he can openly lead the opposition loyal to the ruling system. The pushing out of certain inside men of the CIA from Marcos ranks bears watching.

US imperialism intends to be aggrandized, whichever direction events may take in the struggle between the Marcos and Macapagal factions. This single dominant power in the country wants two dogs to compete for the same reactionary purposes. The only difference there is from reactionary competitions before martial rule is the increasingly conspicuous role of the reactionary armed forces.

Under the circumstances, with both reactionary factions competing for the good graces of US imperialism, it is clear that we become more determined to carry forward the national-democratic line against fascism, feudalism and imperialism and carry out the armed struggle relentlessly. As revolutionaries, we do not want to get bogged down in debates whether the Marcos constitution or the 1935 constitution is to be promoted. The point is to fight well the Marcos fascist dictatorship and the forces behind it and in the process carry the revolution forward.

A coup d'etat led by reactionary military officers can be as bad as or worse than the present Marcos fascist dictatorship even if it promises to pave the way for the interim national assembly. However, there is also the possibility that the coup d'etat will bring to power a civilian faction and really allows it to reverse Marcos' fascist excesses. We must be prepared for every possibility.

We must always remember that our united front work is in support of the revolutionary armed struggle. We must have reliable and long-term allies and we must also have unreliable and short-term allies. The most important thing is that we have allies to be able to reach, arouse, organize and mobilize the millions upon millions of people who are under various influences for the revolutionary cause.

7. Relate the Philippine revolution to the world revolution!

We must relate the Philippine revolution to the world revolution. We are proletarian internationalists. We are

carrying out the Philippine revolution to contribute our own share in the struggle of the world proletariat and the entire mankind to defeat imperialism and bring about the dawn of communism.

We recognize at the same time all anti-imperialist struggles and advances of the revolution in other countries redound to the benefit of the Philippines revolution and favor its advance. These bring about conditions favorable to our revolutionary efforts. We receive powerful political support and boundless inspiration. We learn invaluable lessons. We see in the victorious national-democratic revolutions and socialist revolutions abroad our bright future.

The astounding revolutionary victories of the Indochinese peoples of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos have signaled the irreversible decline of US imperialism in Southeast Asia, in the whole of Asia, in the whole world and in its very homegrounds. We are enthusiastic that the Peoples of small countries can deal so stunning a blow to US imperialism and make so great a contribution to the world revolution.

The stable outposts of anti-imperialism in Southeast Asia have arisen and have raised the banner of socialist revolution and socialist construction. In all unliberated countries in the region, the people are more than ever determined to carry out revolutionary armed struggle against US imperialism and its lackeys.

We are witnessing today the abandonment of the ignominious Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, an outrightly US military instrument, and a retreat into the Association of Southeast Asian Nation. This latter organization no longer flaunt the aggressive power of US imperialism and even denies being an instrument of this superpower. But it admits openly that the three main concerns of its reactionary member governments are to suppress "insurgencies;" promote "peace, freedom and neutrality" and develop "regional economic cooperation. We must not fail to recognize that the main and essential character of the ASEAN is counterrevolutionary even as we observe that this organization reflects a certain trend that is merely the result of the crisis of the world capitalist system, the US imperialist debacle in Indochina and the crisis plaguing each unliberated Southeast Asian country.

Such a trend should remind us the more of our responsibilities as revolutionaries.

In our vicinity are the people of China surging forward in their socialist revolution and socialist construction and standing firmly against the two superpowers. The Korean people are engaged also in socialist revolution and socialist construction in the north and are facing up to US imperialism and its lackeys in the south.

Far and wide, the revolution is rapidly advancing. The people of Asia, Africa and Latin American continue to wage powerful revolutionary movements against imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism. In all other continents, including the homegrounds of US imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism, the people are engaged in revolutionary struggles. Revolution is still the main trend in the world today and Marxist-Leninist parties are steadily forging ahead.

The world revolution is advancing under conditions of intensifying superpower contention, grave crisis of the world capitalist system and the rise of the third world people and countries as the main force of the world anti-imperialist struggle. All basic contradictions are sharpening and all the ingredients of both revolution and war are exhuming.

Despite their off-and-on "peace" and "detente" duets to lull the people of the world, the two superpowers are engaged in an ever-intensifying rivalry for world hegemony and are feverishly making arms expansion and war preparations. They are trying to push each other out and gain an advantage everywhere. It is clear that their imperialist rivalry is the source of the danger of war.

Though the two superpowers are overextending themselves all over the world, Europe is their main bone of contention. Their clashing interests are most concentrated here. War is likely to start here. Troubles are now increasingly erupting here and in its vicinity. Should war break out in that part of the world, the beasts can finish off or weaken each other while we push forward the revolution in our country and in our region.

But while war does not yet break out in Europe, Soviet social-imperialism is trying to penetrate even such a country like the Philippines which US imperialism considers a permanent preserve in this part of the world. Soviet social-imperialism calculates that it must make diplomatic and trade inroads to weaken US imperialism in as many places as possible and push hard its new tsarist ambitions of world hegemony.

US imperialist domination in the Philippines can be removed only by a powerful revolutionary movement. But the Soviet social-imperialists nurture the illusion that someday their long-discredited local agents, the Lava revisionist renegades, will be able to do turns for them and commit far more treachery and mischief than they presently can as shameless tools of the Marcos fascist dictatorship.

Even now, within their narrow circles, the lava revisionist renegades do not tire of talking about getting more help from their imperialist master to do more mischief.

The reason is clear why Soviet social-imperialism even as enemy of US imperialism cannot be our friend in any way. While we must oppose US imperialism, we must be alert to Soviet social-imperialism and frustrate its scheme. We are well past the early sixties when Soviet modern revisionism could still deceive well-intentioned people.

The present crisis of the world capitalist system has been the worst since the end of World War II and continues to deepen and worsen. The inherent law of motion of capitalism, bringing about a crisis of overproduction; the monopolistic competition among capitalist countries, especially the leading imperialist powers; and the reduction of economic territory by revolutions and by the assertion of independence by hard-pressed countries have spelled the present world capitalist crisis.

The imperialists shift the burden of crisis to those whom they can. They do so through accelerated rates of profits on direct investments, usurious loans and unequal trade. The people resist. Even a reactionary government like that of the Philippines, while determined to remain a puppet of US imperialism, has to maneuver for its own sake.

The third world countries have increasingly asserted their independence and demanded a new international economic order in the face of the world capitalist crisis and superpower machinations. Underlying the phenomenon of even reactionary governments posing to assert the independence of their countries is the growth of the revolutionary movement and at the same time the concern of the reactionary leaders that they must lessen or palliate the crisis that threatens them.

It must be made clear to the people that the Marcos fascist dictatorship has broadened the diplomatic and trade relations of the Philippines out of desperation and weakness even as it still clings to US imperialism as its imperialist master. The circumstances in the emergence of better Philippine relations with the Middle East countries and China are clear.

As the fascist dictator claims credit for promoting the US line of "interdependence" in the third world, we must criticize and condemn him for acting as an inveterate agent of US imperialism within the third world and for putting a brake on the most meaningful participation of the Philippines in the anti-imperialist struggle of the third world. We must make our own projection of the demands of the third world in the terms especially of its revolutionary people.

The facts show that under the Marcos fascist dictatorship the economic stranglehold of US imperialism on the Philippines has become tighter. Because of the Marcos constitution and the fascist decrees giving more privileges to foreign investors, there is practically no more need for any new economic treaty replacing the Laurel-Langley Agreement.

The fascist dictator has always asserted that US imperialism should keep its military bases in the Philippines, provide a "nuclear umbrella" and guard the `skies and seas. Negotiations on the US-RP military treaties have been an old ritual repeatedly resorted to in a futile attempt to deflect the people's anti-imperialist struggle.

The only new thing in current negotiations on such treaties is that the Marcos fascist dictatorship wants some rent on the vast tracts of land occupied by the US military bases, relinquishment of some small sections of the land for Marcos' real estate speculation and assurances of more US financial and military assistance. The question of sovereignty over the US military bases has long been resolved; the point has always been to assert such sovereignty by deeds.

We must strive to have the Philippine revolution enjoy not only the political support of friendly forces abroad but also concrete assistance from them. US imperialism has not stopped but has even stepped up the giving of congressional and extra-congressional military and other kinds of assistance to the Marcos fascist dictatorship.

Remaining a puppet of US imperialism, the Marcos fascist dictatorship misappropriates such terms as "self-reliance" and "nonalignment" in the same fashion that he domestically misappropriates such a term as "democratic revolution" for the fascist counterrevolution. Snatching terms from the revolutionary movement is an old trick of the fascist thief. But reality speaks louder.

Unlike the reactionaries, we stand on the basic principles of independence and self-reliance. Foreign assistance should only be supplementary to our independent and self-reliant efforts. Even without any foreign assistance, we should be able to fight on and advance step by step. As already pointed out, practically everything that

we need can come from the people and from the battlefield.

We should be able to draw support and assistance from as many foreign friends as possible, short of falling any trap set by the US imperialists and the Soviet social-imperialists. We appreciate most the kind of assistance that enhances self-reliance, our armed struggle and our propaganda.

Aside from developing the closest and most fruitful relations with the Marxist-Leninist parties and other revolutionary organizations, we should pay attention to our own Filipino compatriots abroad. Associations of our compatriots should extend every possible kind of support to the revolutionary struggle in their motherland and should win the widest possible support from their host people.

The half-a-million Filipinos in the United States have a very important role gathering support for the Philippine revolution not only from their own ranks but also from the American people. US intervention and the possibility of another US war of aggression in the Philippines must be effectively opposed with the support of the American people.

Overseas Filipinos are found in various parts of the world. Wherever they are, they should do what they can to help their people and should prepare themselves to join the ranks of the revolutionaries in the motherland. We assume that the most progressive among them study Marxism-Leninism and take appropriate interest in the revolutionary struggles in their host countries.

The conditions in the world which now favor the advance of the Philippine revolution are bound to become more excellent. The future for all revolutionary people is bright. That of the imperialists and the reactionaries is bleak.

Elaboration on the Ten Point Program

of the National Democratic Front

We of the Preparatory Commission for the National Democratic Front hereby reaffirm the ten-point program which we proclaimed in our Manifesto of April 24, 1973.

This program is our guide in the entire course of the revolutionary struggle for national democracy against the US-Marcos dictatorship. We project again every point in the program in relation to significant developments since four years and to current circumstances. We stress the urgent tasks of the national united front.

1. Unite all anti-imperialist and democratic forces to overthrow the US-Marcos dictatorship and work for the establishment of a coalition government based on a truly democratic system' of representation. We must build a broad unity of patriotic and progressive classes, groups and individuals all for the purpose of overthrowing the US-Marcos dictatorship.

In the process, we must create a vigorous anti-fascist, anti-imperialist and anti-feudal movement. The anti-fascist struggle must lead to genuine national independence and democracy. Upon the overthrow of the US-Marcos dictatorship, there should be a coalition government, a provisional revolutionary government with a united front character, to remove the antinational and anti-democratic causes and results of the fascist dictatorship.

The Marcos regime worsens

In the meantime, anti-Marcos reactionaries begin to be more active, hoping that with the support of US imperialism, they can regain the political power they lost when Marcos imposed martial law. Ex-Senator Gerry Roxas, President of the Liberal Party, Ex-Senator Francisco "Soc" Rodrigo and Ex-Senator Jovito Salonga, close friends of imprisoned Ex-Senator Benigno Aquino, are starting to reorganize the Liberal Party. In the US, the Social Democratic Party in exile has recently been set up.

The United Democratic Socialist Party of the Philippines, commonly called "soc dem", has close links with the anti-Marcos reactionaries. The "soc dems" recently initiated a campaign called "Light a Fire", instigating the people to set fire to Marcos or Imelda owned enterprises, like Rustan's. The hopes of the anti-Marcos reactionaries and the "soc dems" for a coup have been raised by the fall of the Shah of Iran and the Somoza regime in Nicaragua.

The Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP), the old Communist Party leadership that formally surrendered to Marcos in October 1974, continues to collaborate with the Marcos regime by making propaganda for its bogus land reform program and claiming that Marcos is a nationalist trying to maintain an independent stance against US imperialism. On the other hand, the PKP maintains its links with the USSR.

The solid advance of the NPA and NDF in the last few years, their sound educational and organizational programs and policies, and especially the enthusiastic support of the peasants and workers and other oppressed sectors—these constitute a firm basis for further growth and advance on the road to national democracy and socialism.

It shall be the task of the coalition government to draft and issue for ratification a new constitution on the basis of the national and democratic interests of the Filipino people.

The coalition government should recognize all the national and democratic forces that shall have caused the downfall of the fascist dictatorship and give them ample opportunity to participate in legal and peaceful political activities. There should be no monopoly of political power by any class, party or group.

The degree of participation in the government by any political force should be based on its effective role and record in the revolutionary struggle and on the people's approbation,.

We always stand for the independence and initiative of the various political forces working for the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship. The coalition government should allow the free interplay of national and democratic forces during and after election. Thus a truly democratic system of representation can develop and operate to the benefit of the people. Such a government should always be subject to the will of the people

At the moment, various political forces, mass organizations, armed organizations, organs of political power and various alliances are already developing in preparation for the complete overthrow of the Marcos. We basically rely on the people's armed revolution to overthrow the fascist dictatorship and replace the fascist dictatorship with a coalition government of a national democratic form.

However, the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship by a coup d'etat is a distinct possibility. Should this possibility materialize, all forces in the national democratic movement should even more resolutely demand that national independence and democratic rights be upheld and promoted. We should be on guard against a mere shuffling of puppets and fascists.

Proclamation 1081, the Marcos constitution, all general orders, presidential decrees, letters of instruction, and all other anti-national and anti-democratic acts of the fascist dictatorship must be nullified. A popular campaign should be waged vigorously to condemn and dismantle its evil policies and practices.

All political prisoners of the fascist dictatorship should be released. A general amnesty should be issued in their favor. Indemnity and rehabilitation must be provided for all victims of fascism, especially the masses of people displaced and subjected to brutality by the military.

A committee of civilian leaders highly respected by the people for their patriotism, civil libertarian stand and consistent opposition to fascism and puppetry should assume the reins of government. This committee should pave the way for a genuinely popular, free and honest elections within a year's time from the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship. We fully support any antifascist move so long as this constitutes a step forward in the people's struggle for national independence and democracy. We strongly oppose any move to disrupt the unity of the antifascist forces.

2. Expose and oppose US imperialism as the mastermind behind the setting up of the fascist dictatorship, struggle for the nullification of all unequal treaties and arrangements with this imperialist power, and call for the nationalization of all its properties in the country. US imperialism is the instigator of and mastermind behind the Marcos fascist dictatorship. Because of US prodding and assurance of support. Marcos has had the daring to establish and maintain his autocratic rule. A The fascist dictatorship was put up in line with the "Nixon doctrine" to counteract the growing anti-imperialist movement among the people. The impending termination of the Parity Agreement-

Philippine-Japan Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation or the proposed economic treaty between the Philippines and the United States. The sovereign right to nationalize and expropriate foreign enterprises must never be surrendered. Strategic industries should be nationalized. We would rather place vital industries in the hands of Filipino entrepreneurs than in the hands of foreign investors. The latter bring wealth out of the country as a matter of course and in a more rapacious way. "Parity rights" must not be extended under the guise of according "national treatment" to "pioneer", "preferred", and "export" industries. The ownership and control of land and the improvements thereon is a sovereign prerogative of the Filipino people.

Foreign multinational firms must not be allowed to ride roughshod over the people. The unrestricted remittance of profits by these monopolies in the form of outright dividends and royalties and through transfer-pricing and production-sharing or profit-sharing must be put to a stop.

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Under the fascist regime, restrictions on foreign capital in banking, agriculture, mineral extraction and oil exploration, retail trade and fishing have been removed. These just restrictions must not only be restored but should even be increased and made complete. The excessive privileges gained by the foreign monopolies in the course of fascist puppet rule have only served to stress the need for nationalization and expropriation measures for ensuring economic independence and promoting economic development.

The nationalization and expropriation of US and Japanese business enterprises and investments in the Philippines may not even suffice to compensate for the excessive profits already remitted and the non-payment of taxes by them and the ill-gotten wealth stashed away abroad by the puppets.

The foreign loans abusively resorted to by the fascist dictatorship must be subjected to the most rigorous scrutiny. Unjust loans must be repudiated so that the country can recover from the ravages of US imperialism and the fascist dictatorship. These loans have strings attached, which result in the stunting and reversal of economic development. Aside from drawing high interest rates, these loans are used to carry out imperialist policies which include the quick reversion of funds to the lenders at an accelerated rate of profit for the imperialist firms; disproportionate expenditures for infrastructures and military build-up; and allowances for the corruption of the fascists and bureaucrat capitalists.

No country can claim to be independent when encumbered by such agreements as the US-RP Military Agreement, the US-RP Military Assistance Agreement and the US-RP Mutual Defense Pact. All these must be abrogated.

The US military bases must be dismantled and declared a transgression of our national sovereignty and territorial integrity in a new constitution. US military assistance and control over the Armed Forces of the Philippines must also come to an end. The US privilege of intervention in our affairs must be removed.

US military control over the Philippines invites Soviet social-imperialist intervention in Philippine affairs. The US military bases are no defense but are the very magnet for aggression by Soviet social-imperialism, especially in the form nuclear attack.

The broad masses of the people reject the kind of negotiations being carried on by the fascist dictatorship with US imperialism on economic, military and other questions. These sham negotiations are merely calculated to prolong the status quo.

Before negotiations with the United States on any matter, we should abrogate all the unequal treaties and arrangements that violate our national sovereignty and independence.

We must rely basically on our people in every respect, defend their national interests and act independently in world affairs. The Philippines can have relations with other countries, including United States, only on the basis of independence, equality and mutual benefit.

3. Fight for the reestablishment of all democratic rights of the people, such as freedom of speech, the press, assembly, association, movement, religious belief, and the right to due process.

Under conditions of fascist martial rule, we should all the more vigorously assert our democratic rights and exercise them in defiance of the fascists. It is impossible for the fascist dictatorship to silence everyone. The broad masses of the people are increasingly speaking out against the fascist dictatorship and its evils. What needs to be done is to further organize the great popular discontent against the enemy. The various types of anti-fascist and national democratic organizations must expand and consolidate themselves in the struggle against the enemy.

Secret and open meetings and indoor and outdoor rallies must be promoted. The circulation of revolutionary underground publications must be widened.

The broad masses of the people must condemn and reject the Batasang Bayan and barangays and all organizations put up by the fascist dictatorship to deceive and repress them.

The worker masses must demand and exercise their right to strike and other trade union rights to improve their working and living conditions. They must engage in concerted actions to frustrate the anti-labor code and policies of the fascist dictatorship and reject the labor aristocrats in the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines.

The peasant masses must build their own associations and press for genuine land reform. They must reject such fascist and imperialist schemes as Samahang Nayon and Masagana _99.

The urban petty bourgeoisie, which includes the general run of the intelligentsia and small businessmen, must voice out its own interests against the increasing impositions of the fascist dictatorship and join up with the toiling masses.

The students are taking to the path of open mass protests against the rising cost of living and education and against bigger political and economic abuses.

The teachers are also increasingly restive and defiant of the fascist regime as a result of low salaries and heavy financial burdens and impositions on them to spread fascist propaganda.

The youth must actively oppose being used as tools for fascist propaganda through such organizations as Kabataang Barangay and Youth Civic Action Program. They must develop their own organizations to promote national and democratic ideals. They must expose the fascist dictatorship and its foreign and feudal masters for their inability to find meaningful employment. They must resist all attempts to conscript them into fascist military service.

The national bourgeoisie or the middle-type businessmen must stand for the promotion and protection of national capital and oppose foreign monopoly capitalism.

All sections of the population must build their secret and open organizations. Even people in the government and other reactionary institutions should use their positions and influence to serve the revolutionary movement.

We also call on the people in the mass media to find ways and means of effectively utilizing the facilities of the dictatorship at their disposal in ventilating the just grievances of the people against the US Marcos dictatorship. We stand for the freedoms of speech and of the press both now and when the US Marcos dictatorship shall have been overthrown. We must combat the fascist dictator's monopoly over the press and mass media and the deep-going effects of this monopoly.

The freedom of religious belief must be asserted against the campaign of religious persecution launched by the fascist dictatorship. We support the progressive sections of various churches, including clergy and laity, in their unity with the struggle of the people against the fascist and unjust social structure.

All attempts to curtail the freedom of movement and domicile must also be circumvented and defeated. The broad masses of the people must frustrate the national registration scheme and other police-state schemes.

The entire system of fascist rule deprives the people of the right of due process. Under the very "bill of rights" of the Marcos constitution, any person can be arrested or any property searched and confiscated without judicial process.

Anyone can be arbitrarily called a subversive or communist and subjected to fascist abuse under Proclamation 1081 and other Marcos fiats. We must oppose any attempt to whip up anticommunist hysteria because this in fact augments the rationalization of the fascist dictatorship and is calculated to divide the patriotic and progressive forces.

We deplore the attempts of the CIA-directed groups and the clerico-fascists to derail the antifascist movement by pointing to socialism or communism as the main issue now. We state categorically that the main issue now is the question of national independence and genuine democracy.

Besides Proclamation 1081 and the Marcos constitution, the Anti-subversion Law should be annulled as a bill of attainder. Moreover, any provision on martial law in any new constitution must expressly require the approval of the parliament or legislature prior to proclamation by the executive.

So long as the people struggle hard to overthrow the Marcos fascist dictatorship, they are laying the new foundation for the reestablishment of their own democratic rights. An organized vigilant people is the ultimate guarantee for freedom and democracy

4. Gather all possible political and material support for the armed revolution and the underground against the US Marcos dictatorship. The US-Marcos fascist dictatorship will not last a day longer if all patriotic and progressive classes, groups and personages are well organized and determined to contribute what they can to the armed revolution and underground.

The National Democratic Front is a framework or channel for the unity, cooperation and coordination of all national democratic forces. It is comprehensively organized for this purpose. It welcomes among others the Communist Party of the Philippines, the Moro National Liberation Front and the Christians for National Liberation.

We conduct our own propaganda, organizational work and mass campaigns and at the same time promote the revolutionary efforts of all actual and potential components of the National Democratic Front. In this way, we contribute directly to the armed revolution and underground resistance as well as extend support to particular organizations in the revolutionary mass movement.

We welcome volunteers to serve as combat and non-combat personnel for the armed resistance. We welcome contributions in the form of materials and equipment for propaganda work, arms and ammunition, medicine and medical equipment, communications facilities, clothes, and other things. We welcome funds for these.

There are certain areas in the country where the fascist dictatorship has failed to confiscate arms from the people. We make a special appeal that if these arms are merely concealed, they should be turned over to those who are determined to use them in the armed resistance.

We commit ourselves to extending support to the New People's Army, the Bangsa Moro Army and other armed organizations determined to fight the US -Marcos dictatorship. We make no demands on those whom we support, except that they fight the enemy in the best way they can.

We should take steps to disintegrate the reactionary armed forces and paramilitary forces. We urge all sincere patriotic relatives, friends, barrio-mates and former classmates within these forces to oppose the fascist dictatorship. We encourage the antifascist officers and men to side with the people.

We urge the various organizations resisting the fascist dictatorship to acquire weapons from sources abroad so as to counteract US support for the fascist dictatorship. But we must not fall for the imperialist wiles of any superpower.

We should utilize all positive forces at home and abroad to fight the enemy. We should not leave any stone unturned in seeking ways and means to destroy this evil.

5. Support a genuine land reform program that can liberate the peasant masses from feudal and semifeudal exploitation and raise agricultural production through cooperation.

The land reform program touted by the US Marcos dictatorship is bogus. The masses of tenants cannot buy land from their landlords at the price dictated by the latter. Not a single poor peasant has entered into a land sale contract directly with his landlord under Presidential Decree No. 27. This decree is actually calculated to remove the responsibility of expropriatory action from the reactionary government and deprive tenants of their tenancy rights, especially where the imperialists and fascists are interested in the land.

In the negligible land sales where the Land Bank is an intermediary, not a single poor peasant has fully paid for a single instalment in any year because of the prohibitive price arranged by the landlord and corrupt Land Bank officials.

Land monopolization, not land reform, has been promoted by the fascist dictatorship. Landgrabbing is even more rampant than before, with the fascist dictator and his family leading the pack of landgrabbers. General Order No. 47 encourages the large foreign and domestic corporation to take over the management and control of large estates. Funds of the Land Bank flow to them and promote the sales of modern agricultural equipment. Masagana 99 is camouflaged usury. Aside from the exorbitant interest rate demanded, there are the overpricing of the agricultural chemicals, onerous obligations to the Samahang Nayan and barangay and bribe money for officials. Masagana 99 is a device to render even more impossible the idea of selling land to the landless peasants and promote the usurious practices of private moneylenders.

We advocate for the moment a policy of rent reduction and elimination of usury as a realistic step towards the genuine emancipation of the peasantry. We urge landlords to agree to this reform measure as enlightened ones among them have done.

We advocate the raising of agricultural productivity through simple exchange of labor, mutual aid and cooperatives. Fair prices should be arranged between the peasants and merchants.

In the frontier areas, the national minorities and small freeholders should be assured of the ownership of their land. Landgrabbing by the big landlords and big capitalists should be firmly opposed.

In farms run on a capitalist basis, the farm workers should have trade unions and should demand better working and living conditions. Farm workers in noncapitalist farms should organize themselves or join poor peasants associations so as to get fair wages. They should also fight for genuine land reform.

Unemployment is more rampant in the countryside than in the cities. Feudal and semifeudal relations restrict the opportunities for productive employment. Currently, the crisis of the world capitalist system has resulted in further unemployment with the laying-off of wage earners from haciendas devoted to export crops and also from extractive industries.

The land problem, especially the problem of ownership, can be finally settled throughout the country upon the complete overthrow of US imperialist and comprador-landlord rule. Then the conditions shall have been laid for unhindered industrial expansion and balanced economic development and adjustments can be made in the sizes of pasture lands and lands planted to export crops.

Only benighted and despotic landlords fear the increasing political strength of the peasant masses. Upon the victory of the national democratic revolution, there will be more fields for the fruitful endeavor even for former landlords who by their record are enlightened and non-despotic.

The solution of the land problem is the main content of a truly democratic revolution. It is the key to arousing, organizing, and mobilizing the peasantry, the largest mass of people in the country, against the fascist dictatorship and against all enemies of progress. It lays the foundation for a bright future.

6. Improve the people's livelihood, guarantee the right to work and protect national capital against foreign

monopoly capital.

The fascist dictatorship is an economic catastrophe for the broad masses of the people. The economic crisis now ravaging the country and the people is due not only to the crisis of the world capitalist system but also the excesses of the Marcos fascist dictatorship.

As a matter of fact, US imperialism is shifting the burden of its crisis to the Philippines and the Filipino people precisely because of the puppetry of the Marcos fascist dictatorship.

The excesses of this dictatorship, which generate crisis, include inflationary expenditures for US-designed infrastructure projects and military build-up; accelerated remittance of superprofits by foreign monopolies on investments, trade and loans; bungling in foreign trade; rampant corruption and conspicuous luxury of the fascist civil and military officials; and unbridled deficit-spending and accelerated local and foreign borrowing.

The broad masses of the people suffer from inflation and unemployment. The prices of basic commodities are skyrocketing and the increasing tax burden is being shifted to the people. The ranks of the unemployed, the underemployed and the laid-off are swelling.

The ever increasing prices of commodities under the control of US imperialism keep on pulling up the prices of all other commodities. Oil is only one of the commodities under US control which affect the entire economy. The ever rising price of agricultural chemicals weigh heavily on the production budget of the peasant masses and push up the price of staples.

The worker masses must carry the strike movement forward so as to effect the improvement of their working and living conditions and press i The worker masses must carry the strike movement forward so as to effect the improvement of their working and living conditions and press for due respect to their democratic rights.

By these rights, they can defend themselves against exploitation.

While the wages of those employed must be raised, those laid-off in the cities and countryside must be re-employed or provided with alternative sources of income.

A housing policy for the benefit of the toiling masses, especially for the urban poor, must be carried out in close connection with the keeping or creation of sources of income. It is criminal to relocate people only to leave them to their own devices and make way for foreign monopoly capital.

The peasant masses must carry forward the program of rent reduction and elimination of usury. They must undertake the exchange of labor, mutual aid and cooperatives. They must deal with the problem of production, marketing and credit in an organized way. They must refuse the impositions of Masagana 99, Samahang Nayan and other nefarious schemes of the fascist regime.

The urban petty bourgeoisie, many of whom are salaried, must join the workers in the campaign to demand the raising of wages and improvement of economic conditions in general. They must resist the escalation of so many taxes and fees demanded by the fascist dictatorship.

The national bourgeoisie must resist the dictatorship's pro-imperialist policies so that they can contribute more to economic development help create more jobs and give better pay to their workers.

We support the productive endeavors of middle and small businessmen. Sufficient credit must be provided to them. It is criminal for the fascist dictatorship to let the foreign monopoly capitalists control the local financing system and dip their hands into it.

We stand for the protection and development of national capital against foreign monopoly capitalism. We must withdraw the extraordinary privileges of foreign-owned and foreign-controlled enterprises. We must nationalize those which compete with national capital, public and private.

We must promote trade with all countries so that we can acquire the commodities we need, especially the modern means of production in industry and agriculture, in exchange for our exports. In this regard, foreign trade is merely supplementary to our self-reliant efforts.

There is no better guarantee for the right to work than the emancipation of the people from the sway of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. The forces of production must be freed from their fetters.

National liberation, unhindered national industrialization and genuine land reform are the solution to the economic problems of the people. By this solution, we can develop a truly self-reliant economy.

7. Promote a national scientific and mass culture and combat imperialist, feudal and fascist culture.

the culture that the national democratic movement must develop and push forward is one that is suited to the present day revolutionary needs of the Filipino nation, that applies scientific principle and methods and serve the

people, especially the toiling masses of the workers and peasants.

Such a culture cannot be promoted without opposing and defeating the prevailing imperialist, feudal and fascist culture and transforming the political and economic system.

The spearhead of the revolutionary culture movement is aimed directly and immediately at fascist culture. And it must also run through imperialist and feudal culture. The present fascist culture is born of and at the same time serves imperialist and feudal culture.

At the core of what we call fascist culture is fascist propaganda and monopoly of the means of propaganda by the bureaucrat-capitalist despot Marcos and his clique. In this connection, the people's democratic rights are suppressed.

Fascist propaganda consists of rationalizing the open rule of terror and suppression of democracy under the pretext of anticommunism and "national discipline" and misrepresenting the policies beneficial to US imperialism and the ruling clique of big compradors and big landlords as beneficial to the people who are in fact oppressed and exploited in an accelerated way.

The Marcos fascist gang collaborates with US imperialism in launching propaganda campaigns blaming the people themselves for their poverty as in the population control program or for the so-called energy crisis as in the energy conservation campaign. The "green revolution" is a campaign to obscure the problem of landlordism and sell agricultural chemicals from the US monopolies.

The Marcos fascist clique does not only control the mass media owned by the state but also owns and controls all major private mass media (newspapers, radio, TV stations, etc.). Campaigns of these mass media are all in support of the anti-national and anti-democratic policies of the fascist regime and project directly the political lines and commercial advertising of the imperialists.

The only mass media not directly controlled by the fascist regime are those belonging to US imperialism and some church organizations. We refer to the Voice of America, Radio Veritas, some local church radio stations and various publications. But these media directly or indirectly support the policies of the fascist regime.

At every level of the public and private educational system, subjects and textbooks have been introduced to glorify the fascist counterrevolution and its ringleaders. The fascist regime seeks not only to poison the minds of the student masses but also subject them and their parents to intensified exploitation through rising matriculation and living expenses.

At the same time, the teachers are ordered to engage in miseducation and are not adequately compensated. School personnel, facilities and study materials in the public educational system are kept inadequate. Public funds keep on flowing faster and faster into military channels and other activities profitable only to the fascists and imperialists.

The educational reform boasted of by the fascist regime consists of the recommendations of the US financed and US masterminded Presidential Committee to Study Philippine Education. These are calculated to entrench further US control of Philippine public education, put colleges and universities in debt with US-controlled banks and orient Philippine education to create technocrats and cheap skilled labor for a few jobs in imperialist-controlled enterprises and projects.

Upon graduation, the overwhelming majority of youth do not find employment opportunities. Instead, they are encouraged to leave the country in order to earn foreign exchange, especially in the United States. Their knowledge and skills as doctors, nurses, engineers or what else are not put into the service of the people. They are discouraged from performing their share in solving the country's economic development, widespread ill health and the like.

The scientists and technologists and the artists and writers of the country are grossly neglected. Only a few of them are privileged with some state support if they are subservient to the fascist authorities and espouse pro-imperialist and reactionary views.

In special cultural affairs, the wife of the fascist dictator parades herself as a patron of the arts and engages in the most expensive projects. But she is merely a patron of the most decadent things that suit her jetset crowd. Her Cultural Center and Folk Arts Theater have been monuments to her pretentiousness and dilettantism.

Mrs. Marcos' cultural activities are often the cover for extorting funds from people, a great part of which is diverted to her personal treasury. Under the signboard of tourist attraction, a culture of prostitution, gambling and other leisure projects and activities for the parasitic rich, especially the upstart spawned by the fascist dictatorship,

is rampant under the Metro-Manila "governorship" of Mrs. Marcos.

Pilipino as the national language is not being promoted. The first and main language of the reactionary government and culture system is still an alien language, English. However, even if the regime should use Pilipino more extensively, the more important question would still be the content carried by the language.

A national language and a national culture should be promoted to enhance national unity and combat colonial mentality. But respect must be accorded to local languages and other cultural distinctions of the people.

It is chauvinist and entirely wrong to suppress or replace at one blow the local culture. The fascist dictatorship has been bullying the national minorities especially and has the grossest disrespect for them under the pretext of "integration" and "progress."

Marcos suppresses the freedom of speech and the press to the point that he has decreed control of the people's ordinary conversations and mimeographing machines. Also, he suppresses associations other than those in praise of his regime. Under these conditions, it is clearly a revolutionary struggle to promote a national, scientific, and mass culture against fascist, imperialist, and feudal culture.

However, it is impossible for any regime to silence the people and prevent them from organizing themselves and engaging in cultural activities. Patriotic and progressive forces should create a national, scientific and mass culture through propaganda, works of art and literature, and scientific and technological work. They should take to the field to involve the masses further in their own national democratic cultural revolution.

We must turn away from all ancient and modern superstition and rely mainly on the creative revolutionary capabilities of the masses. We stand for religious freedom. Through persuasive means we must turn away from every type of sectarianism, obscurantism and escapism. We welcome the development of progressive trends in religious institutions.

The fascists themselves are busy carrying reactionary cultural programs to the people. They are putting emphasis on misleading the youth through the "Kabataang Barangay." But all the cultural programs of the enemy are bound to fail because they are in fact divorced from the life and struggles of the people.

Our revolutionaries in the cultural field should not only be with the masses of workers and peasants, but should also carry the fight to the very cultural and educational institutions and associations under enemy control. The masses of students and other youth, teachers, professionals, and cultural workers should be aroused, organized and mobilized to make comprehensive economic and political demands and they should be encouraged to throw their lot with the toiling masses of workers and peasants.

8. Support the national minorities, especially those in Mindanao and the Mountain Provinces in their struggle for self-determination and democracy.

The national minorities in the Philippines have suffered for so long. There is the historical phenomenon of "Christian" or "Filipino" chauvinism, the mentality and practice of discrimination and oppression against national minorities.

This was cultivated by the Spanish colonialists, further nourished by the US imperialists and passed on to the puppet ruling classes -the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class. Under the Marcos fascist dictatorship, the lot of the national minorities has become even worse.

Thousands of them such as the Igorots in the Mountain Provinces, are being uprooted from their ancestral lands and relocated far from their sources of livelihood, all to make way for projects and enterprises of the imperialists and the dictator. Fascist agencies such as the PANAMIN are sent to deceive and manipulate, divide and terrorize their ranks in order to grab their mineral-rich lands or break their resistance to oppression.

The national minorities have the right to liberate themselves from such oppression and determine their own destiny. The right to self-determination includes the right to secede from a state of national oppression or choose autonomy within a state that guarantees the equality of nationalities. This right is a weapon against national oppression.

National oppression is never perpetrated for its own sake. In the Philippines it is used to satisfy the greed of US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. Thus, the struggle for self-determination must be substantiated by a thoroughgoing democratic revolution if it is to be of any good purpose.

We support the national minorities in their struggle for self-determination and democracy. We are united with them in the struggle for national democracy.

We salute the Moro people and those leading them in a resolute armed struggle for national

self-determination. So long as they are confronted with a regime as oppressive as that of the US Marcos dictatorship, they are completely correct in going to the length of fighting for secession.

We are prepared to develop further relations with the Moro National Liberation Front, the Bangsa Moro Army and other Moro organizations. They have all the right to fight the imperialists and their puppets for grabbing their lands and other resources and for exploiting the people.

We salute the Igorot people for resisting national oppression and exploitation, including the latest schemes of US imperialism and the Marcos fascist dictatorship. We are exceedingly happy about and welcome the integration of the Igorot people with other revolutionary forces in the country.

The key to the integration of all national minorities in the Philippine revolution is the development of local revolutionary cadres. These cadres must come forward through the people's organizations that take the line of the national democratic revolution.

It is our stand that all national minorities, big or small, should enjoy autonomy and be accorded special guarantee for their accelerated progress.

Their struggle is not merely for "cultural autonomy" but for all-round progress with due respect to their special characteristics.

Where national minorities are mixed with people of other nationalities, they shall be assured of proportionate representation in the political and economic institutions to be set up. We lay stress on the democratic unity of the workers and peasants irrespective of nationality and religion.

9. Punish, after public trial, the ringleaders of the Marcos fascist gang for their crimes against the people and confiscate all their ill-gotten wealth.

The biggest crime of the Marcos fascist gang is treason, high treason, for setting up the fascist dictatorship in violation of the interests of the Filipino people.

There is overwhelming evidence against the fascist dictator. Known by all are his constitution, proclamations, orders, decrees, and other acts which violate national sovereignty and democracy.

He is responsible for massacres, tortures, illegal mass arrests and detention, forced mass evacuations, arson and so many forcible acts attendant to his rightist coup.

He is responsible for graft and corruption unprecedented in the entire semicolonial and semifeudal history of the Philippines.

The penalty for him is undoubtedly clear. It is also clear that his ill-gotten wealth must be confiscated, whether this be in his name or in his relatives' or dummies' names.

While the guilt of Marcos is beyond doubt even now, there will be a public trial for him and deepgoing condemnatory mass campaigns. These will be educational for the entire people.

The public trial will also establish and distinguish the degree of guilt of his underlings. We demand the severest punishment of his vicious subalterns but we recognize as mitigating circumstance secret cooperation with us or defection from the dictator before his final overthrow.

Those who engage in massacres and torture are liable for the severest retribution. Those who engage in wanton corruption are liable to be punished and dispossessed of their ill-gotten wealth.

Because we cannot seize what has been stashed away abroad by these crooks, the investments and properties of those who collaborated closely with them and benefited from nefarious practices should be held liable. Otherwise, the people will recover hardly anything of that which is stashed away abroad.

We urge those within the Marcos bureaucracy to cooperate with the revolutionary forces. They can gather evidence on the crimes of Marcos and his cohorts: graft and corruption, ill-gotten wealth stashed away abroad, torture and other abuses.

They can also organize within the bureaucracy, relying mainly on the rank and file and winning over sincere and patriotic elements among them to the national democratic movement, while isolating the diehard supporters of the dictator.

10. Unite with all peoples fighting imperialism and all reaction, and seek their support for the Philippine revolutionary struggle.

We vehemently oppose the attempts of the US-Marcos dictatorship to use the international relations of the Philippines to isolate the Philippine revolutionary struggle. Marcos' posturings in the third world is futile in the face of the fact that his fascist regime continues to be a political, economic, military and cultural tool and

dependent of US imperialism.

The Marcos fascist gang continues to put in hock to U.S. imperialism the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Philippines. It continues to auction off the human and material resources of the country.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a substitute for the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). It puts its "counterinsurgency" purposes above its pretense of looking after regional economic interests. Its economic schemes are subordinate to US and Japanese monopoly interests.

It is high time that we more actively seek international support and assistance for the Philippine revolutionary struggle. We are more than ever eager to establish relations with other progressive and revolutionary movements abroad. We shall send delegations and establish missions whenever and wherever possible.

In the face of US imperialism giving increasing support and assistance to the Marcos fascist gang, we find it indispensable to seek international support.

But we rely basically on our own efforts and the broad support of the Filipino people in defeating the US Marcos fascist dictatorship.

We call on all compatriots abroad to take initiative in organizing themselves to protect and promote their own interests and support the revolutionary struggle at home. They should seek the cooperation and support of the host peoples.

We find it gratifying and inspiring that in the United States, patriotic Filipino organizations among the hundreds and thousands of Filipinos there have worked with the various organizations of the American people to oppose US intervention in Philippine affairs.

We appeal to the peoples of the world and the progressive countries to extend moral and material support to the Philippine revolutionary struggle.

We wish to develop the unity of the Filipino people with all other peoples of the world so that we can work together for justice, peace and progress.

We uphold the principle of revolutionary internationalism,. We are determined to conduct the Philippine revolutionary struggle so that our people can contribute their share to the struggle for the emancipation of mankind from the scourge of imperialism and all reaction.

'We are enthusiastic over the rise of the third world peoples and countries as the main force against imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism. The strength of the third world as an anti-imperialist and anti-superpower force is bound to rise further as the crisis of the world capitalist system worsens.

We are also enthusiastic over the rise of the proletariat as a revolutionary force in all parts of the world. We are certain of the socialist future of mankind.

Issued by the Preparatory Commission

National Democratic Front

November 12, 1977

The following notes were added by the International Committee of the NDF for the benefit of international solidarity activists and other foreign readers. – Editor

(1) With Proclamation 1081 Marcos imposed martial law throughout the country. It was signed on September 21, 1972 but announced only on September 23, 1972. During the night of September 22 thousands were arrested.

(2) This refers to the 1972 Constitution drafted by Marcos' assistants and approved by a Constitutional Convention heavily loaded with Marcos followers. The minority opposing Marcos in the Convention were threatened by the jailing of 14 delegates. In January 1973 this Constitution was "ratified" in a hastily called referendum where people voted by a "show of hands" with police and military in attendance.

(3) The Parity Amendment to the 1935 Constitution was a stipulation of the Bell Trade Act of 1946 which extended the free trade between the Philippines and the US up to 1954. This Parity Amendment granted American citizens and corporations the same rights as Filipinos with respect to the ownership, use, exploitation and development of Philippine natural resources and the operation of public utilities. The approval of the Parity Amendment and the Bell Trade Act was made a requirement by the US for making war damage payments and other forms of postwar rehabilitation to the Philippines. After a plebiscite and vote of Congress in favor of it, the Parity

Amendment came into effect in 1946.

(4) The Laurel-Langley Agreement of 1954 (or the revised Bell Trade Act) extended free trade between the US privileges under the Parity Amendment for 20 years. In this agreement, the meaning of the Parity is extended to include “parity rights” in all kinds of businesses, including the acquisition and utilization of private agricultural lands. The agreement provided a revised tariff schedule and a quota system which still basically encouraged the export of raw materials to the US and the import of finished products from the US.

(5) the Philippine Supreme Court made two landmark decisions: the Quasha decision limited the rights of American citizens to own land; the Luzteveco decision limited the rights of American citizens to sit in the Board of Directors of Filipino companies.

(6) These laws were designed to strengthen US monopoly control of the Philippine economy. As early as 1967, Marcos enacted foreign investment laws in preparation for the eventual termination of the Laurel-Langley Agreement in 1974. The Investment Incentives Act guarantees the property rights of foreign investors and provides for the rights of non-expropriation. The Export Incentives Act allows foreign participation up to 55 percent of local export industries and up to 100 percent for pioneer export industries.

(7) Philippine-Japan Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation was drawn up in 1960 by the Japanese and Philippine government but met with such opposition from the Filipino people that the Philippine Congress balked at ratifying it for over a decade. Marcos ratified this treaty in 1973 through a presidential decree. The treaty creates every possibility for the penetration of Japanese capital in the Philippines. Aside from providing a dumping ground for Japanese surplus goods, it allows operations of big commercial Japanese fishing vessels in Philippine waters to the detriment of Filipino fishermen.

(8) These unequal treaties are the treaties which govern US-Philippine security relations and tie the Philippines to the military strings of US imperialism. The US-RP Military Bases Pact of 1947 granted to the US for a period of 99 years “the rights to retain the use,” “free of rent,” of 23 bases in the Philippines occupying a total area of approximately 240,000 hectares. (This was renegotiated in January 1979 with the US agreeing to pay \$500 million in 5 years as rent for the use of the military bases.) The US-RP Military Assistance Pact ensures US control over the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The US-RP Mutual Defense Pact allows the US to interfere with the internal affairs of the Philippines under the pretext of securing peace and mutual security.

(9) The Batasang Bayan is one of the national legislative formations that Marcos has experimented with as a replacement for the Congress he abolished. In April 1978 Marcos held widely publicized elections for the Interim Batasang Pambansa, a sham parliament headed by Marcos as Prime Minister.

(10) The barangay is a village-level council that Marcos created, and serves as the “eyes and ears” of the dictatorship on the local level.

(11) The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines is the government organized federation. It is controlled by low labor leaders who are subservient to Marcos, while trying to create the illusion of workers’ participation in the formulation of the government’s labor policies.

(12) Samahang Nayons are the government-organized barrio associations which are supposed to serve as “pre-cooperatives” that, after a process of education, will become full-fledged cooperatives.

(13) Masagana 99 is the government program which provides no collateral loans to rice and corn farmers but compels them to join the Samahan Nayons, buy specific insecticides, and pay high interest rates.

(14) Kabataang Barangay and Youth Civic Action Programs are two of the Marcos regime’s attempts to organize Philippine youth in support of its policies. The former is the more tightly organized group and is headed by Marcos’ daughter Imee.

(15) The term “clerico-fascist” refers to Church elements who have attempted to split the ranks of antifascist movement by spreading anti-communist propaganda. A number of them advocate “social democracy” as an alternative to national democracy.

(16) This refers to the reestablished Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). On December 26, 1968 the Congress of Reestablishment of the CPP decided to repudiate the leadership of the old party, the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP). The PKP leadership had repeatedly refused to accept criticism for its serious ideological, political, military and organizational errors for over 30 years. The reestablished CPP published its rigorous criticism of the old leadership and its Program for a People’s Democratic Revolution firmly taking the road of People’s War. On October 11, 1974 the leaders of the PKP formally surrendered to Marcos and agreed to collaborate

with his regime.

(17) Presidential Decree No. 27 is the land reform decree proclaimed with much fanfare on September 29, 1972.

(18) The Land Bank was created by Marcos in 1973 to finance the regime's land reform program.

(19) General Order No. 47 requires companies with 500 or more employees to provide rice to their employees by importing it or producing rice in mechanized corporate farms. This has meant the displacement of many settlers from lands turned over in lease to the big corporations.

(20) "Green Revolution" refers to the government's attempt to achieve self-sufficiency in foodstuffs through the introduction of high-yield rice and corn varieties. After its initial success in the late sixties, the program collapsed when it was discovered that the new varieties were particularly susceptible to certain types of plant diseases such as tungro. Because the new varieties require close water control, and lots of fertilizers and insecticides, only the better-off farmers use it effectively thereby contributing to greater inequalities in rural society.

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, Kompil 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, KAAK-BAY, 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 American 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 American 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”—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 non-partisanship, 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!

Message to the Nationalist Alliance

in Mindanao Convention

October 20, 1984

I wish to express my warmest greetings to and firmest solidarity with all the delegates of the Nationalist Alliance Mindanao Convention. I stand with you in your determination to carry forward the struggle for national democracy.

I extend to you my best wishes for the success of your convention. I am confident that this convention can consolidate your militant ranks, clarify your fighting tasks and open the way to the rapid organizational growth and further political achievements of the Nationalist Alliance in Mindanao.

It is correct and urgently necessary for the Nationalist Alliance in Mindanao to unite all patriotic and progressive classes, sectors, parties, organizations and individuals against the scourge that is the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique and the longstanding evils of foreign and feudal domination.

To help build a powerful national united front, you must rely mainly on the basic alliance of the working class and the peasantry, win over such middle forces as the urban petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie and take advantage of the contradictions among the big compradors and big landlords in order to isolate and defeat the US-Marcos clique.

In the countryside, you must rely mainly on the poor peasants and farm workers, win over the middle peasants and neutralize the rich peasants in order to isolate and defeat the foreign agricorporations and the big landlords, especially the fascist big comprador-landlords who grab the lands of the people.

The peasant struggle for land is becoming fiercer and fiercer. The foreign agricorporations, the fascist land-grabbers and the big comprador-landlords in general are on a rampage of dispossessing the people of their land under various pretexts and with the brazen use of armed force.

A certain amount of semifeudal capitalist agriculture, dependent on imported inputs and exportation of products, has been growing but at the same time old-type feudalism has held its ground and expanded on a wider scale, overtaking the remotest homesteaders and depriving the ethnic minorities of land.

The concurrent depression of export-crop agriculture, logging and mining; the exacerbation of feudal and semifeudal relations of exploitation; the rapid land dispossession of the peasants by brute force; and the barbaric attacks against the Filipino and Moro peoples, for so long under the fascist puppet regime have generated the armed resistance of the people on a wide scale. Thus, Mindanao has become the largest graveyard of the fascists in the country.

It is my observation that in waging armed and legal struggles the people of Mindanao are building their political power and are playing a decisive role in weakening and destroying the power of the fascist puppet dictatorship.

Mindanao is far away from the seat of reactionary power in Manila. But at the rate that they are drawing reactionary troops and drowning them in a sea of people's war, the revolutionary forces in Mindanao are sapping the strength of the US-Marcos regime and causing its downfall in a few years' time.

The conditions for the growth and advance of the Nationalist Alliance in Mindanao are excellent. The grave political and economic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal system is fostering both the armed revolution and the legal democratic movement. In view of the development of revolutionary forces beforehand, the Nationalist Alliance cannot but find abundant support from the people in the effort to raise the national democratic movement to a new and higher level.

I wish the Nationalist Alliance great victories in Mindanao towards the dismantling of the fascist dictatorship of the US-Marcos clique and the establishment of a democratic coalition government; genuine land reform and national industrialization; a national, scientific and mass culture; and an independent foreign policy.

The people of Mindanao are bound to make ever greater contributions to the entire Filipino people's revolutionary effort to complete the struggle for national liberation and democracy. The victories of the people of Mindanao are victories of the people of the entire country.

Long live the Nationalist Alliance in Mindanao!
Onward with the struggle for national democracy!
Dismantle the fascist dictatorship of the US-Marcos clique!
Long live the people of Mindanao!
Long live the Filipino people.

***Message to the National Convention
of the Muslim-Christian Alliance Nationwide***

November 1984

I am exceedingly happy that through this convention, the people belonging to the two major religious faiths, Islam and Christian, are manifesting and heightening their unity for the struggle to achieve national liberation and democracy against the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique.

I extend my wholehearted support to the alliance and all delegates to this convention in their endeavor to clarify the Philippine and Mindanao situation; and develop Muslim-Christian unity, cooperation and coordination in all fields—political, economic, social, cultural and external relations.

I am confident that my Muslim and Christian brothers and sisters will be successful in raising their common understanding and the level of their militance in the national democratic struggle against the evils of US imperialism and feudal domination which have brought about the fascist tyranny.

It is my firm belief that in an alliance between Muslims and Christians, there must be respect for integrity, equality, initiative and independence of each side as every effort is exerted to attain unity of purpose, consciousness and action for mutual benefit in accordance with the national democratic program. It is my understanding that your alliance is for promoting mutual support and is setting forth tasks that Muslims and Christians can jointly and separately carry out. I hope that you can build a strong machinery for common effort and consultations at various levels and in various sectors.

The fascist dictatorship, by unleashing the worst forms of oppression and exploitation against the entire people has dug its own grave. This tyranny has driven both the Muslims and the Christians to seek and develop unity against a common enemy and overcome deepseated prejudices wrought by colonial domination and religious differences.

The fascist regime has sought to use anti-Muslim prejudice in its campaigns of massacre and other atrocities against the Moro people. But the Christians, including Church leaders, have refused to be taken in and have instead exposed and opposed the brutal acts of the regime against the Moro people and the Muslims.

The Christians themselves, both clergy and laity, have been increasingly subjected to the most vicious acts of persecution by the fascist regime. Like the Muslims, they have suffered massacres, murders, torture, rape, arbitrary arrest, illegal detention, arson, bombardment, forced displacement and so many other barbarities.

Muslims and Christians pursue a common revolutionary struggle and support each other. They must arrive at a common agreement of unity, cooperation and coordination in the struggle for national freedom and democracy against fascist, foreign and feudal domination.

The Filipino people cannot be free if both the Muslims and the Christians are not free. A blow for freedom by one is a blow for freedom for the other as well as for the entire Filipino people. The victories of one in the revolutionary struggle are the victories of the other as well as of the entire people.

I wish you all the success in this convention and in all your forthcoming work. May the Muslims and Christians together help build one modern nation-state where freedom, democracy, equality, justice and peace shall prevail.

Long live the Muslim-Christian Alliance Nationwide!

Carry forward the struggle for national liberation and democracy!

Down with the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique!

Long live the Muslims and the Christians!

Long live the Filipino people!

Onward with the Struggle
for National Democracy: Unite to Dismantle
the US-Marcos Dictatorship and Establish
the Democratic Coalition Government

November 1984

In only one year of existence, the Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy has won significant victories in striving to unite the broad masses of the people to uphold, defend and advance their own national sovereignty and all democratic rights against the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique and the long-standing evils of US imperialism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

These victories in political education, organizational work and mass mobilization have been due to the adoption and militant implementation of the general line of the national democratic revolution under the favorable objective conditions of the rapidly worsening political and economic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal system as well as the general decline of the US and the world capitalist system.

The officers and members of the Nationalist Alliance deserve the warmest congratulations for their victories. They have won these victories through hard work, militant struggle and selfless sacrifices. The enemy's vicious attacks on the Nationalist Alliance are a futile reaction to its growing success.

In its one year of existence, the Nationalist Alliance has endured the murder of some of its leaders and members in the provinces, the illegal arrest and detention of its deputy general secretary and members of his staff, the physical assaults on the persons of its national chairman and other stalwarts during mass actions, a raid on its national headquarters and the illegal seizure of its papers and other effects. These are part of the price we have to pay for freedom, and can only signify the desperation of the fascist regime.

The struggle for national democracy—the mission that the Nationalist Alliance has imposed upon itself—is an extremely serious one. The Nationalist Alliance is determined to dismantle the US-Marcos dictatorship and establish a democratic coalition government. To accomplish this task, it has to keep on raising the level of its national-democratic consciousness and militancy in the face of escalating terror perpetrated by a treasonous, bloodthirsty, corrupt and bankrupt regime.

I. The Struggle for National Democracy

In the struggle for national democracy, the aspect of national liberation means the people's assertion of their national sovereignty and independence against US imperialism which dominates the country politically, economically, militarily, culturally and diplomatically through the Marcos puppet regime.

The aspect of democracy means mainly the solution of the problem of feudalism and the emancipation of the peasant majority of the people. It also means the assertion by the entire people of their civil and political rights against fascism, which is the open rule of terror by a big bureaucrat-comprador-landlord clique and is the outgrowth of foreign and feudal domination.

The struggle for national liberation and the struggle for democracy are therefore inextricably bound together. The antinational and anti-democratic forces of US imperialism, fascism and feudalism combine and assist each other in oppressing and exploiting the people. It is only when the people have achieved national sovereignty and independence that they can amply and fruitfully enjoy their civil liberties and political rights.

The struggle for national democracy is a continuation of the struggle of our revolutionary forefathers for national liberation and democracy, which US imperialism and its local reactionary lackeys have opposed and frustrated time and again since 1898.

The old type of national democratic revolution, initiated by the Katipunan in 1896, was led by a nascent native bourgeoisie in the context of the world bourgeois liberal revolution. It was victorious against an old-type colonialism—Spanish colonialism—but was defeated by US imperialism which proceeded to retain feudalism and further promoted comprador or mercantile capitalism dependent on the exchange of foreign (mainly US) manufactures and local raw materials, the products of an agrarian economy.

Today's revolutionaries are now carrying out a new type of national democratic revolution under the leadership of the proletariat in the context of the world proletarian-socialist revolution. These revolutionaries in our country are striving to compete the struggle for national freedom and democracy in the era of modern imperialism and proletarian revolution. Upon the completion of the national democratic revolution, it is possible to start the socialist revolution.

The backward pro-industrial and semifeudal society that has been maintained under direct and indirect US colonial rule is a society in constant crisis, afflicted by the persistent problem of domestic feudalism and the deleterious impact of foreign monopoly capitalism. These two moribund forces—domestic feudalism and foreign monopoly capitalism or imperialism—are extremely counterrevolutionary. The severe processes of feudal and imperialist exploitation and oppression hinder the social, economic, political and cultural progress of the entire nation and people.

Since the beginning of US domination not a single decade has been unmarked by grave social unrest and outright repression of the people. The chronic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal system, however, was destined to reach its final stage. Thus, in 1972, a fascist dictatorship arose and wiped out every semblance of bourgeois-liberal democracy. The final stage of the crisis of the ruling system began in 1972 with the imposition of the fascist dictatorship.

A ruthless puppet autocracy has replaced the 1946 puppet republic and has aggravated and deepened the chronic crisis of the system. This open rule of terror signifies the inability of the ruling system and the ruling classes of big compradors and landlords to rule in the old way. The people desire revolutionary change, and an armed revolution is in fact growing in strength, led by a revolutionary party.

In the 1970s, the US-Marcos dictatorship seemed in full control of the Philippine situation as the imperialist banks poured into the economy enormous amounts of loan capital for pseudo-development and anti-industrial purposes and the revolutionary armed struggle was still in its early phase of strategic defensive.

In the 1980s it is clear that the US-Marcos dictatorship has merely served to bring the ruling system to its final crisis. The imperialists, fascists and other reactionaries can offer no solution to their own problems other than more of the very same things which in the first place caused their problems. Thus, to solve the debt crisis, they must sink the Philippines deeper into the debt trap; to solve the land problem, they must exacerbate it through "agribusiness."

The broad masses of the people are undergoing intolerable political repression and economic suffering. The basic masses of workers and peasants are being sunk to the level of starvation. Even the majority of the middle strata of society are being relegated to a life of want and misery. Under these circumstances, the stage of strategic defensive in the people's war is rapidly maturing and can enter the stage of strategic stalemate.

The Nationalist Alliance is correct in comprehensively taking the anti-imperialist, antifascist and antifeudal line. Its national democratic program systematically covers immediate and long-term tasks in the fields of politics, economy, culture and external relations.

All progressive and anti-imperialist forces must unite the entire people towards dismantling the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique, do away with its imperialist and feudal underpinnings and establish a democratic coalition government. This is our fundamental political task. US imperialism and its fascist stooges must be held responsible for all their crimes against the people.

The fundamental task in the economic field is to carry out national industrialization and genuine land reform. National industrialization will end our bondage to the imperialist banks and multinational firms, generate employment and higher incomes and give full play to Filipino entrepreneurship. Genuine land reform will break up feudalism once and for all and liberate the peasant majority of our people in an all-round way.

The fundamental task in the field of culture is to promote a national, scientific and mass-oriented system of culture and education. Institutions and means of information and education must favor progressive trends. The ethnic minorities must be able to make all-round progress on the basis of self-determination or autonomy, with full respect accorded to their cultural identity.

The fundamental task in external relations is for the Philippines to play an active independent role so as to enhance its own sovereignty and that of other countries; work for a new international economic order; oppose foreign domination, interference, intervention and aggression; and help create a world of justice, freedom, peace and progress.

In seeking to unite the people for the national democratic struggle, it is correct for the Nationalist Alliance to help build a united front of all patriotic and progressive classes, sectors, parties, organizations circles and individuals. We must specially concentrate on class because no group or individual can escape this.

To become a strong democratic force, the Nationalist Alliance must put emphasis on organizing or helping organize the basic alliance of the working class and the peasantry. These two classes constitute the overwhelming majority of the people (at least 90 percent) and have the most acute interest in the national democratic struggle.

The Nationalist Alliance must also help win over such social strata as the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie to the side of the basic alliance. These strata continue to carry the progressive impulse of the old national democratic revolution; their current interests are in harmony with those of the toiling masses.

In times of severe social crisis, the urban petty bourgeoisie is conspicuously one of the basic democratic forces together with the toiling masses. The middle bourgeoisie has both progressive and reactionary tendencies but the progressive tendency can rise and become dominant, since national entrepreneurs, increasingly exploited and repelled by the policies of the imperialists and fascists, are attracted by the growing strength of the national democratic movement.

Other social strata that can be won over are the rich peasants and enlightened gentry. They are attracted to the anti-imperialist and antifascist content of the national democratic struggle. The enlightened gentry are amenable to the rent reduction and anti-usury campaign; and the rich peasants, to fair wages for farm workers.

The crisis of the ruling system in its final stage has become so virulent that there are serious splits among the reactionary classes of big compradors and landlords. The fascist clique of big compradors and landlords headed by Marcos are so rapacious that it continues to grab businesses, land and privileges from the rest of the reactionary classes. Thus, the latter are desirous of undercutting the ruling clique. In certain ways, the national democratic movement can take advantage of the splits and utilize these in its favor.

On a national scale, the Nationalist Alliance must rely mainly on the workers and peasants, win over the urban petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie, take advantage of the splits among the big compradors and landlords in power in order to isolate and destroy the enemy—the US-Marcos clique.

In the countryside, the Nationalist Alliance must rely mainly on the poor peasants and farm workers, win over the middle peasants and farm workers, win over the middle peasants, further win over the rich peasants and enlightened gentry, and take advantage of splits among the landlords in general in order to isolate and destroy the enemy—the despotic landlords who are attached to the US-Marcos clique.

All forces that can be united must be united. The Nationalist Alliance can help coordinate the broadest possible range of forces against the narrowest target and make short shrift of the US-Marcos dictatorship.

II. Dismantling the US-Marcos dictatorship

It is the sovereign right of the Filipino people to wage armed struggle and all other forms of struggle against tyranny. This is a fundamental principle upheld in the advance of modern democracy. This is affirmed in common by liberal-democrats and by Marxist-Leninists. Even in religious lore, whether Christian or Islamic, tyranny is a transgression of divine authority. Thus, tyrannicide is justified. A war waged against oppression is a just war.

A regime that uses its monopoly of the instruments of violence to trample upon the people's sovereignty and all democratic rights compels the people to wage armed struggle in order to defend and liberate themselves. The daily violence built into the system of exploitation, a violence that continues to intensify combined with direct dramatic acts of terror systematically carried out by the state as it intensifies oppression has become intolerable and has driven the people to resistance.

At any rate, it is up to the people to decide what forms of struggle to wage against the US-Marcos dictatorship as well as which form is the principal and which is the secondary. All these forms of struggle can only be successful as they are willed and carried out by the people under correct and courageous leadership.

It is a matter of public knowledge that the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army and the National Democratic Front have been waging a protracted people's war against the US-Marcos dictatorship. Although the armed struggle is their principal form of struggle, they do not dispense with the nonarmed forms of struggle. They fight wielding and coordinating both armed and nonarmed forms of struggle to dismantle the dictatorship.

The armed national democratic revolution is the correct response to the armed fascist puppet counter-revolution. The prior advantage of the US-Marcos dictatorship in its monopoly of the instruments of violence can

be overcome by the justness of the revolutionary cause as the basis for the application of the strategy of people's war, the agrarian revolution and the building of the mass base.

The Marcos fascist autocracy is ground enough for the people to decide on armed struggle as the most effective form of democratic struggle. This despotism established itself by an armed coup against the established system of government in 1972. Since then, it has continuously waged a fascist counterrevolution.

Ruthlessly using the reactionary armed forces, it has perpetrated the most dastardly crimes against the people—mas-sacre, assassination, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, illegal seizure of property, forced eviction and mass evacuation, bombardment and so on—to keep itself in power.

Subject only to the dictates of his US imperialist master and in complete contempt of the people's sovereignty, the autocrat Marcos has usurped supreme executive, legislative and judicial authority. Fascist laws and acts of terrorism have victimized the workers, peasants, fishermen, ethnic minorities, students and youth, teachers and other professionals, businessmen, religious and the rest of the people.

Sham plebiscites, referenda and elections have been held only with the single objective of legitimizing and further entrenching the puppet autocracy. The rules and the results of these exercises are always rigged.

The monopoly of power has also meant the unbridled looting of the social wealth of the nation by the US-Marcos clique. The crony corporations have been the principal local assistants of the US and other transnational firms in exploiting the people and plundering the resources of the country.

Mortally afraid of being made to account for its grave crimes, the Marcos fascist gang is determined to escalate violence against the people in order to remain in power. As dramatically evidenced by the Aquino assassination, this gang cannot tolerate any serious political challenge even within the system. It cynically describes as maximum tolerance the brutal dispersal of city demonstrators and the far more brutal and barbaric torture and summary executions of peasants and other democratic activists in the countryside and now increasingly even in urban centers.

Marcos has declared time and again that he shall wipe out all opponents before he can be overthrown. He has arrogantly rejected every plea that he reconcile himself with the people whose rights he has so grievously violated.

Even some US officials who are inclined to reduce his powers and improve the facade of the US-Marcos dictatorship publicly say that the tyrant will not relinquish power except when he is already in a coffin. But the US continues to prop up the fascist dictatorship in the name of anticommunism and is peddling the bizarre notion that the puppet autocrat himself is now "revitalizing democratic institutions and processes."

The fascists are still flaunting their license to kill and gloating over their bloody crimes. In a psywar scheme plotted by his US imperialist master, Marcos has absolved himself from the Aquino assassination through the Agrava Board and has consigned the two reports of the board to a notorious clutch of placemen close to himself.

In the face of fascist tyranny, the broad masses of the people are joining and supporting the armed revolution. A fact now perceived by everyone is that the people's war being waged by the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army and the National Democratic Front has been the most effective form of struggle against the US-Marcos dictatorship.

The armed revolutionary movement is wiping out enemy troops in ever larger numbers, seizing arms from them, establishing local organs of democratic power, carrying out genuine land reform and building revolutionary mass organizations. Fascist power and authority is being displaced by the people's democratic power in ever widening areas all over the country.

The CPP, NPA and NDF are demonstrating that political power can be won cumulatively through a protracted people's war. The armed revolutionary movement grows in strength in the countryside and from there encircles the cities until the situation is ripe for a general offensive resulting in the total overthrow of the reactionary state.

As a result of the rapid growth of the revolutionary forces, an end to the US-Marcos dictatorship is now foreseeable. Either the US will junk Marcos or it will sink with him in an accelerated overthrow of the entire ruling system. But even if the US changed puppets, the ruling system would remain hopeless and incapable of solving its final crisis.

The fascist dictatorship of the US-Marcos clique reflects not only the interests of the autocrat, his clique or the US and the local reactionary classes but most significantly the final crisis of the entire ruling system. By its unbridled use of the coercive apparatus of the state against the people, this tyranny compels the people to accomplish nothing less than the armed overthrow of the state.

The Nationalist Alliance is a legal democratic organization and is committed to employing legal methods for advancing the national democratic cause. Its officers and members have various degrees and ways of appreciating the relationship between armed and nonarmed forms of struggle.

But whether one likes it or not, the revolutionary armed struggle is an essential and growing factor in the overall conflict between the national democratic forces and the fascist puppet forces. The armed and nonarmed forms of struggle help each other in advancing the national democratic cause against the common enemy.

The US-Marcos dictatorship will come to an end within a few years by virtue of all forms of militant struggle, armed and nonarmed. The fascist regime is already caught in a pincer by the revolutionary armed struggle and the legal democratic movement.

In consonance with the healthy commitment of the Nationalist Alliance to wage legal mass struggles without denying the people's sovereign right to armed revolution, there are quite a number of legal forms of struggle that can be fruitfully waged. The Nationalist Alliance has already made significant gains in this regard.

It can continue to conduct campaigns of political education on its national democratic program and on the burning issues of the day. This can be done through rallies, conferences, seminars and other gatherings as well as through the issuance of publications. It can thereby raise the fighting will and consciousness of the people.

It can continue to expand and consolidate its own organizational strength by engaging in the rapid recruitment and basic political education of members and thus develop more leaders of the national democratic movement at every level—national, regional, provincial, district, city or municipal and barangay.

It can continue to mobilize ever larger masses of the people for direct democratic action, and take the initiative in launching mass campaigns on a wide scale on the most fundamental and critical issues. With its nationwide membership, the Nationalist Alliance can undertake sustained mass campaigns.

It can either boycott an entire political exercise rigged by the US-Marcos dictatorship or expose such an exercise as a fraud but allow democratic elements to gain what they can on the basis of the unbeatable strength of the people in particular areas. It can turn certain weapons of the enemy against himself. It can encourage and develop democratic elements within the civil bureaucracy and in the reactionary armed forces.

It can wage a campaign of civil disobedience such as a tax boycott, boycott of crony enterprises and their products and so on. As a legal organization, the Nationalist Alliance will have to exert a great deal of political education and moral suasion. But when the armed revolutionaries participate in these boycotts, they can add to these methods certain reasonable acts of interdiction and even confiscation after sufficient warnings.

The range of possible mass campaigns to weaken and cause the dismantling of the US-Marcos dictatorship is wide. Your comprehensive program, practical experience, further research and studies can indicate far more kinds of mass mobilizations to undertake.

The organized strength and ability of the Nationalist Alliance to rally the people to the national democratic cause will continue to grow in stride with the rapid deterioration of the political and economic conditions of the fascist regime.

The Nationalist Alliance has already proven its ability to take on a major role in bringing millions of people to the streets of major cities on certain days of national protest. It can aim higher. It can strengthen itself so that in times to come it can play a major role in bringing the people in their tens of millions to coordinated actions in all cities and towns in a single campaign or even in a single day of reckoning against the US-Marcos dictatorship.

III. The democratic coalition government

The armed revolutionary movement has long been making preparations for the establishment of a democratic coalition government, with effective power on a nationwide scale, by creating the National Democratic Front as a broad united front for armed struggle, by building local organs of democratic power and by advocating a democratic coalition government.

The National Democratic Front is the most comprehensive united front organization underground. Its scope extends beyond the guerrilla fronts. It embraces all democratic forces in the country which are determined to overthrow the fascist dictatorial regime and establish a democratic coalition government.

The National Democratic Front includes movements, parties, organizations, circles and individuals from the working class, peasantry, urban petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie. In principle, it encompasses the local organs of democratic political power established by the armed revolution. It enjoys a high prestige not only in the country but also abroad.

The National Democratic Front is expected by the armed revolutionaries to facilitate the participation of all democratic forces, both inside and outside of its present organized framework, in the struggle to seize power from the people's enemy and establish the democratic coalition government.

Since the inception of people's war, local organs of democratic power have been established upon the initiative of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army. These are units of the people's self-government created along the united front line. These local units of the people's self-government now exist in the overwhelming majority of the provinces in the country, especially in guerrilla fronts.

Insofar as these local people's governmental organs have been established in the rural areas, they stress the antifeudal united front in connection with the comprehensive antifascist, anti-imperialist and antifeudal line.

The antifeudal line of the united front involves the main reliance on the poor peasants and farm workers; winning over the middle peasants and further winning over the rich peasants and the enlightened gentry; and taking advantage of the splits among the landlords in general in order to isolate the despotic landlords close to or members of the fascist clique.

Each local organ of democratic power has an overall leading committee with subsidiary committees in charge of organization, education, land reform, improvement of the people's livelihood, defense, health arbitration and so on. Such an organ of government is supported by mass organizations of workers, peasants, women, youth, children, cultural activists and so on.

The militia under the defense committee serves as the local police to maintain internal order and security. The full-fledged guerrilla units of the people's army move from one local area to another within its jurisdiction to attend to problems of defense beyond the capacity of the militia.

As the strength of the armed revolutionary movement grows, the level of the people's self-government that can be established will also rise from the barrio to the municipality, from the municipality to the district, until the democratic coalition government can be established.

A new people's government along the national democratic line of the united front is growing in the country even while the urban-centered fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique pretends to be in full control of the situation in the whole country and while in fact losing control of more and more extensive areas in the countryside.

From the viewpoint of the armed revolutionaries, the optimum kind of democratic coalition government to aim for is one led by the working class and its revolutionary party, founded on the basic alliance of the working class and the peasantry and further strengthened by the participation of the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie. Even some big compradors may be accommodated if they have a record of supporting the revolutionaries and are willing to convert their merchant capital into industrial capital and thereby change their class character.

This type of democratic coalition government can arise as a result of the complete overthrow of the reactionary state, the fascist puppet dictatorship and the reactionary classes of big compradors and landlord or in other words, the total victory of the broad masses of the people by armed revolution.

The national democratic revolution is completed and socialist revolution begins. In place of the dissolved counterrevolutionary state are the organs of the people's democratic government created in the protracted process of revolutionary struggle on the basis of the revolutionary united front led by the proletariat. The people's army becomes the main component of state power.

The new state will be republican and truly representative of the people. It takes the form of a stable democratic coalition government. There will be processes of election and appointment to fill up the organs of government at every level so that all patriotic and progressive classes, sectors, parties, organizations, circles and individuals are represented.

But between the present strength of the revolutionary forces and the optimum kind of democratic coalition government, is still a long and tortuous road to traverse. There are various grades of possibilities for some less developed kind of democratic coalition government (if we may use this term to denote some significant degree of democratic content in such a government).

The possibility of any kind of democratic coalition government depends on the historical circumstances, the balance of forces and what advantages there are to be gained by the people. There are enough instances that can be cited from world history regarding the combination of Left, Middle and Right forces in a coalition government.

The Left can participate in this coalition if together with the Middle it can significantly carry forward the national democratic line.

The Left cannot participate in such a government if the parameters and conditions are so designed that the Right can unilaterally and arbitrarily manipulate the Middle and the Left to carry forward an antinational and antidemocratic line.

Under the present circumstances and by all indications, the Marcos fascist gang is not in any position nor is it willing to even attempt any kind of coalition government. The Marcos game is monopoly of political power by brute force and sheer deception against the people.

As before, the US is colluding with the Marcos fascist clique in trying to bait the Middle into what is called the "revitalization of democratic institutions and processes." The puppet autocratic regime is being misrepresented as a democratic one. The US is trying to shore up the fascist dictatorship in the face of the surging legal democratic mass movement and the armed revolutionary movement.

The fixed position of the US-Marcos dictatorship towards the Left is to exterminate it by a combination of brute force and deceptive measures. In fact, there is a US scheme to use the Marcos fascist clique first in an anti-communist killing rampage, including the execution of some political prisoners, before the US casts this clique away.

The post-Marcos US scheme is to put up a new set of task masters from the Right and inveigle the Middle into a revival of the two party system, in which two sets of politicians subservient to itself and essentially representative of the big compradors and big landlords take turns in oppressing and exploiting the people.

The US and the local reactionaries completely miss the fundamental changes in the Philippine situation. The chronic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal system has reached the final stage; and the armed revolutionary movement will continue to grow at an accelerated rate. It is no longer possible for any regime of the Right to become stable as in the pre-Marcos period.

Instead of the Right being able to inveigle the Middle into an anti-Left combination, the Left and the Middle will continue to develop their democratic unity and ability to isolate and then defeat the Right. The relatively most reasonable groups and sections of the Right may possibly seek cooperation with the Left and the Middle in a coalition government.

The broad term Left is being used here to allow grades of possible Left participation in a Right-Middle-Left coalition government. One kind of coalition would be one in which only the legal Left organizations participate. Another would be one in which representatives of the CPP participate together with other Left organizations but with adequate precautions.

In any case, it must be assumed that the CPP will never dissolve the NPA and put the people and itself at the complete mercy of the Right, especially the ultrarightists instigated by US imperialism and connected with the worst elements of the reactionary armed forces. The CPP will be needed in a democratic coalition government precisely because of its armed revolutionary strength and its effective defense of the people's national and democratic interests.

Even as the possibility of a Left-Middle-Right coalition government is considered, the contrary possibility of outright military rule of the Right is not being discounted. After all, the ruling system is in the final stage of its chronic and insolvable crisis and is bound to unleash increasingly worse but desperate assaults on the people.

The escalation of counterrevolutionary violence will only serve to hasten the total victory of the national democratic revolution and the resurgence of the people's democratic republic taking the form of a democratic coalition government.

Our Allies and the Armed Resistance

Issued under the pen name Patnubay K. Liwanag

Circa December 26, 1984

This article is intended as a discussion paper for the benefit of allies who are interested in carrying out armed struggle, preparing for it or simply exploring it.—Author

The downfall of the Marcos dictatorship would be accelerated and completed within a relatively short period of time if our allies who belong to the middle strata and certain sections of the upper classes would do what they can to advance the armed resistance.

At a certain point in the growth of the armed resistance, the US would be induced to junk the fascist puppet clique as a total failure. Otherwise, as the US would calculate, the armed resistance of all patriotic and progressive forces would advance faster not only to end the fascist regime but also US domination of the Philippines.

At whatever pace our allies respond to our call to increase their share in the armed resistance, the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army are steadily developing all forms of struggle, especially armed struggle, all over the country.

In the wake of the assassination of Aquino by the Marcos regime, a great mass movement which is peaceful but militant has come to the surface. While this movement is important and necessary, it cannot by itself remove the Marcos clique from power. It is in constant danger of being crushed by the enemy through brute force.

The key to the ascendance and prolongation of the Marcos fascist dictatorship is the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Conversely, the key to the overthrow of this dictatorship and the reestablishment of democracy at a higher level than ever before is armed resistance. The US will never allow Marcos to lose control of the AFP until the armed resistance reaches a certain level that indubitably proves his failure as a puppet.

It is wishful thinking to hope that the Marcos clique will give up its power voluntarily through electoral exercises or as a result of peaceful mass actions. These mass actions are useful and indispensable in arousing, organizing and mobilizing the people. But armed resistance must be resolutely and systematically developed.

The lesson correctly drawn from the Aquino assassination is that the enemy does not hesitate to perpetrate the most brazen acts of terror in order to destroy anyone that it deems a serious threat to its power. The Aquino assassination marks a new level in the desperation of the fascist regime and the escalation of its violence against the opposition and the people.

As the political and economic crisis of the ruling system worsens, the regime unleashes more and more counterrevolutionary violence against the people. The fascists are emboldened to commit barbaric acts, especially in the countryside, because of US support for the "modernization" (re-equipment) of the AFP and Oplan Katatagan as a result of secret talks between the Marcos-Ver panel and the US Department of Defense-CIA panel in 1982.

The evil that is tyranny must be extirpated. Allowed to persist, it spells the daily violence of exploitation and oppression. A well prepared and well implemented armed resistance puts an end to it. Submission to tyranny is acceptance of violence against the people.

Tyrannicide is justified. This is upheld by all major ideologies in the country: Christian, Islamic, liberal democratic and Marxist. Those who advocate acquiescence or purely peaceful methods in the face of tyranny are either wittingly or unwittingly surrendering to it in cowardice, if they are not among the chosen few who benefit from it.

The moral and practical necessity of armed resistance against tyranny must be patiently explained to our allies. With due respect to their class interests and tendencies at every given time, we must propose to them practical measures on how they can contribute their share in the people's armed resistance.

In this regard, we propose to them four practical courses of action: (1) Support or join the New People's Army; (2) Form their own self-defense organizations; (3) Go into active armed struggle; and (4) Encourage a democratic movement in the AFP.

Support or join the NPA

The NPA is a people's army. It includes communists and noncommunists. They are workers, peasants and members of the middle class. Moreover, the NPA is recognized as the main armed organization of the National Democratic Front, which is the consultative or confederal organization of the broad united front of all

democratic forces.

Our allies can therefore wisely and wholeheartedly support or join the NPA. There is no hindrance whatsoever to extending various forms of support to it. Joining it, however, involves certain individual qualifications and responsibilities.

Support may be made directly to NPA units or through support groups or NPA representatives. It means collecting materials, services and funds for the NPA; providing facilities for the reproduction and distribution of revolutionary propaganda; conducting counter surveillance on enemy forces and providing information to the NPA; and encouraging persons with business or landed interests in NPA-controlled areas to negotiate and pay their taxes (a mere pittance compared to taxes paid to the fascist regime) to the people's government.

The most important materials and services needed by the NPA are the following: arms and ammunition; communication equipment; transport equipment and services, medicine, medical equipment and services; propaganda equipment; clothes and food.

The acquisition of arms and communication can be done through donation, purchase and confiscation from the enemy. The extensive contacts, facilities and other means of our allies can be very helpful in the acquisition and delivery of military material to the NPA from local and foreign sources.

Counter surveillance on enemy personnel, facilities and actions are for immediate and long-term purposes. That of enemy personnel is for the purpose of enlightening, disarming or punishing them. That of facilities is for the purpose of confiscating weapons and other related actions. That of actions is for the purpose of countering them.

Any ally who is determined and qualified to join the NPA may do so and be attached to a specific field unit of the NPA. It is fine if he is prepared ideologically, politically and organizationally by responsible representatives of the NPA.

The NPA may also qualify as its members individuals who belong to support groups even as they maintain their legal occupations. Their distinction from other members of civilian support groups is their pledge to perform military duty when necessary.

Form self-defense organizations

Self-defense organizations are armed organizations that do not actively seek combat with the enemy for such reasons as that they would use their weapons in self-defense only when they are attacked; or that they would go into combat only after they accumulate a certain level of armed strength or when they feel it would be effective to do so.

This type of armed organization is very suitable to quite a number of allies who think that they cannot detach themselves from their legal preoccupations. The concept of self-defense is exceedingly acceptable to them.

Our allies may form self-defense organizations of varying sizes and strength and under whatever name. These may be completely independent from but cooperating bilaterally with the NPA or within the NDF framework.

The NPA recognizes the right of our allies to form self-defense organizations, especially if there are intended as reserve armed strength against the common enemy. Liaison with them is necessary not only to avoid misunderstanding but also to achieve positive and concrete forms of cooperation.

It is quite easy for certain allies to form self-defense organizations. They have the legal right under the ruling system to own licensed guns and have guards to protect their homes and properties, especially because of rising criminality. They can also acquire unlicensed arms from local and foreign sources.

In forming self-defense organizations, all that our allies need to do is to orient, organize and train their armed friends and subordinates for self-defense and prospective armed struggle against the enemy. They have some experience to build on, such as their background in ROTC, in running legal gun clubs and security agencies, and in giving or lending arms to their local leaders.

The NPA is willing to cooperate with allies on the formation of self-defense organizations by giving advice and political-military training and leeway for existence. In turn, our allies can give arms and ammunition to the NPA regularly or whenever possible.

It is also possible for the NPA and our allies to cooperate in acquiring arms in great quantity from local and foreign sources so that both sides are assured of increasing armed strength. Materials for the local manufacture of weapons can also be imported.

Go into Active Armed Struggle

Allies who have arms can go into active armed struggle anytime they choose, whether or not they pass through the stage of forming self-defense organizations.

At any rate, they need to cooperate and coordinate with the NPA and other armed organizations in the NDF in order to avoid anarchy or unnecessary conflicts and to deliver the most lethal blows against the common enemy. Cooperation and coordination can best be achieved on the basis of common political agreement in the united front and through liaison groups.

The areas of cooperation are: planning, intelligence, political-military training, build-up of arms and other logistics, and combat operations.

In order to help prepare the self-defense organizations for active armed struggle, the NPA is willing to include some of their units or elements in actual military operations regularly or occasionally. Participation in NPA activities would raise their morale and improve their skills.

The arms in the hands of self-defense organizations also do not have to be idle all the time. These can be lent within clearly agreed time limits to NPA units in order to augment their strength and seize more arms from the enemy or accomplish other objectives.

In the future, when the NPA is already defeating the enemy in bigger battles, there will be great opportunities for the self-defense organizations to go into battle or openly assume rearguard duties in areas where the enemy has been defeated.

Encourage democratic movement in the AFP

The main task of the armed resistance is to annihilate and defeat armed enemy units. But at the same time, we must do work to cause their self-disintegration or turn them against the fascist dictatorship. This is the purpose of encouraging a democratic movement in the AFP.

We must recognize that the overwhelming majority of ordinary troops are recruited from the toiling masses of workers and peasants. They are ill-paid, victimized by intra-service corruption and often brutally treated by their officers. They will be increasingly discontented due to the worsening political and economic crisis and demoralized by increasing casualties.

Even among the officers, there are severe contradictions between the Marcos loyalists and officers who are not benefiting from the evils of puppetry, brutality and corruption, favoritism and nepotism. At the rate the economic crisis is worsening, honest democratic-minded officers are already discontented and disgusted with the dictator Marcos and his clique of loyalists.

Our allies can develop their contacts with AFP officers and men who are their relatives, friends, townmates and neighbors so as to encourage them to reject the fascist dictatorship and embrace the democratic movement. Dialogues and literature for the purpose must be made.

The democratic movement in the AFP might develop to the extent that some AFP officers and men would decide to put the fascist dictator into their protective custody and require him to sign away his autocratic powers in favor of a democratic form of government. They can round up the Marcos loyalists after they have taken Marcos into custody. The concentration of power in his single person is both his strength and weakness.

At any rate, the democratic movement in the AFP will be useful in destroying the Marcos-Ver clique, in effecting a complete reorganization of the AFP, or in countervailing or frustrating any coup inspired by the US in its own interest.

While long-term purposes are not yet achieved, our allies can purchase arms and ammunitions from AFP officers and men on a friendly or business basis, collect data on AFP personnel and facilities and prepare for the day that the most rabid minions of the fascist dictator can be incapacitated.

The NPA does its share of encouraging a democratic movement in the AFP. It implants cadres within the AFP, sends revolutionary propaganda within AFP ranks, deals fairly with the families of AFP soldiers in NPA-controlled areas, gives safe conduct to these soldiers on their family visits and treats enemy captives leniently.

The wise policy of the NPA yields positive results. An increasing number of AFP officers and men give for free or sell arms and ammunition to the NPA and promise to join the side of the people (including their own families) at the proper time. These soldiers speak well of the NPA even in their barracks and they regret being put into combat with it. Many quit the AFP to join the NPA because of enlightenment and moral conviction.

Calculations for the near future

The armed resistance is now in the advanced substage of the strategic defensive. The NPA can launch tactical

offensives within the scope of 500 to 600 municipalities out of the country's 1,500 municipalities. It has at least 10,000 rifles shared by some 20,000 fighters in rotation.

There are now forty guerrilla fronts, each with three to ten guerrilla zones. Each zone covers three to ten municipalities. The organized mass base has risen to six million people in close to sixty provinces. It involves local organs of political power, militia and mass organizations of workers, peasants, youth, women and others.

If the NPA succeeds in raising the number of its automatic rifles to 25,000, the NPA shall already be securely in the early substage of the strategic stalemate; and shall be able to launch tactical offensives within the scope of the majority of Philippine municipalities.

The NPA would then gain the capability of wiping out entire enemy companies quite frequently. Dramatic offensives, up to repeated temporary seizures of major towns and provincial capitals, will be carried out by battalion-size operations. The enemy will be forced to concentrate on key points only to leave extensive areas open for the people's government and the NPA to control.

The point shall have been reached when the US will declare the Marcos puppet clique a complete failure and remove it from power. The armed resistance would advance faster toward the stage of strategic offensive. It will be futile for the US to install another fascist puppet dictatorship.

If our allies have strong self-defense organizations, they together with the NPA and other armed organizations will be able to tell the US not to install another fascist puppet regime and to desist from interfering with the formation of a broad united front government.

The word of our allies will have tremendous weight because it would be backed up by their self-defense organizations. These can help bring about the strategic offensive by going into active armed struggle and joining up with the NPA and other armed organizations. Also, without firing a single shot, our allies will be able to persuade local government in extensive areas to break away from a fascist regime sponsored by the US.

As a possible plus factor in favor of a united front government, the democratic movement of AFP officers and soldiers will likely grow rapidly after the Marcos fascist clique has been eliminated either by this movement or by a US-inspired clique.

The democratic movement inside and outside the AFP will countervail US influence and will incapacitate any fascist military clique so as to make possible the total reorganization of the AFP under a broad united front government. This is a possibility alternative to the continuance of civil strife.

By helping the NPA increase its armed strength rapidly in one, two or three years, our allies can gain an effective lever for removing the Marcos puppet clique from power. At the earliest, the US will begin to drop Marcos after our allies contribute a few thousand of rifles to the NPA.

Our allies can at the same time form their own self-defense organizations to protect and promote their legitimate interests and have more confidence in the united front for armed struggle and in opposing the US-Marcos regime. The NPA respects these legitimate interests and will unite, cooperate and coordinate with the allies in securing their legitimate interests.

The key to our allies being able to form their own self-defense organizations and also help the NPA increase its rifles in a rapid manner is to import arms. If certain commercial goods can be brought into the country by various methods, there is no reason why arms cannot be brought in, using the same methods.

The amount of arms imported can grow progressively as the ability to solicit, purchase, carry and receive them increases. The importation of ten to twenty thousand rifles in one, two or three years is a realizable and sufficient target.

The world is wide open for acquiring the arms. These can be had from any friendly source abroad. At any rate, revolutionary, or anti-imperialist countries, parties, movements or groups are the most reliable sources. The weapons of freedom can be acquired through grants, loans or purchase, especially from friendly revolutionary movements and organizations abroad.

There is no more effective way to end the fascist dictatorship than waging armed resistance. And whatever are our wishes, the Marcos fascist clique is driven by the rapidly worsening political and economic crisis and by its own greed and fear of its victims to rule by terror to the very end.

It would be a pity if the great upsurge of mass actions galvanized by the martyrdom of Benigno S. Aquino and other victims of fascist injustice are not promptly matched by determined efforts to accelerate the growth of the armed resistance.

Without the development of the armed resistance, the US-Marcos regime will continue to suppress the national sovereignty and democratic rights of the people and perpetrate bloody acts to keep itself in power.

Since its defeat in the Vietnam war, the general decline of the US has been accelerating. The United States is being weakened by its internal socioeconomic crisis as well as by being drawn to so many trouble spots in the world. It has become more and more possible for countries like the Philippines and for peoples like the Filipino people to free themselves one by one from the clutches of US imperialism.

The Opposition Must Prepare for any Eventuality

March 11, 1985

Would you endorse participation [by the opposition] in possible elections in 1985? Do you believe elections will be held in 1985? What are the indications that these elections will/will not push through?

The possibility of simultaneous presidential and local elections in 1985 has been premised on the death or physical incapacity of Mr. Marcos. I would have no objection to the legal opposition participating in such elections, especially because conditions for the opposition to breach the ramparts of fascism would then be far better than before.

But it turns out that Mr. Marcos is still alive and kicking. It is more likely that no elections will be held in 1985. Mr. Marcos is using 1985 to accomplish certain objectives.

I believe that Mr. Marcos is indeed sick with some degenerative disease requiring major treatment every so often to keep him alive and from getting incapacitated. But he will remain dangerous so long as he can utter or write out such monosyllabic words as “grab,” “kill,” “cheat,” etc. and he can sign a decree extending his emergency powers to his loyal chief of staff, whether it be General Ver or General Ramos.

How would you assess the moves of the opposition? Is there a maneuver, do you think, on the part of the Marcos regime to deflect attention from (a) the Aquino assassination trial; (b) measures it is undertaking to intensify militarization; and (c) continued repression by floating the prospect of elections? Do you think, in other words, that the rumors about elections in 1985 are a deliberate ploy?

The opposition cannot be blamed for acting on the rumors of a dying Ferdinand Marcos and on the rumors of elections in 1985, as well as for building up a number of presidential hopefuls. In the first place, the opposition must constantly strengthen itself and prepare for any eventuality.

But what is deplorable is that a number of opposition leaders have become so obsessed with inheriting the autocratic powers of Mr. Marcos that they have been negligent in exposing the fact that Mr. Marcos is using 1985 to complete the whitewash of the Aquino assassination; rebuild the image of the regime; get the country deeper into the debt trap; escalate militarization and repression; and prepare the machinery and conditions for fraud and terrorism in the forthcoming elections under the pretext of counterinsurgency.

One or two prominent opposition politicians seem so sure of rising to absolute power that they are already on the campaign to witchhunt communists, denigrate and exclude national democratic organizations, and perpetuate US economic and military domination. They appear too eager to please the US government and uphold the monopoly of power by the big compradors and landlords. They have not paused to consider that against their subjective wishes, the US, particularly the administration of President Reagan, continues to encourage Mr. Marcos to hold on to his fascist dictatorship and to allow him to control and manipulate the AFP [Armed Forces of the Philippines] and the Comelec [Commission on Elections]. The rumors of elections in 1985 have been a deliberate ploy, as you put it, on the part of the US as well as the Marcos clique.

The rumors of a dead or dying Marcos are traceable to the US Embassy, Malacañang Palace [the presidential palace] and Camp Aguinaldo [AFP headquarters]. There is a systematic psywar campaign to put people off balance and deflect their attention from fundamental or gut issues.

My point is that the opposition can and should prepare for elections, engage in all forms of struggle and take up fundamental issues without let-up. As they engage in all forms of struggle, some opposition leaders should stop conceding that the fascist dictatorship has become a democracy; that the 1984 sham elections were a clean and honest political exercise; and that the elections are the only way through which the fascist dictatorship can be ended.

Do you think that President Marcos' announcement of reinstating Gen. Fabian Ver is a preparation on the part of the regime to use terrorism in the elections—whether these be in 1985, 1986 or 1987? Will the pace of the Aquino trial be synchronized with the necessity of elections and the necessity, too, of exonerating General Ver, so that if it becomes necessary to hold elections in 1985, the Aquino assassination trial will end in 1985 in order to exonerate Ver?

Mr. Marcos' essential interest in having General Ver exonerated and in reinstating him is to complete the

process of concealing the real mastermind of the Aquino assassination. A campaign to reverse the people's verdict is going on full-blast, with the connivance of the Reagan administration.

Whether General Ver is reinstated or General Ramos continues as AFP chief of staff, Mr. Marcos continues to be in a position to use terrorism in the elections. The reported differences between General Ver and General Ramos are those of loyal servants to the same master. Both are original members of the so-called "twelve disciples" who conspired with Mr. Marcos in the 1972 coup [declaration of martial law] against the established government. The brutal repression of the people by the military has continued to escalate under General Ramos.

The Sandiganbayan [ombudsman court] trial of the Aquino assassination case will be concluded in 1985, perhaps in three to six months before the end of the year, giving Mr. Marcos and the KBL enough time to bury the Aquino case before the 1986 elections.

Let me express my warmest and sincerest greetings and congratulations to the officers and members of all the mass organizations, now in the process of forming themselves into the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) on the basis of the principles of popular democracy, nationalism, people's welfare and national unity.

BAYAN is emerging as the largest and broadest democratic coalition of patriotic and progressive forces tempered in the heat of militant mass struggles. It represents a new and higher level of development in the legal democratic mass movement.

In forming this alliance, you have taken on an endeavor of historic import. You have bound yourselves to further arouse, organize and mobilize the broad masses of the people and carry forward the struggle for national liberation and democracy against the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique, which is the concentrated expression of the evils of US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

There can be no stronger alliance in the country than one that brings together the organized strength of the workers, peasants, fishermen, urban poor, ethnic minorities, youth and students, women, teachers, lawyers, doctors, writers and artists, other professionals, church people, businessmen and civic leaders who are determined to fight for the national and democratic rights and interests of the entire Filipino people.

We all confront an autocratic puppet regime isolated from and justly hated by the people because of its monstrous crimes. It is a regime that is dying though still dangerous for the simple reason that US imperialism provides it with the means to attack the people and frustrate their will.

After having used this fascist dictatorship, which is the tyranny of a small bureaucratic clique of big compradors and landlord, and finding it an utter failure in the bloody counterrevolution against the Filipino people, the US imperialists now pretend to be pressuring it to give up its monopoly of power voluntarily and give way to a supposed process of democratization.

However, the US imperialists are actually egging on the despot Marcos to escalate his campaigns of terror under the pretext of anticommunism and counterinsurgency, the very same pretext under which the fascist dictatorship had been instituted and entrenched not only against the basic masses of the workers and peasants together with the middle social strata of Philippine society but also certain segments of the upper classes outside the tiny circle of Marcos kins, cronies and loyalists within the military.

Under the US game plan of recognizing Marcos as "part of the problem" yet making him "part of the solution," the US has continued to use him to promote its imperialist interests. Marcos conversely has continued to use the US to promote his fascist interests and to further enlarge his already massive personal fortunes by continuing to loot the country.

The US Reagan administration continuously tries to pass off the autocratic regime as "democratic" and hails every escalation of fascist terrorism and deception (including the Aquino assassination and cover-up) as an "improvement" in the human rights situation in the Philippines. The US in fact equates "moderation" and "democracy" with the preservation and enlargement of imperialist and local reactionary interests through violence and deception.

At the rate that the US-Marcos collusion is proceeding, Marcos will retain or, at the most, merely "modify" Amendment 6; he will continue to control and manipulate the Armed Forces of the Philippines against the people; and he will go on rigging elections until he is unceremoniously kicked out of power.

The present US scheme allows Marcos to fix the rules and procedures of the forthcoming elections through the Batasang Pambansa and the Commission on Elections as well as to use both the regular military forces and the paramilitary forces for fraud and terrorism under the guise of counterinsurgency. In furtherance of militarization and in preparation for the elections, local officials, of whom almost all belong to the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL), have been openly converted into military agents of the US-Marcos clique.

The problem of the legal opposition is not its supposed disunity. It is the fascist dictatorship. It would be far easier to unite the National Unification Committee (NUC), the Conveners Group and BAYAN or the Nacionalista Party-UNIDO, the Liberal Party, PDP-LABAN and BAYAN than to cope with the fraud and terrorism that the US-Marcos clique is capable of unleashing in electoral exercises under its auspices and control.

BAYAN has correctly criticized US imperialism and the tie-up between it and the fascist puppet regime. Without this fundamental critical standpoint, it is impossible to assert and to fight for the national and democratic rights and interests of the people.

BAYAN is correct in asserting that militant mass actions on fundamental issues are far more important than periodic electoral exercise staged by the US-Marcos dictatorship while at the same time being open to the possibility of participating in elections where fundamental issues can be ventilated, where progressive parties and candidates have a chance of winning, and where the forces of reaction can be split and weakened.

BAYAN is also correct in recognizing that the fascist dictatorship continues to rule through brute force and therefore the necessity for all legal democratic forces to strengthen themselves against such violence and prepare themselves against all eventualities.

The life-and-death struggle between the armed democratic revolution and armed fascist counterrevolution is bound to intensify. There is no solution in sight for the ever worsening political and economic crisis of the ruling system. US imperialism and its fascist puppet continue to aggravate the oppression and exploitation of the people. They leave the people no choice but to wage all forms of resistance.

To win victory in the struggle for national freedom and democracy, all democratic forces must develop a broad national united front founded on the basic alliance of the working class and the peasantry, supported by the middle social strata and taking advantage of the splits within the ranks of the reactionary classes of big compradors and landlords in order to isolate and dismantle the fascist dictatorship and its imperialist props.

This national united front must aim for the establishment of a democratic coalition government in order to get rid completely of fascist, foreign and feudal domination and establish a free, independent, democratic, just, progressive and prosperous society.

It is gratifying to note that BAYAN is determined to counterpoise the concept and strength of people's democracy against the elitist misinterpretation of democracy by the imperialists, the fascists and other reactionaries. With its present mass strength and its brilliant leadership, BAYAN is certain to win greater victories in the struggle.

I am confident that BAYAN and all its component organizations will further strengthen themselves by providing their members and the people in general with the correct political orientation and education promptly and rapidly by organizing chapters down to the barrio level and in all barrios in the country, and by undertaking militant mass actions and campaigns to uphold, defend and promote national sovereignty and all democratic rights of the people.

Long live BAYAN!

Unite to dismantle the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique!

Long live the Filipino people!

Those who boycotted the 1984 elections are now busy preparing to participate in the forthcoming local and presidential elections. What do you think of this development?

There have been changes in the objective conditions. The political and economic crisis has further worsened and the Marcos clique has become even more isolated. The legal opposition can further weaken the Marcos clique. Through the elections, they are likely to contribute significantly to the defeat of the fascist puppet clique by coordinating their electoral struggle with the other forms of mass struggle.

The elections are an occasion to further isolate the Marcos dictatorship and strengthen the democratic forces, including the revolutionary forces, which can go on ventilating the fundamental issues.

The local elections can be more closely watched by the candidates and their supporters and the legal opposition would have very good chances of winning many local seats. It is in the presidential elections where the ruling clique would have more opportunity of “winning,” of course, through fraud and terrorism.

The KBL will surely lose in both local and presidential elections, if these are kept relatively clean and honest. If the KBL were to win again through fraud and terror, the desire for armed revolution will grow stronger among the people.

Will not participation in these elections sort of endorse the nature and workings of the Marcos regime? Will it not mean that the boycotters of 1984 have already abandoned their 1984 call for meaningful elections?

Far from being an endorsement of the nature and workings of the regime, these elections will be occasions to further expose and oppose the antinational and antidemocratic character of the regime.

I do not think that the 1984 boycotters have abandoned their call for meaningful elections. They have not stopped condemning the evil character of the regime as well as the unjustness of present electoral rules and procedures.

The US and the Marcos clique are using counterrevolutionary dual tactics in staging the elections. The most determined oppositionists, however, can also use revolutionary dual tactics.

Are not the 1984 participationists correct after all, and the 1984 boycotters riding on the successes of the participationists?

It is wrong to conclude that the 1984 participationists were correct and the boycotters were not. We cannot say that the boycotters were wrong in making just and reasonable demands concerning the elections. Even if they had participated, they would not have changed the election results of 70-30 in favor of the KBL by virtue of a prearrangement between the US and Marcos. The boycotters were not wrong when they said that the Batasang Pambansa would be a sham parliament—a mere embellishment on a despotic regime. A 30 percent opposition minority in a sham parliament is not, by any indication, a whopping success.

The elections staged by the US and Marcos to conjure an illusion of democracy are a mere by-product of the fundamental struggle between all democratic forces and the US-Marcos dictatorship.

The most steadfast among the opposition forces are not the electioneering politicians who wait for opportunities in elections but those who have been risking their lives and limbs fighting the fascist dictatorship since 1972.

Will not these elections isolate, undermine or take away initiative from the armed revolution, the Left in general and the CPP in particular?

I do not think so. Elections staged by the ruling clique are periodic occurrences that do not by themselves provide any profound and lasting answer to the fundamental national and democratic demands of the Filipino people. There will be no losing sight of the fact that elections are merely one of the legal forms of struggle and are subordinate and ancillary to the militant mass struggles and the mass organizing being conducted on a daily basis.

These elections can aggravate rather than solve serious contradictions among the reactionaries and can also result in the ascendance of progressives in many areas where the people's organizations are strong.

These elections cannot dismantle the CPP, NPA, NDF, organs of democratic power, nor the mass organizations of workers, peasants, youth, women and so on.

If again the KBL won through fraud and terrorism, the revolutionary organizations will grow even faster. If the

legal opposition won despite the odds, it will have to adopt fundamental policy changes to come to terms with the revolutionary organizations. It will have to deal with the grave problems the Marcos autocracy will leave behind.

What do you think would be the stand of the Left in general and/or the CPP in particular regarding these elections?

I have access only to legal publications. I observe that the legal forces of the Left are open to supporting progressive candidates, especially those responsive to national and democratic demands.

The CPP, being illegal, cannot come out openly and field candidates under its banner. The CPP is the political party leading the armed revolution in the fundamental struggle between the fascist dictatorship and the democratic forces.

But the Party can determine and influence the results of the elections in many parts of the country. It is quite experienced in letting local officials of the reactionary government serve as facades for local organs of democratic power. Otherwise, such officials would be totally rejected by the people in their local areas.

What is your view of the convenors' group and the national unification council of the UNIDO?

Both are serious attempts to unify the opposition. But I observe that both exclude the progressive organizations of the workers and peasants as well as those of the middle strata, which have a long record of resolutely and militantly fighting the fascist dictatorship.

These are excluded in the conception, organization and decision-making of an electoral coalition against the Marcos autocracy. I hope that the convenor group and the national unification council of UNIDO would include them and give them a fair share of responsibility in a broad-based democratic coalition.

What do you suppose would be a program of government that the opposition can carry if it were to solve or mitigate the economic and political crisis?

It should be a program that comprehensively covers: (1) the dismantling of the fascist dictatorship and the realization of democracy; (2) the assertion of national sovereignty in political, economic, military, cultural and external affairs; (3) national industrialization and genuine land reform; (4) a patriotic, scientific and democratic culture; and (5) an independent, nonaligned foreign policy.

Such a program should take into account the programs and declaration of principles of progressive organizations and alliances of workers, peasants and the middle strata, like the Nationalist Alliance, CORD, etc.

There should be a blending of the programs of opposition political parties, mass organizations and alliances. The Basis for Unity of the Convenor Group can be elaborated on and improved. I have not yet seen any similar document from the national unification committee of the UNIDO. Whatever similar document UNIDO has should be made known.

As soon as possible, there should be some kind of a grand coalition council or a united front council or whatever the participants may wish to call it. Seats in such a council can be equally apportioned three ways: one-third to representatives of the Left (workers and peasants); one-third to the Middle (middle forces); and one-third to the antifascist sections of the Right (big businessmen and landlords).

The workers and peasants who compose at least 90 percent of our people should certainly be adequately represented. Their organizations should not be ignored. They deserve at least one-third of the seats in a grand coalition council

But there can be another way of apportioning seats which may be acceptable to everyone. The following can have equal numbers of seats: (1) organizations of workers and peasants, like the Kilusang Mayo Uno, and regional urban poor and peasant associations; (2) middle strata organizations, like the Nationalist Alliance, CORD, Kaakbay, Sandigan, ACT, LFS, etc.; (3) the Liberal Party, both Salonga and Kalaw wings; (4) the Nacionalista Party, both Laurel and Roy wings; (5) PDP-Laban; (6) the regional parties, such as the Mindanao Alliance, Bikol Saro, Concerned Citizens Aggrupation; Panaghiusa, Timek ti Umili, etc.; (7) Businessmen's organizations, such as ATOM, AMA, Jaycees for Justice, Manindigan, Makati Business Club and other organizations of the enlightened gentry. Still another arrangement could be a four-way grand coalition council with seats equally apportioned to cause-oriented groups, the Liberal Party, PDP-Laban and Nacionalista Party. In this arrangement, the cause-oriented groups get an extremely modest share.

What would be the tasks of the grand coalition council you have in mind?

Such a council can have the following tasks: (1) draft a common program of government, the rules of the coalition, and the criteria and procedures for selecting local and presidential candidates; (2) call as soon as possible a national convention to ratify the common program and other documents, and to receive presidential

nominations; (3) guide the formation of local alliances and the choice of local candidates; (4) direct the campaign for both the local and the presidential candidates; and (5) serve as a consultative council to assist a winning opposition president in fulfilling his signed commitment, which is the implementation of the common program of government, and advise him on policies and appointments; or in case of defeat, continue the campaign against the fascist dictatorship and its foreign sponsor.

How would the council be reflected at the local levels (provincial and municipal)? How would the local councils be constituted?

As much as possible, the grand coalition council or united front council should be replicated at the provincial and municipal levels. But I think that provincial and municipal alliances for the purpose of local elections do not have to wait for the grand coalition council to be formed.

The earlier formation of local alliances of the opposition is advisable because local elections are supposed to be held earlier. Local alliances might be easier to form and can support the formation of a grand coalition at the national level.

Do you think the CPP will accept legalization if the legal opposition won?

I cannot speak for the CPP. But I surmise that it will set a number of preconditions for accepting legalization. Among these could be first, some prior satisfaction of the national and democratic demands of the people; second, the legal forces of the Left and the Left and Middle alliance are existing freely and are developing in a new setting; third, all components of the National Democratic Front agree to discuss matters with the new government; and fourth, the CPP will have to decide if it were truly beneficial to the people to discuss matters with the new government. At any rate, I suppose that the CPP is pleased to be recognized as an important factor by the legal opposition in its offer of legalization.

I suppose that the offer of legalization would carry with it a precondition such as the laying down of arms by the NPA. Do you suppose the CPP will disarm and dissolve the NPA in order to become legal?

My opinion can only be as good as yours. But I would say that before military questions can be tackled, political questions have to be settled first.

I suppose the CPP will ask: Will there be satisfaction of the national and democratic demands of the people? The new regime will have to take concrete measures in this regard.

Then the CPP will ask: Will the new regime reorient and reorganize the Armed Forces of the Philippines so that it becomes an instrument of the people and not a coercive instrument of the US imperialists and the local reactionary classes against the people?

Anyone can see that the CPP is justifiably very wary of the AFP, especially because it has been used by the US-Marcos clique to conduct a bloody fascist counterrevolution against the broad masses of the people. It would be wise for a new president to unilaterally and unconditionally legalize the CPP and invite it to a democratic coalition or a united front government.

The status of the AFP and the NPA can then be subsequently discussed, especially because by 1987 the stage of strategic stalemate in the people's war shall probably have begun.

In the past, Mr. Marcos and Minister Enrile had been publicly offering legalization to the Communist Party. Why have they failed in attracting the CPP?

The lack of good faith on the part of Marcos and Enrile in offering CPP legalization shows in the fact that they are now attacking the legal opposition for offering the same thing and that they are urging the legal opposition to join an anticommunist campaign so as to obscure the urgent issues against puppetry, brutality, corruption and the allround bankruptcy of the Marcos regime as well as all the other evils of fascist dictatorship. Marcos and Enrile failed to attract the CPP because they simply wanted the Party and the people's army to surrender to fascist dictatorship and render the people and the broad opposition completely defenseless and hopeless. They were simply asking the CPP and the NPA to commit political and physical suicide. If the CPP and NPA capitulate to the fascist dictatorship, their officers and members would not only be politically discredited but physically wiped out anytime. The dynastic ambitions of Marcos would prevail. Incidentally, Marcos has legalized the so-called PKP. And this party has had to surrender and submit to humiliating terms.

Mr. Marcos and Mr. Enrile have admitted the growing strength of the NPA. What is the source of this strength?

First, the political and economic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal system has been aggravated by the

fascist regime of the US-Marcos clique.

Second, the people intensely desire revolutionary change—essentially the fulfilment of their demand for national liberation and democracy.

Third, the people have their revolutionary party and their army—the NPA—is led by this party correctly pursuing the national democratic line. It is, as a consequence, growing stronger everyday.

The NPA is not just a fighting force. It is also an education, mass organizing and productive force. In all its tasks, it seeks to serve the people.

The NPA is supported by local organs of democratic power, mass organizations and local militia units. The armed struggle is integrated into a program of genuine land reform and mass base building; and is completed by united front work.

The NPA applies the theory of people's war on the Philippine situation. It builds up its revolutionary strength by relying on the people and seizing arms from its enemy. Strategically, the AFP is superior in the number of personnel, equipment and training. But tactically, the NPA can launch offensives that can wipe out AFP forces piece by piece.

The NPA combination of the people's support and the correct strategy and tactics in accordance with the theory of people's war has been the undoing of the AFP. Its most fatal weakness is its inherently antipeople character—its being the coercive instrument of an antinational and antidemocratic regime.

How do you view the stand of President Marcos, Doy Laurel and the Convenor Group regarding the US military bases in the country?

Marcos would like to have these bases in exchange for US support for himself and his clique. In the past, he would sometimes claim “nationalist” credit for the so-called five-year renewable tenure of the US military bases, the token AFP command over the same, and the commitment for removal of foreign bases under the 1976 ASEAN Accords. But at other times, when he thinks that an outright pro-imperialist position is more profitable, he is for the perpetuation of these bases; his stand is double-dealing in the pursuit of selfish interests.

Laurel can improve on his current stand. He need not appear too eager to please the US. As these bases were imposed on the country by virtue of an executive agreement, there is no reason why this cannot be removed by a truly patriotic chief executive. The military bases agreement allows the Philippine government to initiate the removal of these bases on the ground of Philippine sovereignty and territorial integrity. The proposal for a plebiscite on these bases is superfluous.

The stand of the Convenor Group can also stand some improvement. US military bases should be removed immediately or not later than 1991 when the bases agreement expires. Pending removal, the AFP command over these bases should have authority to inspect and control every inch of the same.

What do you think will be the role of the US in the elections? Which of the presidential candidates will it support?

US authorities are making a lot of noise about the US being a champion of democracy; about their desire of strengthening supposedly democratic institutions and processes. But the Filipino people know that the US imperialists have been conniving with and supporting the fascist dictatorship to suppress the democratic forces, especially the toiling masses of workers and peasants.

Now that the Marcos clique is openly detested by the aggrieved people, they come assuring certain elements of the opposition that they are about to phase the Marcos clique out through elections. But at the same time they are providing Marcos with advice and logistics to go on an anticommunist rampage in order to undermine the broad democratic opposition against puppet autocracy.

The US is a double dealer. It will place bets on both Marcos or his surrogate and an opposition presidential candidate. It places the bigger bet on its favorite. Should local elections come ahead of the presidential elections, local election results will indicate to the US on which side to place the bigger bet but the US will try to make both sides beholden to itself.

What do you think are the chances of the legal opposition in the local and presidential elections?

Were the elections clean and honest, the legal opposition will certainly win by a landslide. It is uncertain of winning only because it is the Marcos clique that fixes the electoral rules and that has total control of the AFP and the Comelec.

There is a big chance for the opposition to win the overwhelming majority of local seats despite the odds. But before that, the ruling clique must fail in its scheme of using the bogey of anticommunism to undermine the

broad democratic opposition.

Who would most likely be the presidential and vice-presidential bets of the opposition? Or is there a possibility of more than one team of opposition candidates for the presidential elections?

There is an abundance of presidential talents in the opposition. The public is well aware of the twelve frontrunners. At this point it is difficult to single out any one of them. But when a grand democratic coalition has been formed and the criteria for selecting candidates have been set, it should relatively be easy to determine by convention vote the presidential and vice presidential bets.

There would then be no other serious team of the opposition, unless the old political parties (NP and LP) become irreconcilably divided or the cause-oriented organizations and the basic masses of workers and peasants are ignored.

In case an opposition candidate wins the presidency, how would the proposal for a democratic coalition government broached by the National Alliance be affected?

If the new president happened to have been the candidate of the grand coalition of the opposition, then he can comply with his signed commitment and carry out the democratic program of government by relying on a united front of democratic forces or he can betray his commitments and stand and act like Marcos and soon become detested by the people. The grand coalition fielding the presidential candidate will be the same grand coalition that will advise and assist that candidate, in case he wins and becomes the new president, in seeking to fulfil the national and democratic demands of the people. The problems left by Marcos will be so grave that there will have to be some kind of a national government of unity.

If the revolutionary forces have grown strong enough, a democratic coalition government can probably be worked out in due time. Or the revolutionary armed struggle will continue until conditions arise for such a government.

How will the issues be fought out between the KBL and the legal opposition?

The KBL will be making false claims of performance and achievement and harping on a pro-imperialist and anticommunist line in a futile attempt to detract attention from real issues and social realities.

The broad opposition will raise the national democratic demands of the people and denounce the Marcos performance record of puppetry, brutality, corruption and all-round bankruptcy.

The oppressed and exploited workers and peasants and the middle strata, the cause-oriented groups, will further intensify their legal democratic struggle by focusing on the most vital issues.

The revolutionary forces can also be expected to launch dramatic offensives to underscore the fundamental issues and the people's desire for national liberation and democracy.

Do you expect to be released in case the legal opposition wins the presidency? If released, what would you do? Would you be willing to help the government of the new president?

The legal opposition have come out with a commitment to unconditionally release all political prisoners and amnesty all political offenders. On the basis of this commitment and on the ground that my constitutional and human rights have been so grossly violated by the fascist, I expect to be released.

If released, I would immediately go back to teaching in a university. I would continue with research and writing. Even in detention, I keep abreast of national and international affairs and do a lot of reading and writing.

If a legal opposition candidate were to win the presidency and seek my advice, I would gladly give this in my individual capacity as I would give advice to whoever comes sincerely seeking it.

Is there any chance that the regime of Mr. Marcos would release all political prisoners to beat the promise of the legal opposition?

That chance is nil. The Marcos regime is escalating violence against those whom it suspects of being its most determined opposition. The trend is to kill captives and save on prison expenses. Those lucky enough to be brought to detention centers are in the main tightly kept under a policy of denying their status as political prisoners.

Marcos has completely turned a deaf ear to the pleas of even Cardinal Sin and of human rights organizations and other leading lights for the release and general amnesty of political prisoners. He even delays the release of political prisoners already ordered released by the civil courts, including the Supreme Court and his military commissions.

According to some high-ranking military officers, Marcos has vowed never to release me. There is even the

possibility that I would be killed by the fascists.

The People's Alternative towards

National Freedom and Democracy Paper prepared for the Forum on the People's Alternative Towards National Freedom and Democracy during the 20th National Student Press Congress and 45th Annual Convention of the College Editors' Guild of the Philippines, Jaro, Iloilo City, May 27 to 31, 1985

I am exceedingly glad to be able to participate in this forum on the people's alternative towards national freedom and democracy, notwithstanding the fact that I am under maximum security conditions of detention by the fascist dictatorship.

It is certainly gratifying that you have provided me with an excellent opportunity to assert and exercise my freedom to address a highly intelligent audience that is committed to the people's struggle for national freedom and democracy, and is determined to promote this struggle with such mighty weapon as the pen.

I hope that I can contribute a bit to the clarification of the people's alternative. I am delighted to know that you are eager to raise your ideological and political level so that as editors and writers you will be better able to apprise your student readers of the critical facts of our national life, guide them with the correct ideas and set them into motion in concert with the rest of the people.

The people's alternative: the national democratic program

In a semicolonial and semifeudal society such as Philippine society, the people's alternative cannot but be the national democratic program.

It is a program that seeks to continue and complete the revolutionary struggle for national freedom and democracy which started in 1896 but was frustrated by US imperialism through the Filipino-American War of 1899-1902.

As a result of the defeat of the old democratic revolution led by the liberal bourgeoisie, US imperialism has been able to rule the Philippines at first directly and then indirectly, and to retain feudalism as its local partner in evolving a semicolonial and semifeudal society.

Philippine society is in constant crisis, afflicted as it is by three grave illnesses: foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. This sick society had definitely reached its terminal stage when out of these grave illnesses a fascist dictatorship grew as a desperate attempt of the ruling system to suppress the people's irrepressible demand for national freedom and democracy. A new type of national democratic revolution is rapidly growing in strength and advancing. A nascent Philippine proletariat through its party is leading the people in this revolution under historical conditions of modern imperialism and proletarian revolution. By people, we mean the working class, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie. They are rising against the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique and, in the process, accumulating the strength with which to defeat US imperialism and the joint class dictatorship of the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class.

The Democratic Coalition Government and the New Democratic Republic

The ultimate political objective of the people is to establish a democratic coalition government and a new democratic republic as instruments of national sovereignty and democracy.

These instruments will be founded on the basic alliance of the working class and the peasantry, who compose at least 90 percent of the people, in further alliance with the middle strata, who compose a small but important part of the people. The sovereign will of the people will be upheld as paramount. They will fully enjoy basic democratic rights. Government will be truly representative of the people; and representation will be achieved through consensus, election and appointment.

There will be no monopoly of political power by any class, party, group or individual. All patriotic and progressive classes, sectors, parties, organizations and individuals will be encouraged to give full play to their initiative and participate in the making and implementation of decisions.

The most important democratic advance will be the elimination, in principle and in fact, of the US imperialists and the local reactionary classes' prerogative to oppress and exploit the people in the supposed pursuit of individual rights in the abstract.

In keeping with the classic advance from feudalism to modern democracy, the peasant majority will be

emancipated politically and economically through genuine land reform and cooperativization. The main content of the democratic revolution is the solution of the land problem.

As the main component of state power, the armed forces, will belong to the people, especially the toiling masses; will be free from the control of any foreign power or local exploiting class; and will not be dependent on alien sources of funds and support.

The territorial integrity of the country shall not be allowed to be violated by foreign military bases nor by any vessel or instrument of any foreign power. If the people have been capable of defeating US imperialism, there is no reason why they cannot defend and secure Philippine sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Towards the establishment of a democratic coalition government and a new democratic republic, a broad national united front is being developed by the people as they wage all forms of revolutionary struggles on all fronts against the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique.

This united front is led by the proletariat through its revolutionary party; relies mainly on the basic alliance of the working class and the peasantry; is participated in by the middle strata; and takes advantage of the contradictions within the reactionary classes for the purpose of isolating and destroying the enemy.

The legal democratic organizations and alliances and the local organs of democratic power are among the various instruments of the people. These are laying down and developing the basis for the democratic coalition government and the new democratic republic.

Genuine land reform and national industrialization

Genuine land reform plays a pivotal role in carrying forward and winning the national democratic revolution. The peasant majority are thereby liberated as they enthusiastically join the revolution.

The key to the growing success of the revolutionary party of the proletariat and the people's army, in the countryside and the entire country, is the integration of land reform with armed struggle and mass base building. At present, the armed revolutionaries are in the main engaged in the reduction of land rent, controlling interest rates, arranging fair prices and other related measures.

The ultimate step in the solution of the land problem is the free distribution of land to the landless tillers and the abolition of feudal and semifeudal exploitation. With the success of land reform, agriculture will serve as the main base for the rapid development of the economy.

The millions of owner-cultivators will raise food production for the entire people and raw material production for industry; engage in rising levels of cooperation; and constitute a large market for the products of industry.

National industrialization will be the leading factor of genuine economic development. Industries will be put up to process locally produced raw materials, including basic metals and chemicals, manufacture machine tools, precision instruments, agricultural machinery and so on. The backward, agrarian character of the economy will be radically changed and spurred through Filipino-controlled or owned industrialization.

The dependence of the Philippine economy on the production of raw materials for unequal exchange with finished products from abroad will be terminated. Enterprises which have been creating the illusion of industrialization by repacking or assembling basically finished components from abroad, either for the domestic market or for reexport, will give way to light industry integral to and bridging local agriculture and heavy industry.

The US and other transnational corporations and banks will cease dictating Philippine economic policy through the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Their extraordinary privileges in the extraction of superprofits and usurious interest rates will be ended.

The people's democratic government will nationalize the assets of antagonistic imperialist firms and fascist traitors; repudiate most foreign debt; and seek to recover all ill-gotten wealth stashed away abroad by the traitors.

The state will own or control the strategic enterprises and major sources of raw materials; practice economic planning in order to have a balanced, well-proportioned and orderly development of heavy industry, light industry and agriculture; and ensure an equitable sharing of income among the people.

Apart from state ownership of productive assets, joint ventures of the state and private sector, private corporations, industrial cooperatives, agricultural cooperatives, partnerships and individual enterprises will also be allowed. Filipino ownership will be the rule. However, certain limited areas of investment may be left open to foreign entities, provided these are helpful to Philippine economic and technological progress.

Normal trade and economic relations will be maintained with all countries. However, we must ensure that the economic sovereignty of the people and national economic development are enhanced rather than hampered by

these external economic relations.

A national, scientific and mass culture

A national, scientific and mass culture will be fostered through the educational system, mass media and all other cultural institutions and means that reach the people both directly and indirectly, formally and informally.

The degrading, humiliating and decadent culture promoted by fascism, imperialism and feudalism will be repudiated and replaced with a new revolutionary culture by cultural workers among the people. The sources of antinational, antidemocratic and anticommunist propaganda will be repudiated through mass campaigns and other appropriate measures.

The national sovereignty, the national purpose and the characteristics and style of the people will be reflected in the various forms of cultural activity. The revolutionary tradition and cultural heritage of the nation will be cherished and will be made to serve the present needs of the nation. The national language will be promoted as the principal medium of information and education.

To promote the national culture is to make a distinctly Filipino contribution to world culture and to be ready to receive from abroad things and influences that serve the present needs of the nation. A healthy national culture resists unhealthy influences from abroad, especially the bourgeois decadence of imperialist culture.

The scientific outlook and method will be propagated. The Filipino intelligentsia and the people will be imbued with the scientific spirit and attitude and will thereby take advantage of the advances in the natural and social sciences throughout the world. The most useful will be adopted and applied concretely in the development of the country.

Proletarian revolutionary cadres will take the lead in various cultural and social fields. A large corps of natural scientists, engineers, technologists and skilled workers will be trained to push national industrialization, agricultural development and other endeavors requiring scientific and technical expertise.

The new culture will be made to serve the people, especially the toiling masses of workers and peasants. It will promote national development and foster democracy.

The public school system will be continuously expanded at all levels to admit the children of workers and peasants in ever increasing numbers. Enough public funds will be made available to enable more students to enrol and adequately compensate teaching and nonteaching personnel.

Health work and facilities will be expanded and improved. Doctors, nurses and other medical personnel will be increased; motivated to serve their own people; and sufficiently compensated. Paramedic personnel will be trained on a wide scale to serve primary health needs at the level of the village and the urban neighborhood.

Proletarian revolutionary cadres and the intelligentsia in general will work together in serving the people. There will be cooperation of Marxists and non-Marxists on common patriotic and progressive grounds and there will be common enjoyment of the freedom of thought and belief.

An independent foreign policy

The new democratic republic will pursue an independent foreign policy. It will enhance its national sovereignty and all-round development by its external relations. It will develop such relations on the basis of independence, equality, mutual respect, mutual benefit and non-interference.

It will oppose domination, interference, intervention and aggression by imperialism or any other foreign entity. It will refuse to be involved in the selfish, narrow rivalries and quarrels of superpowers or other countries. It will not allow one superpower to use its rivalry or contradiction with another as excuse for violating Philippine sovereignty and territorial integrity.

It will foster diplomatic and trade relations with all countries, irrespective of ideology or social system. It will welcome social, political, economic, cultural, scientific and technological exchanges with all countries.

It will participate actively in the United Nations and other multilateral organizations and agencies in order to perform its share of responsibility in pushing forward the cause of world understanding, peace and progress. It will support the struggles of countries, peoples and nations against all forms of oppression.

It will participate actively in the movement of the third world for a new international economic order as well as all other movements that seek to enhance the independence and all-round progress of developing and underdeveloped countries.

It will have close fruitful relations with all countries in Southeast Asia as well as other neighboring countries. It will strive for a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in Southeast Asia, and a zone free of nuclear weapons and

foreign military bases in the entire Asia-Pacific region.

The US, despite its record of oppressing and exploiting the Philippines as a colony and then as a semicolony, can be allowed to maintain normal trade and diplomatic relations with the new Democratic Republic of the Philippines after having been made to give up its imperialist privileges.

Towards the adoption of an independent foreign policy, the Filipino people are now struggling hard to topple the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique and to liberate themselves totally from US imperialism and bureaucrat capitalism.

In this regard, the Filipino people are seeking the moral and material support of all freedom-loving peoples, countries, nations, movements and organizations abroad. The external relations being developed now by the national democratic movement serve to prepare the future foreign relations of the new democratic republic.

Conclusion

The national democratic program can be totally accomplished only by putting an end to the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique and in the process building up the strength to put an end to the entire semi-colonial and semifeudal system.

The accomplishment of the national democratic program makes possible the start of socialist revolution and construction.

Given the time constraint, I have presented the national democratic program in general terms. In the course of the open forum, points of current and long-term interest can be further discussed.

I hope that what I have said here today will somehow enable you to have a firmer and better grasp of the pen as you wield it in the service of the Filipino people's struggle for national freedom and democracy.

August 21 is a day when we recall the barbaric and murderous acts of the fascists. The broad masses of the people rise to condemn these bloody crimes, honor the victims and seek justice for all of them. The level of consciousness and militancy among the people continue to rise for the ultimate purpose of dismantling the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique, and installing a new democratic system free from foreign and feudal domination.

August 21, 1971 was the day when the Second Plaza Miranda massacre occurred, when the entire national leadership of the Liberal Party was almost wiped out and hundreds of people became casualties. This bloody incident was used by the US-Marcos regime as the excuse for the 1971 suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus—the trial run for the 1972 declaration of martial law and establishment of the fascist dictatorship.

Marcos had accused the Liberal Party as an ally of the Communist Party of the Philippines while at the same time he would accuse the latter of seeking to eliminate the former. Again and again, he would use the same dirty trick and bloody intrigue to destroy his opponents. All throughout his career of infamy, he has used the Armed Forces of the Philippines in his bid to monopolize political power and bureaucratic loot as well as to attack the newly resurgent anti-imperialist and antifeudal movement.

The US imperialists instigated the destruction of every semblance of bourgeois democracy; and supported the prolongation of the open rule of terror. What used to be the joint class dictatorship of the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class through a two-party system was transformed into an autocracy; and this big bourgeois autocracy or fascist dictatorship has continued to ride roughshod over the people despite the supposed lifting of martial law in 1981.

August 21, 1983, Benigno S. Aquino, Jr., the chief political rival of the fascist autocrat within the parameters of US neocolonialism and the comprador-landlord state, was assassinated. Aquino had thought that without an armed force of his own nor enough followers within the reactionary armed forces, he could disarm Marcos by pleading reconciliation because after all they prayed to the same God; and they both equated democracy with the continued dominance of US and big comprador-landlord interests in the country.

Marcos had all along been accusing Aquino of being a communist. And yet, in his methodical madness Marcos would accuse the communists of assassinating Aquino despite the fact that he was murdered while under maximum security in the hands of military custodians. Marcos is able to do and say whatever he pleases, no matter how apparently irrational and self-contradictory, only because he can use and manipulate the Armed Forces of the Philippines as his own private army.

The Aquino assassination was done so arrogantly and so scandalously before the eyes of the people of the country and the world that public outrage in its enormity threatened not only the fascist regime but also the entire ruling system. The US imperialist master and the fascist puppet colluded in using cosmetic measures in a calculated scheme to mollify the people and preserve the fascist dictatorship in a fundamental way.

If there is one lesson to be learned from both August 21, 1971 and 1983, it is that the fascists will never give up their power voluntarily and that they will never hesitate to kill people, including their rivals in the neocolonial system, in order to keep their power. The key to their staying in power and getting away with countless crimes is their control and use of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The national democratic movement has considered Aquino a hero because he was a consistent opponent of the fascist regime and was even an occasional critic of the worst US policies, and not because had he become president, he would have made the Philippines safe for US and local reactionary interests under the flag of anti-communism; as some quarters now use Aquino's name.

By linking the Aquino assassination to the martyrdom of so many other people as well as to the intolerable oppression and exploitation of the entire people, the national democratic movement has given it its broadest and most profound significance. Thus, the people's outrage over the Aquino assassination has flowed into the further development of a powerful movement for justice, national freedom and democracy.

The national democratic movement has never allowed philosophical and theological differences within its ranks to interfere with the development of the broadest possible unity of forces and elements opposed to the

fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique. Furthermore, the movement has always allowed varying degrees of commitment to the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal cause among the antifascist forces.

The broadest possible political unity of the people, irrespective of philosophical, theological or religious differences, must be maintained and further developed against the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique. And all forms of struggle must be waged.

The attempts of US imperialist agents and a handful of clerico-fascists (some elements of Opus Dei and some Jesuits of the type of Frs. Carroll and Blanco) to create petty incidents so as to ignite philosophical and religious controversy and organizational disruption within the united front must be exposed and thwarted. Every individual and every organization is entitled to the freedom of thought and belief. But fundamental ideological or religious differences should not be used to disrupt political unity and prevent a practical program against the common enemy from being pursued.

It is wrong to insist that communism or a certain religious belief is the main political issue. The few who do so wittingly and unwittingly join the US imperialists and the fascist dictatorship in obscuring the real issue confronting the Filipino people today. The struggle for national liberation and democracy against the fascist regime of the US-Marcos clique is the issue of urgent necessity to the Filipino people.

It is wrong to insist that US imperialism has no responsibility for installing and prolonging the fascist dictatorship and for the underdevelopment and plunder of the Philippine economy; and that democracy simply means a relatively wider sharing of power and wealth among the big compradors and landlords and their political agents.

It is wrong to insist that the people should cease waging armed resistance. To do so is to actually endorse the US-Marcos monopoly of armed force and the continuity of fascist oppression. Those who wish to disarm the people confess from the very start that they cannot do or take part in what it takes to assert national sovereignty against US imperialism and dismantle the fascist puppet dictatorship.

Contrary to the assurances made by US imperialist agents to a few gullible elements within the opposition to the effect that Marcos is already being eased out in a gradual and peaceful manner, the US policy towards Marcos is clearly stated in the National Security Study Directive released by the US State Department on March 12, 1985: "The US does not want to remove Marcos to destabilize the GOP."

The US method of incentives and disincentives for Marcos to accommodate the anti-Marcos and pro-US oppositionists has not yielded anything beyond token and negligible results even only for these oppositionists. US bilateral military and economic assistance has been unconditionally approved for 1986 and the same is applicable for 1987. The US, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the foreign private lenders are helping out the fascist regime so long as it accepts every dictate to enable them to suck more blood from the Filipino people. Only US press exposés are now left to annoy the fascist dictatorship.

Marcos continues to have a tight grip on the Armed Forces of the Philippines. He continues to keep the courts and the sham parliament within the bounds of fascist dictatorship. He is frantically militarizing local officials and expanding the paramilitary forces. His fake legislature is about to rig up an electoral code to his complete satisfaction. The Commission on Elections is prepared to fix the results of the elections.

The serialized whitewash of the Aquino assassination is already in its final stage. The Sandiganbayan, the Tanodbayan and the defense in the Aquino murder trial are all being coordinated in Malacañang by Marcos himself. Most of the accused are slated to be acquitted by the Supreme Court because of deliberate errors made by the Sandiganbayan and the Tanodbayan. And Marcos will make use of the forthcoming elections as a laundering process for his bloody and corrupt rule.

Marcos can make the legal opposition look disunited even if it succeeded in uniting and he can have this defeated through fragmented accreditation of the opposition parties. Without the proper reservations concerning participation in the forthcoming elections, the legal opposition is being trapped into endorsing a US-inspired and Marcos-rigged demonstration-type elections as a democratic process.

The national democratic movement firmly believes that the forthcoming elections will be farcical exercises in general. However, it is open to electoral participation if only to support progressive candidates; breach the structure of the fascist dictatorship; propagate the antifascist, anti-imperialist and antifeudal line; and be in a position to swing people disappointed by overall results of the elections to more effective courses of action.

The worsening of the political and economic crisis is now so rapid that, despite fascist constraints, a sizeable number of progressive candidates will have a good chance of winning. At any rate, widespread fraud and terror by

the fascist dictatorship will incite the people to expand and intensify their armed resistance.

The struggle to dismantle the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique is still uphill and entails all forms of struggle. Elections under the auspices of tyranny can never be the major nor sole method for defeating it and cannot be superior to armed struggle and daily mass struggles.

It would be self-defeating for any legal oppositionist to fall for false assurances made by the US imperialists and the intrigues made by clerico-fascists; to get carried away by the illusion of coming to power soon and joining Marcos in an anticommunist witchhunt against the leaders and organizations of the toiling masses of workers and peasants. Legal oppositionists who take a rabid anticommunist line only undermine their own position, help prolong the fascist dictatorship and become its accomplices in the brutal suppression of all democratic forces.

The national democratic movement stands and fights for the establishment of a new democratic system which is truly a government of, by and for the people—the working class, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie. The movement is rapidly advancing and growing in strength.

The fascist dictatorship of the US-Marcos clique cannot be removed from power if the broad masses of the people are not aroused, organized and mobilized. The people demand nothing less than a democratic coalition government. Even if Marcos is dethroned, a stable government is impossible so long as it is ruled by the big compradors and landlords subservient to US imperialism and at the expense of the working class, the peasantry and the lower and middle strata of the bourgeoisie.

The very emergence and prolongation of the fascist dictatorship and the irrepressible growth and advance of the armed revolutionary movement spell the inevitable doom of the semicolonial and semifeudal system.

Message to the Conference on US Intervention and the Nationalist Response September 19, 1985

I wish to express my solidarity with the officers and members of the Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy on the occasion of their Conference on US Intervention and the Nationalist Response. I share with you a profound interest in the full exposure of the various types and methods of US intervention as well as the reasons for such intervention in our country today. I hope that by this conference you can strengthen the basis for a broad united front of the people against US imperialism and for waging ever more militant struggles against this alien power and its rabid puppets.

There are enough indications that the US would retain the Marcos fascist dictatorship beyond 1987 and that only the flimsiest of concessions will be granted to the anti-Marcos reactionaries in US-Marcos controlled elections. This is because the US continues to regard the anti-Marcos reactionaries as mere reserves for the perpetuation of foreign and feudal domination.

US bridge financing has propped up the ruling clique of fascists since 1983. This year, the US-controlled multilateral agencies (International Monetary Fund and World Bank) and the foreign private banks have granted the regime further financial props in exchange for the surrender of economic sovereignty and intensified exploitation of the people.

Under US dictation, the fascist puppets are increasing the extraordinary privileges of the US multinational corporations, aggravating the agrarian character of the economy, pushing down real income levels of the people, pushing further import trade liberalization, increasing the domestic tax burden and sinking the country deeper into foreign indebtedness. There can be no economic recovery but only further misery under the US monopolies and the fascist big comprador monopolies.

Despite pretenses at conforming with certain reformist demands, the US has finally approved for 1986 and 1987 the bilateral economic and military assistance in connection with the US military bases, with no conditions whatsoever that would drastically improve the political chances of the anti-Marcos reactionaries.

The fascist dictatorship remains undiminished to do the bidding of US imperialism. The overriding political concern of the US-Marcos tandem is to launch brutal campaigns against the people and their revolutionary movement as well as to make the legal opposition grovel for the flimsiest of concessions in exchange for the further entrenchment not only of US dominance but also of the fascist dictatorship.

The US imperialists are now of the belief that they have achieved success with the ruling clique of fascists in mollifying the people's outrage over the Aquino assassination and all other barbarities as well as in canalizing such outrage toward electoral exercises completely controlled by the US-Marcos regime.

The US scheme is to use the fascists in a vicious campaign of terror against the people, especially the toiling masses, and to extend the life of the US military bases beyond 1991.

If Marcos or his surrogate retains the presidency, of course through fraud and terror, the US will give him all-out military support to attack and seek the total destruction of the revolutionary movement of the people. At the same time, the life of the US military bases will be extended by an agreement made a few years before 1991.

If Marcos or his surrogate succeeds in crushing the armed revolution, he will be rewarded with the completion of his term beyond 1987. If the armed revolution continues to rapidly grow in strength it will be able to launch tactical offensives in more than half of Philippine municipalities and cities within the latter half of the decade, and the strategic stalemate shall have begun.

The US has begun to introduce special operations forces and build up facilities in the Philippines in preparation for all-out US military support for the Marcos fascist gang and for direct US participation in military campaigns against the people.

The current increase of military advisers under the pretext of assisting Philippine puppet troops in the operation and maintenance of US-supplied weapons is comparable to US military intervention in Vietnam in the early 1960s or in Central America today.

The yearly joint military exercises of US and Philippine puppet troops have a clear sabre-rattling orientation against the Filipino people and have been used as a method for leaving and passing on military equipment to the

Armed Forces of the Philippines beyond the level of US military assistance approved by the US Congress.

Of course, the US military bases are always ready channels for weapons delivery and training services to the AFP.

The Filipino people must be farsighted enough to anticipate a US war of aggression before the end of the decade or early part of the next decade. US military strategists think that they can no longer win a war on the Asian mainland but that they still can in the Philippine archipelago.

It is good to prepare against the worst and hope for the best even as we need to act according to the current circumstances. Foresight and deep analytical thinking is necessary so that the people will know exactly how to frustrate every increased level of US intervention in our country. We must also actively seek the support of the American people and other peoples of the world in frustrating US intervention.

It is sad to note that some anti-Marcos elements have the illusion that with the support of the US they can remove the Marcos puppet clique from power in or before 1987 solely through electoral exercises controlled by the fascist dictatorship and the US.

Funds are being given to some anti-Marcos reactionaries by the US Central Intelligence Agency and the National Endowment for Democracy, Asia Foundation and other subversive US entities in order to spread anticommunist hysteria and attack the Left and the middle forces who take the line of fighting for national sovereignty and democracy.

These US funds are chicken feed, if not chicken shit, when compared to the far larger funds and other kinds of support received by the Marcos ruling clique from the US. By taking an antinational and antidemocratic line under the guise of anticommunism, these pro-US but anti-Marcos reactionaries are undermining their own position and rendering special service to the US-Marcos combine.

They seem to forget that anticommunism has been the convenient tool of the US and the Marcos clique in attacking the entire range of the antifascist opposition—the forces of the Left, the Middle and the anti-Marcos Right. Aquino was called a communist yet his murderers in power continue to claim that he was killed by the communists.

The Bishops-Businessmen Conference has been used recently by the Asia Foundation to adopt and “sanctify” a “socio-political survey” which turned out to be a rigged (faulty framework and methods, including bad sampling and leading questions) propaganda coup for Marcos and the KBL.

The institutional church and its high clergy are also being cajoled to engage in rabid anticommunist propaganda and take part in the so-called counterinsurgency campaign in exchange for US supplies of food for the victims of the economic crisis and military depredations. The Opus Dei and some Jesuits are concentrating on pro-imperialist and anticommunist propaganda with US funding.

The US is trying to create an anticommunist alliance between the fascist dictatorship and the anti-Marcos Right in seeking to destroy the armed revolution and preserve the oppressive and exploitative semicolonial and semifeudal system. This is an unrealizable scheme.

The now obvious total whitewash of the Aquino assassination and what can be anticipated as electoral fraud and terrorism in forthcoming elections will scandalize and anger even the most naive and timid among the anti-Marcos Right. The violent contradictions within the reactionary classes of big compradors and landlords will increasingly flare up.

The inability of the ruling classes to rule in the old way has been clearly proven by the emergence of a full-blown fascist dictatorship in 1972. Since then, the crisis of the ruling system has worsened to the extent that we can now foresee the death of that system.

The victory of the national democratic revolution is inevitable not only because its integral forces—based on the toiling masses and the middle strata—are rapidly growing in strength but also because the contending cliques of the reactionaries are hopelessly split.

The best move that the US can make is to lay off and allow a broad alliance of the Left, the Middle and the anti-Marcos Right to remove the ultra-Right Marcos regime from power. But this cannot be expected of the US as it maintains an extremely counterrevolutionary policy towards the Philippines.

The inability of the US to discard the Marcos fascist gang soon enough signifies not only a defect in perception and analysis but an increasingly untenable and desperate imperialist position in Philippine and in world affairs. US imperialist power continues on a course of general decline although it continues to have some relative

strength in the Philippines.

The US finds it convenient to retain the fascist dictatorship. It distrusts a considerable number of anti-Marcos reactionaries and the spokesmen of the middle social strata who voice out in their own way some of the major demands of the nation and the people. And it is mortally afraid of the revolutionary movement of the workers, the peasants and the urban petty bourgeoisie.

Before the US can discard the Marcos fascist gang, the revolutionary movement shall have become several times stronger than it is now. By their own counterrevolutionary violence and rapacity, both the US and its puppet clique will continue to incite the people to wage an even fiercer armed revolution.

Long live the Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy!

Unite to expose and oppose US intervention!

Down with US imperialism and the fascist dictatorship!

Long live the Filipino people!

Victory to the national democratic movement!

Note from the Author: In 1983, I read in prison for the first time the so-called New Katipunan Draft Program of the National Democratic Front which had been drafted in 1981 and circulated since then among the revolutionary forces and people. Mindful that the NDF is the revolutionary united front of the basic revolutionary forces of the working class, peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie, with an openness to the national bourgeoisie, I objected to such revisionist notions as taking out any reference to the leadership of the working class, deviating from the line of new democratic revolution and recycling the old democratic revolution supposedly to attract the forces of the national bourgeoisie and even the anti-Marcos reactionaries to formally join the fold of the NDF. I wrote a counterdraft immediately in 1983 to uphold the line of new democratic revolution in the NDF. My counterdraft became the basis of a new draft in 1985. This was made and issued by representatives of the forces within the NDF. The text is herein published in full.

I. People's war and the National Democratic Front

For more than four and a half centuries, the people of the Philippine islands have been fighting against foreign invasion and domination. From Lapu-Lapu to Dagohoy and Sultan Kudarat, from Diego and Gabriela Silang to Andres Bonifacio and the Katipunan, and from Macario Sakay to the present revolutionary guerrillas in our plains and mountains, our history has been one long and difficult struggle for communal and individual liberty, social emancipation, and national independence. The most glorious pages of our history were in fact written in those periods when the most oppressed among our people took up arms and rose in rebellion to defend themselves against the violence of foreign oppressors and their local lackeys and collaborators.

Ours is a history with a heroic tradition of revolutionary armed struggle we are justly proud of. Our forebears launched hundreds of armed uprisings and rebellions in self-defense, and to cast off the Spanish colonial yoke. Filipinos fought and won the first revolutionary people's war to dismantle European colonialism in our part of Asia. For almost four years, we successfully carried out guerrilla warfare against Japanese invaders during World War II. And for a whole decade at the turn of the century, heroically and at great sacrifice, our people waged a war of national liberation against American imperialist troops to defend the first but short-lived democratic republic in the East.

This history is not dead and past: our tradition of armed struggle and resistance in defense of the Motherland and to regain our freedom and independence is still very much alive today. It is alive for one obvious reason: a foreign master—US imperialism—still dominates the Philippines; and its local big and small collaborators and puppet tyrants—at present led by the dictator Ferdinand Marcos—are still actively sowing evil in our country, helping to perpetuate foreign domination and intensifying the oppression and exploitation of the Filipino people.

Under the sponsorship of US imperialism, the Marcos clique imposed fascist martial rule in September 1972 amid the worsening political and economic crisis of the semicolonial, semifeudal system long dominated by foreign interests and their comprador allies, by big landlords and bureaucrat capitalists.

Through naked armed force and open terror, the US-backed Marcos dictatorship has monopolized state power for over a decade. Since it imposed martial law and abolished or corrupted all semblance of republican democratic processes, the dictatorship has aggravated the basic problems of semicolonial and semifeudal Philippine society, causing untold suffering among our people. US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, the three basic problems that continue to plague our society, have become far more oppressive and exploitative through the dictatorship, which in this period functions as the favored governmental form and the “crisis management team” of the reactionary ruling classes.

Massacres of innocent farmers and workers, hamletting, arbitrary arrests and searches, indefinite detention of dissenters, torture, “salvaging” or liquidation of suspected subversives and sympathizers, violent dispersal of protest assemblies seeking to air legitimate grievances, forcible relocation of urban poor residents and ethnic minorities, monopolization and manipulation of the established mass media, the suppression of truth and dissemination of falsehood, and a thousand and one other violations of basic human and civil rights—this situation has been our common plight under the dictatorship.

Unbridled inflation, rising unemployment and underemployment, scarcity of prime commodities, grinding poverty, financial bankruptcies, capital flight, mounting foreign trade deficits, and a gargantuan foreign debt that

has mortgaged the entire nation for the next two generations, are the economic burdens that have been heaped on the Filipino people by the US-Marcos dictatorship.

Similar to the execution of Jose Rizal and its political impact on society towards the end of the last century, the cold-blooded murder by the dictatorship in August 1983 of opposition leader Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr., sparked a re-awakening among people of all classes and sectors in Philippine society. The assassination underscored the thousands of political murders the dictatorship has been perpetrating for over a decade, and served to focus national and international attention on the complete bankruptcy of the US-Marcos regime.

Since the latter months of 1983, tens of thousands from the middle classes and sectors of society, and even including significant numbers from the anti-fascist circles of the elite, have joined millions of toiling people and militant students in unprecedentedly huge street demonstrations and other forms of protest assemblies, all calling for the immediate removal of the US-backed fascist dictatorship.

The overwhelming majority of our people have awakened and are demanding an end to the hated dictatorship. The basic causes of our problem have been exposed and clarified through the terrible crises and the heartening mass protest actions during the past decade, especially in the last one and a half years. The determination to rise up as a united people, and the spirit of struggle and sacrifice for the common good, have reached a very high pitch among the people. Furthermore, the principles and bases of popular unity have been understood and accepted by almost all: an end to dictatorship and foreign domination, recovery of national sovereignty, unhampered national economic development, and genuine democracy and social justice for all classes and ethnic groups in the Philippines.

Yet, many Filipinos are still searching for an answer to the crucial question: exactly how do we overthrow the US-Marcos dictatorship and build a new Philippines?

The National Democratic Front (NDF), since its establishment in April 1977, has consistently maintained that the correct answer to this question is found in our history, particularly in our heroic tradition of armed struggle to oppose foreign domination and the local tyrants who have aided and abetted this domination. Thus, the NDF has sought untiringly to unite, develop and coordinate all possible parties, groups and individuals, including their armed contingents, for greater participation in the ongoing people's war to overthrow the US-backed Marcos dictatorship and attain genuine democracy and national liberation.

The NDF is made up of Filipino nationalists, democrats, progressive Christian and church people, national minority autonomists, women's emancipationists, socialists, communists, and other genuine patriots here and abroad, representing a wide variety of political and ideological trends. Membership in the NDF is voluntary, and no single political party or group will be allowed to dominate the organization or monopolize the decision-making processes in its leading and subordinate bodies.

The NDF has emerged as the most developed organizational expression to date of the revolutionary united front. It provides a framework and channel for the unity and coordination of all groups and individuals adhering to, and advancing, the general line of fighting for national liberation and genuine democracy. It wages armed struggle—specifically, a people's war—as the principal form of struggle at this stage of the Philippine revolution, but it also recognizes the importance of other forms of struggle, and in fact combines and coordinates the armed struggle with all types of clandestine and open, non-legal and legal struggles.

The NDF has established basic organizational structures on the international, national, regional, provincial, city, town, and barrio levels. It is persevering to multiply these structures and further broaden their membership and scope.

The NDF has studied well and taken to heart the essential lessons of the Filipino people's revolutionary history, and continually sums up current revolutionary practice. It also draws lessons and inspiration from the brilliant revolutionary achievements of the peoples of other countries, especially those of the Third World.

Amidst the continuing revolutionary ferment in our society, the united front of the Philippine proletariat, peasantry, urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie is developing rapidly. The NDF, apace with the entire national democratic revolution, is in an exceedingly favorable situation to step up its expansion and consolidation. It continuously enhances its indispensable role in advancing the people's war from one stage to the next until total, nationwide victory is won and a new Philippine republic with a democratic coalition government is established.

II. The general program of the NDF

The general program consists of the NDF's long-term tasks. These remain valid and binding on all members of the united front for the entire course of the national democratic revolution and provide the strategic guidance and direction for the implementation of the immediate tasks.

1. Unite the Filipino people to overthrow the tyrannical rule of US imperialism and the local reactionaries.

The central aim of uniting the Filipino people is to complete and win total victory in the revolutionary struggle for national liberation and genuine democracy.

The broadest and strongest possible unity of the people is necessary because the enemy we confront and seek to defeat—the US-Marcos fascist dictatorship—is still strong, and it rules by armed force. Only the power of a united people, using revolutionary armed force, can successfully overthrow it.

The broadest and strongest unity of the people is attained by painstakingly building the national united front. The prospects for this are very favorable because the dictatorship has become more and more isolated due to its countless crimes against the people. All sectors of society are oppressed by the dictatorship and are thus open to joining together in a common effort to rid Philippine society of this hated regime.

The workers, the poor and middle peasants, and the lower stratum of the urban petty bourgeoisie make up the main forces of the national united front. Comprising the overwhelming majority of the people, they are the most exploited and oppressed and are thus the most desirous of revolutionary change.

The rich peasants, the upper stratum of the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie—small and middle property owners, traders and professionals, small and middle businessmen, and most of the intelligentsia—are also stifled and oppressed by the dictatorship. Together with the toiling masses and the lower petty bourgeoisie, they are significant forces willing to join in the common struggle to overthrow the dictatorship.

The establishment of the dictatorship and the political and economic crises it has spawned have also seriously afflicted some sections of the privilege classes—the big capitalists and big landlords. They currently espouse certain democratic aspirations of the people, and they participate in the people's struggles in various ways and in varying degrees. The number of government officials and military officers and men who have become demoralized and discontented with the regime's political and moral bankruptcy, is also increasing daily. They may be drawn into various types of alliances at certain times and to a certain extent, provided this strengthens the main forces of the united front and contributes to the defeat of the ruling clique.

The National Democratic Front serves as the organizational framework and channel for unity, cooperation and coordination of all anti-imperialist and democratic forces including overseas Filipinos. Even as a number of patriotic and democratic forces, groups and personages may not yet be ready to integrate into the NDF, we unite with them and encourage their initiative in fighting the Marcos regime and its imperialist backers.

In the common struggle against the US-Marcos dictatorship, and in the process of working together to build the united front, the various classes, sectors, organizations and individuals discover the common roots of their separate grievances. Through increasing cooperation and coordination, they also develop the necessary trust and working unity essential for establishing the democratic coalition government.

2. Wage a people's war to win total, nationwide victory.

The struggle for national liberation and genuine democracy faces an enemy that is armed, well-entrenched and powerful. Thus, the Filipino people can defeat this enemy only by waging a people's war. The strategy of people's war entails the total mobilization of the entire people for armed struggle, open mass struggles, rural and urban uprisings, and other forms of unarmed and armed combat to destroy by stages the military and political capability of the dictatorship.

Armed struggle is the primary form of struggle we must wage. It is only by building their own armed strength through revolutionary armed struggle that the people can effectively assert their sovereignty, independence and democratic rights. This is starkly clear, especially in the face of the fascist dictatorship. By waging armed struggle, the people can frustrate the enemy's attacks and preserve their gains, build a genuine people's army and smash the coercive instruments of the reactionary state.

While being the most decisive, armed struggle must be combined with various effective forms of legal struggle. Open mass struggles, such as rallies, marches and demonstrations, strikes and pickets, petitions and delegations, serve to advance the people's economic and democratic demands, temper the people, and further educate them politically and prepare them organizationally for higher forms of mass struggle. These forms of struggle also effectively isolate the fascist ruling clique and its military establishment locally and internationally, thus weakening

the dictatorship's political position and helping prepare the ground for further advances by the people's armed forces. The armed struggle, in turn, inspires and creates conditions for more open mass actions, until finally aspects of these two forms of struggle effectively combine in rural and urban uprisings, in mass confrontations and raids on the regime's personnel and agencies in which fighting with arms breaks out and in region-wide and nationwide workers' general strikes and people's strikes.

Under certain conditions, engaging in parliamentary exercises within the ruling system can also achieve certain democratic gains for the people and contribute to the advance of people's war. We can also take advantage of such exercises to conduct widespread political education and expand the people's organizations, thus creating favorable conditions for the armed struggle and the open revolutionary mass movement. Moreover, the people's victories in these exercises serve to further loosen the ruling clique's hold on parts of the state machinery.

We can also conduct political work within the regime's bureaucracy and military machinery (i.e., among government officials and military officers and personnel) to divide and neutralize agencies and sections of the enemy camp. We seek to win over as many of them as possible to the side of the people through various forms of cooperation, including providing support and by open defection.

For a long period, the armed struggle is mainly waged in the countryside. It is here where the enemy's political power is weakest and the ground more suited to developing guerrilla and regular units of the people's armed forces. While wearing down the enemy's effective armed strength, the armed struggle in the countryside serves to build the people's political power—the seeds of the coalition government in the localities.

In the cities, effective forms of legal struggle and partisan operations render direct and indirect support to the armed struggle in the countryside by disrupting, and therefore weakening, the nerve center of the enemy's political-military apparatus. While gradually decimating the latter's strength, the legal struggle and armed partisan activity prepare the people politically and militarily for widespread uprisings and insurrections, thus mobilizing them for direct participation in the people's war.

We continuously build the people's armed forces in the course of people's war. The New People's Army is currently the main armed force within the NDF. The NDF encourages other political parties, groups and individuals to form their own popular armed forces, either within the framework of the NPA or as separate entities. Should independent armed groups arise, the NDF will welcome and strive to coordinate with these, and eventually prepare the ground for the creation of a unified command for all revolutionary armed forces.

The probable course of development in the people's war includes the stages of strategic defensive, strategic stalemate, and the strategic offensive. While on the strategic defensive, the revolutionary armed forces launch tactical offensives in the countryside to seize arms and strengthen themselves until they reach the strategic stalemate, when their strength is more or less at par with that of the reactionary armed forces. Subsequent to the strategic stalemate, the people's armed forces can go on to the strategic offensive to defeat the enemy in the centers of his power.

The people and their revolutionary armed forces are basically self-reliant in the course of the people's war. They seek military assistance from abroad only to supplement their self-reliant efforts in the face of the long-standing and increasing US military assistance to the dictatorship and the growing threat of direct US intervention and aggression. Without US military and other support, the fascist dictatorship cannot last long.

3. Establish a democratic coalition government and a people's democratic republic.

The establishment of local organs of democratic power in the countryside is already creating the basis for a nationwide democratic coalition government and a democratic republic. But the broadening of the character, representation and work of these local organs of democratic power does not stop. The effective level of democratic government will also keep on rising from the barrio level through the municipal, district, city, provincial and regional levels to the national level.

On the eve of total victory of the armed revolution, a political consultative conference of all representatives of patriotic and democratic classes, parties, mass organizations, groups and other positive forces shall be held to form a council that will pave the way for the formal establishment of the democratic coalition government on the national level. Upon the formation of this council, the people's democratic republic shall be proclaimed.

The council shall ensure that the transition to peaceful conditions is smooth and orderly and that the wounds of war are healed as soon as possible. All government functionaries not guilty of any serious crimes against the people shall be allowed to stay on in the civil bureaucracy to avoid disruption of necessary public services. As in

the course of the people's war, no political party, group or individual shall be allowed to monopolize the decision-making processes and the execution of state affairs.

A constituent assembly shall be elected to draft the constitution of the new state. After ratification of the constitution, general elections shall be held, and the democratic coalition government inaugurated. Thereupon, the council shall cease to function.

In its constitution and practice, the people's democratic republic shall uphold the essential elements of a genuine modern-day republic: people's sovereignty and national independence; all political authority emanating from the people; democratically elected officials who shall be their representatives and servants; elected representative assemblies at all levels that express the will of the people, rather than a single individual making laws; determination of the popular will through free and clean elections and other democratic means; and the free exercise by the people of all their basic democratic rights and freedoms.

The democratic coalition government shall establish a fair and equitable system of justice. Upon victory, a people's tribunal shall be created. This tribunal will have jurisdiction to try and punish the enemies of the revolution and their collaboration who have committed crimes against the people, and to escheat properties and ill-gotten wealth amassed by the ruling elite of the old order. Severe punishment of those with grave crimes (i.e., those who owe the people blood debts) and reeducation of those who deserve leniency shall be undertaken in accordance with a procedure that will ensure a fair hearing by an impartial tribunal. In the long-run, a people's democratic court, as the highest judicial organ under the democratic coalition government shall be established. People's court shall be heard in public, with the accused having the right to defense. These courts shall also be set up at the local levels.

The democratic coalition government, as the particular governmental form representing state power in the people's democratic republic, promotes the people's will and their interests, ensures the proper representation of the workers, peasants, urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie in the government, and upholds the people's democratic rights. It is a coalition of all allied classes, parties, mass organizations, groups and forces that have worked effectively for the overthrow of the US-Marcos dictatorship or any incumbent reactionary regime that comes after it.

4. Integrate the revolutionary armed forces into a single national revolutionary army.

The revolutionary armed forces that have arisen under various anti-fascist initiatives during the armed struggle shall be integrated to form a single national revolutionary army under the democratic coalition government. It shall be under a ministry of national defense and shall have ground, naval and air forces. In addition, there shall also be police forces and the people's militia under a ministry of public security. The basic tasks of the revolutionary army are to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country and to defend the gains of the revolution and the Filipino people from internal subversion and external aggression. To this end, the revolutionary army as well as the people shall constantly be in a state of readiness to repel any act of intervention and aggression from foreign forces, including the United States.

The forces of national defense shall be drawn from the strategic forces, regional forces and guerrilla forces that have been battle-tested in the course of people's war. The national police force shall also be drawn from the local police forces and the militia shall be improved where they have already been formed in the course of people's war and shall be formed in places where they do not yet exist.

With the time-tested revolutionaries firmly in command of the national revolutionary army, former enemy officers and men who have joined the revolutionary cause before total victory or who have not committed any serious crime shall be allowed to stay in the military service on a selective basis and shall pass on their knowledge and expertise to the revolutionary fighters and shall themselves undergo revolutionary education.

Aside from its military function, the national revolutionary army shall participate in other areas of national life, especially production. It shall be a revolutionary school for its permanent members and for the youth who shall be required to render military service for a certain reasonable period of time.

5. Uphold and promote the free exercise of the people's basic democratic rights.

In the constitution and practice of the democratic republic, the people's sovereignty is the sacred principle from which flows all rights and responsibilities. The government can govern only as it represents the people's will and interests and upholds the people's basic democratic rights. The people shall have the right to revolt against any oppressive and tyrannical regime.

There shall be an express constitutional provision against autocracy or one-man rule under any circumstance. There shall also be an express provision against the declaration of martial law without this being first decided on through the collective processes of definite organs of government and according to publicly ascertainable facts. If so declared, it should last for only a specific and brief period.

All the basic democratic rights contained in a liberal democratic constitution shall be embodied in the constitution of the people's democratic republic. These include the right to life, liberty and property; to due process; against arbitrary arrest and search without judicial warrant; to privacy of personal communications; to free choice of domicile and free movement; to free association and assembly; to strike; to free speech and the free press; to freedom of thought and of religious belief and practice; to freedom of suffrage through secret ballot; and to gainful employment.

On the other hand, apart from publicly-owned means of production, all people shall have the right to individually own the means of production and of consumption achieved through land reform, honest labor and entrepreneurship, skill, inventiveness and intellectual merit. All owner-cultivators and all other owner-producers ranging from the lowliest tool-owner to the national bourgeoisie shall be assisted by the state to expand their productive endeavors through state credits, assured markets, cooperatives and joint ventures with the state.

The democratic coalition government shall address and take steps to remove the distinct forms of oppression women have faced and shall provide equal opportunities for them as well as their equal participation in all aspects of social life. The new government shall rally the people's organization, particularly the women's organizations, into taking active roles in this undertaking.

6. Terminate all unequal relations with the United States and other foreign entities.

Throughout the long history of US imperialist domination of the country, the US and other foreign interests have used various treaties and other agreements to violate the national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Philippines and to perpetuate the country's subservience to foreign interests. The US-Marcos dictatorship has further expanded and extended these extraordinary privileges, to the grave detriment of the broad masses of the Filipino people. These unequal and unjust laws, treaties and agreements, including the Investments and Export Incentives Acts, the Universal Banking Law, the Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation, the Mutual Defense Treaty, the Military Assistance Pact, as well as various cultural agreements prejudicial to the national interest, must be terminated once and for all. The democratic coalition government shall likewise demand an end to, and vigorously defend itself against, all forms of foreign intervention and interference in the country's internal affairs.

The United States must leave its military bases in the Philippines and cease to provide military assistance to local reactionaries. The military bases shall be used for military and civilian purposes by the democratic republic. No foreign power shall be allowed to set up military bases on Philippine soil, nor to carry, by any means of transport, nuclear weapons into Philippine territory.

As a rule, direct investments and profit-making assets of the US and other big foreign capitalists, especially those in the vital and strategic industries, shall be nationalized. Where necessary, the manner of compensation, as well as any possible exemptions to this policy, shall be the subject of negotiations, based on the national interest. However, those that have been actively used for counterrevolutionary purposes shall be confiscated outright.

All foreign loans used to overburden and sabotage the Philippine economy, deepen the country's agrarian and non-industrial state and divert local resources into unproductive channels such as the IMF loans must be cancelled. Otherwise these loans must be renegotiated in order to do away with their obnoxious features and arrive at terms for the easy payment of new loans from the same sources for productive and industrial purposes.

7. Complete the process of genuine land reform, raise rural production through cooperation, and modernize agriculture.

The current land reform policy of the revolutionary movement is to reduce land rent and eliminate usury. It is only in certain areas that despotic landlords and landgrabbers are being divested of their land in favor of poor peasants and settlers.

Eventually, the general land reform policy shall be to distribute land to the landless tillers equitably and at no cost. Under the democratic coalition government, this land reform process shall be completed throughout the country.

In the people's democratic republic, the beneficiaries of land reform and other owner-cultivators shall be

encouraged to increase production in agriculture and side occupations. All forms of agricultural cooperation such as simple exchange of labor, mutual aid and cooperatives shall be encouraged. The process of agricultural co-operativization and mechanization shall be accomplished in stages and in connection with the development of industry. Agriculture shall become the base of the economy, providing food and other necessities to the people, as well as raw materials for industry, on an expanding scale.

Assured of a widening market for their products, the peasants will derive greater incomes and will increasingly be able to purchase industrial products for their productive as well as consumption needs.

Rich peasants shall be allowed to retain their standard of living and shall be encouraged to utilize their surplus capital for other economic enterprises so as to maintain or improve their incomes. They will, however, have to gradually rely more on their own labor power rather than on hired labor.

Landlords who have supported the revolution and who do not oppose land reform shall continue to be given due consideration. They shall be given land to till, some compensation or alternative sources of income to support their families. Opportunities in industry, either through employment or entrepreneurship, shall be open to them.

Plantations owned and controlled by transnationals or by their allies among the comprador big bourgeoisie shall be taken over by the state. The new government shall adopt a flexible policy with respect to other capitalist farms, to be determined by the size of the farm, the type of crop, and the attitude of the owners towards the revolution. Certainly, capitalist farm-owners who have supported the revolution shall be given every opportunity to work closely with the state to raise agricultural production and modernize agriculture. However, farm workers must cease to be exploited, and demands for just wages and improvement in their working conditions must be met.

The refining, processing and marketing of agricultural products shall be owned or controlled by the state, by agricultural cooperatives, by joint state-private enterprises or by private industry, in accordance with the type of crop, its relative importance to the national economy and the people's livelihood, and other factors specific to the product.

In general, however, the trading, refining and processing of major agricultural products shall cease to be controlled by a privileged few and shall be turned over to the state or to capable agricultural cooperatives. The local processing of a wide variety of agricultural products shall be encouraged, but no private enterprise shall be permitted to dominate the people's livelihood, exploit farm workers, peasants and other agricultural producers, and extract monopolistic profits.

To boost agricultural production and modernization, the democratic coalition government shall develop the local fertilizer, seed and pesticide industries. It shall ensure the proper irrigation of farms and the tapping and distribution of water resources. It shall extend credit, technical assistance, marketing and storage facilities to agricultural cooperatives. Livestock production and fishing shall be encouraged and developed, and their producers, especially the small ones, shall be enjoined to form cooperatives or associations and be given appropriate state assistance. The depletion and pollution of marine resources by transnational firms and foreign fishing fleets which have victimized Filipino fishermen and fish farmers shall be ended.

8. Carry out national industrialization as the leading factor in economic development.

The democratic coalition government shall carry out national industrialization as the leading factor in economic development. This shall complement agriculture, which is the main basis for economic development. The development of the agricultural sector will make a large amount of agricultural surplus, which used to be appropriated by a parasitic landlord class, available to support the needs of industry. At the same time, agricultural growth will increase the purchasing power of the rural population and expand the domestic market for products turned out by the industrial sector.

National industrialization shall break up the present colonial pattern of trade based mainly on the export of agricultural and extractive raw materials and the importation of finished goods and capital. Under the new government, such raw materials as logs, copper concentrates, coconuts, sugar and the like shall be processed locally. The marginal repackaging, reassembly, and the light processing industries for the domestic market and for reexport shall, as much as possible, become integral to products truly manufactured in the Philippines.

The democratic coalition government shall nationalize all vital and strategic industries which are now owned or controlled by imperialist interests and their comprador and bureaucrat capitalist allies. All ill-gotten wealth and

assets of the fascist clique shall be confiscated by the state. Non-vital industries similarly owned or controlled by imperialist interest or their allies, may be partially nationalized and operated on a joint-venture basis between the state and national capital, or may be turned over completely to capable Filipino entrepreneurs.

Nationalization represents the collective determination of the Filipino people to assert their economic independence, transfer control of the fundamental means of production and distribution from a handful of foreign monopolists and their allies to the people, break the import-export character of the present semicolonial and semifeudal economy, hasten national industrialization and agricultural modernization, and gear the economy towards promoting the people's livelihood in an all-round way.

Nationalized enterprises shall be under the supervision of state boards composed of government officials and people's representatives, which shall be held accountable to duly-constituted bodies.

The democratic coalition government shall dismantle all private monopolies and monopsonies, especially those serving imperialist interests and those created on the basis of bureaucrat privilege. No form of monopoly control by private industry shall be allowed to dominate the livelihood and welfare of the people. Private entrepreneurs contributing positively to the task of developing the nation's productive capacity and capital resources shall be encouraged to enter into areas of the economy where their expertise and capital are most suited. They shall be ensured a normal return on capital invested or compensated commensurate with their specific contributions to industrial or agricultural development, in accordance with the applicable policies and laws.

The new government shall nationalize the banking industry. The people's savings shall be safeguarded and used prudently to develop industry and agriculture. Stockholders of banks who are not directly agents of imperialist interests shall be fairly compensated. They shall likewise be encouraged to channel their resources and capital towards industrial development, where vast opportunities will be created by the liberation of the economy from the imperialist stranglehold. Foreign banks shall receive compensation under terms determined by the state.

Vital sectors of the import-export trade shall be nationalized. Imports shall be geared towards accelerating the thrust of developing a self-reliant economy. Production shall be oriented towards satisfying the domestic market first, while proceeds from exports must be used primarily to import essential capital goods and raw materials not readily available within the economy.

The energy industry, including petroleum refining and distribution, shall likewise be nationalized as a necessary step towards making the country self-reliant in energy production, and to make energy available at reasonable cost to both industrial and residential users. At the same time, the state shall develop the production and use of inexpensive energy from indigenous sources.

The democratic coalition government shall strive to build and develop a modern transport industry geared towards benefiting the commuting public and the different sectors of the economy. Transnational tire and automotive firms shall be nationalized. The development of local rubber, glass, metal, electrical and engineering industries serving the transport sector shall be encouraged. Where possible, railway systems shall be developed. The development of an effective national railway system has long been sabotaged by imperialist interests concerned only with selling their high-priced cars, trucks, spare parts and accessories.

The telecommunications industry, which is vital and where natural monopolies are present, shall be nationalized. The new government shall also take the lead in building a modern shipping industry to facilitate transportation and communications, and to further develop inter-island trade. In an archipelagic country such as the Philippines, the development of a modern and efficient shipping industry is of major importance.

Transnational drug and pharmaceutical companies shall also be nationalized. The practice of selling high-priced, foreign brand name drugs will be stopped. Priority shall be given to developing medicines using local materials.

High priority shall be given to developing the steel industry as the backbone of the country's industrialization program. The comprehensive national resource base of the country shall be protected and utilized towards developing the metal, chemical and engineering industries comprehensively. The capital goods industry shall be developed intensively so as to improve rapidly the country's productive potential and expand its means of production.

Monetary and fiscal policy shall be utilized by the new government to promote economic development, national industrialization and agricultural cooperativization and modernization. Restrictive monetary policies as dictated by the imperialist-controlled International Monetary Fund and similar institutions, bankrupt local industries, stunt production, promote widespread unemployment, and benefit only those enterprises that corner the available

local credit.

The democratic coalition government shall remove all onerous taxes, especially those which have placed heavy burdens on the working people and the low-income sectors. It shall levy the necessary taxes in accordance with the people's level of incomes and production. State revenues will be augmented by incomes from nationalized and expropriated enterprises. Large savings will also result from the state's strict policy of not engaging in unnecessary and unproductive projects. The new government shall do away with the present large and parasitic reactionary armed forces; it shall maintain only the appropriate size of armed forces, supported by an active and dependable people's militia, necessary to defend the state and the nation.

Trade and other forms of economic relations with all countries, including the United States, shall be promoted on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. The new government shall engage, whenever possible, in barter or counter-trade with such countries as are willing and able to do so.

The democratic coalition government shall institute state economic planning in order to prevent destructive imbalances in the economy and to promote well-balanced growth among heavy, medium and light industries, between heavy industry and agriculture, and between capital accumulation and consumption. It shall also ensure a proper mix between centralized and regional development so that the benefits of economic program are properly spread out geographically. It shall utilize market forces to complement the state plan.

Our country has rich and abundant natural resources and a large industrious and educated population. The new Philippines shall certainly achieve economic and social progress once the fetters of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism are completely broken.

9. Guarantee the right to employment, raise the people's living standards and expand social services the soonest after establishing democratic state power.

It is anticipated that inflation, scarcity of goods, production breakdown speculation and other ills brought about by the decline and final collapse of the reactionary government will be carried over into the early years of the new government. The coalition government shall take swift and decisive steps to control and solve these problems by judicious use of political power and try reviving production as soon as possible. The new state shall have to pass through a period of reconstruction and rehabilitation.

The democratic coalition government shall adopt measures to ensure that all productive enterprises immediately resume and expand their production. Assurances and appropriate incentives shall be given to owners, managers and technicians. Industries producing basic consumer goods shall be afforded larger capital to expand production. Civil service personnel of the overthrown government—except those accused of serious crimes—will be urged to continue manning their offices and serving the public.

The new government shall fix at reasonable levels the agricultural tax and requisition prices for agricultural staples and other producers, allowing the peasants to immediately enjoy the benefits of land reform and to trade their surplus products freely and profitably. Sufficient supplies of grain and other necessary foodstuff shall be ensured to urban residents and other people who do not produce these.

The new government shall ensure a wage policy that is consistent with the requirements of improving the lot of the working people, increasing productivity and expanding the domestic market. It shall also give due consideration to protecting the purchasing power of the peso. Prices will be stabilized, if not lowered, by boosting local production, eradicating the monopoly practices of transnationals, lowering the cost of capital and reducing the country's dependence on high-priced imports.

The new government shall see to it that investments in light industries run ahead of those in heavy industries, in order to provide more consumer goods, generate more employment, raise the people's living standards and pool more capital at a rapid rate. It shall adopt and implement a series of five-year plans to comprehensively develop the economy, including the heavy industries, by stages.

The new government shall encourage overseas Filipinos to contribute their talents and resources to the speedy reconstruction and rehabilitation of the country even as it provides them with opportunities for decent employment.

The new government shall encourage and assist displaced people to return to their places of origin or to new areas where they can engage in production. Demobilized soldiers on both sides of the conflict shall be given ample opportunities to work and earn decent incomes.

It shall also implement programs to provide the necessary social services to the people, including housing,

social security and relief. The welfare of the handicapped, the aged and children shall be given special attention. No man, woman or child shall be left without the resources to meet basic needs. This shall be the joint concern of the government and the people's organizations.

A comprehensive health care program shall be developed with emphasis on primary health care and combining traditional with modern medicine. A national health care system shall eventually be established by the new government to make health care available to all.

The country's natural environment shall be conserved and developed to enhance national development and promote the people's livelihood and welfare.

10. Promote a patriotic, scientific and popular culture and ensure free public education.

The democratic coalition government shall do all it can to propagate nationwide a culture that is patriotic, scientific and authentically popular. It shall foster and promote this through the educational system, the mass media, and direct educational campaigns among the people.

The new government shall provide free and universal education, which is a basic right of the people. Education shall primarily be the responsibility of the state. It shall take steps to ensure that primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education become tuition-free and accessible to all Filipinos. However, privately-owned and administered educational institutions at the tertiary level will be allowed, but all remnants of elitism and unreasonable profit-making shall be eradicated. It shall also carry out extensive literacy and educational campaigns to raise the cultural level of people in areas that have lagged behind because of past disadvantages.

Under the new government, the quality of education shall continuously be improved by eradicating imperialist cultural influences and judiciously adopting the most modern scientific and technical advances from foreign sources. Education shall be geared towards the comprehensive development of the nation and shall serve the people's interests.

The new government shall see to it that teachers and students of the social sciences correctly comprehend the laws of development of Philippine history and society, and learn how the basic problems of our people can be solved. Those in the natural sciences, engineering and technology should be guided to provide the necessary knowledge for national industrialization and agricultural development. Writers and artists should be encouraged to create moving and relevant works which reflect social realities and the people's struggles. Comprehensive sports and athletic programs shall also be implemented to develop the people's well-being.

The democratic coalition government shall promote Filipino as the official language nationwide, while encouraging local languages and dialects to flourish in their respective areas. Our cultural heritage shall be preserved and developed and all Filipinos, primarily the youth, should be encouraged to learn from the past to serve the present.

11. Respect and foster the self-determination of the Moro and Cordillera people and all ethnic minorities.

The democratic coalition government, as a general policy, shall promote the unity and equality of all people, nationalities and ethnic groups of the Philippines. It shall recognize the right of the Moro people to self-determination, including their right to secede from a state of national oppression. It shall guarantee them equal economic, political and social rights, and the preservation of their way of life. It shall respect their right to autonomous political rule.

The democratic coalition government shall likewise foster the right of the Cordillera people and of all ethnic minorities to self-determination in their specific communities. It shall allow and help them achieve allround development (political, economic, social and cultural) according to their own autonomous decisions and specific conditions. It shall give them all the necessary support to enable them to advance and catch up with the rest of the nation.

In areas where they constitute the majority, the ethnic minorities shall have a dominant voice in the organs of local government. In areas where there are people of various ethnic origins, they shall be guaranteed proportional representation. They shall also have representatives in the highest levels of government.

The new government shall fully encourage the ethnic minorities to engage in economic activities in their respective areas, and shall give them priority in employment where the government is allowed to put up investment. They shall also be assured of a large part of the returns from these enterprises to hasten their social progress. The culture of the ethnic minorities shall be preserved and fostered and given a place of honor in the array of diverse local cultures in the Philippines. At the same time, they shall be afforded all the opportunities for modern education at all levels. Cadres arising from the local masses shall be encouraged to take the lead in further developing

their culture and communities towards revolutionary direction.

12. Adopt and practise a revolutionary, independent and peace-loving foreign policy.

Our people's war is part of the worldwide struggle against imperialism being waged by national liberation movements, revolutionary parties, governments and countries, as well as by the working people in capitalist and imperialist countries. Our struggle contributes to their victories, just as their achievements help advance our revolutionary movement.

We wage people's war on the fundamental principle of self-reliance, but we also consider international support as an integral part of our struggle. Thus, we seek the political and material support of other countries and revolutionary movements and organizations abroad. Those who extend such support prove themselves true friends of the Philippine revolution and the Filipino people. In no instance, however, will we become so beholden to any foreign entity that we would even consider sacrificing the sovereignty, national independence and democratic rights our people are fighting so hard to attain.

The democratic coalition government shall establish diplomatic and trade relations with all countries irrespective of ideology or social system. These relations will be characterized by mutual respect for each other's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and by mutual benefit in every possible field.

The new government shall protect the rights of all overseas Filipinos, migrants as well as permanent residents abroad. It shall also respect the rights of all foreigners temporarily or permanently residing in the Philippines.

The new Philippines shall have close and warm relations with the Third World and socialist countries. It shall also develop close relations with capitalist countries. Provided the United States gives up its imperialist privileges in the country, the new Philippines will develop normal diplomatic and trade relations with it. The people's democratic republic will work for the removal of the reactionary forces of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and will help create a situation where the Southeast Asian countries can develop themselves freely, without interference from any imperialist power, foreign military bases, and nuclear weapons in the region. The new Philippines shall pursue an independent foreign policy. It shall strive to support the revolutionary struggles of other peoples, and actively participate in the movement to establish a new economic order. It shall uphold, and conform to, decisions and resolutions of the United Nations and other international organizations which enhance the sovereignty, independence and equality of nations, and which defend and promote international peace and security.

III. Specific Program

The specific program consists of the immediate tasks to be carried out. These are required by the current conditions and are directed towards the fulfilment of the general program. From time to time, these specific tasks may be adjusted or modified according to changes or developments in the current situation.

A. Political tasks

1. Build the broadest possible united front of the Filipino people to isolate and defeat the fascist dictatorship of the US-Marcos regime.

2. Demand the repeal of the Marcos constitution and all autocratic and anti-democratic laws and decrees. Demand the repeal of all laws discriminatory against women, national and ethnic minorities and Filipino nationals.

3. Oppose all forms of suppression of the people's democratic rights and expose and condemn all fascist acts of terror against the people, such as massacres, forced mass evacuations, hamletting, bombardments, looting, arson, mass arrests, kidnapping and "salvaging."

4. Demand the release of all political detainees and prisoners of conscience.

5. Build local organs of democratic power at all levels, from the barrio to the regional level, as part of the over-all effort to establish the democratic coalition government.

6. Build and develop revolutionary mass organizations of workers, peasants, fishermen, urban poor, youth and students, church people, teachers and other professionals, businessmen, women and cultural activists. Encourage them to wage militant economic and political struggles.

7. Encourage Filipino entrepreneurs and their spokesmen to advocate anti-imperialist and democratic policies, and to extend political and material support to the revolutionary mass movement and the armed struggle.

8. Establish links and persuade anti-fascist elements among the landed gentry and the big bourgeoisie to cooperate with, and give material support to, the revolutionary mass movement and the armed struggle.

9. Penetrate and influence agencies of the state bureaucracy from the barangay to the national level, and

persuade personnel of these to raise economic and political demands and support the revolution secretly or by open defiance. Oppose and sabotage whenever possible the functioning of fascist political parties, organizations and agencies.

10. Oppose national and ethnic oppression and discrimination. Promote and safeguard the right of the Moro people and all national and ethnic minorities to self-determination, and adopt measures to foster their political autonomy and economic and cultural development.

B. Military tasks

1. Wage people's war and build the people's armed forces self-reliantly. Encourage various political groupings and people's organizations to form armed groups and heighten unity, cooperation and coordination among these.

2. Develop the material and combat capability of the people's armed forces by launching raids, ambushes, local uprisings, city partisans operations and other appropriate forms of armed tactical offensives.

3. Campaign for the removal of all US military bases, facilities and personnel from Philippine territory. Expose and oppose US and other foreign military assistance programs to the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and punish foreign military and civilian personnel directly involved in training, logistical support, intelligence and field operations.

4. Punish the most abusive military and civilian officials and personnel, especially those who owe blood debts to the people. Smash the enemy's espionage network and such terrorist units such as the "lost command," armed fanatical pseudo-religious sects, death squads and other counterrevolutionary paramilitary units.

5. Disarm repeatedly the Civilian Home Defense Forces and police units, but avoid harming those not guilty of any serious crimes and who are of good standing in the community.

6. Diminish the enemy's political and military strength by repeatedly annihilating his combat forces, destroying military installations and logistics, and smashing his politico-military operations.

7. Mobilize the people to provide all possible forms of support to the people's armed forces, and to carry out effective surveillance and intelligence work against the dictatorship's forces.

8. Expose and denounce abuses and internal ills within the AFP, such as corruption, extortion, profiteering, collusion with criminal elements, nepotism, favoritism, and bullying of inferior officers, enlisted men and trainees.

9. Penetrate the ranks of the regular and paramilitary units of the enemy, including the CHDF and barangay tanods. Launch a patriotic and democratic movement within the AFP.

10. Encourage officers and men of the AFP and its paramilitary units to support the people's cause by defection, sabotage or transfer of arms, ammunition, equipment and vital information to the people's forces.

C. Economic tasks

1. Call for national industrialization and demand an end to all privileges enjoyed by US and other transnational corporations. Encourage Filipino entrepreneurs to advance their demand for national industrialization and to strengthen their economic position against foreign capital.

2. Demand the cancellation of all foreign loans inimical to genuine national economic development.

3. Condemn the dictatorship for continuously aggravating the economic crisis and for the ravages of inflation, rising unemployment and underemployment, and excessive tax and loan burdens on the people. Dismantle the Marcos clique's agro-industrial monopolies and confiscate all its ill-gotten wealth.

4. Reduce land rent and eliminate usury. Implement wherever appropriate the program of land confiscation and free land distribution, especially against despotic landlords and landgrabbers.

5. Support the workers' trade union movement and all their progressive struggles to improve their working and living conditions.

6. Work for equal economic opportunities for both women and men.

7. Support the students' demands for just and reasonable school fees, free public education, and better study and living conditions. Support the demands of college graduates, skilled workers and professionals for expanded employment opportunities and higher salaries to encourage them not to seek employment abroad.

8. Promote various side occupations such as animal husbandry, fish culture, vegetable and fruit raising, handicrafts, and the like, and protect small producers and merchants from extortion by government agencies and enemy troopers.

9. Organize urban small producers, street peddlers, jeepney and tricycle drivers, and employees in small-scale service establishments, the better for them to improve their conditions and protect themselves from the police

and military men.

10. Uphold the rights of the Moro people and of all national and ethnic minorities to their ancestral lands, help them to recover these lands, and protect them from landgrabbing by foreign corporations, government agencies and big landlords and capitalists.

D. Social welfare tasks

1. Demand indemnification to victimized families for loss of lives and property, injuries and other damages and costs resulting from abuses and atrocities committed by the dictatorship's armed forces; and call for the immediate trial and punishment of those responsible for these depredations.

2. Campaign for significant reductions in the dictatorship's military and defense budgets in favor of more fund allotments for public health, education, public utilities, relief and other social services.

3. Call for the reduction of direct and indirect taxes which primarily burden the broad masses of the people.

4. Demand an end to the dictatorship's practice of obligatory deductions from employee's salaries under such pretexts as social security, medicare and housing schemes. Expose and oppose its bogus "civic action," "social welfare," and economic programs such as the Kilusan para sa Kabuhayan at Kaunlaran (KKK), Philippine Charity Sweepstakes, Panamin, Sariling Sikap, Pag-ibig, etc., that serve as mere cover for counterinsurgency measures, extortion and schemes to loot and squander public funds.

5. Call for more jobs and relief programs for the growing number of unemployed.

6. Call for higher payments for pensioners and those disabled by work-related injuries and illnesses.

7. Urge private relief and humanitarian organizations like the International Red Cross, to provide food and medical aid directly to victims of military atrocities and natural calamities.

8. Call for the provision of free medical services and medicine in depressed urban and rural areas. Train paramedic personnel among the people and develop indigenous medicine and primary health care.

9. Oppose the dictatorship's ejection of slum dwellers without provision for adequate housing and jobs in relocation areas. Resist and punish those who eject poor peasants and settlers to make way for foreign agrocorporations and land speculators.

10. Resist the wanton destruction of forest, land and marine resources and the disturbance of the ecological balance for the profit of transnational corporations and at the expense of the poor people who, as a result of these devastations, suffer such calamities as floods, drought, pollution, displacement and loss of livelihood.

E. Cultural and educational tasks

1. Promote a patriotic, scientific and popular culture and oppose imperialist fascist and other reactionary ideas and attitudes in the educational system, the mass media and other institutions.

2. Use and develop the national language as the principal medium for revolutionary communication nationwide, while encourage local languages and dialects to flourish for immediate local purposes. In the long term, propagate Filipino as the national language to further enhance national unity.

3. Preserve the people's cultural heritage and infuse revolutionary content into traditional literary and art forms. Encourage writers and artists to create works of art which serve the toiling masses and the revolutionary movement, and build schools, theaters, workshops and other institutions to propagate and develop revolutionary art.

4. Encourage teachers in public and private schools to depart from reactionary textbooks and use progressive materials in teaching their students.

5. Encourage mass media workers to take an anti-imperialist and democratic viewpoint and desist as much as possible from disseminating pro-imperialist, fascist and other reactionary propaganda.

6. Encourage studies and researches on Philippine society, history and people's struggles.

7. Encourage the publication and dissemination of progressive and revolutionary books, journals, pamphlets, newspapers and other reading materials.

8. Demand intellectual and academic freedom, and support the democratic movement of students, teachers and non-academic personnel.

9. Call for the expansion and improvement of free public education at all levels.

10. Respect and foster the diversity of cultures among the various ethno-linguistic communities in the country.

F. Tasks in foreign relations

1. Demand the termination of all subservient laws and unequal treaties and agreements with the US, Japan and other foreign entities that violate national independence.

2. Denounce throughout the world the fascist character and terroristic acts of the dictatorship and campaign against all forms of foreign support and assistance to it.
3. Denounce US imperialist domination over the Philippines and unite with all peoples fighting US imperialism.
4. Build and develop the broadest and strongest possible foreign support for the Philippine revolutionary movement. Seek all forms of effective political and material support for the people's war.
5. Foster friendship and solidarity with the American people and other peoples of the world.
6. Arouse, mobilize and organize overseas Filipinos to support the revolutionary movement in the Philippines.
7. Support the struggle of overseas Filipinos to uphold and promote their economic and political rights.
8. Support the national liberation and other revolutionary struggles of peoples abroad.
9. Support the world peace movement.
10. Prepare the groundwork to make possible official recognition by other countries and international organizations of the Philippine democratic coalition government.

The 12-Point General Program of the NDF

1. Unite the Filipino people to overthrow the tyrannical rule of US imperialism and the local reactionaries.
2. Wage a people's war to win total, nationwide victory.
3. Establish a democratic coalition government and a people's democratic republic.
4. Integrate the revolutionary armed forces into a single national revolutionary army.
5. Uphold and promote the free exercise of the people's basic democratic rights.
6. Terminate all unequal relations with the United States and other foreign entities.
7. Complete the process of genuine land reform, raise rural production through cooperation, and modernize agriculture.
8. Carry out national industrialization as the leading factor in economic development.
9. Guarantee the right to employment, raise the people's living standards, and expand social services the soonest after establishing democratic state power.
10. Promote a patriotic, scientific and popular culture and ensure free public education.
11. Respect and foster the self-determination of the Moro and Cordillera people and all ethnic minorities.
12. Adopt and practice a revolutionary, independent and peace-loving foreign policy.

I extend my warmest greetings to all officers and members of the Nationalist Alliance-National Capital Region on their first regular conference. To all who are here today, let me express my most militant solidarity with you in your undertaking.

As my contribution to this conference, I have been asked to talk on reformism. I shall discuss reforms and reformism, US-promoted sham reforms, and US-Marcos electoral exercises.

Reforms and reformism

Especially because it is a legal democratic alliance, the Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy must struggle hard for basic reforms such as those immediately demanded by your program of action. If attained, these basic reforms would bring substantial improvement to the lot of the broad masses of the people and would be significant steps towards national and social liberation.

Whatever its degree of success within the existing social system, the very struggle for basic reforms exposes fundamental social problems and raises the people's level of consciousness and capability to undertake social revolution. But the struggle for reforms must lead to social revolution—the total liberation of the people from fascist, foreign and feudal domination.

The struggle for basic reforms within the context of the struggle for maximum revolutionary goals is opposed to mere reformism. For reformism is a mode of political thought and action which systematically rejects the people's sovereign right to rebel against tyranny and seeks to thwart their revolutionary demands by raising the false hope of changing the oppressive and exploitative system through gradual and superficial reforms that merely palliate fundamental social problems.

Reformism endorses and prolongs the unjust system of oppression and exploitation. Palliatives for festering social ills are offered or undertaken without attacking the fundamental causes; the iniquitous system is thereby preserved and even fortified. The essential purpose of reformism is to lead the oppressed and the exploited people astray and to attack organized revolutionary forces. Reformism is the systematic use of palliatives in order to preserve the fundamental interests of the exploiting classes.

While it spreads an unreasonable fear of armed revolution, reformism seeks to preserve the violent neocolonial state and the exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords. It raises the social cost not only in terms of the continued oppression and exploitation of the people but also in terms of the inevitable revolutionary solution. At any rate, it is the intolerable aggravation of oppression and exploitation within the moribund system that drive the people to take the road of armed revolution.

Legal political activists save themselves from the error of reformism by recognizing and affirming the people's sovereign right to armed revolution against tyranny. Additionally and without any direct involvement in actual revolution, they relate their legal struggle for basic reforms to the overall process of social revolution. Later, they may choose to directly and actively support or join the ongoing armed revolution.

US promotion of sham reforms

As a complement to violent efforts aimed at preserving the semicolonial and semifeudal system now in grave crisis, the US imperialists, the fascist dictatorship and the big comprador-landlord classes in general are promoting reforms. They agree that the best and most permissible kinds of reforms are those political, economic and military reforms that the US may be able to elicit from or impose on the Marcos puppet regime.

The main thrust of the so-called political reforms is to fortify US dominance and the joint class dictatorship of the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class. The US is not really for the dissolution of the autocracy but is merely willing to give such concessions to the pro-US rivals of Marcos so as to resurrect a two-party system of pro-imperialist reactionaries which reduces the people and their organizations to mere objects of periodic electioneering. At any rate, the forthcoming election (if it pushes through) will go the way of the sham trial of the Aquino-Galman double-murder case.

Indications are that Marcos or his surrogate will be retained as the chief puppet of the US beyond 1987 or beyond any snap presidential election in 1986. The US plan is to have Marcos or his surrogate retain Amendment 6 and sign in 1988 a new agreement extending the life of US military bases beyond 1991. Only after this agreement

will the US junk Marcos and ask him to retire for health reasons in favor of his vice-president, if he still failed to quell the revolutionary movement.

The main thrust of the so-called economic reforms is not so much to break up the bureaucrat merchant monopolies of Marcos and his cronies (because the assets already concentrated in their hands remain intact) as to keep the Philippine economy an agrarian satellite of the US—ever dependent on it for surplus manufactures and surplus capital.

The Marcos regime has been made to accept the most rapacious US economic dictates through the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The Philippines is being forced to concentrate on agriculture and shun industrialization; lay off workers and freeze wages; liberalize imports; devalue the peso repeatedly; give priority to debt service and so on. There is no way the Philippines can get out of the debt trap under the terms of the imperialist banks and transnational firms.

The main thrust of the so-called military reforms is to loosen Marcos' personal hold on the Armed Forces of the Philippines, tighten that of the US and improve its image to make this a more effective instrument for suppressing the people and their revolutionary movement as well as the legal democratic movement. This is what professionalizing the AFP means.

The US is determined to keep the Philippines as its client state. It is hell-bent on destroying the national democratic movement by brute force. Thus, it has been goading the fascist dictatorship to improve its image within the parameters of a sham democracy and pursue its armed actions against the revolutionary people more vigorously. But Marcos is insistent on having his hatchetmen in firm command of the AFP. The reinstatement of General Fabian V. Ver as chief of staff and the promotion of Marcos' relatives and other favorites within the AFP prove that Marcos cannot be removed from power without a bitter fight.

The so-called reforms being pushed by the US constitute reformism as well as barefaced counterrevolution. These can only further aggravate the crises of the ruling system. Ultimately these will result in more favorable conditions for the growth and advance of the legal democratic mass movement as well as the armed revolutionary movement.

The split between Marcos and the anti-Marcos factions of the ruling classes is bound to widen and become more violent. Marcos will continue to monopolize power and wealth amidst the decreasing inflow of export earnings and foreign loans. As they are increasingly deprived of entrepreneurial opportunities, the middle bourgeoisie tend to swing from a conservative or reformist type to a more progressive type of liberalism. Because they are increasingly condemned to a life of misery and want, the urban petty bourgeoisie have become increasingly receptive to progressive liberalism and have become a big source of activists who remold themselves to become revolutionaries.

Because they suffer the most from the crisis, the toiling masses of workers and peasants increasingly respond to the calls for militant mass actions and armed revolution. They are the main force of the national democratic revolution. They are the main source of cadres and members of the proletarian revolutionary party; and, of course, they provide the indispensable mass base for social revolution.

US-Marcos electoral exercises

It is the political superstition of US imperialists that electoral exercises arranged by them with their reactionary puppets can exorcise the people's sufferings and the cause of social revolution. This superstition seeks to obscure the fact that since 1972 the crisis of the ruling system has reached the point that the ruling classes can no longer rule in the old way, with trappings of bourgeois democracy, that the fascist dictatorship can only rule by naked force and hold electoral farces.

All the voting exercises since US President Carter ordered Marcos to undertake "normalization" in 1978 and President Reagan, "democratization" in 1984 have been as grossly rigged as the sham referenda and plebiscites undertaken by the fascist dictatorship since 1973. The absolute power of the fascist dictator has remained undiminished. He lords over the captive courts and a fake parliament. And the armed revolution has grown in strength along the antifascist, anti-imperialist and antifeudal line.

The US imperialists forget that a short while before the victorious general offensive of the Vietnamese people, the Saigon government could still stage elections. Yet that government fell. Electoral farces run by the US and its puppets do not solve the fundamental problems of the people but exacerbate the contradictions among the big compradors and landlords and serve to incite all forms of popular resistance against the fascist puppet regime.

As a matter of course, the revolutionary party of the proletariat, the people's army, the underground united front for the armed struggle and other illegal political formations boycott elections held by the US-Marcos regime. They must stress the totally evil character of the regime and the necessity of revolutionary armed struggle. They do not, in their own names, engage in electoral campaigns, field their own candidates and directly endorse or support candidates of the legal opposition parties.

Sometimes, boycott may also mean the active effort to persuade as many people as possible to keep away from the polls and even to prevent the holding of elections through the confiscation of electoral paraphernalia. The result of this type of boycott is not reflected on the records of the COMELEC or NAMFREL. When the people do not vote, the fascists can fake their vote just the same. But when the majority of the people have such a high level of political consciousness that they refrain from voting, the fascists can only make themselves more contemptible when they fake the votes.

Legal parties and organizations of the national democratic movement have the choice of either boycott or participation; or they can avoid these terms as semantical baggage in favor of a creative use of flexibility without losing sight of principles and without falling into the trap of reformism. The national democratic organizations can simply intensify their ceaseless campaign for the national democratic program against the US-Marcos regime and denounce the election as a farce. And they may either give direct or indirect support to the antifascist or progressive candidates.

Take the snap presidential elections supposedly slated for February. You may decide to extend direct support to the opposition presidential tandem which meet your criteria; or you may decide to extend only indirect support if you consider them undeserving of direct support. Unavoidably, the tandem can benefit objectively from your intensified campaign against the enemy and from their own concurrence with major points in your program. You can also benefit from the attacks and the gains made by the electoral opposition against the enemy.

Whether you support an opposition presidential tandem directly or indirectly, you may criticize it on just grounds, but with restraint, and to the people's advantage. There should be appropriate venues for criticism and this criticism should help deliver the main blow against US imperialism and the fascist dictatorship. Support, whether direct or indirect, should not becloud our critical faculties, especially because the opposition presidential tandem is representative of the upper classes rather than of the middle and lower classes.

You can have your own rallies where you can fully state what you support and what you oppose. And you can also share the same platform with other parties and organizations in order to denounce the enemy and air the broadest common points of agreement. Furthermore, you can join an electoral coalition not only because you directly or indirectly support the opposition presidential tandem, but also because you are interested in getting progressive candidates nominated and elected in local elections and, more importantly, because you are interested in reaching the masses, whatever their level of political consciousness and in combining with all possible organized forces to act against electoral fraud and terror and their adverse effects.

In whatever way and to whatever extent you may decide to utilize the elections staged by the US-Marcos regime, you must understand and make evident to the people that the electoral struggle is inferior and merely supplementary to other forms of political struggle. To revolutionaries, it comes fourth to armed struggle, people's strikes and other mass actions. Reformists, however, rate elections as the sole or main method of doing away with the fascist dictatorship.

We are certain that the forthcoming presidential election will be characterized by rampant fraud and terrorism. It is designed to give the fascist dictatorship a so-called fresh mandate to pursue an antinational and antidemocratic line and launch bloodier campaigns of suppression against the people in the name of anticommunism.

While we denounce the farcical character of the election and point out the scheme of fraud and terrorism, we allow our antifascist allies to get as many votes as they can and rouse the people to defend their ballots. The opposition is sure to win in a clean and honest election. But there will be none of this. If cheated again, the opposition parties or most of their members will tend to become more supportive of more effective forms of struggle against the common enemy.

If, against all odds, the opposition won, this would be something to be happy about in the event that the elected president could substantially improve the situation by having to rely on a broad democratic coalition. The forces of the national democratic movement could thereby be able to legally achieve some of their demands for the benefit of the entire people.

At the moment, it is reasonable to anticipate that the forthcoming election would result in something as outrageous as the outcome of the sham trial of the assassination of Benigno S. Aquino, Jr. No fascist dictatorship has ever allowed himself to be defeated by some peaceful means of his own making. There is no time and no way for the electoral opposition parties to overcome Marcos' autocratic authority and his control and use of the military and paramilitary forces, the major mass media, most barangay officials, the electoral rules, the COMELEC, government resources, and so on before the snap presidential election in 1986 or even the regularly scheduled one in 1987.

The national democratic movement must anticipate the people's outrage over the sham re-election of President Marcos. It should be able to absorb and utilize the energy of the people for effective actions far greater in magnitude and intensity than we have ever seen in our country. The people simply cannot take another six years of the Marcos fascist puppet regime.

It is of acute urgency for the Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy to strengthen the ranks of the united front for the national democratic revolution against the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique. The ceaseless escalation of the enemy onslaught must be met with the intensification of all forms of popular resistance if victory were ultimately to be achieved.

In a recent blast against the Aquino-Laurel tandem, President Marcos accused it of taking a “dangerously naive policy” in offering ceasefire and negotiation to the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People’s Army. In the process, he also cited alleged CPP former Chairman Jose Ma. Sison as having previously proposed a grand coalition or united front council to support a new democratic government. Philippine News and Features forwarded a list of questions on the subject to Mr. Sison. Hereunder are the questions and his answers.

Can you comment on the comparison made by President Marcos between the Philippines and Nicaragua?

His comparison is inappropriate if not impertinent. If a comparison has to be made, Marcos is the Anastacio Somoza of the Philippines. The reelection of Anastacio Somoza in a US-sponsored electoral farce damned not only the Somoza dictatorship but the entire ruling system of the big compradors and landlords as well.

What is your reaction to President Marcos’ assertion that there is a democratic state in the Philippines being opposed by terrorists?

The so-called democratic state in the Philippines is a joint class dictatorship of the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class both subservient to US imperialism. Worse, this class dictatorship has narrowed into a fascist dictatorship—an open rule of terror—that has done away with tokens of bourgeois democracy. Those who rule the country today are the real terrorists against the people. It is not terrorism on the part of the people to fight the instruments of tyranny.

Can you compare the positions of President Marcos and of Cory Aquino re the CPP and NPA?

Mr. Marcos’ position is one of fanning the flames of civil strife in order to justify his fascist dictatorship. He wants to get a “fresh mandate” for escalating violence against the revolutionaries and the people. He is bent on a killing spree. Yet he has plunged the economy into a grave crisis and he has increasing difficulties giving his own troops decent pay.

What socioeconomic efforts to match military efforts is he talking about?

The position of Mrs. Aquino is wise and commendable. She promises to seek a ceasefire and negotiations. Apparently, she understands the need to develop the broadest possible unity of patriotic and progressive forces in order to face up to the grave political and economic crisis.

What is this idea of a grand coalition or united front council attributed to you by President Marcos? Is it already existent or in the making? Does it include the CPP/NPA and the NDF?

I proposed a grand coalition or united front council among all legal democratic organizations and opposition political parties to work for a democratic coalition government about a year or so ago. On the basis of news reports, I observe that all entities in the legal opposition are exerting all efforts to unite against the fascist dictatorship in every field of legal struggle.

The inclusion of the CPP, NPA and NDF in some broad democratic arrangement is something beyond my competence to effectively propose to the legal opposition.

What do you mean by reorienting and reorganizing the AFP?

The AFP must adopt a patriotic, democratic or pro-people orientation. It must not be a tool of a foreign power and of the local exploiting classes. It must be cured of its blind loyalty to Mr. Marcos and purged of its crimes as the instrument of fascist tyranny.

Naturally, a new regime will have to reorganize the AFP in accordance with its own orientation. It would be foolhardy for Cory Aquino if, after winning the presidency, she retains within the AFP the diehard Marcos loyalists and assassins of her husband as well as other victims. She herself would be in grave danger from these rascals.

By controlling and manipulating 280,000 men of the military, police, paramilitary and cultist groups to kill and persecute opponents, the fascist dictatorship is not only a monitor lizard but a large man-eating crocodile or shark. Pick your metaphor.

Do you suppose the CPP and NPA will respond positively to Cory Aquino’s promise of general amnesty for armed rebels and CPP legalization as well as her offer of ceasefire and negotiations?

I am not in a position to answer your question. But as one who studies political developments very closely, I think that the revolutionary movement will seriously consider any sincere proposal for the good of the people.

Unlike Marcos who never offers anything but demands outright capitulation and surrender in the guise of an offer, Cory Aquino inspires confidence and merits serious attention.

If Cory Aquino wins and releases you among other political prisoners in accordance with her pre-election commitment, what will you do?

That is a big if because the fascist dictatorship will do everything to cheat and terrorize its way to victory. But let me go with your assumption.

I will go on writing and teaching. I will enjoy being reunited with my family. I will be in a position to do more in the service of the people than I can now.

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 re-emergence 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-homogenous 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 CHDF 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 channelled 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. Countertrade must be utilized in order to revive depressed exports and bring in productive equipment and other essential imports.

A certain portion of income from recovered ill-gotten properties must be used to indemnify and rehabilitate the victims of human rights violations. 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.

Let me first define nationalist leadership as that type of political leadership which has a program of asserting national sovereignty and the civil rights of the people; pushing for national industrialization and land reform; promoting a national, scientific and mass education and culture; and stressing an independent foreign policy.

With this program, nationalist leadership seeks to change the semicolonial and semifeudal society into a society that is nationalist and democratic. US imperialism and the local reactionary classes of big compradors and landlords react to and are adverse to this program and want to preserve the present society which they dominate. Thus, the nationalist leadership exposes and opposes them and seeks to undo their dominance.

There are social classes whose conditions, demands and aspirations are reflected in the program of the nationalist leadership and which serve as its source of strength. These are the working class, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie. These classes have the dignity of being called the people.

Among these classes, the working class is the most progressive political and productive force. It deserves to be the leading class. It has the revolutionary party through which it exercises leadership. It is the leading party with the theory, program and organization capable of mastering the past, present and future of not only the most progressive class but also the entire Filipino people.

At any rate, the various patriotic classes can contribute through parties, organizations and individuals to the formation and development of the national leadership.

Being the political, economic and cultural center of the Philippines, Manila has been the single most important locale for the articulation and actions of the national leadership. Every major phenomenon in Manila pertaining to this leadership has had national or even international dimensions, even when these are not intended.

Manila was a raging battlefield between the leadership and forces of the nationalist movement and those of foreign and feudal domination during the 1970s. The battles were carried out aboveground and underground.

The decade opened with a big bang. While the newly established New People's Army led by the Communist Party of the Philippines intensified the armed struggle in Tarlac, the First Quarter Storm broke out in Manila and lashed at the ruling system in 1970. The more the reactionary authorities used truncheons and bullets against demonstrators the more the youth, workers and other urban poor raised a storm of protest against the system.

The evils of US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism were condemned. And the youth and workers roused themselves to ever rising fury with the battlecry, “Makibaka, huwag matakot!”

The nationalist movement derived inspiration and guidance from such works as the Struggle for National Democracy and Philippine Society and Revolution. Anti-imperialist and antifeudal rallies, discussion groups, publications of all types, cultural performances, murals and wall slogans flourished.

The nationalist leadership operated through the Kabataang Makabayan; the Samahang Demokratikong Kabataan; the Nationalist Students' League; the Malayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan; the student governments; the organizations of teachers and other professionals; community organizations; and the labor unions at the US Tobacco Corporation, Northern Motors and others.

Under the influence of the rising anti-imperialist movement, more and more members of the Philippine Congress took the nationalist stand and criticized the US-Marcos regime for its puppetry on a wide range of issues.

In 1971 the nationalist youth movement continued to advance and catch national attention, especially with the Diliman Commune of February 1971 and the long marches of youth, workers and peasants from Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog regions to Manila. The workers' strike movement advanced.

Nationalist blocs within the Philippine Congress and the Constitutional Convention were ascendant. The Supreme Court came out with nationalist decisions on the Quasha and Luztevecos cases in 1971 and 1972. The press bitterly attacked the US-Marcos regime for its failures and betrayals.

Not satisfied with brutal actions against the workers, peasants and students, Marcos engineered petty bombing incidents and eventually the Plaza Miranda bombing which almost wiped out the entire opposition party, the Liberal Party.

This dastardly incident laid the ground for the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus. A number of

nationalist professors and students were arrested.

The Movement of Concerned Citizens for Civil Liberties arose to demand the restoration of the writ. Despite the writ suspension, mass actions were held. Activists who had been blacklisted started to go underground and stayed there.

In early 1972 the writ of habeas corpus was restored as a result of public pressure. The nationalist organizations became even more emboldened to launch mass actions, like demonstrations in the city and long marches towards the city from Central Luzon and Southern Luzon.

The biggest event of the year was the declaration of martial law under Proclamation No. 1081 after a series of petty bombing incidents. Nationalist leaders in political parties, education, student movement, labor movement, press, business, church and other sectors were arbitrarily arrested and detained. Nationalist organizations which had grown rapidly in Manila were outlawed.

Thousands of activists flowed into the underground in order to escape the dragnet of the enemy and wage a fierce struggle against it. Many joined the city underground and many others went on farther to the countryside to join the armed struggle.

The Communist Party of the Philippines assessed the new situation and set new tasks for the entire revolutionary movement of the people against the full-blown fascist dictatorial regime of the US Marcos clique.

In 1973 the CPP expanded its Manila underground organization with highly qualified personnel from the outlawed mass organizations. These mass organizations tried to ensure the safety of their offices and members and sent them systematically to the countryside through the CPP.

The CPP initiated the organization of the Preparatory Commission of the National Democratic Front. The objective was to arouse, organize and mobilize the broadest possible united front against the fascist dictatorship.

The year was one of mastering the new situation, deploying more and more cadres to the various regions of the country and developing both the city underground and the armed struggle in the countryside. There was close cooperation and coordination between these two areas of struggle.

The enemy seemed to be benefiting much from martial law. But in fact an avalanche of people were volunteering to wage armed struggle. The difficulty of the revolutionary movement then was scarcity of arms to give to highly qualified people pouring into its ranks.

In 1974 efforts to revive aboveground the labor, student and urban poor community movements were undertaken against great odds. New cadres not in the enemy blacklist were developed.

It was evident that the US was bent on propping up the Marcos fascist regime with heavy doses of foreign loans. These would increase from year to year to finance infrastructure and other showy projects, to cover deficits in foreign trade and balance of payments, and to build up the military machinery.

The regional organizations of the CPP and NPA were all in place to cover the entire country. That of Manila was the most developed and had the largest membership. Even when Central Committee members of the CPP were arrested, the CPP and NPA regional organizations acquired more strength.

Thinking that he had conquered the people and wanting to save on prison expenses, and, of course, warding off increasing criticism by international organizations, like Amnesty International, about detention without charges, Marcos released a considerable number of political prisoners, including those who would later participate in the open revival of the nationalist movement. Fascist atrocities and abuses were exposed in the country and abroad from Manila by revolutionaries and religious progressives. Work for the legal defense, welfare and release of political prisoners was systematized, especially after the formation of Task Force Detainees.

In 1975 the La Tondeña strike signaled the widespread strike movement in 300 workplaces, mostly in Manila. Community organizing was done more vigorously. ZOTO (Zone One Tondo Organization) was the pioneer of community mass actions.

Human rights organizations intensified their work, with Manila as their headquarters. More religious progressives arose to assist the city underground of the workers, urban poor and the students.

The city underground continued to be incensed by the atrocities and abuses of the military and paramilitary forces but was enthusiastic over the expansion and intensification of the revolutionary armed struggle.

"The Specific Characteristics of People's War in the Philippines" by Amado Guerrero was issued to provide the latest comprehensive guidance for the nationwide armed revolution.

In 1976 the armed struggle advanced vigorously. The enemy was not reporting in its press the victories of the

NPA. But the Manila underground was well-informed on these through underground publications.

The most important revolutionary document to come out in the year was “Our Urgent Tasks.” This would guide the growth of both the legal democratic movement and the armed struggle in the years to come.

The workers, urban poor, students, religious and other sectors continued to develop their respective movements legally and openly in defiance of the fascist leadership.

In 1977 both the legal democratic movement in Manila and other urban areas and the armed struggle in the countryside advanced tremendously. Every regional organization of the CPP and NPA was growing rapidly. The NDF was gaining adherents in Manila and other urban areas.

Arrests made of Central Committee members of the CPP since the previous year, culminating in the arrest of yours truly in late 1977, encouraged the fascist dictator to claim that he had crushed the revolutionary movement.

In 1978 Marcos called for the election of the interim Batasang Pambansa. LABAN (Laban ng Bayan) was formed under the leadership of Sen. Lorenzo Tañada to fight the KBL (Kilusang Bagong Lipunan) in Manila. The election served as an occasion to project the nationalist line on issues, especially because the country was already in an economic crisis due to excessive foreign borrowings for nonproductive purposes.

The fascist regime rigged up the electoral rules, process and results. As a result, a mighty noise barrage burst out in Metro Manila. It brought to the fore the people’s overwhelming hatred of the regime.

Riding on the antifascist wave and outrage over the sham election, the nationalist movement could have rapidly advanced and launched further mass actions in 1978 and 1979. But the nationalist leadership failed to override internal differences over the elections. In 1979 the second oil shock hit the fascist dictatorship. The deleterious effects of foreign borrowing became obvious. The agricultural exports of the Philippines—the main dollar earners—fell into a dismal state.

The Marcos regime could still borrow but at far more onerous terms than before. And it would use the new loans to accelerate the salting away of foreign exchange.

The leaders of the nationalist movement could see the trend that Manila would be the center of turmoil and upheaval in the 1980s. Revolutionary efforts of the nationalist leadership in the 1970s laid the foundation for the overthrow of the Marcos fascist dictatorship in 1986.

I suppose that a sufficient amount of time has passed since the events of February for everyone at the Ateneo to realize that the replacement of the Marcos fascist dictatorship by the Aquino government has not spelled any fundamental change of the semicolonial and semifeudal society in the Philippines.

The new government may be celebrated as the fruit of the people's democratic struggle and may be praised for the substantial restoration of civil liberties. But certainly there has been no social revolution.

Philippine society continues to be dominated by the United States and by such reactionary ruling classes as the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class. While the fascist dictatorship has been overthrown, the very same evil forces that brought it about in 1972 continue to ride roughshod over the people. These are US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

As a whole, the Aquino government cannot be described as liberal democratic. But it has a liberal democratic tendency. In fact, the key positions in the Aquino cabinet are held by pro-imperialist and reactionary elements. Only the secondary positions are held by the liberal democrats.

The minister of national defense (Enrile) is an avid follower of US imperialism and of the Pentagon in particular. And the minister of finance and other major economic officials are close adherents to the interests of the US transnational corporations and the policy dictates of the IMF and World Bank.

Not even the antifascist demands of the people have been completely satisfied. The most important machinery used by the US-Marcos regime to oppress the people remains intact and has not at all been reoriented, reorganized and drawn away from being a tool of a foreign power and the local exploiting classes.

Only the middle class seems to feel some political relief. The workers continue to face and suffer the brute force of the police and military. In extensive rural areas, militarization and military offensives continue to be intensified against the peasant masses.

As far as the anti-imperialist and antifeudal demands of the people are concerned, there is yet no indication that the Aquino regime is determined to satisfy them. On the contrary, the new regime is obviously determined to stay within the parameters of foreign and feudal domination.

So long as US imperialism and domestic feudalism continue to afflict the people, the political and economic crisis of Philippine society will continue to worsen and the possibility of fascist restoration will continue to stare us in the face. So long as these root causes of the people's suffering are intact, the armed revolutionary movement that has been growing in strength will continue to advance.

By this time, it should be clear to many of us that the ruling system is in a worse situation than ever before. The contradictions among the Aquino, Marcos and Enrile factions of the ruling classes are increasingly fraught with violence. The Aquino faction has inherited a bankrupt government and has serious difficulties in gaining control over a demoralized and fractious military.

Under the present circumstances, the revolutionary movement is making great strides. The revolutionary party of the proletariat, the people's army and the national united front are building their strength at an accelerated rate. The proletarian revolutionaries are leading the broad coalition of the working class, peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie and are taking advantage of the conflicts of the factions of the ruling classes in order to isolate and defeat the enemy who wishes to restore fascism.

Definition of a national and democratic constitution

In the face of the bitter reality that is foreign and feudal domination, we demand a constitution that has a national and democratic character. This kind of constitution is already foretold by the programs of the national democratic mass organizations and alliances as well as by the proposals of these entities to the constitutional commission of the Aquino regime.

By national, we mean a constitution that asserts the national sovereignty and independence of the Filipino nation and people and requires the national liberation of the people from foreign domination in all major fields of our social life—political, economic and cultural.

The constitution must abrogate all the unequal treaties, executive agreements and laws which have made the

Philippines subservient to US imperialism. Foreign military bases and nuclear weapons must be prohibited because these violate the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Philippines and these prejudice the national survival of the Filipino people.

The military machinery of the state must cease to be dependent on imperialist indoctrination, strategic planning and material supplies. The Armed Forces of the Philippines cannot truly be an instrument of national defense if it is in the first place controlled and manipulated by a foreign power.

The excessive privileges of the US transnational corporations in exploiting Philippine natural resources, controlling strategic enterprises and extracting superprofits from the country must come to an end.

The Philippine economy must be Filipinized. The policy of national industrialization must be adopted and carried out as the leading factor in economic development. This policy is complementary with genuine land reform.

A national, scientific and mass culture must be promoted. The national language must be upheld as the principal medium of information, education and official communications. But even more importantly, patriotic, democratic and scientific ideas and values must be propagated through the educational and cultural system.

It is not enough to promote national freedom. We must have a high sense of social justice; and we must attain the class freedom of the toiling masses of workers and peasants. A truly popular democracy is one that gets rid of class oppression and exploitation by the big bourgeoisie and the landlord class.

The big swindle in a liberal democratic constitution is that it obscures the reality of classes and class struggle and creates the illusion that individuals belonging to the exploited classes can enjoy as much freedom as individuals belonging to the exploiting classes.

In the abstraction of freedom as individual freedom, as if the reality of exploiting and exploited classes were not existing, the exploiting classes are given free rein to oppress and exploit the toiling masses and the middle social strata who together comprise at least 90 percent of the people.

Democracy is not simply a matter of providing for formal individual rights, processes and institutions which are in fact controlled and manipulated by the exploiting classes. In the semicolonial and semifeudal circumstances of the Philippines, the solution of the land problem through genuine and thoroughgoing land reform is the main substance of the democratic revolution because it means the political and economic liberation of the peasant majority of the people.

With land reform already benefiting them, the peasant masses become a more productive force, a broad domestic market and a source of large domestic savings for national industrialization. In the advancing interaction between land-reformed agriculture and national industry, the ranks of the working class are increased and strengthened to carry out more effectively its historic mission.

Both the proletarian revolutionary and the progressive liberal can agree that land reform is the key to the advance of the modern productive forces and of modern democracy, be this capitalist or socialist, in the history of mankind.

Individual freedom would be truly enjoyed by the Filipino people if they freed themselves from US imperialism and such local exploiting classes as the big compradors and landlords. A national democratic constitution assures the utmost enjoyment of individual freedom by outlawing imperialist and big comprador-landlord oppression and exploitation.

A critique of the Concom and the Aquino constitution in the making

A constitution is nothing but a reflection of the kind of social system that produces it. Since Philippine society is still semicolonial and semifeudal, it cannot but produce a semicolonial and semifeudal constitution though embellished with the jargon of bourgeois nationalism and liberal democracy.

Though it has emerged as a departure from the fascist dictatorship, the Aquino regime strains to keep itself within the boundaries of a semicolonial and semifeudal system. This regime has cleverly packed the constitutional commission with an overwhelming majority of commissioners who have the vested interests and mentality of the pro-US big compradors and landlords.

The predominant attitude in the constitutional commission is to put out a constitution that is better than the Marcos constitution in the sense of going back to the 1935 constitution as much as possible. There is a conscious effort to meet the antifascist demands of the people to some extent and to frustrate the anti-imperialist and antifeudal demands of the people.

Very likely the Bill of Rights would no longer be sullied by a provision allowing the President to issue executive

warrants of arrest, searches and seizures. There would also be some flimsy safeguards against abuse of presidential authority, especially with regard to the declaration of martial law and suspension of the writ of habeas corpus.

But the President is being given wide discretion in making executive agreements on foreign credit, extension of privileges to foreign transnational corporations and other matters. Definitely, there is no elimination or reduction of the gains made by foreign investors in the 1973 constitution, in Marcosian decrees and previous laws. The foreign vultures will continue to plunder the natural and human resources of the country and extract superprofits.

There is going to be constitutional silence on foreign military bases and nuclear weapons in either the declaration of basic principles or transitory provisions despite the assertion of national sovereignty and territorial integrity. The President is being given the leeway to extend the life of the US military bases beyond 1991.

Despite all assurances of individual freedom for the people, the constitution in the making is certainly not going to state anything against the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class. They are strongly assured of their right to monopolize ownership of the means of production and distribution and to exploit the people. Any expression suggesting aversion to big comprador-landlord property is being squelched.

Because of the big number of clericalists in the constitutional commission, the liberal expression “divine providence” has been replaced by the stricter expression “Almighty God” which would turn off the Buddhists, animists, agnostics and atheists in the Philippines. There are also strong attempts to cast away such a liberal democratic expression as “separation of church and state.”

Checks and balances between executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government are being formally strengthened. Albeit, all three branches are under the control of the representatives or agents of the exploiting classes.

Despite the current multiplicity of parties in support of and in opposition to the Aquino regime, there is a strong bias among the reactionary commissioners for restoring the two-party system because it is supposed to be easier controlled by the exploiting classes and their foreign master.

There is not going to be any transitory provision giving sufficient special powers and ample time to the Presidential Commission on Good Government and the Presidential Committee on Human Rights to go after those who used extraordinary powers to perpetrate corruption and human rights violations. And if there is going to be any case against any of them, it shall be filed before the usual overloaded regular court and not before any special court.

The Aquino regime can easily succeed to have its constitution ratified in a plebiscite because by some degrees it is supposed to be better than the Marcos constitution in an antifascist way, because government agencies and the establishment media will campaign for it and because the psychological predisposition of the backward and middle sections of the population is to say yes to an authority that is not yet perceived as rotten and stinking.

But as time passes, the nonsolution of such basic problems as US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism can only serve to undermine the regime and incite the people to armed revolution.

Towards a national and democratic constitution

A national and democratic constitution can be fully formulated and ratified only after the total victory of the national democratic revolution.

Now confronted with a draft constitution that falls short of their demands, the Filipino people have to press these indefatigably even beyond plebiscite day and intensify their struggle for national liberation and democracy.

Far more important than deciding to take an affirmative, negative or boycott position relative to the Aquino constitution is the determination to carry out mass education and militant actions on fundamental issues.

A big comprador-landlord constitution can never put to rest the legal democratic movement and the armed revolutionary movement against foreign and feudal domination.

People's Participation in Nation Building:

A Macro Perspective Lecture delivered at the symposium organized by PROCESS (Participatory Research Organization of Communities and Education towards Struggle for Self-reliance) Foundation
at the UP College of Law, August 12, 1986

It is an honor and privilege for me to speak before you on the subject of people's participation in nation-building.

I do so in the context of the general theme of the symposium which is the people's participation in decision-making: a review of people's power over the past 150 days.

Let me start by reaffirming the principle that the people are the main motive force and real makers of history. I make this declaration in opposition to the notion that outstanding individuals—presidents, technocrats, generals and the like—are solely or mainly responsible for the existence and development of a society.

In the building of any nation, the people are at the socioeconomic base creating the means of consumption and production, including the surplus product that sustains the superstructure consisting of politics and culture.

When the progress of a nation is hindered by a foreign power and by local exploiting classes, the patriotic and progressive classes—the toiling masses and the intermediate social strata—unite as one nation and people to overthrow the oppressive and exploitative ruling system.

A revolutionary class, a revolutionary party, a revolutionary army and outstanding revolutionary leaders arise to take the lead in a social revolution. But this is impossible without a broad and militant unity of the oppressed and exploited people. Revolution or development is a mass undertaking against the structure of oppression and exploitation.

People's participation in Filipino nation-building

Filipino nationhood was forged in the crucible of armed revolution. By asserting their national sovereignty and striving for democracy, the Filipino people had to launch an armed revolution against the colonial and feudal system in 1896.

The national democratic revolution of the old type was led by the liberal bourgeoisie (the ilustrados). But the broad masses of the people—the urban plebeians, the peasant masses and the nascent middle class—had to carry out a revolution. And they were victorious against a decrepit colonial power.

The revolution would ultimately fail against the intervention and aggression of the United States not only due to the military superiority of the enemy but, more importantly, due to the inadequacy of bourgeois liberal ideology in seeing through the guile of a modern imperialist power.

Thus, the national and democratic aspirations of the people were frustrated. The United States superimposed monopoly capitalism on domestic feudalism. In the interaction of these two forces, a semifeudal socioeconomic system would become a semicolonial one in 1946.

Afflicted by both foreign monopoly capitalism and domestic feudalism, the semifeudal system has been chronically in grave crisis. There has always been the necessity and opportunity for the Filipino people to pursue and complete the struggle for national liberation and democracy.

The objective of the Philippine revolution remains the same. It is to end foreign and feudal domination. Without accomplishing this objective, the Filipino people cannot go far in building a nation that is free, democratic, just, prosperous and progressive.

It must be understood that the national democratic revolution is being carried out under conditions in which the class composition of Philippine society has changed since the beginning of the century and in a world era of modern imperialism and proletarian revolution.

The national democratic revolution today is of a new type. It is led by the working class under the guidance of its revolutionary theory and through its revolutionary party, the people's army and a united front of the toiling masses of workers and peasants and the intermediate social strata of the urban petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie against US imperialism and the local reactionary classes of big compradors and landlords.

But whether we agree or not that the working class is the most progressive productive and political force capable of revolutionary class leadership today, there are certain demands of the national democratic revolution which are undeniably valid and worthy of the entire people's support. The fulfilment of these demands spells

nation-building.

In the political field, we fight for the national sovereignty and independence of the Filipino people against US imperialism and its local lackeys. In the economic field, we seek to accomplish economic development through genuine and thoroughgoing land reform and national industrialization. In the cultural field, we promote the national, scientific and mass orientation. In foreign relations, we push forward an independent, neutral and non-aligned foreign policy.

There is absolutely no point in seeking or allowing the preservation of the semicolonial and semifeudal system. This system is already in the process of rapid self-disintegration and the continuing growth in strength of the national democratic movement in both the urban and rural areas seals its doom.

People's power in the February events

There are certain forces and individuals who believe that the fourteen-year fascist dictatorship of Marcos was merely the passing aberration of what is a viable democratic society, if not of an individual with an excessive lust for wealth and power.

Of course, they equate democracy with the dominance of US imperialism and the local reactionary classes of big compradors and landlords, with abstract individual rights which are blind to the reality of exploiting and exploited classes and with institutions and processes that are in fact monopolized and manipulated by a foreign power and the local exploiting classes.

It should never be obscured that the Marcos dictatorship was the outgrowth of foreign and feudal domination, that this was a manifestation of a moribund ruling system and that so long as that domination persists, fascist restoration is always possible.

The Marcos dictatorship was supported for a long time by the US and the local reactionaries in the vain hope that it could destroy the armed revolutionary movement and preserve the ruling system with tremendous amounts of foreign borrowing. The foreign debts were for stabilization and anti-industrial purposes and for spinning off a big budgetary allocation for military build-up.

In the end, the US and the local reactionaries had to drop Marcos because his despotic rule had only succeeded in fanning the flames of armed revolution by the people, ignite violent contradictions among the factions of the ruling classes and plunge the country further into bankruptcy.

The overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship and the ascendance of Cory Aquino to the presidency were made possible by the long-term revolutionary struggle of the people, by the fear of the US and the local reactionaries that if Marcos stayed longer in power the armed revolutionary movement would advance faster; and by the dramatic convergence of antifascist forces and spontaneous masses on the hated regime last February.

The uprising and power of the people protected the Enrile-Ramos military group that broke away from the fascist dictator; prevented the Marcos-Ver camp from launching an effective offensive as well as the Enrile-Ramos camp from setting up a military or military-civilian junta; and made way for Aquino to assume the presidency and set up a civilian government.

The claim that the people's revolutionary movement had absolutely no share in the overthrow of the Marcos regime is completely untrue. This overlooks not only the long-term antifascist, anti-imperialist and antifeudal struggle of the people and the fear of the US and the local reactionaries that the civil disobedience movement called by Cory Aquino would merge with the welgang bayan campaign of the national democratic movement; but also the immediate and direct participation of the national democratic organizations in mass actions at EDSA, MBS-Channel 4, Nagtahan bridge, Malacañang Palace and elsewhere. In fact, it was the national democratic organizations that exerted constant pressure on Malacañang Palace and hastened the flight of the fascist dictator.

But it is also true that the general character of the EDSA happening is that of an antifascist people's uprising, that another set of upper class politicians and technocrats has taken over, that the military machinery of the state remains intact, that the anti-imperialist and antifeudal demands of the people are far from being satisfied; and that people's power is being spoken of by the US and the local reactionaries as mere people power like manpower or horsepower for convenient use by the upper classes who masquerade as middle class.

The nature and problems of the Aquino government

The Aquino government is not a liberal democratic government but a pro-imperialist and reactionary government with a liberal democratic tendency or facade. It has not shown any determination to leave the confines of foreign and feudal domination.

The key positions in the Aquino cabinet are held by pro-imperialist and reactionary elements like Enrile in the ministry of national defense, and Ongpin, Fernandez and the like in the economic ministries and offices. The so-called nationalists and liberal democrats are holding less important positions in the cabinet.

The Aquino government is operating within a ruling system that is wracked by an ever worsening political and economic crisis. There is no solution in sight to this crisis.

The US is using a coup threat and financial squeeze to compel the Aquino government to make an early commitment on the extension of the US military bases beyond 1991, comply with the policy dictates of the World Bank and IMF and reduce the number and influence of the so-called nationalists and liberal democrats in the cabinet.

To advance their respective self-interests, the Marcos, Enrile and Laurel factions are exerting pro-US and reactionary pressures on the Aquino presidency which is itself conservative. The most dangerous threat to the Aquino government is still the Marcos faction which has tremendous financial, military and political assets.

The Enrile faction which is dominant in the AFP has been trying to strengthen its position by taking advantage of the continuing main conflict between the Aquino and Marcos factions. These three factions have their respective groups within the AFP. To make itself more potent than it is, the Laurel faction has lately been threatening to link up with the Enrile faction.

The internal weaknesses of the Aquino government include the inherited financial bankruptcy and the factionalism and demoralization within the civil bureaucracy and military machinery. Every faction in the ruling system and in the Aquino government is insecure and is maneuvering to protect and advance its own interests.

The Aquino government's hope of achieving economic recovery is based on securing further foreign financing and complying with policy dictates from the IMF and World Bank. So, the people can expect to suffer more of the same that they suffered under the Marcos fascist regime.

Aside from hoping for economic recovery to stabilize and improve the situation, the Aquino government hopes to allay tensions within the ruling system through a new constitution and new elections and to outwit and destroy the armed revolutionary movement through ceasefire negotiations and armed combat.

The new constitution being drafted is proving to be largely a return to the 1935 constitution with some flimsy safeguards against abuse of presidential authority with regard to the declaration of martial law and suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus. Such basic problems of the people as US domination and feudal exploitation are not being addressed by the new draft constitution.

The game plan of the US and the AFP with regard to the ceasefire negotiations is to discredit the revolutionary movement by making false charges of ceasefire violations to pressure and drive it into a capitulationist position, to effect a loss of momentum in the revolutionary armed struggle, induce divisive trends within revolutionary ranks and give the fractious and demoralized AFP time and opportunity to retrain, reorganize and consolidate its combat units. But the National Democratic Front and its component organizations are obviously prepared against the US and military game plan and will press for a lasting peace involving the solution of basic social problems.

Though it may still be conceded that the overthrow of the Marcos fascist dictatorship has resulted in the substantial restoration of civil liberties and some political relief and democratic space, especially to the urban middle class, there is yet no complete satisfaction of the antifascist demands of the people.

The same military machinery used by the Marcos fascist dictatorship to oppress the people has not been reoriented, reorganized and reduced. Militarization in extensive rural areas is unabated. Military offensives have been intensified. The peasant masses and farm workers and other urban poor are also being subjected to military and police brutality.

Despite the widely acclaimed failure of the so-called military solution, the coercive apparatuses of the state continue to be used to preserve the semicolonial and semifeudal society and prevent the victory of the national democratic revolution.

Raising people's power to a new and higher level

As it is, the Aquino government cannot be expected to comprehensively satisfy the anti-imperialist, antifeudal and antifascist demands of the people. It cannot solve the basic problems of the people without the cooperation of the national democratic movement. All efforts must be exerted to raise the level of consciousness, organization and militancy of the people along the general line of the national democratic revolution against foreign and feudal domination. Only thus can the people liberate themselves.

To build national unity capable of ridding the country of foreign and feudal domination, we must consciously

rely mainly on the basic revolutionary alliance of the working class and peasantry; win over the urban petty bourgeoisie to the side of the toiling masses as one more basic revolutionary force; further win over the national bourgeoisie to the side of the basic revolutionary forces to form a national united front; and take advantage of the splits among the reactionary factions in order to isolate and destroy the enemy who is the most rabid agent of US imperialism and local reaction.

All forms of organizations must be formed and strengthened along the national democratic line. These may include political parties, mass organizations and alliances.

All forms of struggle must be waged and won along the national democratic line. The legal democratic movement must advance all forms of legal struggle. The persistence of systematic violence against the people justifies their perseverance and militancy in all forms of extra-legal struggle.

The struggle against the structures of fascist dictatorship must be completed and the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle must be intensified. Left alone to the pressures of US imperialism and the local reactionaries, the Aquino government would succumb to these completely and degenerate into an unmitigated tool of foreign and feudal domination. But because of the impending negotiations between the Philippine government and the NDF, there is some hope that the basic social problems of the people can be addressed and that lasting peace can be worked out.

As of now, the Aquino government has a dual character, principally pro-imperialist and reactionary and secondarily liberal democratic. The progressive forces must therefore pursue the dual tactics of unity and struggle.

The people must support and encourage the progressive policies and criticize and oppose its reactionary policies. They can side with the Aquino government in fighting any attempt at fascist restoration by the Marcos faction or any military coup. But they must be ready to oppose every policy or action taken by the Aquino government to serve foreign, feudal and fascist interests.

Under the weight of worsening political and economic crisis and increasing pressures from the US and local reactionary interests, the Aquino government is in the process of finally revealing its character. It may choose to become rigid and repressive, to seek accommodation with the people's revolutionary forces or to give way to another reactionary faction.

The Filipino people must be ready for every eventuality. They must always uphold their own national and democratic rights and interests, maintain their own initiative and build their own power.

at the Founding Congress of Partido ng Bayan

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 multi-sectoral 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 multi-lateral 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 anti-people 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 extra-legal 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.

To comprehend the main political currents and prospects of the Philippines, it is necessary to have a bit of background on the nature of Philippine society and the chronic socioeconomic and political crisis that afflicts it.

The society is semifeudal. After imposing direct colonial rule from the beginning of the century, the United States granted only nominal independence to the country in 1946 but continued to exercise indirect colonial rule through unequal treaties, agreements and arrangements.

The society is semicolonial. Since the beginning of its domination of the Philippines, the US has imposed monopoly capitalism on domestic feudalism and transformed the feudal society of the 19th century into the semifeudal and semicolonial society of the 20th century.

US monopoly capitalism or imperialism did away with the system of sheer colonial plunder run by an old type of colonialism, that of Spain, and exported surplus capital to the Philippines to expand agricultural production for export as well as mineral ore production for the same purpose.

The expansion of raw-material production for export and the unequal exchange of Philippine raw material exports (mainly agricultural) and foreign manufactured imports have raked in superprofits for the US and spawned a native and permanent resident comprador big bourgeoisie.

This class is at the peak of the social structure and determines the semifeudal character of the economy. Though relegated to a lesser position as an exploiting class, the landlord class remains powerful and widespread, especially outside of the large commercial cities. The big compradors in the cities are often also big landlords in the countryside.

These exploiting classes are mere fractions of one percent of the Philippine population. They appropriate the surplus product created by the basic exploited classes—the proletariat and the peasantry, which are respectively 15 and 75 percent of the population.

The intermediate social strata are the middle bourgeoisie, which comprises about one percent of the population, and the urban petty bourgeoisie, comprising eight percent or even less because of the erosive effect of the intensified socioeconomic crisis.

Semifeudal Philippine society, be it during the colonial or the semicolonial phase of US domination, has always been in a state of chronic crisis. Two monsters, foreign monopoly capitalism and domestic feudalism, continue to suck the blood of the working people.

Exploitation is done under conditions of ever increasing surplus labor which cannot be absorbed by an economy that is basically agrarian and pre-industrial, having some negligible light industry dependent on imported equipment and raw materials but absolutely without such fundamentals of modern industry as enterprises producing basic metals, basic chemicals and capital goods.

In the many decades since the start of US domination, spontaneous peasant resettlement in the land frontier had served to relieve the land problem and absorb surplus labor. But towards the end of the 1960s, the land frontier had been exhausted. The process of land accumulation by landlords, government officials and agri-corporations overtook the poor settlers and dispossessed them of tillable public land.

Old and new settlements all over the country turned ripe for peasant war. The tokenistic and fake land reform programs of the big comprador-landlord government could not solve the land problem, but on the contrary aggravated it.

Throughout the 1960s, the US pushed in the Philippines an absurd policy of discouraging local industrialization and assailing even those import-dependent light industries established in the 1950s. So, every outlet for surplus labor would be blocked.

At the same time, the agricultural and extractive export products of the Philippines were getting a beating in the world capitalist market. Thus, the deficits in foreign trade and balance of payments resulted in a grave economic and financial crisis that would necessitate increasingly large amounts of foreign loans.

Under the stress of the worsening socioeconomic crisis, the ruling system became more wracked by a political crisis—the intensified bitter conflict among factions of the same exploiting classes marked by an increasing tendency to form armed groups and inflict violence on each other. The then ruling US-Marcos clique took the most

initiative in unleashing violence against its intrasystemic rivals as well as against the restive toiling masses and the resurgent armed revolutionary movement.

Clearly manifesting the inability of the ruling classes to settle their differences nonviolently and rule in the old way, Marcos took advantage of his presidential position and declared martial law in 1972, imposed a fascist autocracy on the Philippines, and used official terrorism on a wide scale to suppress his political rivals, the progressive mass organizations and the broad masses of the people.

The Marcos fascist dictatorship was the outgrowth of a semicolonial and semifeudal system already disintegrating from within and challenged by resolute forces of armed revolution from without.

The open rule of terror could be maintained by the US only with large doses of foreign loans. These loans were incurred not only to cover deficits from the slump in prices of raw material exports but also to finance infrastructure and other non-productive projects, make way for a rapid military build-up, and encourage high consumerism and bureaucratic corruption.

What resulted has been the aggravation and deepening of the crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal system. As soon as international credit tightened, the basic ills of society became even more exposed. Marcos was driven into desperation and committed the most intolerable mistakes, such as the brazen murder of his chief political rival before the eyes of the world.

The Marcos autocracy fell as a result of the convergence of forces against it. The armed revolutionary movement fought the hardest and longest as its growth in strength accelerated from year to year. Forces of anti-imperialist and anti-feudal orientation became the strongest anti-fascist forces and delivered unremitting blows against the regime. The majority of the big compradors and landlords increasingly turned against Marcos after foreign credit had dwindled, and they openly rejected him after the Aquino assassination and the unprecedented upsurge of the mass movement.

After supporting Marcos for a long time, the US and the Catholic Church junked him, not because they had become progressive but because they had remained counterrevolutionary, driven by fear that the armed revolutionary movement was being hastened by Marcos' persistence in power. And, of course, Enrile and Ramos, together with the US-instigated Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM), had the same motivation of preempting the revolutionary movement aside from that of saving themselves and furthering their personal ambitions.

The US and Filipino reactionaries, including those who had shifted from a pro-Marcos to a pro-Aquino position, have touted the ascendance of Mrs. Corazon Aquino to the Philippine presidency as a "pre-emptive revolution" (a peaceful "revolution" pre-emptive of an armed revolution) and have gone so far as to spread the wishful thinking that the national democratic movement had permanently destroyed itself with a boycott policy in the snap presidential election and had absolutely nothing to do with the downfall of Marcos in February 1986.

The truth is that the national democratic movement called for a national strike movement well ahead of Mrs. Aquino's call for a civil disobedience movement. It also readily agreed with her on the need for mass uprisings, and comprised a significant portion of the organized forces at the core of the people's uprising at EDSA (in the vicinity of Camp Aguinaldo and Camp Crame, the AFP and PC General Headquarters, respectively), as well as the bulk of the organized forces around Malacañang Palace. Organized forces of the national democratic movement also took part in the crucial seizure of the government radio-TV station, in the Angeles City uprising that stopped enemy tanks from the North and in the nationwide mass uprisings.

But certainly, the level of armed strength of the revolutionary movement could not as yet allow it to seize political power. The movement could only further strengthen itself by taking advantage of the bitter strife of the reactionaries.

At any rate, the replacement of Marcos by Mrs. Aquino has not rooted out the fundamental causes of fascist dictatorship, has not solved the crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal system, and has kept the ground fertile for social unrest and armed revolution. Marcos, after all, left a bankrupt government and a depressed economy.

Soon after the fall of Marcos, amidst the ever worsening socioeconomic crisis, the aggravation of the political crisis of the ruling system has become starkly evident in the factionalization of no less than the main component of the State—the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The Marcos-Ver and Enrile-Ramos factions had become a public fact in the days of February 22 to 25, 1986. By becoming president and AFP commander-in-chief, Mrs. Aquino also gained the opportunity to form her own faction in the AFP and further split the Enrile-Ramos faction into two

factions.

The emergence of armed factions of the same ruling classes inside and outside the AFP portends more violent strife within the ruling system even as a blatant fascist dictatorship has been removed for the time being.

Since the beginning, the Aquino presidency has been keeping itself within the parameters of foreign and feudal domination and has remained pro-US and reactionary, despite its wish to restore the pre-1972 liberal-democratic embellishments on the big comprador-landlord state and its actual efforts to undo some of the worst features and effects of the previous fascist regime.

The key positions in the Aquino cabinet, like those of the ministers of national defense and the economic agencies, have always been held by rabid pro-US and reactionary personalities. Only the secondary positions have been given to bourgeois-nationalist and liberal-democratic elements. These are now in the process of being reduced due to US pressures and dictation.

In terms of economic and social policies, the Aquino government has been no different from the fallen Marcos regime. It represents the same class interests—those of the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class—and is utterly subservient to the policy dictates of direct US agencies as well as US-controlled multilateral agencies like the IMF and the World Bank.

The Aquino government follows the line that the Philippines should provide more privileges to the foreign monopoly firms, avoid genuine and thoroughgoing land reform and shun national industrialization, concentrate on agriculture and agricultural export production despite the relative glut and depression of the price of agricultural commodities in the world capitalist market, liberalize imports to smash whatever remaining Philippine industries there are, retain antilabor decrees and press down wages, increase the domestic tax burden, and keep begging for loan rescheduling and for new loans to pay for old loans.

What has excited many people, including the progressive forces, to sympathize with and support Mrs. Aquino is her anti-fascist stance and her role as a justly avenging widow. She has maintained popular support against the challenges posed by the Marcos and Enrile factions. But this popular support is eroding because of failure to solve the country's socioeconomic problems and render justice to the victims of the fallen fascist regime, and because of the increasing atrocities and abuses of an unreformed Armed Forces of the Philippines. Increasing numbers of people condemn the retention by Mrs. Aquino of notorious fascists in the AFP and the emergence of new cronies around her, even before Marcos and his set of cronies could be punished and compelled to restore their loot to the people.

But most alarming of all has been the success of the US in using Enrile through a series of sham coup threats to shake down the Aquino government into yielding to US demands. As early as the morning of November 10, 1986, before her departure for Japan, Mrs. Aquino is believed to have been compelled to agree to a US arranged compromise in which Enrile would resign together with the entire cabinet and she would be able to install General Ilto, who is simultaneously a pro-US and pro-Aquino man, as defense minister. In addition, she would cut down the number and influence of the nationalist and liberal democratic elements in her cabinet and consolidate the entire executive branch of her government for the extension of the US military bases beyond 1991, for the implementation of a vicious two-faced campaign of counterinsurgency, and for the prompt compliance with the policy dictates of the IMF and the World Bank.

The ruling US-Aquino clique is now in the process of rapid consolidation. The executive is being consolidated as an instrument of US policy. The Aquino faction is now formally and really dominant in the AFP and is seeking to unify it. The Aquino constitution has now been ratified, and the elections for local executive offices and for the legislature will be held soon.

There are six major parties of the ruling classes. Three support the Aquino government and three oppose it. Those in support are PDP Laban, UNIDO and Liberal Party (Salonga), while those in opposition are the KBL (Marcos' party), Nacionalista Party (Enrile) and Partido Nacionalista ng Pilipinas.

Since August 31, 1986, the Partido ng Bayan (PnB) has emerged to truly represent the national-democratic interests of the people and breach the monopoly of the electoral and other open political processes by the comprador-land-lord parties. It has grown from a charter membership of 50,000 to more than 500,000 in only four months and has outstripped the Aquino party, PDP-Laban, which has a membership of 200,000.

Fearful of the growing strength of the PnB and the probability that it would get at least 20 percent of the local executive and legislative seats in the forthcoming elections while the six pro-US and reactionary parties would be

divided against themselves, the US and the local reactionaries have waged a vicious campaign of slander against this political party of the working class, peasantry, urban petty bourgeoisie and middle bourgeoisie. Not satisfied with this futile campaign, they have been conducting a campaign of terror, including the kidnapping, torture, mutilation and assassination of no less than the Partido ng Bayan chairman Rolando Olalia; and death threats, kidnapping and selective killing directed against PnB leaders and organizers at various levels. CIA operatives are directing and utilizing AFP personnel to carry out the campaign of terror and are trying to whip together the military followers of all the reactionary factions along the line of rabid anticommunism.

In an attempt to simplify the Philippine situation for itself, the US is pressing for a return to the two-party system monopolized by the comprador and landlord classes. It is pushing the Aquino clique to form a monolithic party, Lakas ng Bansa (Strength of the Nation), with PDP-Laban now headed by the president's brother as the core. It is also pushing the reactionary opposition parties to band together under the signboard of the Nacionalista Party.

However, even if the reactionaries were to be simply divided into two political parties, the crisis of the ruling system would continue to deepen and generate violent strife between them. The scheme to eliminate the PnB from the electoral field will serve only to expose the rottenness of the system and underscore the logic of the armed revolutionary movement.

In its capacity as a national united front organization, the National Democratic Front has negotiated and forged a ceasefire agreement with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines for the purpose of facilitating further negotiations towards the solution of such fundamental problems of the people as US imperialism and domestic feudalism.

But the Aquino regime has been consistently interested only in upholding its political authority, constitution, laws, institutions and processes; offering concessions of a narrow kind to the revolutionary forces; and skirting fundamental issues. The negotiations between the NDF and the Manila-based government have therefore been predictably futile.

For failure to at least spell out a patriotic and progressive orientation regarding foreign and feudal domination, Mrs. Aquino has already disappointed the politically advanced section of the people and an increasing number of the middle section.

The January 22 massacre of peasants and other demonstrators exposes the antagonism of the Aquino regime to the people demanding genuine and thoroughgoing land reform. Mrs. Aquino did not only refuse for the fourth time (since becoming president) to meet with the peasant representatives of Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, (KMP), she even surrounded herself with police and troops poised to fire at the peasant demonstrators and their supporters.

Since the second quarter of 1986, the KMP has submitted to the Aquino government a comprehensive and deepgoing proposal for land reform. But this has been ignored by Mrs. Aquino. Instead, she has engaged in tokenism and press gimmickry reminiscent of Marcos to obscure the land problem and uphold landlord class interests.

The readiness of AFP troops to kill people last January 22 is part of the US scheme to destroy the national democratic organizations. The assassination of Olalia by AFP agents was an act calculated to terrorize the entire national democratic movement because Olalia was not only chairman of Partido ng Bayan but also chairman of Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) and vice-chairman of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN).

Because the Aquino regime is obviously determined by its big comprador-landlord character not to solve the basic problems of the people or cooperate with progressive forces in solving these problems, the semicolonial and semifeudal character of Philippine society will remain, the political and economic crisis will continue to worsen and plague her regime, and the armed revolutionary movement will continue to march forward.

Under these conditions, it is utterly impossible for the Aquino regime to build a liberal democratic state or even only to retain the liberal democratic embellishments of the comprador-landlord state for a long time. As a matter of fact, these embellishments have dropped off in a big way because of the January 22 massacre.

It will become rapidly fatal for the Aquino regime to imagine, after going through the motion of negotiating for peace, that it can maintain a liberal-democratic facade by openly seeking to isolate and destroy the revolutionary movement.

Mrs. Aquino has so often made the threat that she would "unleash the sword of war" against the revolutionary

movement if negotiations would not go her way and she would then have the “moral basis” for counterrevolutionary violence. This counterrevolutionary rhetoric of Mrs. Aquino conceals the fact that the Armed Forces of the Philippines has intensified its military campaigns of suppression in the countryside since the downfall of Marcos, that it has miserably failed, and that the NPA netted 1,500 rifles from March 1 to July 30 last year.

The Aquino regime cannot expect to do better than the Marcos regime in seeking to suppress the revolutionary movement by any combination of violence and deception. Mrs. Aquino is faced with widespread social unrest and is running a depressed economy and bankrupt government. In contrast, Mr. Marcos enjoyed huge amounts of foreign loans and was able to build up the AFP rapidly in the 1970s when the New People’s Army was still small and weak.

The Aquino government is now faced with reactionary opposition groups with far greater financial and military resources than the anti-Marcos reactionary opposition ever had during the 1970s. But more significantly, it is also faced with an armed revolutionary movement far stronger than that which the Marcos regime had to face.

The popularity of Mrs. Aquino is overrated by the US and the US mass media. Moreover, this “popularity” has been manipulated for counterrevolutionary purposes and is bound to be spent very soon. The bloodbath on January 22 has already exposed the Aquino regime as being not fundamentally any different from the fallen Marcos regime. Even only on the issue of fascism, Mrs. Aquino has grossly failed to render justice to the victims of the fallen Marcos regime and has retained the fascists in the military. It is clear that the US-Aquino regime is bent on using the same military that Marcos used for counterrevolutionary violence.

The rapid consolidation of the Aquino regime which is now taking place may keep it in place for one or two years. But if she allows herself to be used by the US in the scheme to wipe out the legal democratic forces, the revolutionary movement is in a position to expose and thwart her counterrevolutionary role and accelerate the downfall of her regime.

The US scheme is to use her as the sugarcoating on the killing blade of the military. But she is now responsible and accountable for retaining the fascist in the military, for allowing them to commit the January 22 massacre in front of Malacañang Palace and for failing to speedily take any disciplinary or punitive action against the perpetrators of the massacre.

The US-Aquino clique isolates itself by continuing the same counterrevolutionary violence and deception used by the erstwhile ruling US-Marcos clique against the people. Posing as the center, reminiscent of Marcosian rhetoric, the new ruling clique strains to attack and suppress the progressive forces, even as the threat to itself from rival reactionary factions runs ahead of the possibility of the victory of the armed revolution or even only of the attainment of a strategic stalemate.

Even if she were to successfully control the AFP for one or two years by increasing the pay and attending to other requirements of the troops, the socioeconomic crisis will only worsen and encourage a group within the AFP to stage a coup d’etat in two or three years’ time.

Such a military group could raise charges of corruption and failure to quell the armed revolution in order to ride to power. Even now, a new set of cronies supposedly headed by Mrs. Aquino’s own brother and other close relatives has gained notoriety. And, of course, the armed revolutionary shall have gained further strength in two to three years’ time.

The Aquino faction is now on top of the Marcos and Enrile factions in the AFP and has expressed determination to do away with factionalism. But the AFP will remain fractious due to the already deeply entrenched factions, the virulence of the social crisis and the growing armed revolution.

The current balance of forces between the armed revolution and the armed counterrevolution indicates that the revolutionary forces can reach strategic stalemate in three to five years, a time allowance that is more than sufficient.

The NPA has 10,000 full-time guerrilla fighters with automatic rifles, tens of thousands of part-time guerrillas with inferior firearms, and hundreds of thousands of militiamen—against the AFP’s 40,000 combat effectives in 80 to 85 maneuver battalions, 120,000 support troops, 50,000 policemen and 75,000 paramilitary personnel.

The armed struggle is supported by 10 million people under organs of political power and in mass organizations. And the reactionary government cannot really claim as mass support for counterrevolutionary violence the people who participate in such voting exercises as plebiscites, referenda and elections.

The strategic stalemate is no longer just a dream for the armed revolutionaries. It is within sight and within the

range of planning, especially because the possibility of a coup d'etat and the further deterioration of the ruling system runs ahead of it. It has also become realistic to expect that the revolutionary movement can win total victory in the next decade.

The US scheme to cut down the vulnerable legal forces of the national democratic movement through terror tactics, exclude the PnB from the electoral and other open political processes, and maintain a monopoly of these processes by the exploiting classes, further justifies the armed revolutionary movement and is bound to further incite the people to rise up in arms.

While the Manila-based reactionary government can arrange voting exercises every so many years to create the illusion of democracy, the rural-based people's revolutionary government is being built and expanded on a daily basis by the revolutionary forces.

"These accusations are pure nonsense," Jose Maria Sison, ex-detainee and founding chairman of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), said with a naughty grin and a wave of his hand when informed that Aquino government officials had again alleged that he and Luis Jalandoni, National Democratic Front (NDF) international representative, have been collecting funds in Europe to buy arms for shipment to revolutionary guerrillas back home.

"I have been very busy lately lecturing, researching and writing," he told this correspondent, who interviewed him for nearly three hours one wintry morning in November in a small but noisy café in Cologne, Germany, just a stone's throw away from the city's magnificent Gothic cathedral.

"I wish I could do more for the movement, but my time has been really limited," Joma (his now internationally known pet name) went on, with a hint of sadness in his voice.

Right after the interview with Sison, I called up the NDF International Office at Utrecht, The Netherlands, for a reaction. Jalandoni was out of town, but his deputy, Byron Bocar, a MABINI lawyer who had been forced into exile by Marcos repression, read me a prepared statement over the phone which he had minutes earlier telexed to Manila and the European papers.

Bocar categorically denied any truth to what he called "the old and incredible tale" about the NDF receiving huge amounts of money and arms from well-known international NGOs.

Their office does not deal in arms and observes national and international laws outside the Philippines, he said.

He reiterated an earlier statement by Dutch Foreign Minister van den Broek that his government found nothing wrong or illegal in the status and activities of the NDF office abroad.

Mrs. Aquino has merely "refurbished an old and favorite tactic of Marcos and many past fascists who had become insecure in their rule; that of finding a scapegoat," he read from his prepared press statement.

"She needs a scapegoat to blame for her obvious failures in governance and divert public attention away from her government's inability to suppress a growing popular movement for change and to quell mutinous officers of her own armed forces."

Mrs. Aquino and her government have surely better things to attend to, such as arresting and punishing her rebel military officers and disbanding the death squads responsible for a string of assassinations and other gross human rights violations, he suggested.

She and her officials had better attend to these rather than "concentrating on dredging up mud in international waters to fling at the NDF and at Luis Jalandoni," Bocar concluded—Homero Buenviaje

You and your wife, Julie, have been away from the Philippines for over a year now. I recalled you left about a month before the assassination of Partido ng Bayan and Kilusang Mayo Uno head Rolando Olalia in November 1986. Do you have any plans of returning home, as Mr. Ruben Zamora and other leaders of the Frente Democratico Revolucionario (FDR) in El Salvador recently did?

JMS: Of course, I plan to return home. But I still have to fulfil certain commitments for quite some time. I have accepted a fellowship in a European university and I am helping out in the formation of a center for Asia studies. I am also busy working on a book, *A View from within the Philippine Revolution*, which is an attempt to present the Philippine revolutionary movement through my experiences, circumstances and ideas. I am also expected by my publishers to update *Philippine Crisis and Revolution*, the series of 10 lectures which I delivered at the Asian Center of the University of the Philippines soon after my release from detention; and to supervise the selection of my works for a book publication.

Because of these three book projects, I have slowed down in the lecture circuit, I need the time to attend to these.

HB: *How do you react to the Philippine authorities' repeated accusations, including that made recently by Defense Secretary Ileto, that you and NDF International representative Luis Jalandoni have been busy going around, especially in Europe, collecting funds, to buy arms for shipment to the revolutionary movement in the Philippines?*

JMS: These accusations are pure nonsense. As I already said, I have been so busy lecturing, researching and preparing my three books for publication. I wish I could do more for the national democratic movement, but my time has been really limited.

But I think that the national democratic movement is entirely entitled to political and material support from the peoples of the world. As far as I know, it is the Aquino regime which is depending on the material support of foreign powers, especially the United States, despite the large amounts of funds it has already received to use for further oppressing and exploiting the Filipino people. It would like to monopolize for itself foreign assistance from institutions and organizations abroad for its own fake NGOs.

If I were in the Philippines the CIA and the likes of General Ileto would certainly like to have me killed, like [Partido ng Bayan and Kilusang Mayo Uno leader] Rolando Olalia and [BAYAN secretary-general] Lean Alejandro. But even while I'm abroad, they like to hound me and keep on imagining wildly what I could be doing.

HB: How would you assess the main characteristics and problems of the Cory Aquino government? Do you still think she won't last more than two years, as you were quoted saying in an article not long ago?

JMS: Since the beginning of the Aquino regime, I have described it mainly and essentially as a pro-US and reactionary government of the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class. For some time, this regime showed a tendency to be liberal democratic in terms of restoring the formal rights of the individual in the abstract and the system of check-and-balance among the branches of the Manila-based government. But this tendency was merely secondary to the essentially pro-imperialist and reactionary character of the regime. Eventually, the bourgeois-liberal and nationalist human rights lawyers in the Aquino cabinet would be wiped out.

There can be no doubt that Aquino is no different from Marcos insofar as she is the chief political agent of US imperialism and the local exploiting classes. She may not have stepped into any of Imelda's shoes but she has certainly stepped into the shoes of Marcos. She has failed to satisfy even only the anti-fascist demands of the people. She has declared total war against the progressive forces and endorsed the death squads and vigilante groups. The rate at which human rights violations are being committed is now higher than it was during the Marcos regime.

Because her anti-people and rabid anti-Communist position has now fully unfolded, Aquino will go, like Marcos, into the dustbin of history, and she will stink more quickly because of the lesser resources at her command, graver human rights violations and ceaseless worsening of the socioeconomic and political crisis. But I never said that she wouldn't last more than two years. I was misquoted. What I said clearly before was that the threat of a coup will become more serious and imminent in the medium term of two or three years from 1986. Indeed, the August 28 coup attempt was the first serious coup attempt, though it still carried the aspect of a mere show d'etat or mere pressure play. This occurred even before Aquino could finish two years.

There are five possibilities for Aquino. One is that a coup d'etat will take place. Two is that she will be assassinated by followers of Enrile or Marcos. Three is that she can stay in power up to 1992 or the end of her term. Fourth is that she will resign before 1992. And fifth is that she will be compelled to call for new presidential elections.

All these possibilities are still open. That is a problem for her even as she tries to meet all the demands of the US and the reactionary classes to which she belongs and which she tries to serve well.

The ruling system is in the process of disintegration. The biggest gain of the revolutionary movement from the downfall of Marcos is the aggravation of the split among the factions of the reactionary classes. After the brief euphoria over the ascendance of Aquino to the presidency, the truth is so clear that the new regime, which is another puppet regime, can only aggravate the crisis, and the reactionary factions are so well-armed against each other and are poised to unleash violence against each other.

HB: What do you think of Aquino's "get-tough" speech last October before business leaders and the publication later of some 25 legal organizations which have been alleged by military intelligence to be "communist fronts"? Do you think this would lead to a declaration of some kind of a state of emergency by the President or maybe a general crackdown against the revolutionary movement and the progressive legal organizations?

JMS: The "get-tough" speech of Aquino before the leaders of big business further exposes the persistence of fascism behind whatever is left of the "democratic" facade of the regime. Aquino herself further lays bare her own increasing tendency to play the fascist game of the fallen Marcos regime. The only thing preventing Aquino from openly declaring a state of emergency or martial law is the fear that she herself would be swallowed up by the whirlpool of fascism. She would be less capable than Marcos of keeping a firm hold on the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

But regardless of her subjective capabilities and wishes, the crisis of the ruling system is ceaselessly

worsening and the trend is towards increased use of violence against the aboveground and underground progressive forces, whether a state of emergency is declared or not.

The United States and the Aquino regime are seeking to destroy the progressive forces even while they make hypocritical claims about democracy. But the revolutionary movement can hit back and deliver crippling blows against the US and the entire system. To defend themselves, the legal progressive forces can use the strength and experience that they have gained in the struggle against the outrightly fascist US-Marcos regime.

It is probable that Aquino would declare a state of emergency in connection with the increasing violent contradictions among the reactionary factions and the intensified conflict between the reactionary and the revolutionary forces.

HB: You have always followed the moves of the US in the Philippines. Do you think the US government, or certain of its agencies or armed forces, have been involved in the series of coup attempts since July 1986?

JMS: US Ambassador Platt has several times indirectly confirmed that he and his men were in contact with Honasan during the August 28 aborted coup, and recently both houses of Congress have announced an “investigation” into alleged US involvement in that incident. What do you think is the real US “game plan” vis-a-vis the Aquino government and how does it intend to meet the growing Communist-led armed struggle.

There were no serious attempts up to August 28. There were only shows d’etat and coup rumors for pressure effect on Aquino. The US was behind these to effect the removal of the human rights lawyers from the Aquino cabinet, extract from Aquino the pledge to extend the tenure of the US military bases, push compliance with the policy dictates of the IMF and the World Bank and push the low-intensity conflict scheme.

The Enrile faction’s coup threats from August to November 1986 resulted in a bonanza of benefits for the US and also for Enrile, who appeared to lose when he was dropped from the Aquino cabinet but who got the Philippine Legion Award and final assurances that he could keep the wealth that he had amassed while in office.

The Channel 7 incident of January 23, 1987 was some kind of a replay of the Manila Hotel incident to draw attention away from the Mendiola massacre and play up Aquino as a heroine. This was a show d’etat directly favorable to the US-Aquino regime.

Even the August 28 incident still carried the aspect of a show d’etat encouraged by the US military attaches and the CIA Manila station. The Honasan group overstepped by bringing troops close to Malacañang but obviously had no determination to carry a coup d’etat through to the end.

The American handlers of the Honasan group had to step in to control damage when things started getting out of hand.

The real US game plan at the level of the White House and the National Security Council is to keep Aquino in place, make sure that she follows the line, and junk her if she does not follow the line or if the situation worsens even as she follows the US line.

Coup rumors will continue to be floated to make Aquino appear as one deserving of public support and to shield her from responsibility for the assassination of the leaders of the progressive legal organizations in the urban areas and the massacres in the countryside.

Aquino is being used by the US as far as possible against the revolutionary movement. But the US also keeps its options open, including that of junking her if she proves to be an ineffective tool after all. The further growth of the revolutionary movement can result in the US putting all the blame on Aquino.

HB: As is widely conceded, the US military bases remain the key strategic interest of the US in the Philippines—as well as the “stickiest” problem in the Aquino government’s foreign policy. How do you think this problem will be eventually resolved?

JMS: As early as the morning of November 10, 1986, Aquino had pledged to the US through Philip Habib the retention of the US military bases beyond 1991. This was part of the compromise deal ostensibly between Aquino and Enrile. In the afternoon of November 12, 1986, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Gaston Sigur secretly met Aquino in Tokyo and gave her Washington’s seal of approval for the deal.

You do not even have to know such details of Aquino’s skullduggery to be convinced that the US-Aquino regime is determined to retain the US military bases beyond 1991. The Aquino constitution reveals the way the US military bases would be retained.

A treaty will be negotiated by an executive shorn of such cabinet members as Joker Arroyo and Rene Saguisag, and will be ratified by a Senate which is more than two-thirds in favor of retaining the US military bases. Actually,

most of the 12 senators being pictured as critical of the bases are actually pro-US bases and wish merely to raise the compensation price for their retention.

The essential act of ratification will be done by the Senate. But a referendum might still be called as a sort of icing on the cake. The US and its stooges will not be satisfied with the manipulation of public opinion through the mass media, which are biased in favor of the bases. It will go so far as to rig the voting process to prove that the people approve of their own chains.

The swindling process has started with Manglapus differentiating his previous anti-bases position as his personal opinion from his current position as foreign affairs secretary. He is now making propaganda in favor of the US bases by soliciting the opinions of the other ASEAN members. Subsequently, he will be drumming up the so-called threats from Cam Ranh Bay and the Soviet Union.

The Aquino regime will certainly justify the extension of the US military bases beyond 1991 by saying that the Philippines is in financial distress and is in need of the compensation package. Within the present system, the arguments against the US bases will not have as much chance of being aired as those in favor. The people can hope to remove the US military bases only through the revolutionary movement.

HB: How do you assess the development of the armed and unarmed opposition to the Aquino administration since she came to power? Do you still estimate, as you did earlier, that the revolutionary forces can attain a "strategic stalemate" with the government's forces in three to five years' time? Won't this estimate be upset in the event that the US decides to intervene directly in terms of combat troops and more sophisticated armaments?

JMS: The estimate that the revolutionary forces can attain strategic stalemate in three to five years' time (from 1986) is actually a conservative estimate. There are those who think more optimistically that it is possible in two or three years' time. Consider that the ruling system is in a process of disintegration, with major political factions of the exploiting classes having considerable armed followings maneuvering against each other.

Then consider the present balance of forces between armed revolution and the counterrevolutionary state.

There are now 10,000 full-time guerrilla fighters with automatic rifles, augmented by 20,000 other guerrilla fighters; some thousands of militiamen trained for combat; and several tens of thousands of militia capable of support work. The mass base is 10 million people under organs of political power and in mass organizations.

The other side has 40,000 combat effectives in 86 maneuver battalions augmented by 120,000 support troops, 50,000 policemen and 50,000 paramilitary personnel. The legal fiction is that the counterrevolutionary state has the loyalty of 58 million people although the fact is that this state does not have the deepgoing loyalty of the exploited classes.

To reach the strategic stalemate, it is enough for the revolutionary forces to have even only 25,000 full-time guerrilla fighters armed with automatic rifles and other high-powered weapons. This level of strength would allow the NPA to operate in 1,000 out of the 1,500 towns and cities of the Philippines.

As I said before, to move up from 10,000 to 25,000 is no longer a dream. The growth of the armed revolutionary movement is cumulative.

The US cannot stop the armed revolution from reaching the stage of strategic stalemate. What it can probably do is to try to prolong the strategic stalemate and delay the strategic offensive with the use of US aggressor troops, especially after the failure of the low-intensity conflict strategy.

But we must recognize that the US, relative to other international factors, has declined greatly from its level of strength at the time of the Vietnam war. And I do not think that the American public is as willing as before to allow its rulers to waste thousands of American lives in the multiplying guerrilla fronts in the Philippines.

HB: Is it correct to say that the stage of strategic defensive is still in the process of maturing? Will not a combination of the low-intensity conflict scheme and some kind of Marshall Plan of two billion dollars cut short the advance of the revolutionary movement?

JMS: You are correct in saying that the stage of the strategic defensive is still in the process of maturing. Upon maturation, this stage leads to that of the strategic stalemate and further on to that of the strategic offensive. To speak of these stages is to conceive of the most probable course of development.

I do not think that the low-intensity conflict scheme will succeed. The idea of the US is to use Filipinos to kill Filipinos and wipe out the cadres and mass base of the revolutionary movement; and extensively use psychological warfare, including assassinations and massacres, to intimidate the people.

The revolutionary cadres and forces are not exposed to the enemy and cannot be destroyed. The killings and

forced mass evacuations will only discredit the puppet regime and will persuade more people to join the revolutionary movement.

It is the counterrevolutionaries who expose themselves to the revolutionaries and are themselves more vulnerable to counter-action. Arms distributed to paramilitary forces eventually fall into the hands of the revolutionaries. The anarchy encouraged by the reactionaries among their paramilitary forces will fuel the internal strife among the reactionary factions.

A Marshall Plan of two billion dollars for the Philippines is a big joke in the face of the fact that the US cannot tolerate even the suggestion of a selective debt cancellation of foreign debts and the Aquino regime cannot borrow enough even only to pay the yearly interest on the accumulated foreign debt. The yearly debt service is now more than three billion dollars.

Because of huge budgetary and trade deficits, the United States is under pressure to cut down its expenditures. Although Aquino is already committed to the extension of the US military bases beyond 1991, she is under the threat of a coup d'état to deter her from upping the price for the bases.

Uncle Sam is not Santa Claus. New loans under a so-called Marshall Plan will only extract more wealth from the country and aggravate the crisis.

So long as the revolutionary leadership continues to be on the correct road, the US cannot cut short the advance of the revolutionary movement.

HB: The CIA station in the Philippines has 10 million dollars more for long-term surveillance, psywar and funding vigilante groups and death squads. How would the revolutionary movement respond to the CIA covert operations?

JMS: Because of the deadly CIA covert operations in the Philippines, which have already resulted in the killing of leaders and members of the legal democratic organizations at various levels, the national question comes to the fore and the revolutionary movement is being obliged to respond to the tendency of the US to turn the civil war into a national war against US armed intervention and aggression.

The US, especially the CIA and the Pentagon, wants to wipe out the revolutionary movement by killing activists of the legal mass organizations and alliances.

The logical response of the revolutionary movement is to strengthen the underground and absorb activists who can no longer work aboveground; to let the legal democratic movement preserve and strengthen itself; to expose the rottenness of the system; and to hit back at the imperialists.

The armed revolutionary movement can attack US military personnel, offices and facilities because in the first place the US is bent on preserving the gains of perpetuated aggression and directing covert operations to kill even unarmed leaders and members of progressive legal organizations.

The armed revolutionary movement is conscious of the fact that the US government because of public pressure decided on withdrawing from Vietnam only after US troops suffered a casualty rate of 50,000 dead and hundreds of thousands injured.

The military and paramilitary forces directly supervised by the CIA and Pentagon agents, with the blessings of the White House and the National Security Council, are very much ahead in killing patriots and progressives.

It is therefore logical and just for the armed revolutionary movement to hit back at the US.

The American people must demand that the US stop the carnage inspired and supervised by its agencies.

As the armed revolution moves into the strategic stalemate, will not the US escalate its intervention to the point of an all-out war of aggression as in Vietnam in the past? How can the revolutionary movement counter this? The US is already escalating its armed intervention in the Philippines. It is delivering more military supplies to the AFP; increasing the number of US military advisers and trainers; and beefing up the CIA network. It is probable that the US will launch a war of aggression. The revolutionary movement has to prepare against the worst to be able to hope for the best.

Let us assume the worst. The US comes in with maneuver regiments and with plenty of tanks and airplanes.

The response of the revolutionary movement to the mere possibility of this is to multiply its platoons and companies on a wide scale, maintain mobility, deprive the foreign and puppet enemy of any safe rear, and inflict heavy casualties on US troops as soon as possible.

As regards the tanks and armored personnel carriers, the revolutionary movement has started to use land mines and seek other antitank weapons. As regards helicopters and other aircraft, these are very expensive and can be shot down by far less expensive weapons. In addition to high casualty rates, the US can be forced to

withdraw by the high cost of planes shot down.

The escalating armed intervention of the US has pressed the revolutionary movement to expand and develop its international relations and seek all possible moral and material support from abroad.

While preparations against the worst have to be made, the people and the revolutionary movement have to recognize the decline of the US since its defeat in the Vietnam war. Little Nicaragua is proving to the world that it can stand successfully against the imperialist behemoth.

HB: Are you aware of certain ideas circulating that the short cut to total victory of the revolutionary movement is through armed urban uprisings and that protracted people's war is passé? One idea is to emulate the Nicaraguan uprisings. And the other is to conduct parliamentary struggle as the main form of struggle under the Aquino regime and then go for uprisings when there is a restoration of fascist rule. What do you think of these ideas?

JMS: Whether we like it or not, the people's war in the Philippines is protracted. It has been going on for 18 years.

To rush to armed urban uprisings with only 10,000 automatic rifles as a hard core is to beg for the annihilation of the armed revolutionary movement. It is wrong and disastrous to overstretch.

The fact is that many guerrilla fronts have already expanded to the point of covering town centers, provincial capitals and cities or portions of cities. Armed city partisans are already operating in many urban areas.

Armed urban uprising should not be counterposed to the theory and practice of encircling the cities from the countryside over a protracted period of time. Some elements can now suggest that armed urban uprisings be launched only because there are firearms accumulated through protracted people's war.

But are the firearms in the hands of the NPA already enough for it to seize and keep political power in the cities? These are not enough. In due time, however, there will be enough. The arms can be accumulated only by winning tactical offensives wherever possible over some more years.

The ruling system is conspicuously in a process of disintegration. But the problem is that the revolutionary movement does not yet have enough means with which to seize and keep political power in the cities. Will the opportunities provided by the deterioration of the ruling system be lost? No! The process of disintegration will continue and is guaranteed to continue with the firm advance of the armed revolutionary movement.

The revolutionaries in El Salvador tried to emulate the Nicaraguan success. But the US and local reactionaries were already prepared to foil the armed urban uprisings. In the Philippines, the US and local reactionaries have always been alert. An impulsive action led by a hardcore of only 10,000 guerrilla fighters has no chance of winning. Revolutionaries have to do some more hard work. They should be happy that the NPA has grown from only nine automatic rifles in 1969 to 10,000 today.

As regards the idea of making parliamentary struggle the main form of struggle in preparation for armed uprisings, I would say that the armed revolutionary movement will never be in a position to conduct armed urban uprisings successfully if it does not continue to accumulate weapons through tactical offensives.

When it is said that armed struggle is the main form of revolutionary struggle, it means that it is the most important and effective way to perform the central task of seizing political power. It does not mean restraining legal forms of struggle. These can go as far as possible and these are helpful to the advance of the armed revolutionary movement. But to bring about the seizure of political power, legal forms of struggle cannot suffice.

HB: Local polls have been set for January 18. In the light of the legal Left's "failure" in the legislative elections, what do you think should be the position of legal mass organizations this time? How about the revolutionary underground, the NDF, CPP and NPA in particular? What stance do you suggest for them vis-a-vis these elections?

JMS: Such revolutionary organizations as the CPP, NPA and NDF should stand above voting exercises staged by the counterrevolutionaries. They can describe these as farcical because after all the class enemy can still rig elections in most areas in the country. They should not debate and divide the house on whether or not to participate in these exercises.

The revolutionary organizations are creating a revolutionary government. Also, the counterrevolutionary government prohibits them from participating in its elections.

But revolutionaries can let alone legal progressive parties in participating in reactionary elections in the same way that progressive and even revolutionary cadres can work in reactionary organizations and institutions.

There must even be more flexibility with regard to mass organizations and alliances. The revolutionaries should avoid allowing reactionary elections to create splits in these organizations. Positions on electoral

candidates and issues can be so formulated as to consider the uneven consciousness of the mass members and the independence and initiative of member-organizations in alliances and at the same time seek to raise the level of consciousness, organization and mobilization of the mass organizations and alliances.

In conducting elections, the reactionaries seek to create the illusion of democracy and to split and isolate the revolutionaries. This is part of their counterrevolutionary dual tactics.

Without endorsing the reactionary elections, the revolutionary organizations can let the progressive parties and candidates go as far as they can to advance the national democratic line and take advantage of the splits among the reactionaries. This is revolutionary dual tactics. As far as I am concerned, Partido ng Bayan can take part in the forthcoming local elections. However, it has to study well ways of overcoming the cheating and terrorism of those in power.

The inability of Partido ng Bayan to translate the progressive mass base into electoral votes in the last legislative elections should not be too discouraging. The candidates of Partido ng Bayan did not do well, not only because of the dearth of campaign money, the lack of mass media facilities, special CIA funding for certain reactionary candidates, reactionary church propaganda and the accumulated effects of state terrorism, but also because Marcos-style rigging of the registration and voting records and processes, the declaration of 695 municipalities as trouble spots, and the intensified military operations and terrorist acts against Partido ng Bayan candidates, campaigners and mass base.

The US-Aquino regime had been so worried about Partido ng Bayan that it used methods of overkill previously used by the US-Marcos regime. These methods were so carried out that the Enrile and Marcos factions were also harmed. The cheating was actually the main igniting factor for the Honasan coup attempt.

The last election has not made for a peaceful mode of settlement among the reactionary factions but on the contrary has aggravated their violent contradictions.

The participation of Partido ng Bayan has not only given it a chance to promote the line of national freedom and democracy but has pushed the reactionaries into more violent contradictions.

HB: There have been recent reports that the National Democratic Front would soon attain recognition of its status of belligerency in the international community, and even that it has plans to set up some kind of provisional coalition government. Can you comment on this?

JMS: Recognition of the status of belligerency in the international community can only proceed from the successful homework of the revolutionary movement. In due time, the National Democratic Front or the people's revolutionary government will have its status of belligerency recognized.

Since early 1969, the revolutionary forces have been building organs of political power at the barrio level. These committees of people's government are the base of the National Democratic Front.

The NDF has been doing well in paving the way for the committees of people's government from the municipal level upwards. At the same time, it has been doing well in building up international solidarity in support of the Filipino people's struggle and in preparation for the negotiations abroad that will further bring about recognition of its status of belligerency.

As far as I can gather, NDF has been developing relations abroad with governments, pertinent offices of governments, national liberation movements, united front organizations, parties and mass organizations.

The Manila-based reactionary government keeps on taking prisoners, and torturing and killing quite a number of them. It would be just and reasonable for the revolutionary movement to arrest, detain and try counterrevolutionaries. In any way, it is a matter of course that the two sides take prisoners and exchange them at certain times.

Fifty-nine guerrilla fronts can hold hundreds of prisoners even only with an average of 10 prisoners each. The reactionary government will not be able to ignore the pleas for a negotiated exchange of prisoners.

At some point, there could be negotiations abroad at least for the exchange of prisoners. The negotiations and agreement can result in the recognition of the status of belligerency.

Usually, the recognition of the status of belligerency is the outcome of there being a foreign government acting as mediator and provider of a venue for negotiations and the reactionary government agreeing to negotiate and sign an agreement.

The most important legal and political effect of the recognition of the status of belligerency is that the NDF or the people's revolutionary government will be able to have transactions with foreign governments and

international organizations without them being accused of interference.

There should be no more negotiations held in the lion's den. There are too many pitfalls in holding negotiations in Manila.

HB: From your vantage point, and projecting what you see as the significant trends in the country today, where would you say is the national situation headed in terms of political and economic changes?

JMS: Within the pro-imperialist and reactionary framework, the Aquino regime is incapable of solving the root problems of the people and the socioeconomic and political crisis.

It is absolutely clear that the Aquino regime is not interested in asserting national independence, solving the land problem and doing away with fascists and corrupt bureaucrats. On the other hand, the regime is determined to follow the dictates of the US, perpetuate big comprador-landlord rule, favor a new set of crooks, breed more fascists and escalate counterrevolutionary violence against the people.

The socioeconomic crisis will continue to worsen. There is no way out for the increasing number of unemployed. The raw material exports of the country will continue to be depressed. The foreign debt will weigh heavier on the people. The imperialists, big compradors, landlords and corrupt bureaucrats will continue to loot a deteriorating economy.

The political crisis will mean a greater propensity among the reactionary factions to arm themselves and use violence against each other; the escalation of counterrevolutionary violence against the people; and the accelerated growth of the armed revolutionary movement.

The US-Aquino regime is now a far weaker opponent than the US-Marcos regime from 1972 to 1983. Aquino has fully unmasked herself as just another oppressor and exploiter of the people. She uses the same slogan and tactics that Marcos used. And yet she does not have as much resources to play with, and no matter how hard she tries to oppress and exploit the people her fellow reactionaries who are also her political rivals will never be satisfied with her.

The Continuing Struggle in the Philippines Written in December 26, 1987 and first published in French under the title “*Les Aspects Politiques et Economiques de la Transition aux Philippines*,” in *Recherches internationales*, hiver 1987/88, nouvelle serie No. 26, Cahiers de l’Institut de Recherches Marxistes [Paris, 1988]. Published in English in three parts in *National Midweek* , Vol. 3, Nos. 30-32, June 15, 22 & 30, 1988.

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.

1. 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-American 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 socio-economic 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 policymaking 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 channelled 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 Ramos 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-Ramos 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 the 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. (This was revealed to the author on November 13, 1986 in a conversation he had with some members of President Aquino's entourage during her state visit to Japan.)

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' counter-intelligence 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 Ileto 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, anti-labor 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 wellknown 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 Ileto 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 Ileto 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 Ileto as defense minister and allow the Aquino-Ileto-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-a-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 NDF-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-land-lord 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 Ileto 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. On a motion of reconsideration, it was allowed to participate but 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 reinstitution 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'état, 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 agricorporations. 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 thorough-going 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 in 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 present 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 some 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'état 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, 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.

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 incurring heavy casualties on its own troops 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 American 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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***Open Letter to BAYAN, KMU, KMP, GABRIELA, LFS, KADENA, ACT and the General
Public October 18, 1988***

Dear Friends, Warmest greetings of solidarity with you in our people's revolutionary struggle for national freedom and democracy against US domination and the big comprador-landlords now represented chiefly by the Aquino ruling clique.

My attention has been called to the fact that US and Philippine military agents, psywar experts and other hired hacks have been persistently using the mass media to recycle the lie and intrigue that I have "identified" BAYAN, Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), Gabriela, League of Filipino Students (LFS), KADENA, and Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) as "CPP fronts" in a lecture in Brussels, Belgium.

Only the psywar experts of the US and Philippine military are capable of making the mistake of using the expression "CPP fronts" to mean "CPP dummies" or "CPP facade"; and ascribing it to an advocate and militant of the movement for national freedom and democracy whom they accuse at the same time of being the Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

In my public lecture in Brussels, Belgium on March 4, 1987, more than a year ago, I referred directly to BAYAN, KMU, KMP, Gabriela, LFS, KADENA and ACT as legal democratic forces in the Philippines. Never have I referred to them as "CPP fronts." Never can I make the mistake of using the lingo of rabid anticommunists and political nitwits in the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Even if they put close together my reference to these legal democratic forces and my discussion of the concept or broad reality of the national united front in any splicing of videotapes or transcription, it is absolutely clear that I have not identified the legal democratic forces as "CPP fronts."

The problem of the AFP psywar experts is that they equate the concept or broad reality of the united front with the CPP. And so, for instance, if someone says that Cory Aquino's family once belonged to the broad antifascist united front during the US-Marcos regime, they jump up to say that the family is being identified as a "CPP front."

United front means alliance or combination of forces against a common enemy. It does not mean CPP facade or dummy. The united front can be formal or informal; in other words, organized or unorganized. Even General Fidel Ramos jumped into the antifascist united front on February 22, 1986.

In my public lecture in Brussels, I referred to the national united front as one not only for armed struggle but also for legal struggle. What is wrong when one explicates that the united front is not a monopoly of those engaged in armed struggle? The legal democratic forces perfectly have the right and duty to be in alliance or combination with each other for the people's cause of national freedom and democracy against US imperialism and the reactionary forces.

Being in a national united front for a patriotic and progressive cause does not make "CPP fronts" of such legal democratic forces as BAYAN, KMU, KMP, Gabriela, LFS, KADENA and ACT. It is a gross act of distortion and disinformation when the military authorities themselves construe participation or political affinity within the conceptual framework of the national united front as being equivalent to "CPP front."

In a related malicious act, the military authorities have also repeatedly misrepresented my wife Julie as having "identified" the legal democratic forces as "NDF fronts" just because she referred to them as belonging to the national democratic movement. The national democratic movement is not exclusively the NDF.

It is a shame to the cause of press freedom that US and Philippine military agents have used both the government-owned and privately owned mass media for their vicious psywar campaign against us.

My attention has also been called to the fact that US and Aquino government agents have been going to foreign partner organizations of Philippine legal democratic forces and telling them the lie that I no less have "identified" these legal democratic forces as "CPP fronts."

This letter can serve as a clarification to the public in the Philippines and abroad. You may reproduce it and cause its publication in the mass media in order to counter the intrigue and disinformation spread by the military and by long-time CIA assets like the notorious Max "Sullivan" to harass you.

Let me point out the fact that there is a two-pronged scheme against my person. One prong is to accuse me of being the Chairman of the CPP Central Committee. The other prong involves sowing intrigues to make it appear

that the mass movement has reason to dislike my person.

I assure my military detractors that I will never make it easy for them to pin me down in any Philippine court. Neither will I make my- self available to them for character assassination or physical assassination characterized by intrigue. This scheme may appear clever to themselves. But in fact, it is puerile and futile.

I wish all the legal democratic forces in the Philippines to heighten their struggle and achieve greater victories.

Fraternaly yours,
Jose Maria Sison

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), it is important and appropriate to review the requirements of the revolutionary united front.

Such requirements take into account the semicolonial and semifeudal conditions of the Philippines and the need for a national-democratic revolution of a new type through people's war in the global era of imperialism and proletarian revolution.

The class line of the revolutionary united front in the new-democratic revolution is to uphold the class leadership of the proletariat, to rely on the peasantry as the main ally of the proletariat, to win over the urban petty-bourgeoisie as a progressive force, further to win over the middle bourgeoisie as a positive force and to take advantage of the splits among the reactionaries who are big comprador-bourgeois and landlords in order to isolate and destroy the power of the enemy.

At every given time in the civil war, the enemy is the worst among the reactionaries and the most servile to the imperialists. In a national war of liberation against foreign aggression, the foreign aggressor is the enemy. At the moment, the ruling reactionary clique is the enemy being propped up by the imperialists.

The revolutionary united front is aimed at arousing and mobilizing the broad masses of the people in their millions and the broadest range of organized forces against the narrowest target, the enemy at every given time. By adopting and employing the united front policy and tactics, the revolutionary party of the proletariat amplifies the strength of the revolutionary movement as it fights one enemy after another.

The revolutionary united front is both an offensive and defensive weapon and takes both illegal and legal forms. In connection with the revolutionary armed struggle, it seeks to isolate the enemy in order to make more effective the blows of the people's army, which is the principal weapon for overthrowing the enemy and seizing political power. In this regard, it can be said that the NDFP is a united front for armed struggle, for seizing political power.

First requirement

The class leadership of the proletariat is upheld in the revolutionary united front. The proletariat is the most productive and progressive political force now and in the future. In the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, no other class can lead the revolutionary united front.

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) is the advanced detachment of the proletariat. It is the materialization of the class leadership of the proletariat. There can be no revolutionary united front in the Philippines without the leadership of the proletariat and the CPP.

The time is past for any stratum of the bourgeoisie to lead the Philippine revolution. We honor the bourgeois-liberal revolutionaries of 1896 for waging the democratic revolution of the old type. But recycling the class line of this revolution under present conditions is retrogressive and reactionary.

The Right opportunists were utterly wrong when in the early 1980s they tried to convert the NDFP into a so-called New Katipunan. Their intent was to reproduce the old democratic revolution and to deny and liquidate the class leadership of the proletariat under the pretext of attracting more people.

Until they were confronted and repudiated by the Second Great Rectification Movement, they tried until 1991 to convert the NDFP into a federation in which the CPP was subject to the numerical preponderance of urban petty-bourgeois organizations. They asserted that voting rather than consensus was the rule among the allied organizations.

They adulated the so-called vanguard united front and touted as their models the liberation fronts in Central America and Africa. They spread the prejudice that the CPP was undeserving of its leading role in the Philippine revolution and ultimately exposed their rabid anticommunist character.

The CPP is not simply one of many organizations in the united front. It is the party of the proletariat with the historic mission of leading the democratic revolution and consequently the socialist revolution. As a matter of principle and practice, the CPP is the highest form of working class organization in the Philippines. It is the Party that directly leads the New People's Army and is the ruling party wherever Red political power has been established.

It uses the method of consultations to arrive at a consensus with its allies. The united front is an important and necessary instrument for harmonizing the legitimate interests of allies at the level of policy. It is not the instrument for requiring the CPP to give up the principle of working class leadership in the revolution, its historic mission and its independence and initiative.

The re-established CPP came into being before any formal united front organization like the NDFP. In fact, in the exercise of revolutionary leadership, it initiated the formation of the Preparatory Committee of the NDF in 1971 and subsequently the promulgation of the 10-point program of the NDFP on April 24, 1973, which is now considered the founding day of the NDFP.

True to its character as the revolutionary party of the proletariat, the CPP has led the masses of workers in class struggle against their oppressors and exploiters and has recruited from their ranks the proletarian revolutionaries for the comprehensive struggle for national liberation and democracy. The cadres of the CPP lead a significant number of trade unions. At the same time, they link up the trade unions that they lead with others having varying degrees of commitment to the revolutionary cause of the working class. Revolutionary work is conducted even within reactionary trade unions.

Second requirement

The foundation of the revolutionary united front is the basic alliance of the working class and the peasantry. By this basic alliance, the strength of the proletariat is augmented by the strength of the peasant majority of the people. There can be no revolutionary united front without the basic worker-peasant alliance.

By leading and relying mainly on the peasantry, the proletariat and its revolutionary party can pursue the general line of the new-democratic revolution through people's war. The main content of this revolution is the satisfaction of the peasants' demand for land.

The CPP carries out the antifeudal class line in the countryside. The proletariat relies mainly on the poor peasants and farm workers, wins over the middle peasants, neutralizes and further wins over the rich peasants and takes advantage of the contradictions of the enlightened and evil gentry in order to isolate and destroy the power of the evil gentry or despotic landlords.

To realize the worker-peasant alliance, the CPP has built the New People's Army and the revolutionary peasant movement. Thus, organs of democratic political power have been established. When we speak of Red political power, we mean the people's government based on the worker-peasant alliance under the leadership of the proletariat and its party.

The revolutionary united front can exist because in the very first place there is the basic worker-peasant alliance, the realization of the antifeudal class line in the peasant movement, the building of the people's army as the main component of Red political power and the building of the organs of political power.

Building the organs of political power from one level to a higher level depends on the development of the worker-peasant alliance, the people's army and the people's war. Consequent to such development, allies from other classes and social strata can be won over by their recognition of the increasing strength of the armed revolution and the growing defeat of the enemy.

Long before the establishment of the NDFP in 1973, the CPP had given priority to building the worker-peasant alliance. By doing so, the CPP laid the sound basis for initiating the NDFP and making available a framework for attracting and integrating a broad range of democratic forces being subjected to escalating levels of suppression during and after the Marcos fascist dictatorship.

As a united front organization, the NDFP helps to pave the way for levels of people's government higher than the village level to arise. But the NDFP is not the people's government, contrary to the views of the Right opportunists. Neither does it supplant the political leadership of the CPP in the people's government.

Third requirement

With the worker-peasant alliance assured, the revolutionary united front involves the development of the alliance of the basic revolutionary forces or progressive forces. These forces are those of the working class, peasantry and the urban petty-bourgeoisie.

The urban petty-bourgeoisie is an important social stratum. The exploiting classes cannot rule without their support. If the urban petty-bourgeoisie swings in large numbers to the revolutionary cause, the ruling system rapidly becomes discredited and weakens. The revolutionary movement becomes stronger both in terms of the positive contributions of the urban petty-bourgeoisie as well as in terms of combating and isolating the enemy.

When won over to the revolutionary cause, the urban petty-bourgeois are good at spreading the revolutionary message, engaging in mass activism and providing a wide range of skills and talent. The advanced section of the urban petty-bourgeoisie has been a rich source of educated activists for the national-democratic movement. The most advanced activists among them have further progressed and remoulded themselves into communists and have become cadres in the armed revolutionary movement and the legal democratic movement.

The urban petty-bourgeoisie is so important that the new-democratic revolution cannot win if it does not gain the support of the most advanced of such stratum. That is the reason why the enemy plays on its selfish tendencies and does everything to prevent or redirect its revolutionary tendency from siding with the toiling masses of the people. The enemy recruits from among the urban petty-bourgeois some elements who pose as progressive or even as revolutionary and act as special agents to attack the CPP and disrupt or derail the revolutionary united front.

The NDFP is the sole underground and consolidated alliance of the basic revolutionary forces, dedicated to the new-democratic revolution through people's war. It is a united front for armed struggle. What distinguishes the NDFP from other revolutionary formations is that it is focused on the alliance of the basic revolutionary forces.

Within the NDFP, there is in fact a preponderance of sectoral organizations with an urban petty-bourgeois character or tendency, even if such organizations are led by CPP cadres. Such preponderance is a concession to the urban petty-bourgeois as a basic revolutionary force in order to attract them further to the armed revolution.

But the rule of consensus must apply among the allied organizations within the NDFP. Otherwise, the NDFP would become a framework for the urban petty-bourgeois to outnumber and outvote the fewer but far larger organizations of the workers and peasants and liquidate the class leadership of the proletariat and its party.

In fact, the Right opportunists tried from the early '80s to the early '90s to undermine and destroy the revolutionary character of the NDFP and to use the name of the NDFP against the CPP. Thus, in response to the Right opportunists, the NDFP has found it necessary to spell out the class leadership of the proletariat and its party and the socialist perspective of the Philippine revolution since 1992 in the course of the Second Great Rectification Movement.

In this regard, there should be no swing to "Left" opportunism and sectarianism because the NDFP has also spelled out that it unites, cooperates and coordinates with other forces in the furtherance of the revolutionary united front in the national-democratic revolution. The NDFP recognizes that it is not by itself the complete embodiment of the revolutionary united front and is always open to the formal and informal broadening of the united front.

Since 1971 when the CPP initiated the formation of the Preparatory Committee of the NDFP, the cadres of the CPP assigned to united front work had tried to attract to the organizational fold of the NDFP not only the urban petty-bourgeois but also the middle bourgeois and even the anti-Marcos reactionaries.

But the middle bourgeois and anti-Marcos reactionaries refused. Thus, the NDFP has remained a united front of the basic revolutionary forces, despite any development of the informal united front with the middle bourgeoisie and anti-Marcos reactionaries, especially in the period of 1983 to 1986 when the Marcos fascist dictatorship was already in the process of falling.

No amount of diluting the program of the NDFP under the deceptive banner of New Katipunan in the '80s or in the bogus NDFP congress of 1990 has been able to attract the middle bourgeois and the lesser reactionaries to its fold. Instead, the incorrigible Right opportunists and renegades were trying to liquidate the CPP, the NDFP and the entire revolutionary movement.

Thanks to the Second Great Rectification Movement, the CPP was able to take the initiative in clarifying its united front policy and revitalizing the NDFP as an alliance of basic revolutionary forces. The NDFP stands ever ready to link up formally and informally with other classes, social strata and forces willing to come to a broader revolutionary united front.

The cadres of the CPP and the NDFP are active in linking up with the sectoral and multisectoral legal alliances, with issue-based alliances, with Moro organizations for national self-determination and with temporary and unstable allies among the reactionaries opposed to the US-Ramos regime.

Fourth requirement

So long as the alliance of the basic revolutionary forces is assured, the revolutionary united front can be

expanded in the form of the alliance of the positive or patriotic forces. This adds the middle bourgeoisie to the toiling masses and the urban petty-bourgeoisie.

The middle bourgeois, sometimes referred to as the national bourgeois, have at their core those entrepreneurs running productive enterprises using local raw materials and serving the domestic market. Traditionally, the middle bourgeois are weak because they do not own heavy and basic industries and they have been further weakened historically by the sequence of import-substitution and export-oriented manufacturing after World War II, under the dominance of the foreign monopoly firms.

The policy of the CPP and the NDFP towards the middle bourgeois is to recognize their dual character, both their progressive and reactionary aspects, to attract them to the united front because of their progressive aspect and to be vigilant towards them because of their reactionary aspect.

So far, the middle bourgeois are not well organized as bourgeois nationalists and as anti-imperialist producers and have refused to join the NDFP or even the legal democratic alliance. But it does not mean that they cannot be in the united front if they are not there formally.

In practice, the middle bourgeois have come to the united front in an informal way. When the enterprise of the middle bourgeois is in the territory of the armed revolutionary movement, they can be persuaded to respond fairly and reasonably to the demand of the workers for better wage and living conditions, to pay their tax obligation to the people's government and allow the revolutionary forces the use of their facilities.

When a revolutionary trade union exists in their enterprise, the middle bourgeois are likely to plead that they should not be treated like the foreign monopoly firms which repatriate superprofits and that they should be given the chance to play their role in national economic development. In accordance with united front policy, the revolutionary forces give concessions to the legitimate interests of the national bourgeoisie.

A more active united front policy can involve preventing foreign monopolies and big compradors from continuing their dominance and allowing the national bourgeois to take over certain lines of economic activity in exchange for their support and cooperation. Certain goods that can be produced by the national bourgeois can be promoted and protected and similar goods that are being dumped into the country by the imperialists and big compradors can be banned.

Fifth requirement

The revolutionary forces take advantage of the contradictions among the reactionary forces of the big compradors and landlords. By themselves, these contradictions weaken the entire ruling system. But to further weaken the ruling system, the united front can be expanded as to involve formal or informal alliances with the lesser reactionaries opposed to the enemy at every given time, so long as the worker-peasant alliance, the alliance of the basic revolutionary forces and the alliance of positive or patriotic forces are being developed.

Reactionaries are characteristically unstable and unreliable allies. They are willing to ally themselves with the revolutionary forces for as long as there is a temporary need to do so in order to advance their own reactionary interests. The revolutionary forces are likewise willing to enter into temporary alliances with lesser reactionary forces in order to intensify the contradictions among the reactionaries, weaken the ruling system and strengthen the armed revolutionary movement.

The CPP, NPA and the NDFP have rich experience in alliance work with reactionary forces. They distinguish the enlightened gentry from the evil gentry, the enlightened businessmen from the unenlightened ones, the local reactionaries from the Manila-based ruling clique, the smaller reactionaries from the bigger ones and the reactionaries out of power from the reactionaries in power.

All exploiting classes and their reactionary political agents that come within the range of power of the revolutionary movement are required to comply with the laws and regulations of the people's democratic government. Violations of or noncompliance with such laws and regulations are properly dealt with by the apparatuses of law enforcement. Activities that are harmful to the people and the environment are banned. Permissible economic activities are subject to the tax policy of the people's government.

In the course of competition among the reactionaries for political power and economic privileges within the ruling system, some of them approach the revolutionary movement for alliance against their opponents. The approaches increase and intensify during the electoral processes of the ruling system and in any period when the reactionaries fight over certain privileges and confront each other with armed personnel. The revolutionary forces can skilfully utilize the contradictions to the advantage of the revolutionary movement and the people.

In a prolonged, comprehensive and profound way, the armed revolutionary movement as well as the legal democratic movement persevered in a policy of united front with the reactionary forces opposed to the US-directed Marcos fascist dictatorship. The reactionary forces headed by Aquino were able to replace Marcos in the ruling system. But in the process of developing the united front against the fascist dictatorship, the revolutionary forces were able to gain strength. What is regrettable is that the “Left” and Right opportunists undermined the revolutionary gains.

So far, the only experience in united front work that the current revolutionary forces have not yet had is an alliance with the reactionary ruling clique against a foreign aggressor, as in the case of the alliance between the Guomindang (Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Party) and the Communist Party of China against the Japanese invasion.

To this day, united front with reactionaries is usually informal at various levels. These reactionaries are also usually mostly outside of the ruling clique. However, contradictions develop within the ruling clique and can be taken advantage of by the revolutionary forces. For instance, the Marcos fascist dictatorship could not have fallen without the split within. The law of contradiction applies to everything. Nothing is indivisible.

Sixth requirement

The different types of alliances are all intended to weaken, isolate and destroy the enemy. An alliance with reactionaries opposed to the enemy is done in accordance with the principle and policy of defeating the reactionaries one by one, defeating the enemy one after the other and in the process strengthening the revolutionary forces until they can overthrow the entire ruling system and establish the people's democratic government.

If indeed the objective in carrying out the united front policy is to isolate and destroy the enemy at every given time, why is it that the NDFP negotiating panel has been authorized by the revolutionary movement to negotiate with the GRP negotiating panel of the US-Ramos regime which is identified as the enemy?

By way of quick reply, we say that the Guomindang was the enemy of the Communist Party of China and the Chinese people before the Guomindang agreed to be an ally against the Japanese aggressors. But we do not mean to say that the US-Ramos regime is about to become an ally of the revolutionary forces.

At the moment, the regime can be challenged to recognize the basic problems generating the armed revolution and can thus be exposed to the broad masses of the people as not really interested in a just and lasting peace. Had the revolutionary forces refused to accept Ramos' offer of peace negotiations, he and his regime would have come out as the lovers of peace and the revolutionary forces would have appeared as no better than warmongers.

The CPP, NPA and the NDFP have always made clear the following: 1) that in entering into the peace negotiations with the GRP, they continue to adhere to the line of new-democratic revolution as the line for a just and lasting peace and 2) that the peace negotiations, as properly conducted by the authorized negotiating panel, is a form of legal struggle, which is subordinate to the revolutionary armed struggle or even to the legal democratic mass struggles.

In only one important respect are the peace negotiations conducted by the NDFP superior to the other forms of legal struggle. The NDFP has put itself forward as the equal of the GRP as a co-belligerent in a civil war in the light of international law. The NDFP takes certain risks in going into peace negotiations with the enemy. But the enemy likewise takes certain risks. The NDFP is aware of the balance of risks and the antidote measures it has to undertake in order to avoid confusing the revolutionary ranks and falling into the pit of capitulation.

So far, the most that has been attained in the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations is the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law. This is a significant document, beneficial to the people and the revolutionary forces, even if it has limitations and defects.

The revolutionary integrity of the CPP, NPA and NDFP is intact. There is no surrender to the legal and judicial system of the reactionary state, in contrast with what happened in the case of the human rights agreement between the FMLN and the El Salvador reactionary government. There is still a long way to go in the negotiations of social, economic, political and constitutional reforms before the question of truce can be taken up.

The Filipino people and the revolutionary forces are clear about the continuing hostile counterrevolutionary character of the US-Ramos regime and about the principal and secondary forms of struggle that need to be waged in order to advance the cause of the new-democratic revolution against foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

The policy of the revolutionary united front in the Philippines has an international dimension. It is linked to the

anti-imperialist united front on an international scale. The Philippine revolution is part of the common struggle of the people of the world against imperialism. It is as well the internationalist duty of the Filipino people to contribute their strength to the international united front.

Such a united front is led by the proletariat and Marxist-Leninist parties, which are bound by proletarian internationalism. But there is a certain broadness of solidarity in this united front. It allows the active participation of all individuals and forces, with varying degrees of anti-imperialist consciousness and militancy and without ideological requirements, provided that there is vigilance against special agents who pretend to be anti-imperialist but whose main objective is to attack the proletarian revolutionaries and subvert the united front.

According to circumstances, the revolutionary forces can take advantage of the interimperialist contradictions in the same manner as they can take advantage of the contradictions among the domestic reactionaries. The imperialist powers are united against the people of the world but they are increasingly driven to compete against each other by the worsening crisis of the world capitalist system. The imperialist alliance headed by the United States is bound to crack up. Crisis and war are characteristics of imperialism.

There is a new world disorder, following the defeat of Soviet social-imperialism in the Cold War and the proven bankruptcy of the neoliberal policy of the traditional imperialist powers. We are in a period of transition to the resurgence of the anti-imperialist and socialist movement. We are once again on the eve of social revolution on a global scale. In building the subjective forces of the revolution, we uphold proletarian internationalism and at the same time adopt a broad united front against imperialism.

Long live the National Democratic Front of the Philippines!

Carry forward the new-democratic revolution!

Long live the Filipino people!

It is correct to raise the slogan "Oust the US-Arroyo regime!" The broad masses of the people welcome the call because they suffer the ever-worsening socioeconomic crisis and are outraged by the puppetry, corruption, mendacity and repressiveness of the regime.

The slogan can call to life a broad united front of forces capable of either removing Ms Macapagal-Arroyo from power before 2004 or making her lose in the 2004 presidential elections.

And if she can somehow overcome the presidential bid of a retired general like DND secretary Angelo Reyes, supposedly favored by the US as a "law and order" candidate, the broad united front will still have the chance to chase her out of office after 2004.

Whichever of the foregoing possibilities is going to be realized, the revolutionary cause stands to be benefited by the accumulation of the people's wrath and strength, resulting from any prolongation of Ms Macapagal-Arroyo in power. As of now, the US-Arroyo regime is stinking to high heavens because it has aggravated the crisis of the entire ruling system.

Some major reactionaries who are critical of the regime are still hesitant about joining the broad united front to oust the US-Arroyo regime and are publicly saying that they do not wish to join it lest one more overthrow of a president would totally discredit the reactionary constitution or entire ruling system.

At whatever pace the broad united front develops, the patriotic and progressive forces are resolutely and vigorously using the time to arouse, organize and mobilize the people in their millions in order to isolate the regime and bring it down in due course.

At the moment, the fragility of the regime is dramatically evident from the delicate balance of followers and opponents of the Macapagal-Arroyo ruling clique in the Philippine Senate and in the Lakas-NUCD ruling party. Any attempt of the ruling clique to augment its strength, assert its autonomy or paralyze current opponents in any way will only tend to upset the balance of forces within the reactionary government.

The officers of the reactionary armed forces and police are extremely factionalized according to conflicting political loyalties and ambitions as well as according to competing interests in lucrative criminal activities, including kidnap-for-ransom, smuggling, drug trafficking, jueteng and white slavery. The current ruling clique cannot be too sure about the loyalty of the military and police officers when the mass movement surges again as in the final days of Marcos or Estrada.

The regime is aware that the patriotic and progressive forces of the national-democratic movement are steadily growing in strength and advancing. Instead of extending any friendly hand to them, the regime has been pushing military and police forces to attack them and violate human rights on a wide scale.

We have been informed that the regime has indefinitely suspended the GRP peace negotiations with the NDFP in preparation for scrapping them and has long given the orders to the reactionary armed forces and police to escalate their campaigns of suppression against the people and the people's army in utter subservience to the US line of pursuing large-scale terrorism under the pretext of combating the small-scale terrorism of such disgruntled assets of the US CIA like the Abu Sayyaf.

We have also received a report that Ms Macapagal-Arroyo has authorized military and police forces to bully, provoke and disperse the rallyists on the day of her state of the nation address on July 22, to show off her "iron fist" on the issue of peace and order. She cannot stamp out the criminal gangsters because they are in cahoots with her military and police officers. And yet she arrogantly calculates that she can assault with impunity unarmed and peaceful demonstrators.

If the regime does not step back from its unjust and brutal course, it will only cause the intensification of all forms of resistance by the revolutionary forces and people. It cannot gain anything by unleashing threats and attacks against them. The current raging crisis of the world capitalist system and the ruling system is favorable to the armed revolution.

Mass Movement Is the Key Factor

for Ousting the Arroyo Regime July 28, 2005

Since June, the mass movement to oust the Arroyo regime from power has expanded in waves in the national capital region and nationwide through the alternation of localized build up mass actions and peak mass actions at certain focal points.

The broad united front of opposition parties and mass organizations against the Arroyo regime deserves congratulations for having already concentrated 30,000 rallyists at Ayala, Makati on July 8, 70,000 to 80,000 at the same place on July 13 and recently 80,000 to 100,000 at Commonwealth Avenue on July 25 on the occasion of SONA (sinungaling na orasyon ng nanlolokong Arroyo - Lying oration of deceitful Arroyo).

The supposedly pro-Arroyo rally on July 25 was no more than 15,000 but the police bloated the count to 35,000. Most of those whom news reporters interviewed expressed themselves against the Arroyo regime and its crimes. The mass movement is not a field for the Arroyo regime to compete in. In fact, Arroyo did not show up at the supposedly pro-Arroyo rally on July 16 for fear of being booed.

In her SONA, Arroyo insulted the suffering Filipino people by claiming that the growth rate of the depressed semifeudal Philippine economy for 2004 (6.1 percent) is more than 240 percent higher than the average growth rate of the highly industrialized Group of 7 countries. Knowing fully well the unwillingness of the Senate to join a constituent assembly with the Lower House, she cynically pretended to embrace the scheme of charter change through constituent assembly. .

The rate at which the mass movement has been growing in size and advancing against the Arroyo regime is quite good and commendable. It is ridiculous for the Arroyo regime and its apologists to scoff at the mass movement as failing to raise immediately enough mass strength to overthrow the regime. It took more than 2.5 years (August 1983 to February 1986) for the mass movement to bring down the Marcos fascist dictatorship. The overthrow of Estrada took more than 2 years from the time BAYAN called for his ouster in December 1998 and nearly five months from the Chavit Singson expose .

The mass movement is the key factor for overthrowing the Arroyo regime. As in the past, it will become dramatically effective when it is able to concentrate 500,000 to one million people at a focal point in the national capital region. The broad united front is working towards massing people on all the streets leading to the presidential palace. This is expected to be the focus of militant mass actions all over the country and to signal the withdrawal of military support from the regime.

The mass movement is the ever developing and ultimate weapon of the Filipino people in view of the determination of the fake president and her regime to frustrate every proposal to bring out the truth and render justice on the charges against her for electoral fraud, corruption and other high crimes. It is the sacred democratic right of the Filipino people to assert their sovereign will and rise up to get rid of an exceedingly oppressive and exploitative regime.

To make a mockery of the proposal for a truth commission, Arroyo who is the principal accused has announced that she is taking initiative to create it and handpick its members. She has also announced that the commission is meant to go after those she accuses of destabilizing her regime. Thus, the commission will not only exculpate her but will be her weapon for an inquisition against her opponents.

The House majority belonging to the ruling coalition headed by Arroyo and Speaker De Venecia is out to squelch the impeachment complaint against Arroyo by stacking the rules of impeachment. The Arroyo regime is maneuvering, using both money and technicalities, to prevent the impeachment complaint from reaching the Senate for trial.

The Ramos-De Venecia constituent assembly scheme to amend or change the 1987 constitution is a non-starter. The Senate has long been known to be an unwilling party to its own dissolution. Even during his presidency Ramos could not push through a charter change. Arroyo is now floating this merely as a diversionary tactic to obscure her crimes. The scheme of a mere shift from a presidential to a parliamentary form of government is being deceitfully depicted as a system change.

Can the Arroyo regime succeed in prolonging its rule by trying to deceive and intimidate the people? No. The

broad masses of the people are outraged by its crimes and are eager to overthrow it. All reliable surveys show that the overwhelming majority of the people want to get rid of it. The broad united front and the mass movement persevere in the struggle to topple it.

The broad united front of legal opposition parties and mass organizations is of the consensus that a combination of legal mass movement and withdrawal of military support from the regime can remove the Arroyo regime from power. The forces of the armed revolution are of a similar view and have made clear that the New People's Army should intensify armed tactical offensives in the countryside while the pro-Arroyo officers of the military and police are preoccupied with the social unrest and political turmoil in the urban areas.

The people are so incensed by the high crimes of the Arroyo regime that they spontaneously demand the quickest ways to punish those in power or at least to demonstrate the inability of the regime to govern. If their demands and grievances continue unaddressed, we can expect spontaneous elements among the masses, especially the most oppressed and deprived, to start breaking the glass windows of the multinational firms and the pro-Arroyo big compradors, landlords and corrupt bureaucrats. We can also expect some of those in the middle class to start parking their cars at well-selected choke points and paralyzing every day the road traffic to and from the presidential palace.

The broad united front and mass movement must stay the course in arousing and mobilizing people in their millions all over the country and in raising the level of mass actions to a new and higher level until Arroyo understands the message that her regime must end or else. The broad masses of the people can overthrow the Arroyo regime by asserting and exercising their democratic rights. The best sight we would like to see is countless people occupying all the streets leading to the presidential palace from as far as several kilometers away.

The revolutionary forces represented by the National Democratic Front of the Philippines wish the Arroyo regime to be ousted or to resign as soon as possible so that formal talks in the peace negotiations can be resumed with the incoming regime. However, if the regime manages somehow to prolong its life beyond 2005, they estimate that conditions would become exceedingly favorable for armed revolution, due to the deepening and aggravation of the crisis of the ruling system through the continuance of a hated regime that is without moral authority and legitimacy whatsoever.

The Broad United Front of Patriotic Forces

Is Determined to Mobilize the People Nationwide against Arroyo Regime February 23, 2008

I am happy to observe that the broad united front of patriotic forces is determined to arouse and mobilize the broad masses of the people in the national capital region as well as on a nationwide scale, including provincial centers and localities, in order to further isolate the Arroyo regime and cause the resignation, impeachment or ouster of the fake president, Gloria M. Arroyo.

The people are deeply outraged by the Arroyo regime's servility to foreign interests, its corruption and plundering mania and its wanton violations of human rights. The task of the broad united front is to bring to the surface and to the streets the people's outrage and thus overcome the regime's campaign of mass deception and intimidation.

It is possible to remove the Arroyo ruling clique from power mainly through the people's exercise of their democratic right to speak and assemble, as in 1986 and 2001. The issuance of statements, indoor meetings and localized rallies against the regime can generate the gigantic mass actions. The peaceful uprising of the people in great numbers can encourage the bureaucracy and military to withdraw support and can thus cause the Arroyo regime to implode.

According to reliable information, the patriotic military and police officers and the overwhelming majority of enlisted personnel will manifest their withdrawal of support from the regime as soon as 100,000 people converge in any of the protest rallies either in Manila or Edsa in the coming days, weeks and months. Such level of mass participation is expected to ignite the peaceful uprising of the people in their millions nationwide.

The patriotic military and police officers uphold the principle of civilian supremacy and are not interested in taking power for any military clique. They want a triumvirate of officials of the Supreme Court, Senate and the executive to be the caretaker leadership for running the government until a new president is elected in a snap election within four months from the removal of Arroyo from power.

In its website and through its official spokesman Ka Roger, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) has repeatedly declared that it is encouraging the people to exercise their democratic right to speak and assemble and that the armed units of the New People's Army are keeping out of the protest mass actions in the urban areas in consonance with the legal and defensive character of these actions.

According to the CPP, the NPA is intensifying armed tactical offensives in the countryside in order to seize more arms and strengthen itself for ultimately overthrowing the entire ruling system. In that connection, it is targeting Arroyo loyalists among the reactionary military and police, the most notorious violators of human rights and the plunderers of the natural wealth of the Philippines.

Generals Esperon and Año are merely exposing their state of panic when they keep on barking that the NPA will join the protest mass actions and that the military and police of the reactionary state will always follow the pro-Arroyo chain of command. The real big problem of these running dogs of the Arroyo regime is the simultaneous growth of the protest mass actions of the people in the cities, the tendency of the regime to implode and the intensified tactical offensives of the people's army in the countryside.

We of the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) welcome wholeheartedly the holding of the Eighth National Congress of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN). On this special occasion, we express our solidarity with the leadership and member-organizations of BAYAN and all the national sectoral and chapter delegates, including those from BAYAN-USA and BAYAN-Canada and the BAYAN desks in Japan and Hong Kong.

We are proud of BAYAN as the strongest formation in the Philippine chapter of the ILPS. We salute BAYAN for being the most comprehensive and largest alliance of class, sectoral and issue-based forces that pursue the general line of struggle for genuine national independence and democracy against imperialism and local reaction.

It includes the toiling masses of workers and peasants and the middle social strata, the women, the youth and various types of professionals and the advocates of human rights, social reforms, just peace, healthy environment and other causes. It has a comprehensive range of capabilities. It can rally the people to confront the most powerful adversaries, to surmount the social disasters as well as the natural disasters that these aggravate and to fight and work for a new and better Philippines.

We congratulate you for all your victories in building your strength and in serving the people. We join you in anticipating that the congress will succeed in assessing and evaluating the five-year work of BAYAN from 2004 to 2009 and will be able to set forth the political and organizational tasks of rebuilding and strengthening the regional and provincial formations, which have borne the main brunt of fascist attacks.

We share with you the hope that the congress will pave the way for a meaningful and bountiful celebration of the 25th anniversary of the founding of BAYAN as the main alliance of patriotic and progressive forces and as a powerful center of the national democratic movement in the Philippines.

We live today under the harsh conditions of the worst crisis of the world capitalist system and the domestic ruling system since the end of World War II. The broad masses of the people are undergoing terrible suffering. At the same time, they are being driven to wage struggles against their oppressors and exploiters.

The crisis conditions are favorable for BAYAN to arouse, organize and mobilize the Filipino people to fight for their own national and democratic rights and interests against foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. We must seize every moment to expand and consolidate the organized forces for the national and social liberation of the people.

The global financial and economic crisis continues to worsen, contrary to the claims of recovery by the G-20. The imperialist states cling to the dogma of "free market" globalization and providing public funds to bail out the big banks and the big firms in the military-industrial complex that in the first place made the crisis. Thus, the imperialists cannot solve the crisis but aggravate it and are generating new financial bubbles.

The crisis relentlessly attacks the working people. The monopolies extract superprofits by further cutting down wage incomes and engaging in mass layoffs. Thus, mass consumption and the market continue to contract. The imperialist powers always try to pass the burden of crisis to the underdeveloped countries. They use the crisis to further cheapen the exports of these countries, seize the natural resources, expand the market and field of investments for monopoly firms and impose a heavier debt burden on the people.

The imperialist powers headed by the US persist in their global war of terror against the people of the world. Together with puppet regimes, they use state terrorism to suppress the people and wage wars of aggression against countries assertive of their independence. They presume that they can overcome the crisis, their protectionist tendency and their struggle for a redivision of the world by escalating the oppression and exploitation of the people of the world

The oppressed peoples and nations are more determined than ever before to wage revolutionary struggles for national liberation and democracy and look forward to a socialist future. The working class in imperialist countries and elsewhere is pressed hard by the crisis to fight for immediate anti-imperialist and democratic goals and to perform its historic role of bringing about and building socialism.

Under the weight of the global financial and economic crisis, the crisis of the long-rotten semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system is accelerated and deepened. Philippine exports of raw materials and low value-added semimanufactures have shrunk. Overseas contract workers are in less demand and remit less earnings to the

country. Foreign credit has become scarce while the interest payments and amortization of the accumulated debt are unbearable. Even as the economy is depressed, the Arroyo regime keeps on increasing the people's tax burden and is using the tax revenues mainly for debt service, military expenditures and graft-ridden projects and programs.

Subservience to the US-dictated policy of "neoliberal globalization" has prevented national industrialization and land reform and has ruined agricultural production for domestic consumption. The export-oriented and import-dependent enterprises are either closing down or reducing production. The rate of unemployment has risen steeply. The income levels of the working people and middle class have gone down abruptly and yet the prices of basic commodities and services are soaring.

The broad masses of the people are in dire economic straits. Social unrest is widespread and rising in intensity. The revolutionary forces of the people are growing in strength and advancing. The socioeconomic crisis is fuelling the political crisis of the ruling system. The contradictions among the competing political factions of the ruling classes of big compradors and landlords are intensifying and becoming more bitter and violent as the ruling clique strains to monopolize the spoils of power and as the opposition is quick to expose corruption and other wrongdoings.

The Arroyo regime has long unleashed state terrorism and perpetrated systematic and gross violations of human rights in a vain attempt to suppress the growing armed revolutionary movement and intimidate the broad range of legal opposition forces, including the reactionary ones and the progressive ones spearheaded by BAYAN. The regime has been emboldened to commit the most despicable barbarities under Oplan Bantay Laya by the US-directed global war of terrorism. It has allowed the deployment of US military forces on Philippine territory under the Visiting Forces Agreement.

The campaigns of military and police suppression of the workers, peasants and national minorities and the abduction, torture and extrajudicial killing of social activists by the regime have served even more to incite the broad masses of the people to wage various forms of resistance and to isolate the regime internationally, thanks to the help of human rights organizations, overseas Filipino communities and solidarity organizations. The plan of the regime to defeat or reduce the revolutionary movement to inconsequentiality has utterly failed, as proven by the growing tactical offensives of the people's army nationwide.

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) has engaged in peace negotiations with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) for many years. But the GRP has paralyzed these negotiations for more than 95 percent of the time by trying to put aside the negotiations on social, economic and political reforms and to maneuver the NDFP towards capitulation and pacification within the framework of disarming and demobilizing the people's army and preserving the semicolonial and semifeudal system of oppression and exploitation.

The Arroyo ruling clique has given up the scheme to amend the 1987 constitution in order to adopt a parliamentary system and keep itself in power. While the 2010 elections are in sight, there are fears of the opposition that the ruling clique will cause a breakdown of the automated system of the elections, declare a failure of elections and run a caretaker government.

It is more likely that the Arroyo ruling clique will favor its own slate of candidates under the banner of Lakas-KAMPI and will put side bets on one more presidential and on lower-position candidates who belong to other parties in a scheme to get their support for the nonprosecution and condonation of Arroyo, her family and cronies for their crimes of plunder and human rights violations. The ruling clique is worried that the candidates of its own party would lose and is preparing to engage in massive fraud in the elections.

Until now, the presidential candidates or political parties of the reactionary classes present themselves as rivals in a personality-based popularity contest. Those on the opposition side merely claim to be for good governance against the regime's record of corruption, incompetence and repression. They have not put forward comprehensive political statements or political programs that present the basic political, socioeconomic, cultural and ecological problems of the people and offer the basic reforms to be undertaken.

The patriotic and progressive forces of the people like BAYAN and its member-organizations can take the moral high ground and clarify what are the principles and policies that ought to be adopted and implemented in serving the people. Makabayan as the people's democratic coalition and the progressive partylist groups are the forces that directly engage in the electoral struggle by fielding candidates, slating them and campaigning for them.

Even if not registered by the Comelec, Makabayan is an effective electoral alliance distinctive for having a clear

program and a large active mass base. It is formidable in a political landscape in which there is a big but discredited ruling reactionary party and too many small reactionary opposition parties. It can play the highly significant role of selecting and endorsing the candidates that take up the national and democratic rights of the people and, at the same, encouraging and rallying the people to support and elect such candidates.

All the patriotic and progressive forces of the people must wilfully and vigorously make the following demands in the course of the mass movement, including the electoral campaign: uphold national independence against the dominance and dictates of the imperialist powers headed by the US; realize democracy through the empowerment of the working people and respect for human rights; develop the economy through national industrialization and land reform; promote a national, scientific and mass culture; protect the environment from imperialist plunder and destruction; and pursue an independent foreign policy for world peace and development.

These demands must be elaborated and expressed in full against the concrete factors and conditions that are inimical to the rights and interests of the people. We must do away with the unequal treaties, agreements and arrangements in economic, political, military and cultural terms. We must end the system and processes that exclude and oppress the working people. We must put a stop to the plundering of our human and natural resources by the foreign monopolies, the big compradors and landlords. We must repudiate the ideas and patterns of behavior arising from imperialist and feudal culture. We must ban the imperialist and local reactionary ravagers of the environment. We must oppose the imperialist powers, their global plundering and aggressive wars.

BAYAN must do its best to take up the basic demands of the people and the burning issues of the day. Without any respite, it must arouse, organize and mobilize the broad masses of the people to fight for their national and democratic rights and interests. You and the people must overcome the violence and deception that the adversary unleashes to stop, derail or limit what you can accomplish towards a fundamental change of society. From the struggle itself, you and the people learn how to solve problems, hurdle the obstacles, gain strength and advance.

We of the ILPS wish your congress the utmost success. May you succeed in summing up your experience, identifying strengths to enhance and weaknesses and difficulties to overcome and setting forth the tasks that will bring you to a new and higher level of unity, all-round strength and militant service to the people. We look forward to further significant victories of BAYAN on time for its 25th founding anniversary and in all the years to come.

On Ninoy Aquino's Relations

with the CPP and NPA Interview by Lisandro Claudio, for GMA News TV July 24, 2010

1. *Was there ever an alliance between the CPP-NPA and Ninoy Aquino? If so, could you comment on the extent of this alliance?*

JMS: There was no formal alliance between the CPP-NPA and Ninoy Aquino. By absence of formal alliance, I mean that there was no written instrument of alliance (document) and there was no organizational form to embody the alliance. But there was an informal and objective alliance. The CPP and NPA and Ninoy were informal and practical cooperators against the Marcos regime from late 1968 onwards up to his assassination by the military minions of Marcos and further on with his wife as ally after his assassination.

Even before the CPP was reestablished in 1968, Ninoy had maintained a certain amount of good relations with the old people's army units headed by Bernabe Buscayno in Tarlac. Independently, I became friends with Ninoy in late 1967 through his young Senate aide Raul Roco who was then my neighbor in Sta. Mesa Heights. Ninoy had come to my house but I was not at home. Raul eventually brought me to Ninoy's house in Times St. Ninoy and I exchanged ideas about the political situation. Cory served coffee.

I was then publicly known as chairman of Kabataang Makabayan, editor of Progressive Review and friend of most of the congressmen known as the Magnificent Seven opposed to the US war of aggression in Vietnam and the so-called Philippine Civic Action Group (PHILCAG) sent there. Ninoy had no idea then that I and others were preparing for the reestablishment of the CPP and the founding of the NPA.

2. *Would you recall why Ninoy sought you out for the first meeting? What did you talk about?*

JMS: Ninoy proposed that the two of us go on a hunger strike against the Marcos regime and make demands for reforms. I thanked Ninoy for the proposal but I declined because at that time I was extremely busy with labor, peasant and youth mass organizing. I did not tell him that I was kept most busy by the rectification movement within the old CPP against the Lava dynasty and the Taruc-Sumulong gangster clique and with the rebuilding of the CPP.

3. *Below is an excerpt from a telegram sent by the US Embassy in the Philippines to the State Department. It is dated September 18, 1972. Would it be possible for you to react to it?*

"In private conversations with two Emboffs Sept 12, Senator Aquino said that on Sept 7 he had met with Sison and several other members of CPP/ML Central Committee in house in suburban Makati. At meeting, he was presented with proposal to join broad opposition front including part of Liberal Party, CPP/ML, and other radical groups. According to Aquino, this proposition was premature since situation had not yet reached that stage of deterioration which would prompt him to take such a move. He did, however, agree to provide CPP/ML with statement of program and principles on which he invited their comments with view of established basis for possible future cooperation. He did not, however, show Emboffs copy of paper or discuss its contents."

JMS: It was Julius Fortuna (not me) who met Ninoy Aquino in the house of a big businessman (whose daughter was an activist) and who represented the NDF Preparatory Commission, the CPP and NPA and in effect or in a manner of speaking me. I did not meet Ninoy but it is highly probable that Julius told him that I sent Julius to him. Up to now, I do not understand why Ninoy told Enrile and others that I met him. I could only surmise that it was his way of stressing the importance of the meeting. Indeed, Julius discussed with Ninoy how to make a broad united front more effective against the Marcos regime.

4. *I interviewed Rudy Salas and he claims that it was Aquino who introduced you to Dante. Is Salas correct?*

JMS: Rudy Salas was not in a position to know the details of my communications with Dante. It was Arthur Garcia who was closely assisting me. Ninoy did not introduce me to Dante. It was Arthur Garcia. It was Rep. Jose V. Yap who at one time helped to arrange my trip to his province. The stories about Ninoy introducing me to Dante revolve around the trip arranged by Yap.

5. *Why did Yap help you arrange the trip to Tarlac? Was this because of a request from Ninoy?*

JMS: Not because of a request from Ninoy. But because of a request directly from Dante (Bernabe Buscayno) to Mang Apeng Yap and I agreed through Arthur Garcia. You must understand that Mang Apeng has his own weight in dealing with progressives. He comes from a traditionally Huk town (Victoria, Tarlac) and has relatives

who belonged to the old movement.

6. *I would just like to know how Arthur Garcia knew Dante. Also, did Aquino provide any material support to the movement? Did he help finance or arm the NPA?*

JMS: Dante himself was interested in contacting me and the KM. He was happy when Arthur Garcia made contact with him through some activists in Tarlac. I did not have any direct contact with Ninoy Aquino regarding any material support from him. I can only cite his public statements directly or indirectly supportive of the people's resistance to Marcos. I cannot offer to you anyone who might have some direct personal knowledge regarding any material support from Aquino.

7. *Salas claims that Aquino helped open up the Isabela region to the NPA via his connection with Faustino Dy. Is this a claim you can confirm?*

JMS: At that time Faustino Dy was indeed pro-Ninoy against Marcos. But it was not Ninoy who introduced the NPA to then Cauayan mayor Dy. It was Ka Ruben Tuason, a peasant leader and member of the CPP Central Committee, who introduced the NPA to Dy. Ruben and Dy had been boyhood friends in Tarlac. Prior to the introduction of the NPA to Dy, the CPP had already deployed a team of cadres headed by Ka Eddie Layug to do expansion work initially among the ex-Huks in the NARRA [National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Administration] resettlement areas and the forest region in Isabela. I had the honor of giving political education to the said team of cadres in Tarlac before it was dispatched to Isabela.

8. *In my fieldwork in Hacienda Luisita, residents told me that the hacienda served as a safe haven for NPA troops in the 1970s. Can you confirm this? If it is true, did Aquino play a role in opening up Luisita?*

JMS: Hacienda Luisita is a big place of several thousands of hectares. It was an area of mass work by the NPA. The peasants and farmworkers welcomed the NPA. Ninoy did not have to open the place for the NPA. But certainly it was helpful that Ninoy was not known to be hostile to the NPA. His local loyalists did not run to the military to report the presence of the NPA.

9. *On September 3, 2010 journalist Claudio made a follow-up question regarding Aquino as CIA Asset. Hereunder are the question and the answer: Thanks for posting the article on your website by the way. Out of curiosity, I never got to ask this, but were you ever concerned that Aquino was a CIA agent?*

JMS: Of course, I was concerned that Ninoy Aquino was a CIA asset (to use the precise term). He himself had indicated that he had been such, especially when he was a journalist moving around in Southeast Asia and was privileged to have close connections with Magsaysay and his CIA handlers. Don't you know that Aquino and his brother had material interest in the acquisition of certain lands in Tarlac for ultimate sale to Voice of America? That should be an interesting point of research for you. Aquino was obviously a CIA asset who was not a run of the mill on a monthly payroll of the CIA. He was not as cheap as that. He had elbow room to look after his own political and economic interests. Marcos was also a CIA asset like his uncle Modesto Farolan and made himself the biggest one as president, overpowering Ninoy and the rest of his fellow trapos [traditional politicians] and for a long while made himself an indispensable asset to the US. I had no problem about seeing Aquino as an ally or as a friend in the face of the biggest CIA asset Marcos rendering him an underdog in their struggle for power from the late 1960s onward.

I wish to convey warmest greetings of solidarity to all my academic colleagues in the Congress of Teachers/Educators for Nationalism and Democracy (CONTEND) on the occasion of its celebration of the 16th anniversary of its founding on July 22, 1994. I am proud to give you a message of unity as I did in 1998 during your anti-imperialist conference in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Philippine-American War.

I salute CONTEND as a combination of the associations of militant teachers and educators from public and private schools, colleges, and universities from all over the Philippines, who are fully aware of the semicolonial and semifeudal character of Philippine society and accept the role as agents of social change and who are ever committed to raising the social and political consciousness of teachers, the defense of their democratic rights, and sharpening of their skills for the purpose of promoting a progressive, nationalist, scientific and mass-oriented education and culture.

I congratulate you for all your efforts and achievements in arousing, organizing and mobilizing the teachers to serve not only their distinctive sectoral interest but also the entire Filipino people in the struggle for national liberation and democracy against US imperialism and the local exploiting classes. You have excelled at upholding, defending and promoting the anti-imperialist and antifeudal line against the semicolonial and semifeudal conditions.

You have attained outstanding and resounding success in the political work of clarifying the national democratic line and applying it on important issues affecting the academic community and the people on a national and international scale. You have persevered in struggle not only against barefaced adversaries who perpetuate pro-imperialist and antipeople lines of thought, especially in the curriculum, but also against pseudo-progressives who stir up fashionable anti-Marxist trends like postmodernism, neoliberal economics and bourgeois feminism masquerading as socialist.

You have manifested your position in so many conferences and forums. You have issued so many enlightening books, pamphlets and statements. Academics and nonacademics are gratified to read the books that you have published: *Serve the People*, *Ang Radikal na Kasaysayan ng UP* [The Radical History of UP], *Mula Tore, Tungong Palengke* [From Tower to Market] against neoliberal education, three books of poetry and three anthologies of poetry on various themes, including the Hacienda Luisita massacre in 2004 and other grievous human rights violations and the people's demand to oust Arroyo from power.

To foster transformative education, you have undertaken film screenings of local and international films and documentaries. You have engaged in mass actions on every campus of tertiary education where your association exists and, as part of the wider frame of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers, you have participated in its activities. You have joined and even spearheaded broad formations in the University of the Philippines on issues with regard to good governance, electoral fraud, human rights and the ouster of Arroyo. You have played an important role in mass campaigns to oust Estrada and Arroyo, against the Hacienda Luisita massacre and other human rights violations and against US military intervention in the Philippines and US wars of aggression abroad, especially in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine.

I appreciate the extent of recruitment that has been done by CONTEND. I measure my appreciation in relation to your perseverance in struggle over the years and also in relation to the total number of teachers on the campus where your association exists. I believe that the national democratic line is so appealing to the broad masses of teachers that a substantial number of them can be recruited from year to year to become members of CONTEND. As regards those who do not join CONTEND, the policy of the united front can be applied in order to cooperate with them. The possibility of alliance on issues is always possible with teachers who are either active or not active in the traditional faculty association or union and of course with the association of nonacademic employees.

I have read the Constitution of CONTEND promulgated in 1994. It envisions some kind of a federation of associations in various schools, colleges and universities. And it is quite elaborate in seeking to combine such associations and providing them with the organs of leadership at various levels. But it does not make clear the basic rule of recruitment, the basic tasks and basic rights and duties of individual members per association. It is advisable that in this regard the Constitution is amended or a provision of the By-Laws or a set of guidelines is made.

As it is, your Constitution is good in terms of its preambular description of CONTENTD, its enumeration of principles and objectives and its conceptualization of so many associations to combine and to be governed by leading organs at various levels. But it is necessary to have clear provisions about the recruitment, basic rights and duties of individual members. Thus, the task of recruiting more members is made simple and easy through compliance with the provisions of the Constitution.

I urge you to intensify your efforts at solid mass organizing and thereby increase your political strength. You need to pay close attention to the recruitment of the individual members of every existing association of CONTENTD as well as the recruitment of the initial members of an association that is in the process of being established or reestablished. I do not know how much has been the adverse effect of not having clear provisions on the recruitment of individual members. But I am certain that it does no harm to have such provisions.

Aside from the need to make clear the basic requirements for recruitment and membership of individuals, there is also a need to examine what are possibly the subjective tendencies that can prevent or slow down the growth of an association. These tendencies or factors may include the petty bourgeois small group mentality, contempt for mass organizing, unwitting conceit towards non-members and towards new members, plain neglect of the task of recruitment and failure to keep and develop those already recruited as members.

There should be no problem about recruiting an ever increasing number of individual members and building the member-associations of CONTENTD. The national democratic line responds to the demands of the workers, peasants, urban petty bourgeoisie and even the middle bourgeoisie and upholds their rights and interests. We must trust and rely on the mass of teachers as being capable of understanding the principles and objectives of CONTENTD and the national democratic movement, willing to be recruited and to recruit others and ever ready to participate in various campaigns launched by CONTENTD.

I am pleased to know that by way of celebrating the founding anniversary of CONTENTD you are holding a forum with the theme, Back to Class: O Kung Bakit Hindi Kadiri ang Makauring Pagsusuri [Or Why Class Analysis Is Not Yucky] and with an array of distinguished speakers to discuss topics related to the concept and reality of social classes. I presume that the discussion of the subject is meant to deepen and heighten your understanding of who are the friends and who are the enemies of the national democratic revolution in class terms. I cannot help but contribute my share in the discussion.

We may define classes as divisions of society defined by ownership of the means of production and the relations of production, role in the process of production, share in the distribution of the social product and the mode of thinking on economic, political and social issues. To know best the character of a society, it is necessary to make a class analysis and know the class composition. The class analysis starts with looking at the material base or mode of production and proceeds to the political and cultural superstructure. But to avoid the pitfalls of economic determinism or reductionism, we must grasp the dialectical interaction of the economic, political and cultural aspects of society.

In an exploitative society, there are basic exploiting and exploited classes and there are intermediate classes often called the middle class, usually the petty and middle bourgeoisie. In an industrial capitalist society, the capitalist class and working class are the basic opposite classes. In a semicolonial and semifeudal society, there are the comprador bourgeoisie and landlord class on one hand and the working class and peasantry on the other hand.

The ruling exploitative class controls the economic base by owning the means of production and determining the relations of production and division of labor and the distribution of the social product. It uses the political and cultural superstructure to maintain its class rule. The legal system upholds the property rights of the ruling class and the coercive apparatuses of the state are used to enforce the laws favoring the ruling class. Cultural institutions and practices are used to make the ruling class look good and acceptable, to indoctrinate the people and to entertain and divert them from resisting the exploitative and oppressive ruling system.

To fight the ruling class and overthrow the ruling system, the exploited and oppressed classes have to wage a class struggle in the socioeconomic, political and cultural fields. The class struggle of the working class arises in the socioeconomic field and develops from the spontaneous actions of the class in itself to the more conscious better organized trade union and political actions of the class for itself. The socioeconomic struggles give rise to political struggles which require the leadership of the party of the working class as a revolutionary class. Cultural class struggles also arise and develop. The all-round class struggle enables the revolutionary class to strengthen

itself together with the rest of the people and to develop further until they can overthrow the old social system and establish an entirely new one.

There is no other category more significant and effective than social class in the process of maintaining, reforming or radically transforming a social system. But we must also be mindful of categories smaller than the class and subsumable by the class. There may be elite groups of the ruling class which are distinguished by some outstanding competency or representation of a new dominant section of the class or rising type of economic activity. There may be groups or sections in any class that are identifiable by certain industries, occupations, clans and regions and by racial, ethnic, religious and other cultural characteristics.

Other than class, there are important social categories that seem to transcend class category such as individuals, families, clans, tribes, associations, nations, nation-states and associations of states. Such categories are even used to obscure and deny the existence of classes and class struggle. But there is no category more important than classes in the consideration and realization of revolutionary change in any country even when the sense of national unity is also of decisive importance in the people's struggle for national liberation against imperialism.

A reactionary ruling class is always definitely conscious of and acts according to its own class interests and it always seeks to limit, undermine and divert the class consciousness of the exploited and oppressed people and prevent them from acting concertedly in their interest. It is afraid of the toiling masses of workers and peasants becoming conscious of their classes and becoming militated against the handful of exploiters and the conditions of exploitation. Whatever is the level of class consciousness and militancy of the exploited classes, the exploiting classes always engage in class struggle against them. They do so in various ways in order to preempt and prevent the rise of class consciousness among the exploited as well as to counter and combat an already conscious and militant class struggle of the exploited against the exploiters.

Like the Philippine reactionary state, the University of the Philippines carries as official ideology a pro-imperialist kind of liberalism. It considers individual rights in the abstract as the most important aspect of democracy, glosses over the existence of classes and class struggle and pays lip service to national and public interest. It is a hotbed of self-serving individualism and subjectivism, variegated and yet all are in the mold of petty bourgeois thinking that is servile to the foreign monopoly capitalists and local exploiting classes. Its main purpose is to teach and train the professionals and bureaucrats for the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system.

A major method of the bourgeoisie for obfuscating or laying aside the theory and practice of class struggle is to play up individualism, narrow family interest, ethnocentrism, religious sectarianism, chauvinism and a pro-imperialist sense of globalization against the national and class rights and interests of the working people. Let us do the opposite. Let us uphold the class struggle of the working people as the key link and harmonize their class rights with our legitimate rights and interests as individuals, as family, as group, as an ethnic community, as a nation and as internationalists against imperialism and all reaction.

The theory of classes and class struggle was originated by bourgeois thinkers, who were then revolutionary democrats against the feudal order, and was an important element in the advance of social science in France in the 18th century. Marx himself said that he did not originate such theory but he pointed out as his unique achievement the extension and development of such theory to the theory of the proletarian revolution and class dictatorship of the proletariat against the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

It is of crucial importance that we deepen, widen and heighten our knowledge of the reality of social classes and the theory and practice of class struggle up to proletarian revolution and class dictatorship of the proletariat. Why so strong a term as class dictatorship? It refers in the first place to the bourgeois state as organized violence against the proletariat and consequently the proletariat must smash the bureaucratic and military machinery of the bourgeois state in order to liberate the proletariat and the rest of the exploited people. You may use the scientifically frank term of class dictatorship but also say in a more gentle way, people's democratic or socialist state or democratic rule of the working people, depending on the actual conditions.

It is of urgent necessity to study and apply the theory of classes and class struggle up to proletarian revolution and proletarian class dictatorship in view of the fact that the financial oligarchy and monopoly bourgeoisie have systematically and effectively propagandized that the working people of the world must forget about class struggle. And yet they have waged the most rapacious and violent class struggle against the working people in the last three decades under the policy regime of "neoliberal globalization" and unceasing state terrorism, foreign military intervention and wars of aggression unleashed by the US unilaterally or multilaterally in collaboration with other

imperialist powers.

Take note that “neoliberalism” or “free market” is a petty bourgeois expression meant to appeal to the middle class and camouflage the big bourgeois interest in the policy. Under such a policy, the imperialist powers and their agents all over the world have blamed any rise of the wage level of workers and government social spending for the recurrent and worsening economic crises and have adopted and implemented a wide variety of cruel measures against the working class and the entire people.

They have brought down the levels of income of the toiling masses and most of the middle class, attacked their hard-won social rights and cut back on government social spending. They have accelerated the accumulation of capital in the hands of the monopoly bourgeoisie through tax cuts, privatization of public resources, liberalization of trade and investments, deregulation against public interest, the working people, women, children and the environment and the denationalization of the economies of client-states like the Philippines.

It is high time that academics of the UP and all other schools strive to take the standpoint of the anti-imperialist progressive and optimally that of the proletarian revolutionary and contribute to raising the level of class consciousness and class struggle of the working people against the biggest financial and industrial bourgeoisie in the imperialist countries and the big comprador bourgeoisie and landlord class in the Philippines. We must aim for victory in the people’s democratic revolution and advance to socialism.

The crisis of the world capitalist system and the domestic ruling system is worsening rapidly. It is now characterized by prolonged global depression and wars of aggression. The epochal struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is once more conspicuous in the imperialist countries and the rest of the world. In the Philippines, the people’s democratic revolution is intensifying. The struggle for national liberation against foreign monopoly capitalism is necessarily linked to and interactive with the class struggle for social liberation against the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class.

I hope that the current generation of academics carry on the work to which we in my generation have committed ourselves. Take the stand, viewpoint and method of materialist dialectics and use class analysis in order to rip apart and debunk any attempt of the big bourgeoisie and its political and intellectual agents (mostly recruited from the ranks of the university-educated and unremolded petty bourgeois) to misrepresent capitalism and liberalism as the end of history, ridicule proletarian class struggle and revolution as obsolete and irrelevant and misrepresent the latest petty bourgeois intellectual spin as new and therefore correct.

I have always told petty bourgeois faddists among the intellectuals on and off campus and NGO entrepreneurs who brag about their new ideas and new language that all the newly-minted petty bourgeois subjective terms coming from imperialist-directed think tanks, universities, institutions, business corporations and mass media can never make Adam Smith younger than Karl Marx.

It is capitalism, especially monopoly capitalism and finance monopoly capitalism, that is obsolete and moribund. We are in the midst of an unprecedentedly severe crisis of global capitalism and we are now on the eve of an unprecedentedly great rebound of the anti-imperialist and socialist movement to a new and higher level of revolutionary struggle from the deep trough caused by revisionist betrayal of socialism, capitalist restoration and neocolonialism.

I wish to thank the promoters of the International Cultural Festival in Berlin today, October 16, for inviting me to attend this event and to express solidarity to all the participants. I am unable to attend the festival and enjoy your company due to unjust travel restrictions. The Dutch authorities continue to deny me residence and deprive me of my rights despite my legal victory in getting out of the terrorist list of the European Union by virtue of the decision of the European Court of Justice.

But I am able to convey my wholehearted message of solidarity to all of you. I salute and congratulate you for successfully realizing this cultural festival as an event of solidarity. I am happy to know that thousands of people of various nationalities are attending it and diverse groups are expected to exchange their views, make cultural exhibits and stage cultural performances.

Let us celebrate the people's struggle for greater freedom, democracy, social justice, all-round development and peace against imperialism and all reaction. Let us renew our resolve to fight for a new and better world in which socialism upholds the leadership and power of the working class, serves the needs of the entire people and stands against exploitation, oppression, crises and wars that imperialism unleashes.

We are today in the midst of the most severe economic crisis of the world capitalist system since the Great Depression. The US-dictated policies of "neoliberal globalization" and "permanent global war on terror" have resulted in a chain of monstrous phenomena, prolonged economic and financial crisis, decline of production and chronic mass unemployment, state terrorism and wars of aggression.

The burden of crisis is being passed on to the working people in the underdeveloped as well as in the imperialist countries. As societies are rapidly polarized, imperialism and its reactionary allies do everything in their power to cover up their criminal culpability for the catastrophic crisis. Chauvinism, xenophobia, racism, religious bigotry and other reactionary currents are being whipped up to obfuscate the root causes of the severe crisis in the very nature and processes of monopoly capitalism.

There is an urgent need to arouse the people with the facts and ideas about the real roots of the crisis and with their own immediate needs and demands for fundamental change, to organize them in every possible and necessary way as resolute and militant forces against the ramparts of imperialism and reaction and to mobilize them in their millions, including the spontaneous and still unorganized masses, in order to sweep away the obstacles to fundamental social change.

We must build an international united front of anti-imperialist and democratic forces in order to arouse, organize and mobilize the people. The International League of Peoples' Struggle is an international united front of mass formations or people's organizations and does not include political parties. But it is ever ready and ever willing to engage in a larger and broader united front and cooperate with other international organizations or coordinating bodies, including those with political parties as constituents, such as the ICOR.

Forty Years of Philippine Society and Revolution

Interview by Ang Bayan, November 20, 2010

It has been 40 years since the Central Publishing House of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) first published Philippine Society and Revolution (PSR). In the past 40 years, PSR has served as the CPP's principal reference and guide in laying down the basic principles of the two-stage revolution in the Philippines based on the analysis of concrete conditions of the semicolonial and semifeudal system. To commemorate the anniversary of PSR and reaffirm the principles it laid down, Ang Bayan decided to interview Comrade Jose Ma. Sison who, as CPP founding chairman Amado Guerrero, was the author of PSR.

1. Can you relate to our readers certain historical facts about PSR? When did you start writing it? Who were involved in the research and writing? When was it first published and in what form? To your knowledge, how many times has the book been printed?

JMS: I wrote it soon after the launching of the people's war and on the eve of the First Quarter Storm of 1970. I started and finished writing it in the third quarter of 1969. Some comrades in the EC/CC (Executive Committee of the Central Committee) like Charlie del Rosario and Monico Atienza brought me the reference materials that I needed. When I finished the rough draft around August 1969, I gave it to Julie de Lima and other individuals and some members of the Central Committee for suggestions and comments.

The first edition of PSR was published in mimeographed form in October 1969, of which copy was submitted for publication in the Philippine Collegian under the title Philippine Crisis and Revolution (this can be considered the second edition). Pulang Tala Publications published the third edition and Ta Kung Pao of Hong Kong, the fourth edition in 1970. The fifth and sixth editions in English and Pilipino were mimeographed by the CPP Central Publishing House in 1971. In 1977, the Katipunan ng Demokratikong Pilipino published the seventh edition in the US. This can be considered the fourth edition if the mimeographed editions are excluded.

Other editions were released after my capture in 1977. There were even German and Turkish translations and a comics edition.

2. PSR is one of the most important Marxist-Leninist theoretical works of the revolutionary movement in the Philippines. What theoretical challenges faced its writing? What do you think are the key contributions of PSR to the theory of revolution in the Philippines? Has it made any contribution to theory that is relevant beyond the practice of the Philippine revolution?

JMS: The biggest theoretical challenge was the application of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought to Philippine history and circumstances. It necessitated the concrete analysis of concrete conditions. The key contributions of PSR are its characterization of Philippine society as semicolonial and semifeudal and the corresponding line of national and democratic revolution under the leadership of the working class.

In this regard, PSR specified the allied classes (workers, peasants, the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie) and the class enemies (big compradors and landlords) in the new democratic revolution. It also laid down the principal task: national liberation and democratic revolution. It defined as well the stages of the Philippine revolution: people's new democracy and socialism.

3. Before PSR, there were Struggle for National Democracy (SND) and the document "Rectify Errors, Rebuild the Party" (RERP) which were among the first major theoretical works of the national democratic movement in the Philippines. Can you recount the history of the development of the theory of Philippine revolution up to the publication of PSR in 1970?

JMS: The publication of SND and the RERP document was necessary and essential. SND paved the way for the exposition of the people's basic problems and the possible revolutionary solution in legal and persuasive language. It was in line with the tradition of the old democratic revolution of 1896 and the new democratic revolution under the leadership of the working class. It was based on the prevailing conditions and needs of the Filipino people, especially the toiling masses. RERP was seminal in the analysis of the experience of the old merger party of the Communist and Socialist Parties. It exposed the errors and weaknesses which led to the failure of the revolution. It therefore laid down what must be done in order to realize the ideological, political and organizational requirements to rebuild the revolutionary party of the proletariat, the people's army and the united front and to rekindle and advance the revolution towards victory.

4. What was the biggest contribution of PSR to the course of the Philippine revolution in the past 40 years? What role

did it play in the different stages of development of the Philippine revolution?

JMS: PSR greatly strengthened the general line earlier laid down by the Party Constitution and the Program for a People's Democratic Revolution. Since the first year of the people's war up to the present, PSR has played a key role in shedding light about the history, the basic problems and the revolutionary solution of the Filipino people. PSR has played an important role in every stage of the revolution. PSR further enlightens with the help of recent writings based on the advances of the revolution and the worsening of the crisis of the rotten system. PSR has been an effective tool of the Party in raising the consciousness and fighting will of Party members and mass activists.

5. The fourth edition of PSR included "Specific Characteristics of Our People's War" and "Our Urgent Tasks" which emphasized the theoretical importance of this document. What other theoretical works of the CPP do you think have equal weight and significance in terms of the development of the theory of revolution in the Philippines?

JMS: The fourth edition (if the three mimeographed editions are not counted) indeed emphasized the theoretical importance of the two supplementary documents, which in turn further enhanced PSR. The documents of similar importance and significance in the development of the theory of revolution in the Philippines are "On the Mode of Production in the Philippines" (1983), "Philippine Crisis and Revolution" (1986), "Stand for Socialism Against Modern Revisionism" (1992) and "Reaffirm Our Basic Principles and Rectify the Errors" (1992), the basic documents of the Second Great Rectification Movement, and basic documents against the policy of neoliberal globalization and other offensives of imperialism.

6. It has been over 40 years since the PSR was first published. How would you compare Philippine society today to the conditions then? Do you think PSR remains an effective guide for the Philippine revolution? Do you see a need for a new edition, revision or supplement to PSR?

JMS: The continuing semicolonial and semifeudal conditions are further worsening and deepening. Thus, PSR remains an effective guide for the Philippine national and democratic revolution. The Party continues to issue new editions of PSR and supplement it with new related documents. However, I am tempted to write a new edition with expanded text dealing with the past four decades.

7. How can PSR further benefit the current stage of the revolution, especially in line with the CPP's call to achieve the strategic stalemate in five years? What do you think are the crucial issues that have to be studied by Philippine revolutionaries in order to further invigorate the different fields of struggle?

JMS: Always review PSR and apply it to current circumstances and events. Under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought (or Maoism), PSR explains why the people's war is necessary and how to advance it in stages: from the strategic defensive to the strategic stalemate and from the strategic stalemate to the strategic offensive. PSR also laid down the need to fulfil the political requirements in order to advance the people's war from one stage to the next.

The Party must be strengthened ideologically, politically and organizationally. The people's army must be strengthened through armed struggle, agrarian revolution and the building of the mass base and organs of political power. There must be a united front policy involving certain types of alliances: the basic worker-peasant alliance, the progressive alliance of the toiling masses and the urban petty bourgeoisie, the patriotic alliance of the progressive classes and the national bourgeoisie and the temporary and unstable alliance with reactionaries fighting the enemy.

Strengthen Communist Parties

in the Worsening Global Capitalist Crisis Paper prepared as contribution to the 20th Brussels Communist Seminar, May 13-15, 2011

On a global scale, the objective conditions for strengthening communist parties are favorable. The crisis of the world capitalist system keeps on worsening. And the broad masses of the people are rising up simultaneously in many countries in various continents to resist the dire consequences of the global crisis.

Communist parties have the opportunity to strengthen themselves in an all-round way: ideologically, politically and organizationally. The ever-worsening crisis exposes the bankruptcy and rottenness of the entire world capitalist system and points to the necessity of revolutionary struggles for national liberation, democracy and socialism under the leadership of the proletariat and its revolutionary party.

1. Worsening crisis and aggressiveness of imperialism

The economic and financial crisis that burst out in the US and spread throughout the world in 2008 has persisted and aggravated as a global depression. That is because the imperialist states have continued to cling to the US-dictated policy of neoliberal globalization. Under the auspices of this policy, the financial oligarchy and the rest of the monopoly bourgeoisie have continued to make profits in the real economy by pressing down the incomes and social benefits of the working people as well as in the financial markets by generating and manipulating speculative capital.

Public money has been used to bail out the big banks and corporations, improve their balance sheets and revive the stock market. Even the much-touted stimulus packages doled out to the favored corporations are subject to their labor-cost saving and profitmaking decisions. Thus, there is no real economic recovery. The general trend is for production and employment to stagnate and decline. Underconsumption and poverty are increasing as more people suffer unemployment, lower income and rising prices of basic commodities and services.

Public deficits and the public debt have soared because of tax cuts, subsidies, overpriced contracts and bailouts for the big bourgeoisie and quite conspicuously because of the mounting debt service and the rising expenditures for military production and for military intervention and aggression. But the public sector employees and the rest of the working people and even the decreasing level of government social spending are blamed for the soaring public deficits. They are all scapegoated for the adoption of austerity measures which pass further pass on the burden of crisis to the working people.

The imperialist powers are united in applying the anti-worker, antisocial and anti-environment bias of the neoliberal economic policy. But among them there are increasing contradictions regarding economic, financial and trade policies. There are growing trends of protectionism and the use of fiscal measures to stimulate demand and rebuild the infrastructure. Amidst the growing indecisiveness of the G8 and the G20 and such multilateral agencies as the IMF, World Bank and the WTO, China, Russia, India, Brazil and South Africa are combining to develop their own position relative to the crisis of the world capitalist system.

In more than three decades of neoliberal economic policy, the chronic crisis of overproduction in the world capitalist system was accelerated, deepened and aggravated. But it was made to appear that the crisis was always being solved or overcome by limitless debt financing at the level of the households, the corporations and the states. The constant creation of money, credit and derivatives was supposed to perpetuate a happy world of expanding production, upvaluation of assets and speculative bubbles.

While the big bourgeoisie railed against supposed wage inflation and big social spending by government, they had no compunction about pouring public funds into military production and deployment of military forces abroad. The military-industrial complex profited from the overpriced contracts with the state. These are considered to have buoyed up the US economy since the Reagan high-speed spending for hightech military production in the 1980s, down to the military Keynesianism of Bush junior and the continuing rising military expenditures for military production and wars of aggression.

The ever-worsening crisis of the world capitalist system is driving the imperialist powers headed by the US to increase military production and launch wars of aggression. The end of the Cold War upon the implosion of the Soviet Union has served to embolden the US and its NATO allies to engage in wars of aggression such as those

against Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya. The increasing aggressiveness of the imperialist powers is driven by the domestic profit-seeking of the monopoly bourgeoisie and its scheme to expand economic territory abroad, as cheap sources of labor, oil and other raw materials, as markets and fields of investment and as spheres of influence.

The imperialist powers are united against the oppressed peoples and nations and underdeveloped countries that assert national independence. But among themselves they are increasingly beset by contradictions as they struggle for a redivision of the world. Certain countries that collaborated with the US and NATO in the aggression against Iraq subsequently became wary and formed the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Most recently, China, Russia, India, Brazil and even Germany would not support the aggression on Libya.

2. Growing peoples' resistance

In the imperialist countries, there is widespread discontent among the people because of the high rate of unemployment, the erosion of hard-won social benefits, the curtailment of trade union and other democratic rights and the austerity measures being adopted against the working class and the people in general. There are outbursts of general strikes and militant mass protests by the workers, youth and students, women and other sectors of society. The public sector workers, the migrant workers, the youth and women are often in the forefront of mass protests in the streets.

The strikes and mass protests break out in countries more often where crisis conditions and austerity measures are most severe, where the authorities are most reactionary and repressive and where there are communist parties, mass organizations or coordinating centers that call for concerted actions on the burning issues. In most imperialist countries, there is still political inertia due to the absence of a strong communist party and a strong mass movement of the working class, youth, women and other sectors.

At the same time, the monopoly bourgeoisie has been quite adept at using the mass media, the political parties and the schools in propagating anti-communist ideas and prejudices and playing up chauvinism, racism, religious bigotry, war hysteria and fascism to divide the people, to divert public sentiment and to obscure the roots of the crisis in the world capitalist system. Elections are being used to absorb the swings of political moods from Right to Left and from Left to Right and to keep them within the frame of the capitalist ruling system.

Nevertheless, the crisis conditions persist and provide the opportunities for the subjective forces of the revolution to arise and grow in strength. The communist parties and mass organizations under their leadership are manifesting various degrees of success in developing their strength. They are conscious that a principled and effective communist party generates a strong mass movement and in turn the latter provides the base for increasing the ranks of communists.

In the underdeveloped countries, the people are carrying out and intensifying various forms of resistance against the imperialist powers and the local reactionary forces. The people wage armed resistance against imperialist aggression and occupation as in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Palestine. They do likewise in civil wars against repressive ruling systems as in India, the Philippines, Colombia, Peru, Turkey and elsewhere. Whether they wage armed resistance or not, the people engage in mass movements for national and social liberation and intensify these against the ever rising level of oppression and exploitation.

The people who wage armed revolutions for new democracy and wars of national liberation against foreign aggression and occupation have the best chances of seizing political power and establishing a state with an anti-imperialist and democratic character.

Legal mass movements and mass uprisings without arms, as in North Africa and the Middle East recently, cannot by themselves change the reactionary ruling system even if they succeed, with the direct or indirect support of the reactionary military, in overthrowing autocrats or authoritarian regimes. But they can assist existing armed revolutions or engender these as a subsequent development.

The protraction of the global depression since 2008 has set the stage for great disorder and upheavals in the second decade of the 21st century. The rise of new democratic revolutions through people's wars in the underdeveloped countries can inspire and stimulate revolutionary mass movements in the developed countries. The more imperialist countries engage in military intervention or aggression against other countries the more they take the risk of undermining political and economic stability in their home grounds.

The growing contradictions among imperialist countries can result in the general weakening of the hold of the most repulsive imperialist powers like the US on the underdeveloped countries and in wider room for

underdeveloped countries in asserting national independence and anti-imperialist and democratic mass movements to surge forward. The inter-imperialist contradictions involve imperialist powers backing different governments in underdeveloped countries and in exchanging provocations and threats of igniting national, regional or global wars.

3. Strengthening communist parties amidst the worsening global crisis

In the last three decades, the imperialist powers headed by the US have blamed the working class and government social spending for the phenomenon of stagflation in the 1970s and have relentlessly pursued a ruthless class war to press down wage levels and attack the rights of the working class in order to enable the monopoly bourgeoisie to accumulate more capital and enjoy the widest opportunities for profitmaking under the policy of neoliberal globalization.

And in the last more than two decades, the imperialist powers have also gloated over the revisionist betrayal of socialism, the fall of revisionist regimes and the full restoration of capitalism in revisionist-ruled countries and described these as proof that the history of mankind does not go farther than capitalism and liberal democracy. With the obvious intention of perpetuating capitalism and further burying socialism, the monopoly bourgeoisie has intensified ideological, political, economic and military offensives against the working class and all anti-imperialist forces.

But the evils of capitalism and imperialism are once more totally exposed upon the bankruptcy of the imperialist policy of neoliberal globalization. This policy is inflicting horrendous conditions of exploitation and oppression on the broad masses of the people and is inciting them to engage in various forms of resistance. The conditions are favorable for waging revolutionary struggles and demand that communist parties take the lead in the struggles of the people and to strengthen themselves for the purpose.

Ideological strengthening

Communist parties must strengthen themselves ideologically. They must uphold Marxism-Leninism as the universal theory of the proletariat and apply it on the history and current circumstances of the people's struggle for national and social liberation against imperialism and all reaction. Ideological building is the first requisite in building the revolutionary party of the proletariat. Without theory, there can be no revolutionary party and no revolutionary movement.

We now hear from an increasing number of serious-minded people, who are not even communists, of the need to read and study Marx in the face of the grave crisis and depression of the world capitalist system. They are disgusted with the bourgeois subjectivism and the dogma of personal greed that have been pushed by the monopoly bourgeoisie in the anti-communist and anti-socialist ideological offensive and that have resulted in grave harm to the broad masses of the people under the policy of neoliberal globalization.

To make a living and useful study of Marxism-Leninism, we must focus on the current dire circumstances as a result of the laws of motion and internal contradictions of the capitalist system. We must apply the theory not only to critique and interpret the decadent system but more importantly to adopt an outlook, methodology and plan for overthrowing it and replacing it with a new system through the revolutionary process.

We must reaffirm the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism and the historical victories in their application. But we must avoid dogmatism by going into the concrete analysis of concrete conditions in accordance with materialist dialectics. We must also shun empiricism, which deprives us of revolutionary direction in the welter of facts and impressions. We must continue to be most vigilant and active against reformism and revisionism, which have been the most lethal to communist parties that have been in power or not yet in power.

Communist Parties must strengthen their ranks ideologically through definite courses of study and through the revolutionary application of the principles and lessons learned. A general level of understanding materialist dialectics and class struggle must be ensured among the rank and file. They must be able to carry out a resolute and vigorous ideological offensive against the ideological trends generated by imperialism and all reaction.

The propagation of Marxist-Leninist ideas among the Party rank and file and among the mass activists should be faster than ever before with the use of various electronic media.

The monopoly bourgeoisie still owns and controls the major mass media. But the reality reflected in the electronic media used by the proletarian revolutionaries can in the long run speak louder than the false ideas and claims of the imperialists and reactionaries.

Communist parties must grasp the new factors in the new situation. In the first instance, the monopoly

bourgeoisie owns and controls the high technology for production, distribution and communications. But this accelerates the profitmaking, the concentration of capital, the crisis of overproduction, the abuse of finance capital, the global depression and the people's resistance. In fact, high technology is suitable to socialism and not to capitalism in terms of knowing and satisfying human needs and demands.

Political strengthening

Communist parties must strengthen themselves politically by drawing correctly the general line of the people's revolutionary struggle on the basis of concrete conditions and steadfastly pursuing this line until complete victory is obtained with the seizure of political power and establishment of the new revolutionary state system. In semi-colonial and semifeudal conditions, communist parties must pursue the line of bourgeois democratic revolution of the new type. In industrial capitalist conditions, they must pursue the line of socialist revolution, taking into account the necessity of democratic struggle against the threat or reality of fascism.

The revolutionary struggle of the people must be led by the working class through the Communist Party as its advanced detachment. The working class must be the leading class because it is the most productive and most progressive force. It is the agency for supplanting the bourgeois ownership and management of the means of production and for bringing about socialism. It has the vantage point of recognizing the need for the liberation of all working people and for leading the process of overthrowing the reactionary state and establishing the revolutionary state. In political struggle, communist parties must avoid the pitfalls of Right and "Left" opportunism. Right opportunism usually takes the form of reformism and revisionism, keeping the struggle for reforms always within the confines of the reactionary state and going so far as to revise and depart from the fundamental principle of overthrowing the reactionary state. "Left" opportunism means calling for violent actions that are not yet justified by the ongoing conditions and putting the revolutionary forces and people in a losing position. Adventurism is "Left" in form but Rightist in content because it spells defeat for the revolution.

What principal form of struggle to pursue, whether violent or nonviolent, depends on the concrete conditions. In certain semicolonial and semifeudal countries, where the peasants are the most numerous class, it is possible to wage a protracted people's war in order to accumulate armed strength for the ultimate overthrow of the reactionary state. But in industrial capitalist countries, it is impossible to wage such a protracted people's war in which a people's army and its areas of operation grow in stages in the countryside. Under conditions when it is not yet possible to transform an imperialist war into a civil war, it is possible to learn the teachings of the great communist leaders on state and revolution, to build self-defense units against the fascist disrupters of strikes and protest mass actions and to arouse, organize and mobilize the people to engage in giant marches and rallies.

In any given period, a communist party can only have a certain number of members, always limited in relation to the total number of the exploited and oppressed people. It cannot make revolution or any kind of political progress without leading a mass movement. It must build the mass organizations of various classes and sectors: workers (trade unions), peasants, fishermen, urban poor, women, youth, professionals, cultural activists, and so on. It must also build mass organizations focused on important issues of popular or multisectoral interest.

Communist parties must have a united front policy, engage in united front work and build various types of united front or alliances formally and informally in order to amplify, extend and maximize the strength and influence of communists and the masses that they have organized. Communist parties must constantly seek to reach the masses that are unorganized or that belong to other parties, mass organizations and institutions. They can do so through multisectoral, sectoral and issue-based alliances. Success in united front can verify whether the general line of the Party is valid and acceptable to the people.

Communist parties must avail of both the traditional and new methods for arousing, organizing and mobilizing the people. The traditional forms of communications, such as speaking without any amplifier, handwriting and printing on hard copy, are indispensable and basic. But the new forms of communications made available by high technology should be used in order to accelerate, intensify and expand the agitation and education, mass organizing and mobilization of the people. We are confronted by the forces of imperialism which exploit and oppress the working class and the people on a global scale and use all sorts of instruments, including the multinational firms and banks, agencies of political and cultural subversion and military forces. It is absolutely necessary to uphold the principle of proletarian internationalism among communist and workers' parties and to build solidarity movements of the proletariat and people of the world for national liberation, democracy and socialism against imperialism and all reaction.

Organizational strengthening

Communist parties must strengthen themselves organizationally by following the principle of democratic centralism. This means centralism based on democracy and democracy under centralized leadership. Leading organs of the Party at all levels are elected and responsible to the Party organization or conference that elected them. After free and thorough discussion of issues, decisions are taken and implemented, giving due respect to the following: the individual is subordinate to the organization, the minority is subordinate to the majority, the lower level is subordinate to the higher level and the entire membership is subordinate to the Central Committee and the National Congress.

The Party should combat the opposite extremes of bureaucratism or top-down commandism and ultra-democracy or anarchism. Leading organs should always pay close attention to the reports and views of lower Party organizations and the masses of Party members and constantly study concrete experiences and give prompt guidance and assistance in the solution of problems. Lower Party organizations should give regular and timely reports about their work to the organization above them and request instructions concerning problems that require the decision of a higher Party organization. All Party organizations must follow the principle of collective leadership and all important decisions must be decided collectively.

At the beginning, a Communist party may be built by recruiting a few Party members from Marxist study circles and from the ranks of trade unions and other forms of mass organizations. But no matter how still small in size, the Party strives to build a nationwide structure and take deeper roots among the toiling masses. The opportunities for building a Party that is nationwide and deeply-rooted among the masses become wider when the crisis of the ruling system worsens and the Party leads a growing mass movement. From this the Party can recruit a far greater number of Party members than before.

Amidst current conditions of global capitalist crisis and depression, it should be easier than ever before to build communist parties where there are none, to rebuild those previously destroyed by the enemy or degenerated by revisionism and to strengthen those that have persevered under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism. Communist parties must take the lead of the mass movement in protesting and making demands against the worsening conditions of oppression and exploitation. From this growing mass movement, they can and must recruit an increasing number of Party members.

In living up to its character as the revolutionary party of the proletariat, a party in an industrial capitalist country or in an underdeveloped country must have as top priority the recruitment of members from the ranks of the workers. The period of candidature for workers may be as short as six months in order to ensure the predominance of workers in the Party and one year for those coming from the petty bourgeoisie. In the underdeveloped countries, where the bourgeois democratic revolution is going on, the poor peasants and farmworkers may have a six-month period of candidature like the workers.

It is best for communist parties to have in their ranks cadres and ordinary members. Cadres are those capable of leading a committee or any other collective unit of work. They are trained and developed within the Party in the course of struggle. They may also be previously leaders in the mass organizations from which they are recruited. Limiting the Party membership to cadres slows the growth of the Party. The Party must have a fast growing number of ordinary members in order to carry out tasks that require mass strength and in order to have within the Party a wide base for developing cadres.

Communist parties must build and strengthen themselves selfreliantly. To do so, they must learn from their own study of Marxism-Leninism and their experiences and set the tasks for advancing and winning greater victories. They must also learn from the teachings and successful experiences of communist leaders and parties on an international scale. In this regard, they can benefit from exchanges of ideas and experiences with other parties through publications, bilateral meetings, multilateral meetings and practical cooperation.

At the moment, several international conferences of communist and workers' parties wish to establish and develop a new Communist International. Communist parties can contribute their ideas and proposals and learn a lot that is helpful from the debates and documentary output of conferences that uphold Marxism-Leninism and oppose revisionism. But it is still too difficult or even impossible to single out which of these conferences is already on the way to being the new Communist International or the new center of the world proletarian revolution.

The advance of a communist party in any country does not depend on the claims of any international conference as the new center of the world revolution. It depends on the line that the party correctly adopts and

implements. It is better to look forward to communist parties victorious in revolution initiating a new Communist International than to expect any of the current international conferences to directly lead to the new Communist International or enable specific parties to win revolution in their respective countries.

Celebrate the Achievements of the League, Resolve to Further Advance the Struggle Keynote Address and General Report

to the Fourth International Assembly, Manila, July 7, 2011

Dear colleagues and friends, distinguished guests, Let me express warmest greetings of solidarity to all of you and thank you for joining us in this Fourth International Assembly of the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS). Let us all congratulate the International Coordinating Group (ICG), the Host Country Committee and the entire Philippine chapter of the League for their success in preparing this assembly.

Let us celebrate the achievements of our League and pay our respects to all who have made sacrifices in the course of struggles, especially those who have been martyred. Let us renew our resolve to carry the struggle forward and win ever greater victories. The road is still long and tortuous before we can defeat imperialism and reaction on a global scale and free the world from these monsters. But we can succeed in bringing the struggle to a new and higher level within our time.

It is my duty as chairperson of the International Coordinating Committee (ICC) to make a comprehensive report on the political and organizational work of the League since the Third International Assembly in 2008. At the same time, the ICC has instructed me to make the report within the context of the 10th founding anniversary of the League by way of delivering the keynote address to the Fourth International Assembly.

We are guided by the assembly's theme: "Build a Bright Future! Mobilize the People to Resist Exploitation and Oppression Amidst the Protracted Global Depression, State Terrorism and Wars of Aggression"! I. Conception, struggles and achievements of the League

I propose to present in broad strokes the conception, major struggles and achievements of the League in the first ten years of its existence, the worsening crisis of the world capitalist system and the rise of the people's resistance and the tasks the League must carry out in order to advance the people's struggle along the anti-imperialist and democratic line.

I. Conception of the League

As early as 1994, I presented and discussed before an international conference of working class parties the need for establishing an international united front of anti-imperialist and democratic mass organizations. From year to year, we persevered in proposing the formation of such an international united front before formal and informal meetings until 1999 when representatives of several mass organizations from several countries agreed to constitute the International Initiative Committee for the purpose of establishing the League. I announced the plan to form the League in my keynote speech to the People's Assembly and March-Rally against the World Trade Organization in Seattle, Washington on November 28, 1999, the eve of the Battle of Seattle. It was my distinct honor to convene the International Initiative Committee on January 15-16, 2000 and to be elected as the chairperson of the committee for preparing the founding assembly of the League.

The preparatory work included the drafting of the Charter of the League and the Rules of Participation, planning the First International Assembly and inviting mass organizations to participate in the assembly. We of the International Initiative Committee conceived of the League as a force for promoting, supporting and developing the anti-imperialist and democratic struggle of the workers and oppressed peoples of the world in order to oppose the ideological, political, military, economic and cultural domination and attacks of imperialism and reaction.

We were determined to build the League as an alliance of mass formations and mass movements to expose and oppose the inhuman policies and acts of the multinational companies, their governments and international instruments such as the IMF, World Bank, WTO and military alliances and to realize the unity, cooperation and coordination of such organized forces of the people as trade unions and organizations of women, youth, peasants, teachers, health workers, journalists, writers, scientists, technologists, lawyers and other professionals, as well as popular movements, campaigns and just causes involving major concerns and issues.

Political education

Since its founding through the First International Assembly (FIA) on May 25-27, 2001 in Zutphen, The Netherlands, the League has been outstanding in undertaking and generating political education along the anti-imperialist and democratic line on a comprehensive range of major concerns and issues. Every international

assembly is an occasion for raising political consciousness through the plenary deliberations and the workshops of the commissions.

Between international assemblies, the League intensifies efforts to propagate its Charter, current General Declaration and commission resolutions. In accordance with the foregoing, the Chairperson, the International Coordinating Committee, the International Coordinating Group, the commissions, the global region committees, the national chapters and member-organizations of the League have promptly taken up within their respective scopes the issues of the anti-imperialist and democratic struggles through statements and calls to action.

The ICC and the commissions have undertaken study meetings, seminars and conferences to discuss and draw up conclusions and resolutions on various concerns and issues. Researches and publications have been done. The educational materials of the League, including its basic documents, primers, position papers and the like have been published in the print and electronic media. The League has effected a constant flow of information and study materials through its website, mailing lists and list serves.

We have analyzed and expressed our position on major events in the period after every international assembly. In the period from 2001 to 2004 after the FIA, the League issued statements on such highly important issues as the bursting of the hightech bubble, the bankruptcy of the neoliberal globalization and the wars of aggression against Afghanistan and Iraq in the wake of 9/11.

In the period from 2004 to 2008 after the Second International Assembly (SIA) and from 2008 to the present after the Third International Assembly (TIA), the ICC and the ICG have issued resolutions and the Chairperson statements on many major events and issues of international significance. In accordance with the Charter and under the principles and policies of the League as well as on the basis of ICC resolutions, the Chairperson has issued statements in his capacity as chief representative and spokesperson of the League.

Because of effective political education on the anti-imperialist united front and people's solidarity, the League has achieved a high level of political unity and militancy against imperialism and reaction. It has succeeded in frustrating the attempts of a few pseudo-Maoist sectarians to undermine the unity of the League and to isolate the League in some obscure anarchist or even Trotskyite ideological corner of denying the major role of anti-imperialist states and countries and their contradictions with imperialist powers.

Failing in their disruptive acts, the sectarians have attacked and declared a boycott on the League, ICC and the Fourth International Assembly and have thereby excluded themselves from these. Their latest act of sabotage reminds us of their vicious attempt to paralyze and scuttle the Second International Assembly in 2004 by filibustering, walking out and preventing plenary sessions for more than one day after they failed to impose on the assembly the weird notion that countries which assert or invoke national independence are of no consequence and that contradictions between such countries (like Cuba, DPR of Korea, Venezuela, Iran and Syria) and the imperialist powers are of no significance.

The League stands today as the foremost global formation of mass organizations comprehensively covering all major concerns and issues in the people's struggle for national and social liberation and promptly issuing analyses, statements and calls to action for the benefit of the broad masses of the people. Whatever position or action the League takes is based on the needs and demands of the people and is aimed at advancing the political struggle of the people and achieving their goals.

Organization

The First International Assembly of the League was attended by 339 delegates and guests, representing 232 mass organizations from 40 countries. It ratified the Charter of the League, which upheld our view in the International Initiative Committee that the League shall have a broad mass character, shall not be subordinate to any political party, government or church, shall afford equality to all participating organizations and shall strive to realize the unity, cooperation and coordination of anti-imperialist and democratic struggles throughout the world.

The Second International Assembly (SIA) from November 11 to 13, 2004 in Eindhoven, The Netherlands, carried the theme, "Advance the people's solidarity and struggle for liberation and democracy against imperialist plunder and war." It was attended by 240 delegates representing 136 mass organizations in 33 countries as well as by observers representing 39 organizations in various global regions. The number of delegates was less than that of the FIA because the organizational growth of the League had been stunted by failure of the ultra-Leftist sectarians to perform their assignments and because Dutch and other European governments refused to grant visa to many delegates from the Philippines, Nigeria, Nepal, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and other countries.

The Third International Assembly (TIA) from June 18 to 20, 2008 in Hong Kong carried the theme, “Strengthen the peoples’ struggle, unite to build a new world against imperialist aggression, state terrorism, plunder and social destruction!” and was attended by 265 delegates representing 165 peoples’ organizations. Because we had begun to counter the obstacles put up by the ultra-Left sectarians, the number of delegates in TIA was higher than that of the SIA but still lower than that of FIA because of financial constraints on member-organizations.

After the TIA, the ICC approved the By Laws of the Charter in order to have a clearer guide for the organizational development of the League. It also urged the building of national chapters more strongly than ever before. It invited more participating organizations, especially from countries and global regions like Africa, Latin America, Central Asia, South Asia and Eastern Europe and encouraged the setting up of coordinating committees at the level of the global regions (Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe, North America and Oceania). But the results in building chapters and global region coordinating committees have been modest because of the continuing obstacles put up by the ultra-Left sectarians.

Until now, the ICC, ICG and General Secretariat of the League connect directly with the hundreds of member organizations. The League has national chapters in the Philippines, Australia, Indonesia, Canada and Hong Kong and Macau. The ultra-Left sectarians established a national chapter in Turkey after the FIA but soon scuttled it because they could not maintain united front with other organizations, especially the more significant ones.

The global region coordinating committee for East Asia and Oceania was formed in Hong Kong in 2005 and held a consultative meeting in Cebu in 2006. It is the only functioning global region coordinating committee, with four national chapters under its oversight. The sectarians preempted the task of forming global region committees in Europe, the Middle East and Latin America but failed to form any. Moreover, they turned off many organizations that had joined or had wished to join the League.

We consider as major cause for the slow development of the multilevel structure of the League the sectarianism of ultra-Left elements who sought to impose a narrow pseudo-Maoist ideological position on the League’s united front policy and line of people’s anti-imperialist solidarity. They not only failed to carry out the tasks that they had volunteered for and preempted but also systematically repelled organizations that did not share their narrow ideological position which runs counter to the character of a broad political alliance or movement of mass formations.

These sectarians have at certain times asserted that the united front policy is opportunism. They sought to prevent the participation of some anti-imperialist groups in the ILPS-sponsored International Conference of Migrants and Refugees in Athens in November 2009. And when the ICC Chairperson in his inspirational message credited the aforesaid groups for their active cooperation one of the sectarians in the ICG publicly declared that the Chairperson had no authority to speak. As a consequence, the Chairperson asked for a vote of confidence in the ICC meeting on November 21, 2009, resulting in the reconstitution of the ICG.

The commissions have been responsible for inviting many reliable anti-imperialist mass formations to become members of the League. But they tend to become active only when they organize the workshops for the international assembly. In the years between such workshops, many of the commissions survive through a secretariat or a lead organization. Only a few commissions (such as those concerned with labor, peasants, youth, women, migrants and refugees, war and peace and socioeconomic development) are active in issuing timely papers and statements, launching seminars and conferences and bringing about or helping bring about new international organizations or alliances on a sectoral or issue basis.

We are proud that we can hold international assemblies and other international events by relying on membership dues and cooperation of our member-organizations and thus we do not have to depend on funding from any imperialist or reactionary source. But the financial constraints have compelled us to have an uncompensated staff shared by the Chairperson and the General Secretariat.

We have also used the proxy method and Skype to overcome the financial inability of members to travel from afar and attend ICC and ICG meetings. But to become stronger organizationally, we must build our financial capability through the efficient collection of membership dues and donations, fundraising through cultural presentations and other activities such as the sale of publications, t-shirts, artistic works, memorabilia and the like.

We are all happy to know today that the number of delegates in the Fourth International Assembly far surpasses that of any of the previous assemblies. We have new member-organizations and delegations from Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and other continents. We congratulate the ICC, the ICG, the General Secretariat,

the commissions, national chapters and the Host Country Committee for this signal achievement. This can be attributed to the correctness of our application of the ILPS united front policy and our determination and perseverance in surmounting all obstacles in advancing our anti-imperialist and democratic line.

The work of the League has become far more effective since November 2009 when the ICC confronted and solved the problem of obstructions and disruptions by the sectarians. What has been achieved since then puts the sectarians to shame for their desperate attacks and calls for boycott and liquidation against the League, the ICC and the Fourth International Assembly.

Despite all kinds of difficulties due to the objective conditions of dominance by imperialism and reaction and due to some glitches caused by a few ultra-Left sectarians, the League stands today as the largest global formation of its kind, militantly anti-imperialist and democratic, with hundreds of member-organizations which in turn have millions of individual members in scores of countries and in all continents.

Mass mobilization

The League is guided by the international united front policy. It can initiate or join mass campaigns or occasional activities of mass mobilization and broad international conferences along the anti-imperialist and democratic line of struggle. By its nature, the League is a united front of mass formations at the international, global region and national levels. It brings together and coordinates the people's organizations according to common multisectoral and sectoral interests and purposes. It initiates and launches mass campaigns and various types of activities and seeks the cooperation of other anti-imperialist and democratic forces. At the same time, it joins and supports their initiatives.

We have covered a wide range of major issues, whether these arose in the imperialist countries or in the most numerous countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. To mention a few, we have expressed our position and have called for people's action on the imperialist policies, the crisis of the world capitalist system, environmental plunder, the US war of terror and continuing US occupation of Iraq and US-Zionist occupation of Palestine, the exploitation and oppression of peoples, the counterrevolutionary campaigns against people's wars in various countries, various forms of discrimination (chauvinist, racial, gender, religious and others), the digital divide and the antilabor, anti-immigrant and anti-youth policies in imperialist countries.

After the first international assembly

After the FIA, the League called on its member-organizations to initiate or join campaigns and activities against the US-instigated policies of neoliberal globalization and so-called perpetual war on terror which unleashed state terrorism and wars of aggression, as in Afghanistan and Iraq. The League established cooperative relations with other anti-imperialist and democratic forces and alliances in the home grounds of imperialism and many other countries. ILPS member-organizations all over the world mobilized in full force on February 15, 2003 to join the millions of people in scores of cities all over the world who poured into the streets to condemn the war of aggression against Iraq and support the Iraqi people.

We joined protest actions against imperialist plunder during summits of the imperialist leaders and during meetings of such imperialist-controlled institutions as the IMF, WB, WTO and the World Economic Forum. We started to initiate campaigns in Asia and Africa against the Millennium Development Goals as a form of shedding crocodile tears and glossing over the problem of imperialist plunder. We sponsored and promoted the international women's conference held in Vancouver, Canada in November 2002 which carried the theme: "Towards our Liberation: Against Imperialist War and Plunder."

We co-organized with Greek organizations an anti-imperialist camp in Thessaloniki, Greece from June 15 to 22, 2003 parallel to the European Social Forum in the same city. Several thousand people came to form a strong anti-imperialist bloc in the mass demonstrations against the EU summit. We also co-sponsored the conference on US military bases on September 20-22, 2003 in Chania, Greece and launched an international campaign for the dismantling of overseas US military bases.

We launched campaigns to demand the release of political prisoners, such as ILPS vice-chairman Memik Horuz who was arrested by Turkish authorities soon after coming from the First International Assembly and the ILPS Auditor Irene Fernandez who was arrested by the Malaysian government for exposing the sad plight of migrant workers and fighting for their rights.

When the ILPS General Consultant was put on the so-called terrorist blacklist of the US, Dutch and European Union in 2002, participating organizations of the League carried out a campaign to defend his democratic rights.

DEFEND Committees were formed, with ILPS participating organizations at the core of these committees to conduct information meetings and mass actions.

A conference titled Laws, Label and Liberation focusing on my case was held in Montreal, Canada in May 2004 under the auspices of the League. My case served to illustrate the intensified attacks by the imperialists and reactionaries on human rights and on the right of oppressed peoples to national liberation through legislation using as pretext the so-called war on terror.

In cooperation with the All-India People's Resistance Forum and other progressive Indian organizations, the League organized the Mumbai Resistance 2004 to confront the problem of imperialism and to call for system change in opposition to the reformist line of the Mumbai World Social Forum in January 2004. Over 300 Indian mass organizations and hundreds of representatives from scores of mass organizations from Asia, North America, South America, Europe, Middle East and Africa participated in MR 2004.

After the second international assembly

After the SIA, we carried out solidarity campaigns for the peoples of Iraq, Palestine, Nepal, India and other countries, against imperialist war in Iraq and Afghanistan and against foreign military bases, for the release of Memik Horuz, for the defense of the rights of the ILPS Chairperson and for his delisting from the so-called terrorist list. We supported the international women's conference on March 8, 2005. We joined the March 19 protest actions against the US occupation of Iraq and the conference on political prisoners "From Attica to Abu Ghraib" in the US in 2005.

We joined the conference against the war of aggression on Iraq in Germany on March 20, 2005. We sponsored the conference in Bandung in April 2005 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the historic Bandung Conference that gave birth to the Non-Aligned Movement. We participated in the formation of the Palestinian Committee on May 15, 2005. We sponsored a symposium on political prisoners in order to denounce and demand the end of torture and isolation in Turkey in June 2005.

We joined the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings in August 2005. Brazilian member-organizations of the League manifested in Porto Alegre our criticism of the World Social Forum. We co-sponsored the conference on Iraq on October 1-2, 2005 in Rome. We were among the main organizers of the People's Action Week against the WTO in Hong Kong on December 8-18, 2005.

We co-organized the Conference on US Militarism and War of Terror in Asia-Pacific from December 9 to 10, 2006. The ILPS East Asia Coordinating Committee initiated the formation and launching of the Asia-Pacific Anti-US Bases Network. We endorsed and supported the various activities organized and sponsored by the member-organizations of the League, such as the International Solidarity Mission in Defense of a People Under Siege (Philippines), Conference Towards a Just and Lasting Peace in Canada and the Conference on Trade Union and Labor in Turkey.

In many cases, the League generated information campaigns on a global scale but member-organizations engaged in the action campaigns on the issues that they had started in their respective countries. The issues included human rights violations in the Philippines, Turkey, India, Brazil and other countries, the royal coup in Nepal, the apartheid wall in Palestine, displacement of people in Nandigram, repression of Turkish activists in Germany and France, the occupation of Iraq and so on.

Officers of the ICC continued to be targeted for persecution by reactionary governments. Soon after coming from the Second International Assembly, our colleague in the ICC, the Palestinian health activist Dr. Ahmad Maslamani was arrested and imprisoned by the Israeli Zionist authorities. Our first Chairperson and subsequently honorary chairperson Rep. Crispin Beltran was also arrested and imprisoned for more than a year from 2006 to 2007 on the trumped-up charge of rebellion by the Arroyo regime in the Philippines.

On the same charge of rebellion, the Chairperson was placed at the top of the 50 accused social activists, including the Chairperson of the Philippine chapter, other progressive members of Congress and anti-Arroyo military officers. The charge was dismissed by the Philippine Supreme Court in June 2007. But shortly after, your chairperson was arrested and imprisoned in The Netherlands on the false charge of inciting murder in August 2007, on the basis of specifications nullified by the aforesaid court. A global campaign was undertaken to defend my rights and the rights of other Filipino refugees and to demand my release from the Scheveningen prison.

In all cases, the League defended its persecuted leaders, carried out protest actions and initiated petition campaigns for their release. It spearheaded the global campaign to defend my rights and those other Filipino

progressives abroad and succeeded in generating protest rallies against the Dutch government in more than 20 cities of the world and helping cause my release from prison in September 2007.

The League and particularly its Commission on Migrant Workers and Refugees held the First International Conference on Migrant Workers and Refugees and subsequently in 2008 launched the International Migrants Association in Hong Kong on the eve of our Third International Assembly.

Since the third international assembly

Since the TIA, the League has initiated and carried out the following campaigns: against the global financial and economic crisis and the G20; against the US-led imperialist wars of aggression and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan; against intensifying US militarism and intervention; against US foreign military bases; against Israel's illegal settlement expansion and in support of the Palestinian right to return; against the oppressive policy aimed at the ILPS Chairperson; against the extrajudicial killings of progressive leaders and activists in the Philippines; against the illegal arrest, torture and unjust detention of 43 Health Workers (Morong 43) in the Philippines; in support of the struggles of the workers of Hacienda Luisita; against displacements of indigenous people and Operation Greenhunt in India; in defense of jobs; for the release of political prisoners; against the Global Forum on Migrants and Development; against threats of war on Iran; and against nuclear reactors and power plants.

The League has also engaged in a number of campaigns initiated by other organizations since July 2008, such as the following: against the G8 Summit in Hokkaido; against the US plan to launch a war on Iran; against growing repression in Iran; against US and NATO maneuvers in the Russia-Georgia conflict; for the bailout of the American people and not of the big bankers; for supporting the Greek people against the Karamanlis regime; for the Palestinian people against Israeli attacks, invasion and massacres; against the Israeli invasion of Gaza and massacres of the Palestinians; against the criminal record of the Bush regime; for supporting the general strike of the French people; and against the brutal attacks by the Italian police on Italian revolutionaries.

Commission No. 2 of the League reactivated RESIST as an international campaign against neoliberal globalization and war. It planned and organized an international forum of prominent economic experts and social scientists on the economic and financial crisis which broke out in September 2008. The forum on the root causes and consequences of the crisis was held on January 30, 2009 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, with the cooperation of IBON-Europe. The Chairperson of the League contributed to the forum the paper entitled "What the People Can and Must Do About the Financial and Economic Crisis."

RESIST co-organized a series of forums on the crisis in Bali, Indonesia, in New York City, in Nairobi and in Manila. It conducted a workshop on US militarism and human rights at the US Social Forum in Pittsburgh with BAYAN USA. It held a symposium on "charting alternatives for the global economy" as part of Peoples' Summit vs. the G20 in Seoul, Korea. It put forward and distributed the "People's Manifesto for Jobs and Justice" at the Peoples' Summit in Pittsburgh G20.

The League participated in the Beirut International Forum for Resistance, Solidarity Between Peoples and Alternatives from January 16 to 19, 2009 for the following purposes: to know more about the nature, forces and plans of the Beirut International Forum; to disseminate among the participants basic information about the ILPS; to explore the possibility of alliance between ILPS and the forum; and to prospect for ILPS member-organizations and allies, especially in the Middle East and Africa. The ultra-Left sectarians fiercely opposed the participation of the League on the argument that the forum included Muslim and other organizations from Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and Iran.

From February 2009 onwards, the League participated in information campaigns for land and justice for the peasants and farmworkers of Hacienda Luisita; for the people's struggle in the Niger Delta against foreign oil monopolies; for the cause of replacing capitalism with socialism; against political repression in the Philippines; for the immediate and unconditional release of Revolutionary Democratic Front leaders and activists in India; against the false claims of economic recovery; against the US global war of terror; against the US-RoK military exercises against the DPRK; and for livelihood and social justice in the Philippines and other countries impoverished by imperialism and reaction.

We joined the opposition to the L'Aquila G8 Summit. We persevered in condemning the US invasion and occupation of Iraq and demanding the US and other forces of aggression. We participated in the celebration of International Women's Day on March 8, 2009. We defended the rights of the indigenous peoples in the Lalgargh Solidarity Convention on August 6, 2009. We endorsed and supported the Second International Assembly of

Migrants and Refugee in Athens, Greece, on November 1-4, 2009. We continued to defend the rights of Italian revolutionaries persecuted by the Berlusconi government.

We promoted the anti-imperialist and democratic line of the League in the International Conference on Education, Imperialism and Resistance at the Shih Hsin University in Taipei on August 10, 2009. The Alliance of Concerned Teachers, a member-organization of the League, was the key organizer.

Last year the League either called for, joined or supported campaigns for defending the DPRK from US and RoK war provocations, against the NATO during its summit, for the New Social Congress in Mexico City, against Operation Greenhunt and the US-India military partnership, for the general strike of French workers and youth, for the human rights of political prisoners and the disappeared, for the national demonstration led by the Italian metal workers, for the American people against the fascist current, for the Europe-wide Day of Action against austerity measures and for jobs and economic growth, against the massacre of migrant workers in Tamaulipas, Mexico, for the commemoration of 9/11 and condemnation of US terrorism and against the mounting burden of crisis on the backs of the people and against the barbaric Israeli attack on the Freedom Flotilla.

In the current year, the League also called for, joined or supported campaigns for the celebration of the Centennial of the International Toiling Women's Day, for the mass uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East, against the US and NATO military attacks on Libya, for peasant unity in Asia, for the human rights of political prisoners and the disappeared, for the freedom of Julian Assange, for the banning of nuclear reactors and power plants and for the people of Greece in their struggle against austerity measures. The year is still far from over. The League will involve itself in further campaigns.

With the Fourth International Assembly being held in the Philippines, I find it appropriate and relevant to mention the fact that, in all the years since the TIA, we have promoted the anti-imperialist and democratic line of the League in various campaigns, conferences and other gatherings organized by progressive organizations of Filipino workers, peasants, youth, women, cultural workers and others in the Philippines as well as Filipino compatriots and their friends in various countries.

The League stands today as the global formation of mass organizations that has the widest range of involvement in informative gatherings and mass actions by initiating them or by joining the initiatives of other organizations, alliances and campaign centers. We have our own mass strength in the millions of members of our member-organizations but by carrying out the united front policy and direct appeals to the masses we have been able to augment and amplify our own organized mass strength and we have been able to take advantage of contradictions among the imperialists and reactionaries.

II. Ever-worsening crisis of global capitalism

The International League of Peoples' Struggle had been conceived of since 1994 to confront the world capitalist system, its policy of neoliberal globalization, its policy of aggression in the new world disorder and, of course, the emergence of the US as the sole superpower in a so-called unipolar world as a consequence of the full restoration of capitalism in former socialist countries.

In the 1990s those who boasted of capitalism and liberal democracy as the end of history glossed over the fact that the US had become the biggest debtor of the world in the 1980s, that the revisionist regimes of pseudo-socialist countries had long been trapped in the web of global capitalism, that Japan had fallen into stagnation since the beginning of the 1990s and the policy of neoliberal globalization began to be discredited in a big way by the so-called Asian financial crisis of 1997 and further crises in South Korea, Russia and elsewhere.

By the time that the League was established in 2001, the US and the world capitalist system had fallen into a new round of severe crisis, characterized by the bursting of the hightech bubble and the unravelling of Clinton's new economy (touted as ever growing upon the impetus of high technology and the absence of wage inflation). This economy was the centerpiece and lead factor of the US-directed policy of neoliberal globalization.

The new US administration under Bush junior wanted to continue the policy and thought of keeping the US economy vibrant by further loosening credit, fuelling consumerism and going into the direction of generating the housing bubble that would start to burst in 2006 and become a full-blown mortgage meltdown in 2008. The Bush administration also added to the neoliberal policy a heavy dose of Keynesian militarism, driven by the hysteria and wars of aggression as a consequence of 9/11.

As we hold the Fourth International Assembly and celebrate the 10th anniversary of the League, we are keenly aware of how far the crisis of the capitalist system has worsened. The abuses of monopoly finance capitalism in a

futile attempt to overcome the crisis of overproduction and raise the profits rates of the financial oligarchy and the monopoly bourgeoisie have led to an unprecedented economic and financial crisis and a global depression, the worst since the Great Depression.

The current global depression escalates exploitation and oppression and inflicts terrible suffering on the broad masses of the people. At the same time, it incites the people to fight back and to develop the forces by which they can win victory in the struggle for national liberation, democracy and socialism. It is a boon to the people that the League has existed and has developed for ten years as their instrument and is prepared to confront the dismal objective conditions of the world capitalist system by arousing, organizing and mobilizing the people to wage anti-imperialist and democratic struggles for fundamental change.

The current grave crisis of the world capitalist system is rooted in the relentless drive of the monopoly bourgeoisie to maximize profits by raising productivity while pushing down the wages of the working class. This results in the recurrent crisis of overproduction. The income of the workers decreases and they cannot buy what they produce. The rising productivity amidst market constriction results in the tendency of the profit rates to fall.

As a consequence, the monopoly bourgeoisie resorts to finance capitalism, the rapid expansion of money and credit, unregulated debt financing and the generation of derivatives, to boost the rate of profit far above the real economy, overvalue assets and accelerate the accumulation and concentration of both real and fictitious capital. The hightech bubble conjured the illusion of endless economic growth in the second half of the 1990s. More than 40 percent of American households bought shares of stocks, mainly by using pension funds and bank credit.

After the hightech bubble burst, the monopoly bourgeoisie thought next of making the housing bubble. This was made possible by the further abuse of debt financing at every level: the state, corporations and the household. The mortgage meltdown occurred and resulted in the collapse of big banks and corporations. The imperialist states used huge amounts of public money to bail them out, let them improve their financial statements, cut down labor costs and avoid the risks of expanding production in a narrowed market.

The bailout in trillions of dollars combined with the continuing tax cuts for corporations and the upper class and the rising military expenditures also in the trillions have resulted in huge public deficits and public debts while failing to stimulate production. The biggest and the worst of the financial bubbles have conspicuously appeared in the form of the public debt bubble. Now, this bubble is bursting in the imperialist countries and spreading like an epidemic to other countries. And the reaction of the imperialist and client states is to adopt austerity measures at the further expense of the working people and even the middle class.

The austerity measures involve further pressing down wages, eroding pensions and social benefits and cutting back on government spending for social services. The burden of the worsening crisis is further being passed on to the broad masses of the people. At the same time, the imperialist states do not take the initiative to expand production and employment. They stick to the dogma of neoliberal globalization, blaming wage inflation and government social spending for the crisis and leaving all the initiative to the big banks and corporations to accumulate capital and make profits, without having to plan and expand production and employment.

The epicenter of the global economic and financial crisis is the US, the leading economy and main market of global capitalism. It is necessary and appropriate to focus on it to understand the global crisis and depression. It is both a beneficiary and victim of its own greed under the policy of neoliberal globalization. It has outsourced the production of cheap consumer goods to China and sought bigger profits in hightech production and financializing its economy. But the ever rising US foreign trade deficits have enlarged its foreign debt at a runaway rate. The US has overshoot the current limit on its public debt and is about to raise the limit further in order to avoid default on its debts in the international market.

The abuse of debt financing at home and the huge foreign debt of the US have gravely undermined its economic and financial standing. Any major US attempt to solve these problems and counter the global crisis by reviving domestic manufacturing and generating employment, is bound to upset the balance of forces among the imperialist powers. Nevertheless, China, its main partner under the policy of neoliberal globalization, has become wary of decreasing orders for consumer goods from the US and the weakening of the US dollar and is maneuvering to develop other trade partners, fields of investment and sources of fuel and other raw materials.

Not so long ago, the traditional imperialist states were jubilant over the notion that the full restoration of capitalism in revisionist-ruled countries spelled the final victory of capitalism and the final doom of socialism and the national liberation movements. But the rising capitalist countries, like China and Russia, together with Brazil, India

and South Africa, exert pressure on the dominance of the US and the balance of forces among the imperialist powers in several ways.

The imperialist powers still manage to unite against the proletariat and people of the world, especially in the underdeveloped countries. But they continue to fail to solve the global economic and financial crisis and are increasingly in contradiction with each other over economic, financial, trade, political and security issues. The G8, the G20, the OECD, the conferences of the IMF, World Bank and WTO have failed to solve the crisis and many related problems.

There was unanimity among the imperialist powers in launching wars of aggression against Afghanistan and Iraq in the first half of the current decade. But since then, China and Russia have become very wary over the expansionism and maneuvers of the US and NATO in Central Asia, the Middle East and South Asia. They have formed the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Collective Security Treaty Organization to countervail US incursions. Currently, no unanimity exists among the imperialist powers over the war of aggression being carried out against Libya as well as on the proposal to launch aggression on Syria and Iran.

The US and other imperialist powers tend to be more aggressive as the global economic and financial crisis worsens. Under the deceptive schemes of waging “war on terror,” humanitarian intervention and promoting democracy, the US has taken the lead among the imperialist powers in stepping up war production and engaging in aggressive actions as a way of satisfying the military-industrial complex, maintaining some measure of economic growth, expanding economic territory abroad and selling arms to client-states. But by being bogged down in Iraq and Afghanistan, the US incurs heavy costs of war and the growing resistance of the American people. It has difficulty in launching further wars of aggression.

As a result of the worsening crisis of the world capitalist system, the contradictions between capital and labor, and between the monopoly bourgeoisie and working class are becoming acute at an accelerating rate. The workers, the youth, the women, the migrant workers and the rest of the people have launched general strikes and massive protest actions in France, Italy, Spain, Greece, Ireland and Portugal against the growing loss of employment, the plummeting of income, the erosion of social benefits and social services. The austerity measures that aggravate these problems and the rise of state violence to suppress the people are goading them to resist in large numbers.

The factors that have blunted the resistance of the proletariat and people are being countered by the gravity of the crisis and by the steady efforts of progressive and revolutionary forces to build their political strength. The worsening of the crisis and rise of people’s resistance are steadily pushing back the influence of the previous decades of relative affluence and consumerism, revisionism and opportunism in the working class movement and are contesting the reactionary currents of fascism, chauvinism, racism and religious bigotry.

At the moment, there is a see-saw in the electoral strength of the reactionary and progressive parties in Europe. In contrast, the Democratic and Republican parties in the US compete as do Coca Cola and Pepsi Cola in flagrantly carrying out the policy dictates of the financial oligarchy and the military-industrial complex. Both parties agree on raising the US debt ceiling. And to blunt public protests, they promise to bring down the public deficit, with the Democrats wishing to reduce the tax cuts for the corporations and upper class and the Republicans demanding the further reduction of government social spending.

Countries in the third world play a major role in either serving or opposing imperialism. In every country, such role is decided by the character of the ruling system or the political leadership obtaining at a particular time. Certainly, the Philippines now is a country dominated by reactionary classes and leaders subservient to US imperialism. But a country that is socialist or has bourgeois nationalist leadership and asserts national independence can oppose or stand against imperialism. A country is not one-sidedly a plaything of imperialist powers. It can reflect the dominant patriotic trend in the mass movement and the national and democratic aspirations of the people against imperialism and reaction.

It is fine that the group of ultra-Left sectarian elements has left the League after failing to impose on us the anarchist notion of some among them that non-imperialist countries are incapable of playing a positive role in the anti-imperialist movement and can only be marionettes of one or another imperialist power. Although they do not deny the phenomenon of contradictions among imperialist countries, they deny the contradictions between the non-imperialist countries invoking or asserting national independence and the imperialist countries attacking or suppressing them.

They practically deny that the revolutionary party of the proletariat can and ought to seize state power in a country and assert the national sovereignty and independence of that country. Despite their lip service to Mao and Maoism, they condemn Mao for the participation of socialist China in the Bandung Conference of 1956 in order to join up with the anti-imperialist leaders of other countries and establish the five principles of peaceful coexistence in diplomatic relations and oppose imperialist maneuvers to divide and rule the countries, nations and people of Asia and Africa. The infantile sectarians confuse peaceful coexistence in diplomacy with Khrushchov's revisionist line of peaceful coexistence.

They also deny the fact that countries like the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, China, Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia and others are capable of asserting national independence and opposing the US and other imperialist powers on major issues. The worst notion expressed by some ultra-Left sectarian elements is that the united front policy and tactics do not apply on Iran and cannot be used to counter the theocratic premise of the current Iranian state and its claim to being the defender of national independence. Some among them have the puerile notion that the League should not be involved in any effort to support Palestine because Syria and Iran support it.

The League draws a certain measure of political and organizational consolidation from no longer being hampered, disrupted or threatened with liquidation by the sectarian elements who try to impose on it some weird and obscure ideological considerations and prevent its development as an international united front of mass formations and as a political movement of a broad range of anti-imperialist and democratic forces. Such sectarian elements have turned off many organizations from joining the League. Now that they have left, the League can expand more easily than before.

The broad masses of the people in Asia, Africa, Latin America and several countries of Eastern Europe suffer the worst of imperialist plunder, intervention and aggression. As the crisis of global capitalism worsens, the imperialist powers impose on them ever more exploitative and oppressive policies, further pass on to them the burden of crisis and suppress their demands for national and social liberation. But precisely because of the escalating level of exploitation and oppression, the people are driven to resist the enemy. They steadily build their strength and wage various forms of struggle.

Legal protest movements are rising on a global scale. They are fueled by concrete conditions generated by pro-imperialist and reactionary policies, such as rising mass unemployment, soaring prices of food, fuel and other basic commodities and increasingly violent reaction of states to unarmed protests. As a result of the mass uprisings, revolutionary parties of the proletariat, mass organizations and alliances have arisen.

Most outstanding recently are the mass uprisings against US-supported autocratic regimes in North Africa and the Middle East. The uprisings have resulted in the overthrow of such regimes as those in Tunisia and Egypt. But the ruling system of the same reactionary classes persists in the absence of a revolutionary party and people's army to overthrow it. In other cases, the same autocratic regime of the same family or clique stays in power. The Western powers led by the US have taken advantage of political disorder to launch aggression against Libya or threaten to launch this against Syria.

The most outstanding armed struggles are those being waged by the people of Iraq and Afghanistan against the US-led invasion and occupation of their countries, the Palestinian people against US-supported Zionist Israel, the people of Columbia, Peru, the Philippines, India, Turkey, North Kurdistan, Nigeria and other countries for national liberation and democracy against US imperialism and the local reactionaries.

As the crisis of global capitalism protracts and worsens, more armed revolutionary movements are bound to arise and advance in various countries and continents. By their own example of counterrevolutionary violence, the imperialists and local reactionaries are pushing the people to rise up in arms. The revolutionary armed struggles are responding to the crucial demand for the seizure of state power in order to defeat the enemy and achieve all-round social revolution.

III. Constant and new tasks of the League

On behalf of the outgoing ICC of the League, I urge all the delegations and all member-organizations of the League to take guidance from and carry out the constant tasks stated in our Charter and the new tasks to be spelled out by the General Declaration of the Fourth International Assembly and by resolutions of the commissions. Let me present some points about political education, organization and mass mobilization by way of guiding and stimulating the discussion, consensus-building and decision-making on the basis of your experience and analysis thereof. I am sure that many correct and useful ideas will come up to enrich our understanding and

statement of our tasks in political education, organization building and mass mobilization

Tasks in political education

We call on you to intensify political education among the individual members of all the member-organizations of the League on the need for a broad anti-imperialist and democratic united front and international people's solidarity in accordance with our Charter, General Declaration and the resolutions of the commissions. We propagate the content of these documents in order to strengthen the League politically and organizationally.

We must always have an acute awareness of the political reality around us and take up issues promptly as these arise in the anti-imperialist and democratic struggles. The ICC, ICG, the Chairperson, the commissions, the global region committees, the national chapters and member-organizations must put forward their analyses and views as current events and issues arise within their respective scopes of responsibility. They must issue timely statements and conduct study meetings, seminars and conferences on major issues in order to raise the political consciousness of their ranks and those that they wish to invite as member-organizations or as allies.

The commissions have the special task of undertaking research and publications on the various concerns for expanding and deepening the knowledge of all our constituents and for raising the consciousness of our friendly organizations to the level that they decide to join because of their interest in one, several or all concerns of the League. They must use the print and electronic media to spread the basic documents, primers, position papers, statements and other reading materials.

Organizational tasks

At this Fourth International Assembly, you must elect to the International Coordinating Committee those whom you consider capable of contributing significantly to the further all-round development and fulfilment of the tasks of the League. To strengthen the ICC and the entire League organizationally, we must adhere to the Charter and to the By Laws which stipulates in detail the duties and functions of the leading organs and their officers at various levels.

We must recruit more member-organizations through the efforts of our existing member-organizations, the national chapters and the global region committees as well as through the efforts of the commissions on various concerns. We must carry out the longstanding guideline that a national chapter may be formed in a country where there are already three member-organizations of the League and the global region coordinating committee may be formed in a global region where there are already three national chapters.

We must build the national chapters and the global region coordinating committees in order to reduce the work load of the ICC, ICG and the General Secretariat and develop a more solid mass base of the League. We must cover the regions of Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe, North America and Oceania. We must pay special attention to the attraction of member-organizations in the global regions of Africa, Latin America, Central Asia, South Asia and Eastern Europe.

We must complete and strengthen the organization of the commissions. These should not be allowed to slacken after international assemblies. They must have continuous organizational life and activities. The lead organizations and secretariats must make sure that the commissions develop in full through internal communications and meetings and through conferences to engage other organizations at the national, global region and international levels.

Inter-commission cooperation and coordination and joint projects or activities must also be undertaken and availed of to augment and combine capabilities, especially those that are closely related and on specific issues, campaigns and activities of mutual concern. But the commissions should always bear in mind that they primarily serve the entire League as the main engine for informing, educating and mobilizing the entire League and the people on various concerns.

We must collect efficiently the membership dues and donations from the better off member-organizations and from friends. We must recognize the disparity of circumstances and incomes in the South and North of the world and allow member-organizations in the South to pay annual membership dues less than the US\$150 which member-organizations in the North can afford to pay. The incoming ICC should spell out the specific guidelines, criteria and the corresponding amounts for rationalizing the membership dues accordingly.

We must also raise funds by soliciting donations and funding for programs, projects and campaigns and by undertaking cultural performances, sale of publications, t-shirts, paraphernalia and the like. We must continue to strengthen the self-reliant financial standing of the League and strive to raise the much-needed resources for the

League to function more effectively and launch more campaigns and other activities.

Tasks in mass mobilization

Under the policy of the international united front, we must aim for and initiate more widely-coordinated mass campaigns, more frequent activities of mass mobilization and more broad international conferences along the anti-imperialist and democratic line of struggle. We invite other organizations and alliances to participate for the purpose of advancing the common cause and attaining mutual benefit. We thereby augment and amplify the given strength of our League with the strength of other forces. In turn they do likewise for their benefit. Under the same policy, we can participate in campaigns and activities initiated by other organizations and alliances.

We must intensify our efforts to initiate or join the aforesaid campaigns and conferences on various multi-sectoral and sectoral concerns and issues and in varying geographic scales. We must calendar in advance these activities in order to prepare and carry out well the tasks of arousing and mobilizing our member-organizations and the broad masses of the people.

We must further develop our capacity to hold globally coordinated actions on major global issues as well as specific regional or national issues that have global implications. There has been a number of positive experiences where a local struggle initiated or participated in by our member-organizations was augmented or bolstered by supportive actions by the League member-organizations in other countries, thereby visibly manifesting the breadth and strength of our League and attracting more organizations to join.

We must seek the cooperation of national liberation movements, campaign centers, organizations, institutions and alliances for the purpose of mass mobilizations. We must take advantage of the contradictions among the imperialist powers and among the local reactionaries to expose and isolate the worst and most reactionary targets at any given time and place. We must further strengthen the League by availing of the mass mobilizations and broad international conferences to increase our member-organizations.

We must ceaselessly study, clarify to ourselves and carry out our tasks for strengthening our League and our movement, in accordance with our basic documents, on the basis of the consensus we reach and the decisions we make in this assembly. Our current assembly serves to chart our course and line of advance and open a further stretch of the road towards our ultimate goal.

A bright future

The people have a bright future because they wage revolutionary struggles and build their strength against those forces that oppress and exploit them. As the ever-worsening crisis of the world capitalist system wreaks havoc on their lives, they have no choice but to fight back. The anti-imperialist and democratic forces of the people ensure the rise of mass protests and revolutionary struggles for national and social liberation against imperialism and reaction.

The broad masses of the people are inexorably moving in the direction of a fundamentally new and better world. Through resolute and militant struggles, the people and the people alone can liberate themselves and create a bright future for themselves.

Expand and Consolidate

**the Christians for National Liberation Celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Christians for National Liberation,
May 17, 2012**

I wholeheartedly convey revolutionary greetings and solidarity to the Christians for National Liberation (CNL) on its 40th founding anniversary. The CNL has gained many victories in serving the Filipino people while practicing Christian belief.

The victories are the fruition of intense struggle and sacrifices. It is but fitting to honor the entire CNL and the martyrs and heroes who strengthened and advanced the spirit and aims of the CNL in revolutionary practice of love for others, especially for the exploited and oppressed under the oppressive system of the big comprador and landlord adherents of US imperialism.

The CNL plays a very important historical role among the ranks of church people in advancing the revolutionary movement of the Filipino people for national liberation and democracy. The Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army are fortunate to be associated with the CNL in the framework of cooperating and serving the oppressed and exploited masses.

Since the beginning, the CNL aligned itself with the patriotic and progressive forces. They valiantly and enthusiastically joined the fight against the Marcos fascist dictatorship. They persistently worked to arouse the common church people, the nuns, priests, pastors and bishops to defend human rights and defeat the purpose of the reactionaries to use the institution of the church as an instrument of imperialism and the exploiting classes against the working people, including the Bangsamoro.

CNL helps us in spreading the movement for national and social liberation in the cities and countryside. The CNL played a big and decisive role within the National Democratic Front. After the downfall of the Marcos fascist dictatorship, the CNL continued to work within the framework of the NDF and on the path of revolution against the entire system and the succeeding reactionary regimes.

During my time, the CNL contributed in helping the revolutionary forces take root on a nationwide scale. After the National Liaison Committee was disabled, the revolutionary priests and nuns helped in communication and in producing and moving a lot of things. Among so many that the church people did, I can mention only a few of their contributions. Many comrades and the people can testify to the many contributions of the CNL to the revolution.

I agree with the theme of the celebration of the 40th anniversary: "Expand and consolidate the Christians for National Liberation as an underground national democratic movement of the church people. Actively join the armed struggle. The CNL must raise the level of their fighting will and capability to further help in advancing the revolution."

In celebrating the anniversary, it is vitally important for the National Council of the CNL, its chapter in various regions in the country and abroad to remember and refresh the experiences of CNL in order to draw lessons and plan for the coming years in advancing the revolution.

I am glad that you are able to publish reading materials, hold forums and cultural performances, produce a video on the history of the CNL and to honor the martyrs and heroes. It is gratifying to have a new song for the anniversary.

It is meaningful that members of the CNL who have joined the New People's Army or performed underground revolutionary tasks have each sent messages to inspire the members of the CNL to continue living revolutionary principles and militantly participate in the revolution.

It is praiseworthy that you were able to hold regional assemblies and sum up the development of the CNL during the past 12 years. You identified your victories in relating to the church hierarchy. You also explained the problems and weaknesses you need to overcome.

Your 40th anniversary celebration is a favorable opportunity during which you can make resolutions and plans for expanding the ranks of the CNL and developing your links with the masses and other revolutionary forces. My confidence is strong that the CNL will strengthen itself and enlarge its contributions to the advance of the Philippine revolution.

Long live the Christians for National Liberation!

Advance the national democratic revolution!

Long live the Filipino people!

Is he the Fidel Castro, Mao Zedong and Che Guevara of the Philippines, or is he a terrorist and a misguided idealist? One of the most controversial persons in Philippine history, the Utrecht, Netherlands-based 73-year-old Professor Jose Maria "Joma" Sison is the founding chairman of the 44-year-old Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and chairperson of the International League of Peoples' Struggle. Joma became well-known in the mid-1960s as co-founder of leftist Kabataang Makabayan (Patriotic Youth). Joma is co-founder of the CPP's guerrilla-military arm the New People's Army (NPA). An award-winning poet, a literature and political science professor born to a landed family in Ilocos Sur province and educated at the Ateneo, Letran and University of the Philippines, revolutionary Joma Sison was jailed for nine years and tortured during the martial law era of President Ferdinand E. Marcos. Joma was freed in 1986 by President Cory C. Aquino for the sake of national reconciliation and for his being part of the anti-Marcos forces, but he continued his anti-government activities. He won the prestigious 1986 Southeast Asia WRITE Award for his poetry presented by the Crown Prince of Thailand, and later went into exile in the Netherlands to seek political asylum. The government of former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo had lobbied for Joma to be labeled a "terrorist" by US and European governments since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on New York's World Trade Center. At present, Joma Sison is officially the chief political consultant of the National Democratic Front (NDF), a broad far-left coalition of political parties, farmer and trade unions, and other groups. He recently gave the Philippine Star an exclusive interview:

Philippine Star: We will soon mark the 29th anniversary of the 1983 assassination of Senator Ninoy Aquino. Who do you really think was the mastermind (or were the masterminds) of this unsolved crime?

JMS: The masterminds were the fascist dictator Marcos and a very close relative of Cory Aquino. General Ver could not have coordinated the assassination plot, involving subordinate generals and colonels and several armed services, without the approval of Marcos. The cousin of Cory Aquino — who hated Ninoy Aquino and who was one of the top cronies of Marcos — was the patron and boss of General Gatan who was responsible for getting Galman as a prop in the David Copperfield-type illusionist theatrics of the assassination plot.

Did you ever meet the late Ninoy Aquino?

In my capacity as general secretary of the Movement for the Advancement of Nationalism (MAN) and chairman of the Kabataang Makabayan (KM), I met Ninoy Aquino as senator in the late 1960s. We discussed how to oppose Marcos. Since then, Ninoy and I had become friends.

Was it true the past accusation of the military and Marcos that then opposition Senator Ninoy Aquino was a friend or even had helped the Communist rebels or your NPA?

I did not have any direct relations with Ninoy pertaining to the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army as claimed by Marcos and by the military.

You are an Ilocano, like the late President Ferdinand E. Marcos, did you ever meet him? What did you talk about?

Justice Secretary Claudio Teehankee arranged with Senator Lorenzo Tañada, chairman of the Movement for the Advancement of Nationalism, the meeting of Marcos with the MAN National Council in 1967. As MAN general secretary, I met Marcos for the first time at that meeting.

What did you and President Marcos talk about?

We discussed how a policy of national independence, industrialization and land reform could be pursued. He pledged to pursue the policy and he said that the mass actions should not be directed against him.

Senator Tanada told him that the mass actions could be in support of a nationalist policy.

Was that your only encounter with Marcos?

The second time I met Marcos was after my capture by the military in November 1977. We talked for 30 minutes. He opened the conversation by saying that he had read my books and articles and that it was possible to have national unity and reconciliation. I said that he must anticipate the US dropping him if he became more of a US liability than an asset. Then he said that I talked like Aquino. He asked if Aquino had anything to do with the establishment of the CPP and NPA. I said no.

He asserted that armed struggle was passe and that a Marxist like Allende of Chile could become president

through elections. I retorted that Allende was subsequently assassinated in a coup d'état. I complained to him about extrajudicial killings in the Southern Tagalog region. And he promised to investigate. I gave a full narration of my encounter with Marcos and my subsequent torture to my lawyer, the late Atty. Juan T. David.

You were freed in 1986 by the government of the late President Cory C. Aquino. Did you get to meet her?

I met Cory Aquino at the Cojuangco building penthouse, where she was holding office, when I was released on March 5, 1986. Her son, the current president, was also there. I was released on the recognizance of Ninoy's mother, Doña Aurora Aquino. Cory conversed with me and Bernabe Buscayno who was also released. The picture of us conversing was taken by the Associated Press and it came out on the front pages of major newspapers throughout the world.

What were your impressions of Cory?

I was impressed that she was a gentle lady. It was the same impression I had of her when I first met her in 1967 at her Times St. residence.

Has the Philippines become a more democratic society after the 1986 military-backed uprising?

The Marcos fascist dictatorship was brazenly antidemocratic. But the succeeding regimes have been pseudo-democratic and consistently antidemocratic.

Why do you think the post-Marcos governments failed to uphold democracy?

The same anti-national and antidemocratic exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords, who are subservient to the US are ruling, exploiting and oppressing the workers, peasants and the rest of the people. Every regime emerges from an electoral contest of political factions from the same exploiting classes.

How do you assess President Noynoy C. Aquino, who has a populist style of governance after a big election victory in 2010?

Noynoy Aquino has become president by capitalizing on the deaths of his parents, by manipulating the anti-Arroyo sentiment of the people and of course by having collected more campaign money than his rivals and by having the experts to handle the mass media. He appears to have the populist style by using Arroyo as a punching bag, by posing as Mr. Clean and by using big and small events to land on the front pages. He makes big news on the floods even after stopping and delaying the flood control projects.

What about P-Noy's commitment to reforms?

Noynoy has not done anything to advance the Filipino people's struggle and aspirations for national independence, substantive democracy, national industrialization and land reform, social justice and the like. He has done the opposite of these. He is not a leader of the people but an errand boy of US imperialism, foreign big business and the local exploiting classes to which he belongs.

He will eventually be isolated and discredited like Arroyo despite his pretenses and media savvy. The people are suffering from more unemployment, worse poverty, soaring prices of basic necessities and deterioration of social services. The corruption of his regime is being exposed in the making of infrastructure contracts and all kinds of deals involving government approval and funding. Human rights violations are mounting under the US-designed Oplan Bayanihan.

You are famous as the founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) in 1968, but the CPP has claimed that for the past two decades that you're no longer involved in its operations and that you're only an adviser. Is this true?

It is obvious that I cannot be involved in operations of any organization in the Philippines, not even the Philippine chapter of the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS). I am now merely the chief political consultant of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. I am daily preoccupied with my duties as chairperson of the ILPS. You can look at the volume of my writings for the ILPS on global issues.

If you're no longer leader of the CPP and the armed wing New People's Army (NPA), who are the top leaders now?

How do you assess their capabilities? You have to seek them out and find connections to them. They are in the Philippines like you. I presume that they are very dedicated and capable as I can estimate from my visits to <http://www.philippinerevolution.net>.

In my recent interview I asked Senator Ping Lacson whether your New People's Army (NPA) is still a serious threat to national security. He replied: "No more, they've been decimated already, unlike in 1987 or 1988 when there were 25,000 armed regulars. Now, there're only 5,000 to 7,000 NPA rebels." Is this accurate?

The NPA never reached the level of 25,000 fulltime fighters with high-powered rifles. According to the 1985 Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPP, the NPA had only 5,600 full-time fighters. These increased by

another 500 in 1986. Then the NPA strength stagnated until the Second Great Rectification Movement rectified major errors and revitalized the revolutionary forces from 1992 onwards.

So it's not true what Ping said about the NPA being decimated or declining in numbers?

You can approximate the current number of NPA full-time fighters by using as a multiplication factor the more than 110 guerrilla fronts that now exist in the Philippines. A guerrilla front usually has the total strength of 75 to 120 fighters with high-powered rifles. You can also monitor the increase of NPA arms by tabulating the names of regional and guerrilla front commands and list the number of arms that the NPA is seizing in tactical offensives. What should worry most those who wish to preserve the ruling system is that membership in the people's militia now runs in the tens of thousands and the self-defense units in the hundreds of thousands.

Would the CPP agree to stop its armed rebellion and to surrender the NPA if, just in case, the Philippine government allowed the Communist Party to exist legally and be part of the democratic process of elections?

As chief political consultant of the NDFP in peace negotiations, I can assure you that the NDFP in representation of the CPP, NPA and other revolutionary forces of the people is trying hard to persuade the Aquino regime to engage in serious negotiations for a just and lasting peace by addressing the roots of the armed conflict through mutually agreed basic social, economic and political reforms.

Is the surrender of your military-guerrilla arm the NPA not a possible scenario, even if the CCP is legalized, since your allies BAYAN and others have already won surprisingly many seats in Congress anyway?

The NDFP will never agree to capitulation and pacification. It will not stop the revolutionary movement and surrender the arms of the NPA in exchange for participation in elections controlled and manipulated by the US and the local exploiting classes. BAYAN and other legal progressive forces are independent of revolutionary forces and make their own decisions.

President Noyonoy Aquino says that the Philippine economy is doing very well under his anti-corruption administration. What is your assessment of our economic situation?

Aquino is feigning ignorance of the ever-worsening crisis of the world economic system and the domestic ruling system. The value of Philippine exports is going down. The economic crisis and the political biases egged on by it in host countries work against the acceptance of migrant workers. The cost of foreign borrowing is rising. The business call centers, the plunder of mineral resources and graft-ridden infrastructure projects do not and cannot result in economic development.

How many among the people are classified as poor based on your studies or informants?

The toiling masses of workers and peasants, and even the middle social strata, are suffering from the high rate of unemployment (at least four times than the official 7 percent), the soaring prices of basic goods and services, increasing homelessness, landlessness and other deprivations. At least 80 percent of the people are living in poverty and misery—worse than two years ago. The tokenistic cash dole-outs under the Conditional Cash Transfer Program are now better known for corruption and serving the well-to-do in the barangays than in serving the truly poor.

The United States today seems to be still in economic crisis or at least in the doldrums. How do you analyze their problems?

The US remains afflicted with grave economic and financial crisis. It clings to the neoliberal economic policy that has caused the current crisis of overproduction and overaccumulation by a few. The federal government bails out the banks and the military-industrial complex and gives the tax cuts to the corporations and the wealthy. But it leaves the revival of production and employment to the so-called free market. The public debt crisis in the US is conspicuous at the level of the local states, cities and towns.

How do you assess the impact of the US economic crisis on their people?

The American people are suffering from a high rate of unemployment, the soaring prices of basic goods and services, the foreclosure of mortgages and other economic ills. The poor and near poor are close to 50 percent of the population. Impoverished areas are expanding, looking like those in the third world. While the jobless, homeless and poor have increased, the monopoly bourgeoisie and the financial oligarchy are wallowing in wealth as never before in human history.

Who would you prefer to win in the US presidential election, Obama or Mitt Romney? Why?

It does not matter who wins. Obama appears to be better than Romney but he has used the appearance of being better than Cain to do as bad as Bush the junior in many cases or even worse in certain cases. Romney

appears to be worse than Obama and most probably will be so if he becomes president. It would be easier for the American people to confront a blatantly bad president than a bad president who pretends to be good.

Are the economic problems in the US and Western Europe just the excesses of capitalism, which can still be rectified?

The current economic and financial crisis of the US, Western Europe and the rest of the capitalist world is deep going and likely to protract (counting the years from 2008). It has come as a result of the total bankruptcy of the neoliberal policy and from a long series of economic and financial crises, of which there have been more than 100 of varying scales in various countries and global regions since the 1980s.

Are you predicting a crisis or collapse of capitalism?

Capitalism is not going to collapse anytime soon. But so long as the imperialist powers stick to the neoliberal policy, they will continue to fail at solving the current economic and financial crisis. Neither will they be able to solve the crisis by resorting to protectionism, which would intensify the inter-imperialist struggle for a redivision of the world.

The protraction of global depression, the rise of state terrorism and the unleashing of aggressive wars have a potential for inciting the people to rise up in resistance and challenge the imperialist powers and their puppet states with people's movements for national liberation, democracy and socialism.

China has become the world's most amazing "economic miracle" the past three decades due to the late Deng Xiaoping's "Socialism with Chinese characteristics" or use of market-oriented reforms, and it seems Vietnam's Communist leaders are successfully following this model. Do you think this is the ultimate future of socialism, to have a socialist foundation with a strong-willed pro-people government acting as resolute referee to market-oriented policies? Or do you consider China and Vietnam as apostasies to the authentic ideals of Communism or Socialism?

Capitalism has prevailed over the socialist cause in China and Vietnam. The ruling party is still called communist but in reality it is now bourgeois. The bourgeoisie is in power and is accumulating wealth in these countries. Let us see whether in the forthcoming years China and Vietnam can avoid the crisis of global capitalism, continue to have some amount of prosperity and prevent the people from rising up.

Mao Zedong explained a long time ago that it takes a great deal of revolutionary blood and sweat to ascend from one society to a higher kind, but a descent to a lower kind of society is peacefully done where there is nothing to prevent the state and party officials from adopting revisionist policies of capitalist restoration and from becoming corrupt and divorced from the people. The communist revolutionaries of today think that they will be able to use Mao's theory of continuing the revolution under socialism, wherever socialism can be established.

What are your views about the controversial anti-American Venezuela President Hugo Chavez and his ongoing fight for reelection? Will he win?

I appreciate Hugo Chavez for being anti-imperialist and for using the oil income of his country to benefit the people. According to my Bolivarian friends, he will win in the elections.

Have you ever met Cuba's Fidel Castro? What are your impressions?

I met the officials closest to Castro when I visited Cuba in 1988. Cuba has the unique problems of being small and being only ninety miles away from the biggest monster of the world and having lost favorable trade relations with the former Soviet Union. But Cuba has also the unique achievement of looking after the good of the Cuban people and refusing to capitulate to the US, even after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Will Cuba eventually go the path of China-style reforms or not?

I do not know any further direction Cuba might take even as I know it has good relations with China.

What about North Korea, your assessment of the new third-generation leader President Kim Jong-Un?

For the Korean people and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Kim Jong-un is living up to the legacy of his grandfather and father, continuing the development and defense of the North, working for independent and peaceful reunification with the South and standing up against the economic and military blockades, pressures and threats from the US and its allies.

Did you ever meet his late father Kim Jong Il or his late grandfather the revolutionary Kim Il Sung? What are your impressions?

I met Kim Il Sung but not his son Kim Jong IL. I have long admired Kim Il Sung for having led the revolutionary struggle of the Korean people for national liberation against Japanese colonialism and then against US imperialism which occupied the South and launched a huge war of aggression against Korea. I was impressed by his firm stand against US imperialism, notwithstanding the blockades, pressures and threats.

What about Chairman Mao Zedong, did you ever meet him?

Yes. I met him in Beijing in 1967 at the 25th anniversary of his Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Art and Literature.

You had been a former literature professor at the University of the Philippines (UP) and you had won the Southeast Asia WRITE Awards for your poetry book Prison and Beyond in 1986 with the Thai crown prince presenting you the honor. Who are your top three favorite writers in the world?

My top three favorite foreign writers are Ernest Hemingway, Bertolt Brecht and Pablo Neruda.

What about your top three favorite Filipino writers?

My top three favorite Filipino writers are Amado Hernandez, Nick Joaquin and Gelacio Guillermo. I can mention more, but you have limited me to three for Filipino and foreign writers.

Who among our showbiz stars you admire or are impressed with? Why?

I admire Angel Locsin, Monique Wilson, Allen Dizon and Gina Alajar. Angel Locsin and Monique Wilson take up the women's liberation cause and participate in various campaigns of Gabriela. Allen Dizon and Gina Alajar are excellent actors and have appeared in the progressive films of Joel Lamangan and Boni Ilagan.

Any favorite Filipino movies in recent years or even in the past?

I have watched several movies of Joel Lamangan and Boni Ilagan. I have watched the acclaimed and award-winning films of Lino Brocka and Ishmael Bernal.

The late director Lino Brocka seemed like an activist with leftist sympathies. Was he with your revolutionary cause?

I was a friend of Lino Brocka because we were in the same classes, in the same ROTC company and in some plays of the UP Dramatic Guild. He enjoyed my banter. I do not know how he developed his progressive views.

Who else in the past were with you and Lino Brocka?

My contemporaries in the UP Dramatic Club were Behn Cervantes, Ishmael Bernal, Joonee Gamboa, Adul de Leon and Lino Brocka. Most of them became progressive on their own account.

Is it true the son of motel tycoon Angelo King—Wyden King—was once an assistant of yours during the martial law era?

I remember him.

Wyden King is now a born-again Christian. Your impressions of him then and now?

He was intelligent, conscientious, fearless and punctual. I hope that I can meet him again some day.

The military had a few years ago released a photo of you dancing with then sexy actress Ara Mina. You said that was at a Christmas party. Your version of this incident?

Indeed, the occasion was a Christmas party of the Filipino community, with the Philippine embassy officials and NDFP personnel attending.

Your impressions of Ara Mina, if any?

Ara Mina was a gracious woman and was a good total performer—singing, dancing and bantering.

How is life in the Netherlands? How do you spend your days, and what are you busy with?

I stay at home most of the time to do my research and writing. Thus I save money and time.

Are you not bored there?

In a sense, I am a prisoner because of financial and other limitations. I spend much time writing statements as chairperson of the ILPS and occasional papers for delivery before graduate students of political science and conflict studies. Whenever I get bored, I go out for bantering or karaoke sessions.

Are you used to life in exile?

A group of Dutch, Canadian and Greek documentary film-makers is doing a film on me. It is titled Penal Colony because they think I am in The Netherlands as if it were a penal colony. I cannot travel freely to any other country, unless I get a laissez passer (special passport for one trip) for peace talks in Oslo or court hearings in Luxembourg.

Your hobbies?

Walking and singing with or without karaoke.

Had there been any assassination attempts on your life like in the case of Leon Trotsky in Mexico? When? By whom?

I have not been axed yet. But the first assassination team was dispatched from Manila to kill me by knife in the period of 1999-2000. In one instance, one of the assassins walked towards me while I was crossing the street with a small boy in front of the NDFP Information Office in Utrecht. I became alerted and changed direction and Fidel Agcaoili caught up with me. The would-be assassin backed out.

A second assassination team was organized, when the first one failed to carry out its mission and was called back to Manila. It was at this point that an insider revealed the assassination plot to friends of mine in Manila and also to then Colonel Berroya who was the former boss of the insider in the military. The details are known to my Filipino and Dutch lawyers and Dutch police and are on record. Colonel Berroya named the principal plotters in a radio broadcast in Manila and before a Dutch police investigator in early 2001.

Do you now have any security or bodyguards?

Since 1999 I have been extra careful in going out of my home and going to public places. I am always accompanied by at least one person. We make sure that any strange character approaching me or casing my home or office would be covered by camera. I am also alert to possible rendition or wet operation by US operatives.

Who were your parents, their professions or backgrounds? I read you're from an Ilocano landlord family?

My father was a landlord who was one of the main heirs of the Serrano, Solter and Sison estates in the Ilocos. He got enough rent from tenants and could sell pieces of land to be able to send his seven children to expensive Catholic schools in Manila and further on to American universities for postgraduate studies. I was the only one who did not go to the US.

Any of your ancestors involved in politics before?

In his twenties, my grandfather Don Gorgonio Sison was the last gobernadorcillo of Cabugao, Ilocos Sur under the Spanish colonial regime, the first municipal president of the Philippine revolutionary government and the first mayor under the US colonial regime. The first governor of Ilocos Sur, Don Mena Crisologo, was a grand uncle of mine. There was a time when two uncles of mine, Jesus Serrano and Sixto Brillantes, were the congressmen of the two districts of the province.

But our Sison relatives in Pangasinan were far more awesome. Six became governors of the province, starting with Don Rafael Sison at the start of the US colonial period. Several became senators and assemblymen or congressmen. Quite a number became cabinet secretaries. The most notable was Teofilo Sison, who was the first secretary of national defense and also became secretary of justice and executive secretary. He was close enough to Quezon to move from one cabinet position to another.

Your hometown of Cabugao in Ilocos Sur is facing the sea, any recollections of your childhood years there?

The town center or poblacion of Cabugao is a few kilometers away from the seaside barrios of Dardarat, Salomague, Daclapan, Salapasap and Pug-os. We owned land in all these barrios. My mother loved to go to the beaches for picnics during summer. We also enjoyed going to the barrios east of the town, especially Caellayan where there were orchards of mangoes, santol and duhat.

I read that your family is connected to or maybe related to Ilocos Sur political clans like the Crisologos and the Singsons?

My extended family of Azcuetas, Sollers, Serranos and Sisons intermarried several times with the Florentinos, Crisologos and Singsons of Vigan since the 19th century. Several uncles, first and second cousins of my father were the latest to marry into these Vigan families.

Your impression of Ilocos Sur Governor Chavit Singson?

Chavit is a good guy and loyal friend if you are friends with him. He and I have mutual relatives. He and my younger brother were classmates and friends.

Is it true you first got interested in leftist revolution from your childhood barber telling you about the Hukbalahap uprising?

Yes, I had a Capampangan barber who talked a lot about the Huks while cutting my hair. But I learned about the Huks earlier from my Capampangan mother whose family came from Mexico, Pampanga. When I was a boy, I heard her telling my father that a Laxamana landlord relative of ours was killed probably by a poor relative who was a Huk.

Who among the leftist revolutionaries in history do you admire the most—Chief Justice Jose Abad Santos' elder brother, the medical board topnotcher and bar topnotcher Pedro Abad Santos, Huk leader Luis Taruc, Kumander Dante (Bernabe Buscayno) or former martial law era Ateneo student leader Edgar Jopson?

I admire Pedro Abad Santos who was landed and yet chose to be a socialist and then a communist. I admire Crisanto Evangelista, who was the founder of the Communist Party of the Philippine Islands in 1930. I did not have a chance to meet them. They were both martyred by the Japanese fascists.

I admire Edgar Jopson. At first, he was on the opposite side of Kabataang Makabayan in the student

movement. But eventually he became progressive and joined the Communist Party of the Philippines. I was the one who asked him to chair the NDF Preparatory Commission in 1975. He was martyred by the troops of the Marcos fascist dictatorship in Davao.

Luis Taruc and Bernabe Buscayno had good periods in the revolutionary movement. But they dropped out at some point. I met Taruc while he was still in prison in Camp Panopio in 1964 or thereabouts. Tonypet Araneta brought me along when he interviewed Taruc for his doctoral dissertation. Of course, it is of public knowledge that Bernabe Buscayno and I were together in the revolutionary movement.

If you had not become a revolutionary, what would you have been?

I would have become a lawyer for the poor and exploited, and I would have tried to fulfil the ambition of my late father for me to become president of the Philippines.

How would you want Philippine history to remember you and your legacy?

I would like be remembered as the activist and articulator of the Filipino people's struggle and aspirations for national independence, genuine democracy, national industrialization and land reform, social justice, a patriotic and progressive culture and international solidarity for peace and development.

In representation of the over 250 member-organizations of the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) in over 40 countries, we the International Coordinating Committee express our solidarity with ILPS-Canada on the occasion of its Second General Assembly.

We congratulate you for your success at convening the Assembly and initiating such related events as the key-note speakers event featuring outstanding and inspiring anti-imperialist figures; the Right to Exist, Right to Resist Conference; and the Mass Artillery of People's Culture.

The Second General Assembly is an occasion to review the situation in Canada, your role as the Canada chapter of ILPS and your experience since the First General Assembly, to clarify the public and internal issues vital to your further development and to define the tasks by which to strengthen your Chapter and advance the struggle for the rights of the people of Canada.

We are confident that you will continue to arouse the people through the most effective undertakings of education and information, to attract existing organizations to join your Chapter, to motivate the formation of new organizations and to mobilize the broad masses of the people on issues of multisectoral and sectoral interest.

It is excellent that the Right to Exist, Right to Resist Conference immediately follows your Assembly and makes the call to build a united front against Canadian imperialism, capitalism and colonialism on four major fronts in which the Canadian imperialists carry out wars on the people's resistance, on the working people, on the communities and on the land defenders and the environment.

We see that the conference provides content and direction for the further development of your Chapter and struggle. It can expand and deepen your understanding of the various aspects of the Canadian situation and the people's struggle, the objectives and the activities and campaigns that you need to carry out.

The four tracks of the conference bring together activists, organizers and concerned people from various sectors of Canadian society to share and expand points of unity and struggle against Canadian imperialism, capitalism and colonialism. The participants are bound by the call for a united front against imperialism and by the resolve to issue a statement of unity. We hope that the conference can strengthen the unity of the ILPS member-organizations and motivate other mass organizations to join the ILPS.

We take this opportunity to elucidate on the building of the ILPS. Like any country chapter of the ILPS, ILPS-Canada is basically a united front of mass organizations, which may include those based on sectoral interests like those of workers, youth, women, immigrants, indigenous people, scientists and technologists, writers and artists and other types of professionals as well as those based on multisectoral or sectoral issues such as any of the concerns of the ILPS as enumerated by its Charter.

As a united front form of organization, the ILPS is replicated by ILPS-Canada on a country level and to the widest extent possible, with due consideration to the specific characteristics of Canada and the existing organizations available for combining along the anti-imperialist and democratic line.

At whatever level, the efforts of ILPS initiators or conveners intent on building and strengthening the ILPS as a united front formation must focus on convening the existing mass organizations that have an anti-imperialist and democratic character and are willing to comply with the ILPS Constitution. At a given time, there may be only a few member-organizations that can be united to form an alliance, but subsequently through expansion efforts more mass organizations can join, or in the meantime become steady allies external to the ILPS.

Expansion efforts can be made in various ways, including direct approaches, general calls and conferences and other gatherings initiated or co-sponsored by the ILPS, and allowing the participation of organizations which share the same values and aims but are not yet members. Your Right to Exist, Right to Resist Conference is a good example of bringing together ILPS member-organizations and a wider collection of other organizations as well as individuals.

The leadership and membership of every mass organization in the ILPS remains intact. Every member-organization maintains its independence and initiative even as it agrees to unite with other organizations in order to form an alliance and be able to achieve a higher level of strength through common purpose, closer cooperation

and coordination of larger numbers of people in various types of activities and campaigns.

The ILPS benefits from the political and organizational synergy arising from the united front or alliance of its member-organizations from the level of cities and municipalities to that of country chapters and further to that of global regions and still further to the international level. However, the member-organizations basically take care of themselves.

Higher levels of leadership are formed through the method of representation in committees and assemblies. Officers can use the email, social media, online and/or telephone consultations or conferences (e.g., Skype) to implement and sharpen previous decisions or if necessary to make new decisions. Thus, the costs of transport and communications among officers can be reduced, especially in a country the size of Canada. A minimal number of staff personnel can suffice at every level.

We wish the utmost success of your Second General Assembly and all the related events in paving the way for the further advance of ILPS-Canada and the people of Canada in the struggle for greater freedom, the democratic rights of the working people, the rights of women and children, equality of the various communities, respect for the First Nations and protection of the environment against Canadian imperialism, capitalism and colonialism.

Long live ILPS Canada!

Advance the people's struggle!

Long live the anti-imperialist fighting spirit of the people of Canada!

**The Need for United Front in the Filipino People's Democratic Revolution Speech in Celebration of the 40th
Founding Anniversary of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, Amsterdam, Netherlands, April 28,
2013**

Good afternoon, dear comrades and friends from various countries and Filipino compatriots, warmest greetings of solidarity!

As chief international representative, Louie Jalandoni has presented the achievements of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. My assignment is to discuss the united front policy in general terms.

The Filipino people's democratic revolution constantly needs the revolutionary united front because this is the effective way to arouse, organize and mobilize the broad masses of the Filipino people in their millions in order to advance and win total victory. The need for the united front is more urgent than ever as the socioeconomic and political crisis is rapidly worsening and inflicting intolerable suffering on the Filipino people and they must intensify their struggle against those who exploit and oppress them.

The united front is one of the three most powerful weapons of the new democratic revolution. The two others are the leadership of the working class and armed struggle. The united front consists of the working class allying itself with the peasantry, winning over the urban petty bourgeoisie and middle bourgeoisie and taking advantage of the contradictions among the big compradors and landlords in order to isolate and destroy the enemy at every given time. The broad masses of the people cannot defeat the overwhelming state power and economic wealth of the exploiting classes without the application of the united front policy.

The semicolonial and semifeudal character of Philippine society has been aggravated and deepened by the ever-worsening chronic crisis of the system and by the crisis-generating policies imposed by US imperialism. The reactionary classes of big compradors and landlords and their political representatives are subservient to US monopoly capitalism. Thus, the Philippines is being ravaged by the US-instigated neoliberal policy of "free market" globalization. It is also being subjected to US military intervention and to the constant threat of outright aggression.

Basic alliance of the working class and peasantry

The national and democratic character of the Philippine revolution is more than ever clear. In seeking to achieve the victory of this revolution, we have to know who are our friends and who are our enemies. We need to know at the very start the best of friends and the most formidable forces for social revolution. The basic exploited classes of Philippine society are the working class and peasantry. They are the most desirous of revolutionary change and they are definitely the closest and most reliable friends of the revolution.

In the present era of modern imperialism and proletarian revolution, the industrial working class is the leading class and has the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) as the revolutionary party. It is the most progressive political and productive class. But foreign and feudal domination limits it to around 16 percent of the population. The working class is being subjected to a high rate of mass unemployment, loss of job tenure, reduced wage income, lack of social benefits and the suppression of trade union and other democratic rights.

By way of building the revolutionary united front, the working class and its revolutionary party have linked up with the peasantry, which is the overwhelming majority of the people, in order to form the basic worker-peasant alliance. The program for the people's democratic revolution of the CPP recognizes the peasantry as the main force of the revolution and the fulfilment of its demand for land as the main content of the revolution.

Since its reestablishment in 1968, the CPP has sought to forge the strongest links between the working class and the peasantry. It has done so by building and developing the New People's Army and the peasant mass movement in pursuit of the agrarian revolution and in response to the repeated attempts of the reactionary state to undertake bogus land reform schemes. The CPP and the NPA pursue the strategic line of protracted people's war, which relies mainly on the peasantry. They integrate revolutionary armed struggle, genuine land reform and the building of mass organizations and organs of political power.

They apply the antifeudal united front policy of relying mainly on the poor peasants and farmworkers, winning over the middle peasants, neutralizing the rich peasants and taking advantage of the contradictions among the landlords in order to destroy the power of the despotic landlords. To resist feudal and semifeudal exploitation, the NPA and the peasant masses have delivered lethal blows on despotic traditional landlords and the modern land-grabbing corporations engaged in plantations, mining, deforestation, real estate speculation and so-called economic zones.

United front with the middle social strata

The working class and the peasantry comprise at least 90 percent of the people and they constitute the foundation of the revolutionary united front. But they need to win over the intermediate social strata as friends of the revolution. These are the urban petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie. They are a small part of the population within the range of eight percent and one percent, respectively. But they play key roles in society and are highly influential.

They have professional, technical, entrepreneurial and other capabilities which can best serve the revolution. The middle social strata have played an important role in exposing and condemning puppetry to the US and the worst forms of human rights violations. It is a necessary and crucial function of united front policy to win over the middle forces to the side of the revolution. Under the conditions of worsening crisis, they are increasingly subjected to unemployment, reduced incomes, higher taxes, bankruptcies and other difficulties. They have played an important role in the legal mass movement for national independence and democracy.

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines has been the most outstanding underground united front organization for uniting and harmonizing the national and democratic rights and interests of the toiling masses of workers and peasants and the middle social strata. Since 1973 the NDFP has excelled at building the alliance of progressive forces of the toiling masses and the urban petty bourgeoisie against the Marcos fascist dictatorship and subsequently against the pseudo-democratic regimes. The alliance of progressive forces has taken major initiatives in the struggle for national independence and democracy.

The NDFP also promotes the patriotic alliance of the progressive forces and the middle bourgeoisie. It supports the aspirations of the middle bourgeoisie for Filipino-owned industrialization. Such aspirations have been undermined and frustrated by a series of US-dictated neocolonial economic policies: the import-substitution re-assembly of the 1950s and 1960s and the export-oriented semimanufacturing which began in the 1970s and expanded under the neoliberal economic policy since the 1980s. Thus, industrial development of the Philippine has been stunted. Large numbers of Filipino professionals, technologists and skilled workers have been forced to separate from their families and seek jobs abroad.

Temporary and unstable allies

The basic exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords are the class enemies of the revolution. They rule over the cities and the countryside, respectively. They have intertwining interests. They have the most economic wealth and the most political power. They have put up one reactionary regime after another to deceive and suppress the people. They have benefited most from the US-dictated neoliberal economic policy. We may call them reactionaries in general. But we may undertake the broadest possible united front by narrowing the target on the worst of the reactionaries and designating these as the enemy.

The reactionary classes are divided according to their clans, the kind and magnitude of wealth, political affiliation and the degree of their anti-national and antipeople character. The contradictions among the reactionaries often become bitter and violent, especially under conditions of worsening crisis. The revolutionary forces can take advantage of such contradictions and derive from reactionary ranks temporary allies, even if unstable and unreliable, in order to bring about the broadest kind of united front against the worst enemy, which is the most reactionary force in the civil war or the foreign aggressor in a war of national liberation.

The CPP, NPA and the NDFP have firmly stood in principle against the ruling system of the big compradors and landlords. However, as a matter of flexibility in united front policy, they have encouraged and extended cooperation to political groups and leaders of the middle social strata and even some of those from the exploiting classes to take anti-imperialist and democratic positions on major issues within the institutions and processes controlled by the reactionaries. The revolutionary forces avail of every opportunity to cause the immediate defeat of the current enemy and the long-term disintegration of the entire ruling system.

United front policy in peace negotiations

The NDFP and all the revolutionary forces within its fold have gone as far as to engage the reactionary government in peace negotiations and even to offer immediate truce and alliance on the basis of a clear declaration of patriotic and progressive intent. They are exercising initiative in applying the united front policy and offering even the ruling clique the opportunity to join the struggle of the people against foreign and feudal domination. The

NDFP has succeeded with the reactionary government in making the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law and other major agreements. But so far every reactionary

clique that has come to power has refused to join the NDFP in confronting the basic social, economic and political problems of the people, addressing the roots of the armed conflict and forging the comprehensive agreements on basic social, economic political reforms.

Under the US-designed Oplan Bayanihan, the US-Aquino regime regards the peace negotiations as a mere means of demanding the capitulation and pacification of the revolutionary forces and people and as a minor dispensable part of the overall military plan to destroy the revolutionary movement. The same ultrareactionary kind of bureaucrats and military officers are sabotaging the peace negotiations.

The NDFP has persevered in peace negotiations to demonstrate the just and reasonable cause of the revolutionary movement, to spread the content of the program for people's democratic revolution and to anticipate the advance of the people's war and the further worsening of the crisis. It is possible that a significant change in the balance of forces between revolution and counterrevolution would persuade the reactionary government to engage in serious peace negotiations. In any case, the NDFP resolutely calls for genuine national independence, democracy, social justice, economic development through national industrialization and genuine land reform, a patriotic, progressive and people-serving culture and independent foreign policy.

International united front policy

The national united front policy of the NDFP and its revolutionary components have an international dimension. It includes arousing, organizing and mobilizing the migrant workers and other overseas Filipinos to stand for their democratic rights and interests and to develop their solidarity relations with the host people and international organizations.

In representation of the entire Filipino people at home and abroad, the NDFP develops the broadest range of solidarity and cooperative relations with foreign governments and their appropriate agencies, various types of people's organizations, parties and national liberation movements. The NDFP also facilitates the international relations of its component organizations with existing and potential partners abroad.

The Communist Party of the Philippines is well known for developing relations with communist and workers' parties in the spirit of proletarian internationalism as well as with various types of parties, people's organizations and movement within the framework of international united front along the anti-imperialist and democratic line. The other components of the NDFP also develop relations with their counterparts in various countries and participate in international gatherings, movements and campaigns along the anti-imperialist and democratic line.

Perspective of the Philippine Revolution

The Filipino people persevere in waging revolution because the reactionary state persists in being a puppet to US imperialism and in inflicting counterrevolutionary violence to preserve the exploitative and oppressive ruling system. Thus, the revolutionary forces and the people are determined to complete the people's democratic revolution through the nationwide seizure of political power and thereafter proceed to the stage of socialist revolution under the leadership of the working class. The national united front shall be further developed in order to uphold, defend and promote the cause of national independence, democracy and socialism.

The socialist features of the people's democratic state system shall include the leadership of the working class and the Communist Party of the Philippines, the people's army as the main component of state power, the nationalization of the commanding heights of the economy, the planned advance of the economy on the road of socialist industrialization and agricultural cooperation and mechanization, the hegemony of a national, scientific and mass culture and an independent foreign policy of international solidarity, peace and development.

Celebrate the Historic Leadership of the Working Class in the Philippine Revolution

December 26, 2013

Thank you for your invitation to the forum and your introduction a while ago. For a long time, since the emergence of the working class in some industries in the second half of the 19th century, we can celebrate many victories of this class stemming from their work, struggle and sacrifices. However due to the limited time in this forum, I can only narrate briefly the development of the working class.

My advice to all who would like to further study the history of the working class democracy is for them to read my article on it in the book *Struggle for National Democracy*, Manila, Amado V. Hernandez Foundation, 2001, p.89-104; and also its link with the Communist International in the development of the Communist Party in the book *Crisis of Imperialism and People's Resistance*, Aklat ng Bayan, 2009, p.236-59.

I. Short history of the working class

The industrial workers started from the status of individuals offering their labor power to capitalists that bought this at values pressed down and thus increase their profit. The payment or wage set by the capitalist is a small part of the entire value of the commodity created by the workers. A far greater part of the value of the newly created commodity is appropriated by the capitalist to extract profit and pay the land rent and interest on bank loans.

To fight for the improvement of their wage and living conditions in an organized way, the workers learned to form unions for economic struggle at the beginning of the 20th century. In 1930, they reached the stage of forming a party upholding the leadership of the working class and aiming to change the ruling social system through political struggle against the exploitative capitalist class.

This was the Communist Party of the Philippine Islands. It did not take long before the US colonial government suppressed this Party. It was made illegal on the accusation of sedition and its leaders punished. The Party operated secretly and the related unions took caution. However, the Socialist Party operated legally based on the masses of peasants and farmworkers. The Communist Party was made legal in 1937 when the Commonwealth government due to the need for the Popular Front against fascism. The US government acceded.

In 1938, the Communist Party and the Socialist Party merged. This strengthened the basic alliance of the working class and the peasantry. With the Japanese fascist aggression in 1941-42, the merger party formed the Anti-Japanese People's Army (Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon /Hukbalahap) on March 29 1942. The inter-imperialist war became a good opportunity for strengthening the workers' party. The people's army and the mass organizations and organs of political power. However, the merger party leadership committed a series of serious errors.

The Right opportunist line of retreat for defense was implemented. The squadrons were divided up into small teams thus slowing the advance of the people's army. This was followed by the line of friendly welcome for the return of US imperialism for this to fulfil the promise to grant national independence to the Philippines. This was indeed granted but it was fake; the Philippines was made a neocolony and US dominance over the puppet government remained in the economic, political, military and cultural fields.

The US and its puppets violently took back the lands of the landlords from the peasants who took these over during the war. The masses wished to rebel. However, the leaders of the party rode on this by implementing the "Left" opportunist line of all-out offensive against the enemy to win victory merely within two months; failing to take into account the necessity of protracted people's war that attends not only to military offensives but also to the agrarian revolution and building the mass base in the countryside.

After the series of people's army offensives in August 1949, the enemy countered with offensives in the countryside and the city. The people's army camps in the Sierra Madre were isolated and the party leadership in Manila was captured in October. The armed struggle took a slide until the enemy broke its spine. The leadership that took over from the previous one carried a Right opportunist line that resulted in its orders to liquidate the people's army in 1955 and the Party branches and organs under a hiding Party general secretary in 1957.

Independent of the old party, the proletarian revolutionaries started to form study groups on Marxism-Leninism in 1959 and undertake propaganda and mass actions among the students and workers. In 1961, they launched a huge mass action against anticommunism. In 1962, a few of them joined the old party. They

discovered that the Party had no branches and organs. Nonetheless, I was immediately included in the executive committee considered as the seed for renewed party building.

The proletarian revolutionaries were the ones who produced new cadres and members for the old party and the mass organizations of workers, peasants, and youth. Within the expanded executive committee, the conflict between the proletarian revolutionaries and the revisionists; and both sides expelled each other in 1966. In May 1967, the proletarian revolutionaries issued a declaration expelling the revisionists.

II. Victories of the working class in leading the Philippine revolution

The separation of the revisionist party was a big victory for the working class. A thoroughgoing rectification movement was undertaken to criticize and repudiate new revisionism and subjectivist and opportunist errors of the revisionists since the latter part of 1942. Today we call this the First Great Rectification Movement. It stressed the building of the revolutionary party, the people's army and the revolutionary united front. It opened the way for the reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines guided by Marxism-Leninism-Maoism on December 26, 1968.

Simultaneous to the rectification movement was the framing of the Constitution of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the Program for a People's Democratic Revolution. The writing of the book *Philippine Society and Revolution* followed in 1969. These documents clarified and set the leadership of the working class in the Philippine revolution in the current period. The theory of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism was applied on the history and circumstances of the Filipino people. The Party proved itself as the advance detachment of the working class and as the most productive and progressive class in society.

The Party set the general line of people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war. Its objective is to win and complete the struggle for national liberation and democracy against US imperialism and the ruling classes of big compradors and landlords. Thus, would the semicolonial and semifeudal conditions be ended and the road to socialist revolution and construction be opened. At every opportunity and in various ways, the Party and other revolutionary forces arouse, organize and mobilize the broad masses of the people.

The Party successfully implemented the leadership of the working class in the democratic revolution in firm alliance with the peasantry through the revolutionary armed struggle, implementation of genuine land reform and expansion and consolidation of the mass base in the countryside. Under the leadership of the working class and its party, the New People's Army grew in number and strength from almost nothing and from being weak in 1969. The agrarian revolution in two stages (minimum and maximum) was undertaken.

With the leadership of the working class through the Party, the National Democratic Front (NDF) was established in 1973. It is a framework for uniting the organizations of the working class and peasantry with various organizations of the urban petty bourgeoisie and the multisectoral organizations of the people. While the NDF is a united front of progressive forces, it is always open to patriotic alliance with the national or middle bourgeoisie. It is also prepared to go into temporary and unstable alliance with parts of the reactionary classes to hasten the isolation and defeat of the enemy, the worst reactionaries.

The working class and its Party are able to advance the revolution by carrying the program of national freedom and democratic power of the toiling masses, genuine land reform and national industrialization; social justice; national, scientific and mass culture; proletarian internationalism and solidarity with peoples of all countries. This is the program of the Filipino people against the enemy state that is the instrument of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

The ruling classes still prevail through violence and deception; and the support of US imperialism. Marcos imposed fascist dictatorship in the country for a long time. But the revolutionary movement further strengthened itself. The Filipino working classes and people prevailed upon and overthrew the dictatorship. Regimes pretending to be democratic but in fact similar to the Marcos regime followed. These still use violence against the toiling masses. In spite of all these, the people's revolutionary movement continued to grow under the leadership of the working class guided by Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. At another turn in 2001, one regime was overthrown and the succeeding regime was almost overthrown.

In the years 1989-91, the revisionist ruled countries ran into trouble. These countries became openly and thoroughly capitalist and the Soviet Union collapsed. The imperialists and their puppets gloated that socialism is dead and the revolutionary movement in the Philippines would also wither away supposedly due to lack of support from abroad. The Philippine revolutionaries laughed off the claims of the counterrevolutionaries; for the fact is the

CPP was re-established and remained firm on the line of struggle against imperialism, revisionism and reaction. The revolutionary movement is deeply rooted among the toiling masses and remain seriously in their struggle.

The Right and “Left” opportunists also attempted to liquidate the Party and the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism. They secretly attempted to do so since 1988 at exposed themselves completely from 1992 onward. As early as 1980, they united on the subjectivist position that the Philippines is no longer semifeudal supposedly because fascist Marcos had industrialized it. They committed grievous errors in line throughout the decade of the 1980s. The “Left” opportunists sought to “regularize” the people’s army and follow urban insurrectionism, contrary to the line of protracted people’s war. The Right opportunists sought to liquidate the leadership of the working class and to simply ride on the line of the anti-Marcos reactionaries. The Party launched the Second Great Rectification Movement in 1992. It fought for the line of people’s democratic revolution through protracted people’s war. It defeated the subjectivists and opportunists. Eventually the most rabid of these exposed themselves as agents of counterrevolution and the reactionary parties.

In 45 years of revolutionary struggle under working class leadership. The Party strengthened itself ideologically, politically and organizationally. From 80 members and candidate members in 1968, the Party today counts more than a hundred thousand members covering almost all provinces and is deeply rooted among the toiling masses. The New People’s Army from a few Red fighters with nine automatic rifles and 26 inferior guns has grown to thousands of Red fighters armed with powerful guns and is supported by tens of thousands of militia forces and hundreds of thousands self-defense unit membership. The NPA today cover more than 110 guerrilla fronts covering wide swathes of 71 provinces.

The NDF is led by the working class through its Party. It ranges over 17 revolutionary forces. These include the Party, the New People’s Army, the Revolutionary Council of Trade Unions, National Association of Peasants, Kabataang Makabayan (Patriotic Youth), Cordillera People’s Democratic Front, Christians for National Liberation, Association of Patriotic Teachers, Patriotic Government Employees, Patriotic Health Association, League of Scientists for the People, Federation of Labor Organizations, Council of Lawyers for the People, Moro Revolutionary Organization for Liberation, Revolutionary Organization of Lumads, and Compatriots.

The People’s Democratic Government exists in all guerrilla fronts. It is the totality of local organs of democratic power. It is led by the Party and the working class. It is supported by mass organizations of workers, peasants, women, youth, cultural activists and children. Assisting the local organs of democratic power are the committees on organization, education, land reform, production, health, defense, culture and others. The committees ensure that tasks and campaigns are launched for the welfare of the people.

Currently, the Party is pursuing the plan to advance the people’s war from the strategic defensive towards the strategic stalemate. It is carrying out the political, military and socioeconomic requirements such as: expanding Party membership to 250,000; increasing Red fighters to 25,000, increasing guerrilla fronts to 180; and the number of mass organization membership into millions upon millions with bigger numbers of the masses covered by the organs of democratic power; implementation of the agrarian revolution and improvements on production, livelihood, health and culture.

III. Favorable conditions for advancing the Philippine revolution

The crisis of the world capitalist system protracts and worsens. Proven totally bankrupt is the neoliberal economic policy that sped up the accumulation of capital in the hands of the monopoly bourgeoisie and its financial oligarchy. The imperialist powers cannot solve the crisis of overproduction and overaccumulation of capital because they refuse to get rid of the neoliberal policy and because they continue to grab huge profits by passing on the burden of the intensifying crisis on to the toiling classes and the third world countries.

Depression is deepening throughout the world. The degree of exploitation and oppression continues to escalate. The suffering of the toiling people and the middle social strata continues to intensify. The people’s suffering is a bad thing. But this is what moves them to fight their exploiters and oppressors. The ruling classes are themselves pushing the toilers to wage revolutions.

Now, we can say that the crisis favorable for the revolution. Explosions of mass protests and strikes are widening and more frequent, the anti-imperialist and socialist movement is being enlivened and the numbers of those desiring revolution, especially in underdeveloped and poor countries, are increasing. The imperialists and their puppets can no longer boast that revolution and socialism are dead as a result of their claimed effective cure—that is the neoliberal policy—to economic and social problems.

Focusing on the Philippines, income from exports of raw materials and semimanufactures are down, while expenses for imports of manufactures and semimanufactures are up. Mining and other extractive industries proliferate but the real quantity of the minerals mined is not revealed and smuggled out. The government budget and external trade deficits are increasing, thus the debt burden is also increasing. Taxes and the price of social services are rising. But these come with the wastage and embezzlement of the people's national wealth in nonproductive and ineffective programs and projects, in corruption through the pork barrel system, in huge military spending and growing debt interest and amortization.

Despite all these, the Aquino regime boasts of growth in the Philippine economy. But the supposed economic growth come from so-called hot money or portfolio investments that come and go to and from the stock market and the money markets and pushes speculation in private construction and consumerism among the tiny upper rung of the population. Due to the absence of genuine land reform and national industrialization, the Philippines remain underdeveloped and poor. Unemployment, wage decreases and rising prices of basic commodities and services are worsening rapidly.

Due to the global capitalist crisis, there is a big employment downturn for migrant labor in other countries. The permanent crisis of the Philippines has worsened due to the global capitalist crisis. The ground for revolution is certainly growing ever more fertile in the Philippines. The organized forces of the revolution need only excel at strengthening themselves and fighting imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism. The Filipino people are very capable of winning the national-democratic stage of the Philippine revolution with the leadership of the working class. Thus, the socialist revolution can follow when the working class hold state power and much more capable of leading the Filipino people in socialist revolution and construction.

Advance the People's Mass Struggles

**for National and Social Liberation Message of solidarity to the 4th National Congress of the Frente Popular
Revolucionario May 1-3, 2014**

We, the International League of Peoples' Struggle, convey our warmest greetings of solidarity to all the militants, sympathizers and cooperators of the Frente Popular Revolucionario, holding its 4th National Congress on 1-3 May, in Mexico City. We extend special felicitations to Comrade Florentino López Martínez, National President of the FPR and member of the International Coordinating Committee of the ILPS, on this important milestone for the FPR and the anti-imperialist movement in Mexico.

We congratulate the FPR for having won significant victories in arousing, organizing and mobilizing the people. You have a great deal to celebrate in your congress and in the upcoming 13th Founding Anniversary of your front in September this year. Your organization is relatively young, but it has already managed to expand to salient parts of the country, uniting the masses of workers and peasants and waving high the banner of proletarian revolution in Mexico.

We support your call for a powerful and broad Frente Popular Revolucionario, that has the capability to engulf all the streets and fields of Mexico with your Red flags! We are confident that through your congress you will be able to raise higher your understanding of the objective conditions in Mexico and the world, to make a self-critical analysis and appreciation of your 12-year experience in mass organizing and united front work and to further clarify your strategy and tactics, the line of advance and the urgent tasks that you must accomplish.

The proletariat and broad masses of the people of Mexico are suffering terribly from the worsening conditions of exploitation and oppression, which are engendered by the crisis of the world capitalist system and the domestic ruling system. You must wage vigorous and sustained mass struggles against US monopoly capitalism and the local exploiting classes in order to build revolutionary strength and advance towards national and social liberation. The imperialists and the local exploiting classes persist in imposing the neoliberal economic policy in order to further extract superprofits. They think that they can always pass the burden of crisis to the working people and that revolution can be forestalled by state terrorism and aggressive war. But the contradictions between imperialism and the oppressed peoples, among the imperialist powers themselves and between capital and labor have steadily grown and become acute since 2008. The objective conditions have become favorable for revolutionary struggle. The oppressors and exploiters themselves are goading the people to fight back against political repression and mass unemployment and low incomes, rising costs of basic goods and services, the degradation of social services and all concrete conditions that aggravate poverty and misery. And under the revolutionary party proletariat, the people learn to fight not just for the improvement of their socioeconomic conditions but for the end of the exploitative and oppressive and the establishment of people's democracy and socialism. We wish you the utmost success in your deliberations and decision-making. We look forward to the enrichment of your Declaration of Principles, Program, and Statutes of the FPR. And we congratulate in advance the comrades who shall be elected to the new Central Committee. We convey to them the best wishes for a resolute, militant and effective leadership. We are proud to have the FPR as a member-organization of the ILPS, building a strong pillar of unity and cooperation among anti-imperialist and democratic forces in Mexico and the Americas. We are hopeful that the 4th National Congress of the FPR will further strengthen the anti-imperialist and democratic struggles of the people of Mexico, and be a major step forward on the road of proletarian revolution.

Glory to the 4th National Congress of the Frente Popular Revolucionario!

Long live the Frente Popular Revolucionario!

Uphold the class leadership of the proletariat in the Mexican revolution!

Victory to the Mexican peoples' struggle for social emancipation!

Long live international anti-imperialist solidarity!

through Protracted People's War Lecture at the Forum for Liberation Theology, Centre for Liberation Theologies,
Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium, May 15, 2014

I thank the Centre for Liberation Theologies for inviting me to this Forum for Liberation Theology to speak on the new democratic revolution through protracted people's war. It is an honor and pleasure for me to interface and dialogue with theologians and others who are seriously interested in knowing the nature and development of the Philippine revolution, and the relationship of Christians with the Filipino people's struggle for national and social liberation. I wish to present my subject by using the following outline: 1. the old democratic revolution against Spanish colonialism and feudalism; 2. the new democratic revolution against the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system; 3. the Christians for National Liberation; 4. the continuance of the new democratic revolution to the present.

1. Old democratic revolution

Spain was motivated by mercantilism and the desire to spread the Catholic Christian faith in imposing colonialism by force of arms on the people of the Philippine archipelago, effectively starting in 1565 after the expedition of Magellan in 1521. It used the sword and the cross to pacify the people. The conquistadores brutally suppressed those who resisted. The missionaries worked persuasively to bring the people under the bells of the Catholic church.

The Spanish colonialists could apply the divide and rule policy on a people that generally had pre-feudal autonomous small communities. The Islamic sultanates covered a small part of the archipelago, particularly in south-west Mindanao. The Muslims traded in other parts and began to spread their faith. But the success of Spanish colonialism cut them off from most of the archipelago.

The Spanish king rewarded the conquistadores by granting to them the encomiendas, large areas of land which they were supposed to administer to make sure that the natives got their Christian catechism and paid tribute. The encomienda system, which involved slavery and all its brutal features previously denounced by Bartolome de las Casas in the Americas, would last for almost a century, and morphed into the system of feudal ownership of land by the friars and the native principales.

Spanish colonialism succeeded in maintaining a colonial system of government centralized in the walled city of Manila. It was enough to control entire municipalities with the use of Spanish friars in charge of the parishes and the Spanish military officer in charge of the civil guards. However, the people were never a totally conquered and pacified. The Moros in the south, Igorots in the north, and many hill tribes resisted subjugation until the end of Spanish colonialism. More than 200 revolts of varying scopes and intensity occurred in supposedly pacified provinces in more than 300 years preceding the Philippine revolution of 1896.

In the Manila-Acapulco galleon trade which lasted until 1815, the Spanish religious orders had a share of the boletas, cargo spaces in the ship, which the friars rented out to merchants. The income was supposedly for obras pias (pious works) but was large enough to capitalize the establishment of a bank, the Monte de Piedad. The galleon trade was basically trade between Chinese porcelain and silk, and Mexican silver, with the Chinese buying Philippine rice and cotton.

When the Suez Canal was opened in 1869, the direct trade between the Philippines and Europe accelerated and expanded. The Spanish religious orders expanded their landholdings arbitrarily, especially in the Tagalog areas of Luzon, in order to produce export crops, including sugar, copra, cocoa, tobacco, and hemp. Landholdings of native landlords for the production of staple food crops also expanded. The dispossessed peasants nationwide became restless.

Since the middle of the 19th century, a big number of native secular priests had been produced by the seminaries. They eventually demanded that they take over the parishes from the foreign missionaries, and that the latter stay in the convents of their religious orders. What arose as a secularization movement among secular priests was condemned by the Spanish regular orders and the colonial government. A theocracy practically existed in the Philippines, with the church often more powerful than the governor generals who came and went in rapid succession.

When the Cavite Mutiny of 1872 occurred in a Spanish naval stockyard, the colonial and religious officials framed up and tried as instigators of the mutiny the known leaders of the secularization movement, secular priests Mariano Gomez, Jose Burgos, and Jacinto Zamora. They were sentenced to death by garrote and were executed in 1872. Their martyrdom galvanized for the first time the national sentiment of the Filipino people against the Spanish colonial authorities and the Spanish religious orders.

Before the 1880s, Filipino students in various professional courses (medical, legal, engineering, etc.) increased. Some of them who resented the authoritarian system in the Catholic schools left for Spain. They imbibed the influences of the French revolution and the Spanish enlightenment. They formed in Madrid the Propaganda Movement in the 1880s advocating such reforms as making the Philippines a regular province of Spain and letting the people enjoy democratic rights.

La Liga Filipina was established in Manila in 1892 to pursue the reforms advocated by the Propaganda Movement. The Spanish authorities arrested and exiled the leader Dr. Jose Rizal. The crackdown on La Liga Filipina inspired the formation of the Katipunan which vowed to rise up in arms for national independence from Spain. The Katipunan, led by Andres Bonifacio, launched a series of armed uprisings in Manila and its environs in 1896. Thus the Philippine democratic revolution started.

The guiding ideology was bourgeois liberal democratic. It called for national independence from Spanish colonialism and the end of feudalism, especially the dissolution of the friar estates. It was espoused by patriots and progressives among the workers, peasants, and the university-educated youth. They were strongly anti-clerical and were most averse to the friars of the religious orders and to the colonial officials. But they generally considered themselves Christians and called for a Filipino church. It may be said therefore that the Christians were on the opposing sides of revolution and counterrevolution.

The old democratic revolution of 1896 achieved national independence from Spanish colonialism in 1898. The Malolos Constitution of 1899 followed the template of the liberal democratic constitution. It provided for the separation of Church and State. But national independence was short-lived as US imperialism intervened and launched a war of aggression on 4 February 1899. The Constitutional provision on Church-State separation was then suspended for the duration of the war by the cabinet of the revolutionary government on the argument that the Filipino priests of the Catholic church were the most effective collectors of financial and other material resources for the revolution.

The revolutionary government had its own vicar general Rev. Gregorio Aglipay. He had been sent by the Spanish Bishop Nozaleda to offer a peace settlement to the revolutionary government. But instead he declared loyalty to the Philippine revolution and was appointed the vicar general. He considered the Philippine revolution a just war against colonial oppression and social injustice. He led a guerrilla force in his home province of Ilocos Norte to assault the US military garrison in Laoag. All Filipino secular priests in areas governed by the revolutionary forces declared their independence from the Spanish religious authorities, and of course from the colonial government.

As soon as they conquered the Philippines, the US colonial authorities moved to persuade the Catholic Church and the religious orders to replace the Spanish friars with Filipino secular priests in parishes, and to phase out gradually the Spanish friars in religious orders and schools with American or Irish priests. The Catholic church has remained dominant, with 85 percent of the population baptized by it.

The priests who followed the leadership of Aglipay established the Philippine Independent Church in 1902. This covers some four percent of the population. To this day, it is the largest Christian church outside of the Roman Catholic church. The US colonial period opened the way to the entry of various Protestant denominations that share among them some five percent of the population.

II. New democratic revolution

The US imperialists defeated the old democratic revolution mainly with the use of superior arms and extreme brutality. They massacred 10 percent or 700,000 of the Philippine population during the Filipino-American War which formally ended in 1902. They continued to inflict on the Filipino people another 800,000 death casualties up to 1915.

US imperialism had also a high capacity for deception. In the course of its war of aggression, it proclaimed a policy of benevolent assimilation to the revolutionary leaders and the people. It declared that it had no other aim but to further civilize and Christianize the people, and to teach them democracy for the purpose of self-rule. It

used the language of bourgeois liberalism to coopt the leadership of the revolution.

The US established a colonial rule different from the old style colonialism of Spain involving sheer plunder. It represented a new kind of colonialism involving the extraction of superprofits through investments. It had the resources and the needs of monopoly capitalism. It expanded the plantations for export crops, opened the mines, and engaged in a limited amount of manufacturing. It established the public school system and improved the infrastructure for expanding domestic and foreign trade.

It has developed a semifeudal economic system among the natives since the first decade of the 20th century. The urban-based big compradors and the rural-based landlords have served as the ruling classes. They comprise fractions of one percent of the population. The size of the middle bourgeoisie has stagnated as a fraction of one percent and the urban petty bourgeoisie has grown to eight percent. The industrial proletariat has risen from a small percentage to some 16-17 percent. The peasantry has gone down from a high of 90 percent to 75 percent.

The growth of the proletariat and the trade union movement paved the way for the establishment of the Communist Party of the Philippine Islands under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism in 1930. The US colonial regime tried to suppress this party as soon as it was established by imprisoning and exiling the leaders. But the Great Depression and the ever worsening social conditions goaded the workers and peasants to undertake strikes and mass protests.

After World War II broke out, the merger party of the Communist and Socialist parties and the mass movement built a people's army and local organs of political power, carried out land reform, and fought the Japanese invaders. After the war, the US and the local exploiting classes unleashed violent actions against the communists, the people's army, and the people, compelling them to fight back and declare an armed revolution.

In 1946, the US gave up direct colonial rule, granted nominal independence to the Philippines, and passed on functions of national administration to the politicians of competing factions of the local ruling classes of big compradors and landlords. Thus, the Philippines became a semicolony, with the US retaining its military bases, the property rights of its citizens and corporations, and its strategic dominance over the Philippine state, its economy, politics, culture, defense, and international relations.

The semifeudal economy persisted characterized by the exploitation of the toiling masses of workers and peasants, production of raw materials for export and import of manufactures mainly for consumption. Politics remained a revolving game for factions of the local exploiting classes. The dominant culture was a mixture and compromise of cultural imperialism and Christianity of the reactionary kind. The Philippine military continued its dependence on US indoctrination, planning, intelligence, and supply of war materiel. The Philippine government robotically followed US policy.

In the 1960s, the crisis of the Philippine ruling system worsened, with the exhaustion of the land frontier for peasant resettlement and the lack of industrial development causing mass unemployment and widespread poverty. The broad masses of the people called for fundamental social change to lift them from poverty and misery. The anti-imperialist and anti-feudal mass movement grew. The Marcos regime became more violent in suppressing the mass movement and saw the conditions opportune for a fascist dictatorship.

The proletarian revolutionaries recognized the worsening social conditions and the need for an armed revolution. They separated from the old merger party of the Communist and Socialist parties in April 1966. They criticized, repudiated, and rectified the errors of this party. They reestablished the Communist Party of the Philippines on 26 December 1968 under the theoretical guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. They proclaimed the Program for a People's Democratic Revolution. They organized the New People's Army on 29 March 1969 with the aim of overthrowing the big comprador-landlord government, and replacing it with a people's democratic government.

The Communist Party of the Philippines constituted itself as the advanced detachment of the proletariat – the leading class in the new democratic revolution and the consequent socialist revolution. It recruited its cadres and members from the ranks of workers and progressive youth activists who wished to remould themselves as proletarian revolutionaries. It deployed the proletarian revolutionaries to the countryside to arouse, organize and mobilize the peasantry as the main force of the revolution and as the inexhaustible support for the people's war. It regarded the urban petty bourgeoisie a basic revolutionary force but no longer as the leading force as in the old democratic revolution. It also sought to win over the middle bourgeoisie on grounds of patriotism, despite the latter's distrust for the toiling masses.

The program of the new democratic revolution holds US imperialism and the local exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords as responsible for the semicolonial and semifeudal character of Philippine society. In the political field, it demands national independence and democratic rights, including respect for civil liberties, the solution of the land problem, and the empowerment of the workers and peasants. In the economic field, it demands social justice and economic development through land reform and national industrialization. In the cultural field, it demands a patriotic, scientific, and pro-people system of education and culture. In foreign relations, it seeks solidarity and cooperation with all peoples and countries for peace and development.

All the demands in the program of the new democratic revolution uphold, defend and promote the national and democratic rights and interests of the entire Filipino people, especially the toiling masses of workers and peasants, irrespective of their religious beliefs, their ethno-linguistic affinity, ancestry, color of skin, and gender. For emphasis, let me state that Christians and other religious believers, have the fundamental right to freedom of thought and belief. This right is clearly enshrined in the revolutionary constitution, the Guide to Establishing the People's Democratic Government.

The strategic line of protracted people's war, which involves encircling the cities by the revolutionary forces in the countryside, and accumulating strength here until conditions are ripe for seizing the cities, has been adopted by the CPP and the NPA for two reasons. First, it gives full play to the role of the peasants as main force of the democratic revolution. Second, it is the way to enable the people's army to grow from small to big and from weak to strong, and avoid being decisively destroyed in one uprising or one battle by a far superior enemy military force. All forces of the new democratic revolution, including the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army, the National Democratic Front, the revolutionary mass organizations, and the organs of democratic power, recognize that more than 90 percent of the population are Christians, and that the new democratic revolution cannot be won without the participation and support of the Christians. Thus, the Christians for National Liberation has been initiated to engage the Christians as such, and give full play to their participation and support in the Philippine revolution.

The CNL has played a highly significant role in promoting ecumenism by uniting within the revolutionary movement the faithfuls of the Roman Catholic Church, the Philippine Independent Church, and various Protestant denominations; by developing mutual understanding between Christians and Muslims; by opposing Christian chauvinism so-called and other un-Christian phenomena engendered by colonial history and continuing bigotry; and by realizing the dialogue and cooperation between religious believers and nonbelievers.

While guided by dialectical and historical materialism in their revolutionary practice, the communists in the Philippines have a high level of discipline, and code of social behavior. They respect freedom of conscience and do not impose their ideology on others. When others differ from them in opinion, they prefer to listen and learn first, and then patiently explain their side for the purpose of mutual understanding and cooperation.

They avoid deflection of the issues of national and social liberation towards a heated debate of religious issues above the social needs and demands of the people. But they happily welcome and agree with any attempt to develop the dialogue and cooperation between them and the Christians in their obedience to the second great commandment to love and serve the people in consonance with their love of God above all.

III. Christians for National Liberation

The Christians for National Liberation (CNL) was founded at the worship room of the Sampaloc University Center in Manila on 17 February, 1972 on the anniversary of the martyrdom of Fathers Gomez, Burgos and Zamora. Seventy-two revolutionary disciples of Christ gathered to bear the "cross of sacrifice" and raise the "red banner of revolution". They described themselves as a revolutionary organization of church people who had been challenged by social realities and their Christian faith to take part in the new democratic revolution under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines and in accordance with the Program for a People's Democratic Revolution. They adopted the battle cry, "Love your neighbor. Serve the people."

The founding process extended to the general assembly that was held at the Assumption Convent in Herran, Manila on 19-20 August 1972, a full month before the Marcos regime declared martial law and imposed a fascist dictatorship on the Filipino people. The nearly 250 delegates included priests, nuns, pastors, seminarians, novices, and church militants involved in social action projects in urban and rural communities. They elected the National Executive Board of the CNL.

The CNL officers and members arose from and developed in the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal or national

democratic movement from the late 1960s to 1972. They were motivated by a high sense of patriotism sharpened by renewed studies of the Philippine revolution of 1896, the current dismal conditions, and the urgent need for continuing the Philippine revolution. They wanted to end the semicolonial and semifeudal conditions. They wanted national and social liberation from the evils of foreign domination, domestic feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism. Like the rest of Filipino patriots and progressives, they were also inspired by the revolutionary resistance of the Vietnamese and other Indochinese people against the US war of aggression.

They were appalled and challenged by the ever worsening social crisis, the increasing violence of the Marcos regime towards mass protests, and apparent scheme of the regime to impose a fascist dictatorship on the people. They deemed it necessary to fight for democracy not only in the sense of upholding civil and political liberties but also in realizing the substance of democracy through land reform for the benefit of the peasant majority of the people. They desired the end of the conditions of underdevelopment and the start of genuine development through land reform and national industrialization.

The Catholics, the members of the Philippine Independent Church, and the Protestants all used the Bible as the source of inspiration. They had their respective theological authorities to support their commitment to the cause of national and social liberation. Certainly, the Catholics found wider new ground in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. The book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paolo Freire became available in English translation in 1970, and influenced those who became members of the CNL. It was well ahead of the book *A Theology of Liberation* by Gustavo Gutierrez which was published in English by Orbis only in 1973. The book *Rules for Radicals* of Saul Alinsky also influenced those Christians who engaged in community work. The Filipino Redemptorist, Fr. Luis Hechanova advocated the Theology of Struggle and wrote a pamphlet on this.

The CNL departed from the conservative tradition and position of the institutional church and hierarchy. It called for the church of the people, especially for the poor, deprived, and oppressed. It propagated conscientization and preferential option for the poor. The lower clergy joined the CNL and consciously distanced themselves from the mindset and actuations of an institutional church that owns substantial land and stocks in major corporations, and that provides services mainly to the exploiting classes. In the shift from the Spanish to the US colonial period, the Catholic Church retained their property rights and gained capital for corporate investments from the sale of friar estates which came under the US-instituted land reform program.

The religious and church workers that comprised the CNL also differentiated themselves from the reformist tradition cultivated by the American Jesuits since the 1930s to propagate the social encyclicals of the church, advocate social reforms, and carry out social action with the objective of improving upon and preserving the ruling system, and preventing the communists from winning the people and taking power. The American Jesuit, Fr. Walter Hogan became prominent in the Philippines for establishing the Institute of Social Order which trained the organizers of the Federation of Free Workers and the Federation of Free Farmers starting in the 1950s, in order to seize the initiative as the state cracked down on the suspected communist organizations of workers and peasants. They also pushed for the enactment of the Anti-Subversion Law to target suspected communists.

Special mention must be made of the Student Christian Movement of the Philippines, based in the state-owned University of the Philippines, in the university belt in Manila and the Protestant colleges and universities. It studied and published articles against US domination and the unjust social system in the Philippines. The KHI Rho, a militant Catholic youth and student organization, declared itself a national democratic organization. It promoted the line of the new democratic revolution not only in the Catholic schools and the National Union of Students of the Philippines but also worked to win over to the line such organizations as the Federation of Free Workers and Federation of Free Farmers. It actively opposed the rabid anti-communist line of Fr. Jose Blanco, S.J.

The officers and members of the CNL studied the documents of the Communist Party of the Philippines, especially the Program for a People's Democratic Revolution and Amado Guerrero's Philippine Society and Revolution, and engaged the communists in dialogues for mutual understanding and cooperation in the social, economic, political, and cultural fields. The Christian side did not oblige the Communists to study Christian theology. Neither did the Communists oblige the Christians to study Marxism-Leninism. But certainly in the course of ever continuing dialogue, each side took interest in studying the principles of the other side, in appreciating the desire of the other side to join the cause of national and social liberation, and in creating the bridge of cooperation.

The Communists learned more deeply than ever about the faith and good works of the Christians. They distinguished the good Christians from the bad ones among the exploiting classes, who used religion as an opium to

delude themselves and the people. On the other hand, the Christians learned to appreciate materialist dialectics and class analysis as tools for understanding and solving social problems and for changing society. Many do so without having to give up their religious faith. Some priest friends of mine also said that they accepted historical materialism but not dialectical materialism.

When Marcos declared martial law on September 21, 1972, the CNL played an important role in opposing the fascist dictatorship and in providing refuge and facilities to many people, especially the activists, who were targeted for arrest and detention. They also helped families in asking the military for the whereabouts of people arrested and detained, and in providing humanitarian aid and legal counsel to those in need. They did so even as then Cardinal Rufino Santos supported the proclamation of martial law and declared that it be given a chance to carry out reforms.

The CNL joined the National Democratic Front of the Philippines when it was established on 24 April 1973 as a united front of patriotic and progressive forces committed to work for the unity of the broad masses of the Filipino people in fighting the US-directed Marcos fascist dictatorship. It cooperated with the organizations that sought its help. It deployed CNL members to strengthen the urban underground. It played a key role in encouraging and supporting the La Tondeña workers' strike in 1975, and the consequent nationwide wave of workers' strikes in 300 workplaces that extended up to 1976.

It authorized CNL members to work in the countryside in order to do religious work and mass work, or join the New People's Army and become spokespersons or communicators to the people. Many priests, nuns, pastors and seminarians became communists and even joined the NPA in the course of working with communists and Red fighters in serving the people and fighting the enemy. There is a long list of martyrs and heroes who were religious and chose to become revolutionary fighters. There is also long list of religious who became political prisoners.

In the broad united front of the religious promoted by the CNL, the secular priests in the Philippine Priests Incorporated and the Association of Major Religious Superiors made significant contributions to the people's struggle against the Marcos fascist dictatorship. Many social action centers of the Catholic Church adopted the national democratic orientation and enjoyed the support of Bishop Julio X. Labayen and Fr. Luis Hechanova, head and executive director of the National Secretariat of Social Action (NASSA). Bishop Labayen inspired and supported the Basic Christian Communities-Community Organizing which became targets of propaganda and physical attacks by the military minions of the fascist dictatorship.

Archbishop Jaime Sin took over the archdiocese of Manila when Cardinal Santos died in 1973. By then, human rights violations had become rampant and more bloody, with forced disappearances, torture, and extrajudicial killings victimizing oppositionists, trade unionists, and peasant leaders, who were affiliated with the church and who were not at all connected to the revolutionary movement. The CNL played a significant role in persuading Cardinal Sin and the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines to criticize the fascist regime and demand justice for the victims of human rights violations.

However, Cardinal Sin would only proclaim a policy of critical collaboration towards the Marcos fascist regime. This policy would come to an end only on 13 February 1986 when the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines issued a pastoral letter declaring the regime illegitimate and immoral after the farcical snap presidential election of 1986. In accordance with their own respective reasons, the Catholic and other Christian churches, the conservative opposition forces, the Communist Party of the Philippines, the US, sections of the reactionary armed forces, the chambers of commerce and industry, and other forces, converged on the decision to overthrow the Marcos regime. The broad masses of the people carried out gigantic mass actions in the national capital region and in the provinces to put the fascist dictatorship to an end.

IV. Continuance of the new democratic revolution and people's war

The downfall of the Marcos dictatorship did not result in the national and social liberation of the Filipino people. The ruling system of big compradors and landlords under US hegemony remained intact. From the monopoly of political power and bureaucratic loot, there was a swing back with a vengeance to the oligarchy of factions competing for power and wealth, and masquerading as democracy.

Every post-Marcos regime has been characterized by puppetry to US imperialism, collaboration with foreign and local exploiters, bureaucratic corruption, brutality, and gross human rights violations. It is therefore not surprising that the Filipino people and the revolutionary forces have persevered in the new democratic revolution

through protracted people's war, and that every post-Marcos regime has failed to destroy the armed revolutionary movement.

In the course of the struggle against the Marcos fascist dictatorship, a broad range of opposition forces had an understanding that, immediately after the overthrow of Marcos, there would be a peace agreement between the Manila government and the revolutionary forces represented by the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. In accordance with such understanding, the revolutionary forces represented by the National Democratic Front of the Philippines discreetly reminded President Corazon Aquino of their willingness to negotiate an agreement for a just and lasting peace.

But Aquino was interested merely in a ceasefire agreement to allow her to consolidate her power. She had no interest in an agreement to address the roots of the armed conflict through basic social, economic, and political reforms. At any rate, the NDFP agreed with the Aquino regime in November 1986 to have a 60-day ceasefire to work out the agenda for substantive peace negotiations. Before the ceasefire agreement ran out, Aquino allowed her security forces to massacre peasant demonstrators in front of her palace on 23 January 1987, and then, in her own words, "unsheathed the sword of war" against the revolutionary forces on 22 March 1987, instead of investigating and finding out which military officers were culpable for the massacre.

When hard pressed by the mutinous military group called Reform the Armed Forces of the Philippines and by the worsening social and political crisis in the Philippines in 1989, she sent a series of emissaries to the NDFP to express her desire for peace negotiations. But she relented in December 1990 from exploratory talks. It would be her presidential successor Gen. Fidel Ramos who would seek peace negotiations more seriously in 1992.

The Manila government and the NDFP signed The Hague Joint Declaration on 01 September 1992 as the framework agreement for conducting the peace negotiations. This stipulates that the roots of the armed conflict are to be addressed by basic reforms in order to lay the basis for just and lasting peace; that national sovereignty, democracy, and social justice are the mutually acceptable principles guiding the negotiations; and that no side shall make any precondition that negate the character and purpose of negotiations. It sets forth the substantive agenda to be negotiated in sequence, namely: 1. respect for human rights and international humanitarian law; 2. social and economic reforms; 3. political and constitutional reforms; and 4. end of hostilities and disposition of forces. The Hague Joint Declaration also lays down the method of forging the comprehensive agreements through the formation of reciprocal working committees.

Before the end of the Ramos regime, the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) was signed by the Negotiating Panels on 16 March 1998. The NDFP principal, Comrade Mariano Orosa, immediately approved it on 10 April 1998, while Ramos hesitated to approve it. It was his presidential successor Joseph Estrada who approved the agreement on 7 August 1998. However, since then, the Estrada and succeeding regimes continuously put up obstacles in violation of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) and CARHRIHL in order to prevent the negotiation on social and economic reforms.

The Christians for National Liberation and the broad masses of Christians have strongly supported the new democratic revolution through protracted people's war, the legal and peaceful democratic mass movement, and the campaign for a just and lasting peace. Bishops of the Catholic Church, the Philippine Independent Church, the Protestant denominations, and the lower clergy outside of the CNL have been calling for upholding national sovereignty and the national patrimony, social justice, respect for human rights, protection of the environment, and a just and lasting peace. During every regime of the Manila government, bishops have used their conferences and special bodies, like the Ecumenical Bishops Forum, Pilgrims for Peace and Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform, to call for peace negotiations and to serve as bridge between the Manila government and NDFP. The revolutionary forces and people represented by the NDFP are ever ready for serious peace negotiations to forge agreements with the Manila government for a just and lasting peace. But because this government refuses to address the roots of the civil war through peace negotiations, the revolutionary forces are justified to wage the new democratic revolution through protracted people's war. Along this general line, the revolutionary forces are currently pursuing their strategic plan of advancing from the stage of strategic defensive to that of the strategic stalemate. The Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army, the revolutionary mass organizations of workers, peasants, youth, women, children, and cultural activists, and the organs of democratic power are strengthening themselves. In the course of the people's war, they are carrying out programs and campaigns to improve the

conditions and lives of the people through self-organization, public education, health care, land reform, economic production, self-defense, arbitration of people's disputes, cultural upliftment, gender equality, and environmental protection.

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**IN RELATION TO PHILIPPINE DEVELOPMENT ISSUES READ AT THE INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

at the Utrecht University, November 17, 2014

I thank Prof. Robert Fletcher and the International Development Studies Program for the invitation to speak on the role of activism in relation to development issues in the Philippines. Let me try to you give a brief introduction on the basic problems of economic underdevelopment in the Philippines and the program of action for economic development being proposed and demanded by three types of activism associated with the legal national democratic movement, the people's democratic revolution and the movement for a just and lasting peace. Mr. Luis Jalandoni, Chief International Representative and Chairperson of the Panel of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) Negotiating with the Panel of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP), will speak on the minimum and maximum programs of land reform in relation to the people's democratic revolution which integrates armed struggle, land reform and mass base building. Ms. Julieta de Lima, Chairperson of the NDFP Committee on Social and Economic Reforms negotiating with its counterpart in the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations, will speak on economic sovereignty, genuine land reform, national industrialization and social justice being demanded by the peace movement and the people.

The Philippines is an archipelagic country east of the Asian mainland, north of Indonesia and south of Japan. It has a population of more than 100 million and a workforce of 59 million. It has rich natural resources, including 14 out of the 16 mineral ores necessary for industrial development. But the Filipino people are poor consigned to an underdeveloped, agrarian, pre-industrial and semifeudal economy, despite the abundance of Filipino professionals, scientists, technologists and skilled workers. More than 10 percent of the population or more than 20 percent of the workforce have to look for work abroad and are in more than 120 countries.

The Philippines has a current GDP of USD 272 billion. The GDP per capita of USD 2790 puts the Philippines at the 126th spot. Because of the inflow of hot money or portfolio investments, there was a rise of the GDP by 6.8 percent in 2012 and 7.2 percent in 2013. This has led the multilateral agencies, hedge funds and the business journalists to hype the Philippines as a newly-industrialized country, an emergent market or a tiger cub economy. The false illusion of industrialization is conjured by teaming up the output values of the service and industry sectors at 54.4 percent and 33 percent respectively against that of agriculture at 12.3 percent and the work force distribution of 52 percent and 15 percent in the service and industry sectors against 33 percent in agriculture. But the service and industry sectors are heavily dependent on foreign debt and imported equipment and fuel, add low values and are consumption-oriented.

Let me give you a bit of history. The Filipino people underwent more than three centuries of Spanish colonial rule and became the first Asian people to overthrow a Western colonial power in 1898. But the US launched an imperialist war of aggression in 1899 and imposed colonial rule on the Philippines. Despite the nominal grant of independence in 1946, the US continues to dominate the Philippines as a semicolony (if you wish to stress political control) or as a neocolony (if you wish to stress the economic and financial control). The domination is done through unequal treaties, agreements and arrangements in the political, economic, financial, security and other spheres.

Let me give you a view of the social structure. The ruling classes in the Philippines are the comprador big bourgeoisie based in the big cities and the landlord class based in the expanse of the countryside. They are the main exploiting classes and are merely 1 percent of the population. The intermediate social strata are middle bourgeoisie and urban petty bourgeoisie which are 1 and 7 percent of the population, respectively. The basic exploited classes are the working class and the peasantry, which are 16 and 75 percent, respectively.

The high officials of the Philippines are essentially political representatives of the aforesaid ruling classes. They do compete as factional groups in periodic elections but they are bound to adopt and implement social and economic policies that harmonize the interests of the US and multilateral agencies and the local exploiting classes. They have been called the bureaucrat capitalists serving as brokers between the foreign monopoly capitalism and domestic feudalism. Whether they take the form of autocracy or an oligarchy, these bureaucrat capitalists

equally oppress and exploit the people.

Under the auspices of neocolonialism, we have some industries dependent on imported equipment and fuel. We have undertaken reassembly and repacking enterprises, token land reform and graft-ridden infrastructure building since the 1950s. We have gone through the First UN Development Decade of the 1960s and the Second Development Decade of the 1970s, with the IMF looking after the financial subordination of the Philippines to the US and other developed countries and the World Bank financing graft-ridden infrastructure programs and projects to facilitate the traditional exchange of raw material exports and manufactured imports. The UN development decades coincided with the Marcos fascist dictatorship prolonging the import-substitution assembly plants and eventually paving the way for the reexport-oriented semimanufacturing enterprises in export-processing zones.

The basic problems of foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism have persisted. These have been aggravated under the auspices of neoliberalism which has resulted in increased investment privileges for multinational firms and banks, privatization of public assets, deregulation and denationalization of the economy. Under the neoliberal policy dictated by the US to the post-Marcos regimes, the WTO has drawn the Philippines to “free trade” agreements at the global and regional levels, multilaterally and bilaterally. The Philippines to some extent has been one of those underdeveloped countries favored at times with money and credit flows for private construction booms and reexport-oriented semimanufacturing of semiconductors and basic consumer goods like garments, footwear and subsequently hard hit by the global financial and economic crisis.

The Philippines is chronically beset by foreign trade deficits and mounting foreign debt because of the unequal exchange of imported manufactures on one hand and the exported raw materials and semimanufactures on the other hand. The construction of high rise buildings, the accelerated export of mineral and plantation crops and the remittances of overseas contract workers have not resulted in industrial development but in further underdevelopment. Budgetary deficits have also grown because of economic stagnation and wastage of public funds in bureaucratic corruption and military expenditures.

The underdeveloped Philippine economy is in a chronic state of crisis. This is well manifested by widespread poverty, high rates of unemployment, landlessness, ever decreasing levels of income, soaring prices of basic goods and services, grossly inadequate social services (in education, health, housing, poverty alleviation, disaster relief and so on) and the ever deteriorating infrastructure. The dire economic and social conditions, the exploitativeness and repressiveness of the ruling system have made the Philippines a fertile ground for social activism.

In 1958 when I was a graduate student and teaching fellow at the University of the Philippines, I was among the students who wrote patriotic and progressive articles and formed a student organization to demand full national independence and democracy, social justice, economic development through land reform and national industrialization, a patriotic and progressive culture and international solidarity with peoples fighting against imperialism and reaction. We succeeded in reviving anti-imperialist and anti-feudal protest actions and generating a significant national democratic movement among students nationwide by 1961.

We proceeded to bring our political and organizational work to the toiling masses of workers and peasants. In 1962 we joined the research and education department of the Workers’ Party and we conducted seminars among the trade unions. We were also able to establish connections with peasant associations and provided them with refresher courses on land reform and the national democratic movement. By 1964 we were able to establish the Patriotic Youth, a comprehensive organization of students and young workers, peasants, teachers and other professionals.

By 1966 we formed a united front organization for workers, peasants, youth, women, professionals, patriotic businessmen, bourgeois national members of Congress and progressive religious. We were able to hold mass actions with as many 25,000 participants. We consistently demanded the abrogation of unequal treaties, agreements and arrangements with the US, especially in the economic and military spheres, and the adoption of policies for land reform and industrialization. We joined the workers in their strikes against particular employers and against government policies. We also joined the peasants in demanding genuine land reform.

Our demands were not heeded by those in power, although we were allowed extremely limited time to express our views in public congressional hearings and in the bourgeois mass media. By 1968 we were confronted by increasingly repressive measures. We raised the level of our activism from entirely legal forms of struggle to revolutionary armed struggle without giving up or opposing the patriotic and progressive forces that carry out legal

struggle, including electoral struggle and struggle in court against human rights violations in the political, civil, economic, social and cultural fields.

We reestablished the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and we issued the Program for a People's Democratic Revolution. We have consistently called for economic sovereignty, social justice and economic development through land reform and national industrialization. We have considered land reform as the main content of the democratic revolution because it spells the economic, social and political liberation of the peasant majority of the people. We stressed the complementary relationship of land reform and national industrialization. The open secret about the CPP being able to wage a protracted people's war is the persistence of gross exploitation and rampant poverty and the success of the CPP and the peasant movement in carrying out agrarian revolution in stages.

The Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army, the mass organizations and the local organs of political power grew in strength as fascist dictatorship was imposed by Marcos on the people from 1972 to 1986. As soon as Marcos fell, the revolutionary forces were ready to negotiate peace with those who came to power. But the worst reactionaries have so far succeeded in fouling up the possibility of peace by being far more interested in the capitulation and pacification of the revolutionary than in addressing the roots of the civil war with agreements on social, economic and political reforms.

Even then, the NDFP as representative of the revolutionary forces and people is ever ready to resume formal talks in peace negotiations. It appreciates the rise of one more form of activism undertaken by peace advocates and people from various classes and sectors who demand that the Manila government and the NDFP pursue the peace negotiations seriously in accordance with The Hague Joint Declaration of 1992 and succeeding agreements. The peace movement reflects the clamor of the people for social, economic and political reforms as the basis of a just and lasting peace.

As the social and economic crisis is worsening in the Philippines, it is urgent to resume the negotiations on social and economic reforms. The NDFP has submitted its 50-page draft of the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms since a long time ago. Development issues are addressed in this draft. They refer to the problems of foreign economic domination, persistence of feudal and semifeudal exploitation and bureaucratic corruption.

The solutions are spelled out, such as upholding economic sovereignty, conservation of the national patrimony, wise utilization of natural resources, land reform, national industrialization, immediate provision of livelihood and employment and expansion of social services. The NDFP continues to hope that said solutions can be realized by the combined strength and cooperation of the now conflicting forces.

Foreword to Louie Jalandoni: Revolutionary January 18, 2015

I am delighted and honored to give the foreword to this book on the pre-revolutionary background and revolutionary record of my beloved comrades, Louie Jalandoni and Coni Ledesma. I have personally known and worked with them since 1974, more than forty years ago. Their struggles, sacrifices and achievements in the service of the Filipino people, especially the toiling masses, are comprehensively covered, filled with gripping insights and presented in a unique artistic way through illustrations.

Even before meeting Louie, I had known about his revolutionary commitment and dedicated work from the Eastern Visayas regional secretary of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) when he came to Luzon to report to the CPP Central Committee in January 1973. The first time I met Louie and Coni was in Nueva Ecija in 1974, soon after their release from military detention.

They were already tempered in the revolutionary struggle. They had advanced from being Christian militants in social action among the farm workers of Negros to being full-fledged revolutionaries by raising the level of their social consciousness through studies and mass work, becoming candidate members of the Communist Party of the Philippines and becoming founders and officers of the Christians for National Liberation.

To paraphrase a familiar expression, it was “work at first sight” that bound me with Louie and Coni. So many hours passed unnoticed, as we discussed what work could be done to advance the mass movement against the Marcos fascist dictatorship. In several meetings, together with Julie, we developed concrete plans to defend and assist the political prisoners, carry out a people's referendum to isolate the regime, encourage the bishops to uphold human rights, promote social investigation and produce educational materials for the workers and peasants.

Louie and Coni conscientiously implemented the plans with great success in cooperation with other comrades. Since the beginning of our cooperation with them, Julie and I have observed their revolutionary resoluteness and courage, their high level of intelligence and education, their militancy and diligence, their sense of self-sacrifice, their humility and simple life style and readiness for anonymous revolutionary work. They have all the attributes of the excellent communist cadre.

To augment and strengthen the communications system of the CPP between Luzon and the Visayas as well as with Mindanao, Louie organized the Frogmen who belonged to foreign religious orders and who had become CPP members. They were effective not only in nationwide communications but also in special operations to secure the safe accommodation and mobility of responsible comrades. They assisted me a number of times to move from one region to another as well as to escape enemy encirclement operations.

Louie and Coni maintained close but discreet relations with the assigned responsables in the CPP organizations in the national capital region and the Visayas. They provided help whenever necessary and possible within their capacity. Louie handed to me a large amount of money, consisting of cash gifts at his wedding with Coni. The amount helped the revolutionary movement in the Cordillera. Louie was also chiefly responsible for initiating the development of partnership between people's organizations and foreign institutions interested in supporting community and other social projects.

Louie and Coni were highly qualified to become the international representatives of the National Democratic Front. Thus, the leadership of the CPP and the NDFP duly appointed them for international work in Europe, with Louie as the chief international representative of the NDFP. Julie and I had the distinct honor of confirming their appointment and bidding them goodbye at a barrio in Mexico, Pampanga in 1976.

We had continuous communications with them until we were captured in November 1977. We knew about their successful initial efforts at establishing solidarity relations in several countries in Europe. We were able to send them the elaboration of the NDFP Guidelines into a full program. When Julie was released from detention in 1982, we came to know about the great success of Louie in organizing the overseas Filipinos, developing solidarity relations with foreign friends and undertaking projects like the trial of Marcos and his fascist cohorts before the Permanent People's Tribunal in Antwerp in 1981.

We reunited with Louie and Coni when we came to The Netherlands in January 1987 in the course of our global lecture tour. They were the most responsible for our lecture tour in Europe. We were able to go to the universities, Filipino communities and solidarity organizations in more than 20 countries in Europe from 1987 to 1988. We presented the basic history of the Philippines, the current problems, struggles and prospects of the Filipino people.

The NDFP international office became our base for our tour. A Dutch comrade close to Louie and Coni helped

me to get a position as research consultant in a department at the University of Utrecht. I had the opportunity to write a book and articles. Then in September 1988, the Cory Aquino government cancelled my Philippine passport for the purpose of shutting me up and forcing my return to the Philippines. Louie and Coni advised me and helped me to get an asylum lawyer and to apply for political asylum.

Within the framework of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), we have worked with them in undertaking and participating in information and educational meetings, press conferences, seminars and conferences on Philippine and global issues and in issuing publications in the form of periodicals, books, articles and web postings. We have promoted the Filipino people's struggle for national and social liberation. We have played our respective roles in connection with the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations since the initial approaches of the Cory Aquino regime in 1989.

As chairperson of the NDFP negotiating panel, Louie has adhered to revolutionary principles and exercised flexibility on policy matters and brilliantly and fruitfully led the negotiations and come to a number of agreements with the Manila government. We worked together for the success of the Second Great Rectification Movement in the 1990s. We upheld the basic principles and strategic line of the revolutionary movement and fought hard against those who wanted to condone and cover up serious errors of line and crimes like *Kampanyang Aho*s which were committed in the 1990s.

Louie and Coni have given me and Julie the strongest support by generating campaigns in my support whenever I am under vicious enemy attack, such as the frequent campaigns of vilification, the persistent refusal of the Dutch government to grant me political asylum (despite judicial recognition as a political refugee since 1992), the assassination plots directed from Manila in 2000, the blacklisting as a terrorist and violation of certain rights and withdrawal of social benefits since 2002 and my arrest, seizure of personal papers and my detention on false charges of murder in 2007.

At this point, after trying to show how Julie and I have worked with Louie and Coni and have been the beneficiary of their cooperation and support, let me round up and state some of the outstanding contributions that they have made so far to the struggle of the Filipino people for national liberation and democracy.

1. Before and after falling in love with Coni, Louie demonstrated how to do mass work and strike deep roots among the sugar workers in sharp contrast to the failure of the first team dispatched by the CPP to organize in Negros in 1969.

2. Louie and Coni excelled in united front work, encouraged and developed priests and nuns to join the Christians for National Liberation, cooperated well with those belonging to other Christian denominations and inspired a significant number of the religious to join the CPP and the NPA.

3. They helped in strengthening the secure communications system of the CPP Central Committee in the crucial year of 1975 when the National Liaison Committee was practically dismantled by the enemy.

4. They showed determination and courage when they were arrested and imprisoned and used their detention as a revolutionary school for raising their theoretical and political level and for developing lasting comradely relations with other political prisoners.

5. They excelled in the representation of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines among overseas Filipino and in relations with foreign parties, organizations, movements and government agencies and in building solidarity relations in Europe in contrast to the Bruce Occeña clique which disorganized the work of the *Katipunan ng Demokratikong Pilipino* from 1977 onwards.

6. They stood up and fought for the Second Great Rectification Movement and fended off the attacks on the basic principles and strategic line of the revolutionary movement and the attempts to condone and cover up serious errors and crimes. In this connection, they worked for strengthening the international work of the CPP and NDFP.

7. Louie as chairperson of the NDFP negotiating panel and Coni as panel member, international spokesperson of *Makibaka* and head of the NDFP Special Committee on Children have set the highest standard for negotiating and making agreements by being firm on revolutionary principles and flexible on matters of policy.

The book succeeds in presenting all the foregoing achievements in the service of the Filipino people and the Philippine revolution. It is a necessary, enlightening and interesting read for all those who wish to know and understand more the advance of the revolutionary forces in the Philippines and the international work done on their behalf.

Affirms Solidarity with Venezuelan People June 30, 2017

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines has released a statement reiterating their “firm solidarity” with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and “the heroic Venezuelan people” amid the ongoing Washington-led campaign to topple the socialist government of President Nicolas Maduro and the ruling United Socialist Party of Venezuela.

The revolutionary united front – which encompasses progressive militant trade unions, indigenous peoples and national minorities, student organizations and other mass organizations across the Southeast Asian archipelago – noted in their statement that the embattled government of Venezuela has “earned the solidarity of freedom-loving peoples and governments in Latin America and the Caribbean and other parts of the world.”

The NDFP, founded in 1973, also added that the strength of the Venezuelan people and government, “with the overall international solidarity support of other peoples and governments are firm and strong enough to repel any acts of subversion and attacks by the domestic reactionaries and counterrevolutionary foreign powers.” The statement was signed by veteran communist leader and former priest Luis Jalandoni.

Speaking to teleSUR English from exile in the Netherlands, Communist Party of the Philippines founding chairman and chief political consultant to the NDFP Jose Maria Sison, said that, “the Filipino people and revolutionary forces led by the Communist Party of the Philippines and represented by the National Democratic Front of the Philippines in relations with foreign governments have the highest regard for the Bolivarian Government of Venezuela, which stands and fights for the national independence and socialist aspirations of the Venezuelan people.”

“We wish the Bolivarian Government and the anti-imperialist and social accomplishments of its leadership from Comrade Hugo Chavez to Nicolas Maduro to prevail over all attempts of US imperialism and the local reactionaries to subvert and transgress the sovereign rights and interests of the Venezuelan people,” the 78-year old writer and Marxist-Leninist continued. “We have a common cause in fighting and defeating USA imperialism and the big bourgeois and landlord oligarchy.”

The NDFP statement further condemned the June 27 helicopter attack against the Venezuelan Supreme Court and other government buildings as a “terrorist attack” meant to further a “coup plot” within the country, joining a growing group of countries and mass organizations who have condemned the US-backed right-wing opposition’s increasingly violent attacks on the Bolivarian government.

“We salute the people of Venezuela and their government for resolutely and courageously fighting the enemy in order to obtain total victory,” Sison said. “They inspire the Filipino people to fight for their own national and social liberation and to extend solidarity and support to the people of Venezuela.”

ESQUIRE: During what precise period were you directly involved in the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)-New People's Army (NPA)? What was your role in the organization after your release from imprisonment in 1986 and for how long did that role last? What is your current position, if any, with the CPP-NPA?

JOSE MARIA SISON: I was the Chairman of the Central Committee of the CPP and was the over-all political officer of the NPA from the respective founding dates of the two organizations to the date of my capture by the Marcos fascist dictatorship on November 10, 1977. Since my release from military detention in 1986, I have been an academic and writer and called the Founding Chairman of the CPP by many journalists, without any objection from me because of the historicity of the title. Sometimes, I have been called the spiritual icon of the revolutionary movement. But more humbly speaking, I have been the Chief Political Consultant of the National Democratic Front Philippines (NDFP) in peace negotiations since 1992.

The Dutch courts and the European Court of Justice ruled in 2007 and 2009 respectively that I do not operate or run the CPP and NPA. In April 2013, the Government of the Philippines (GPH) through its presidential adviser on the peace process and negotiating panel chairman proclaimed that I have no influence over the CPP, NPA, and NDFP and thus decided to terminate the peace negotiations with the NDFP Negotiating Panel that is based in The Netherlands.

ESQ: What must the government do in order to resume the peace talks? What new steps would the NDFP be willing to take to enable the peace talks to resume?

JMS: The resumption of peace talks is possible. The position of the NDFP is that in principle the peace negotiations are still going on in the absence of a formal notice of termination from the GPH. The GPH can simply contact the NDFP directly or through the Royal Norwegian Government to express its desire to resume formal talks. Formal talks are done by the Negotiating Panels of the GPH and the NDFP. The NDFP does not set preconditions for such talks even as it demands compliance with existing agreements. The NDFP does not have to do anything but to wait for the approach of the GPH. It was the GPH last April which announced to the press that it was terminating the peace negotiations. At the same time, it has not given the formal notice of termination either because it arrogantly rejects all the previous agreements or it gives space for resumption of talks.

ESQ: In Latin America, many unapologetically leftist candidates have made successful presidential runs, such as Chavez of Venezuela, Morales of Bolivia, Correa of Ecuador, and even Lula of Brazil. Do you think it is possible for a candidate with a similar ideology to succeed under the prevailing electoral framework in the Philippines? Why do you think those candidates in Latin America were able to gain power through the ballot?

JMS: It is possible to have anti-imperialist and progressive presidents in the Philippines like the late Chavez, Morales and others if the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations succeed in making comprehensive agreements on social, economic, and political reforms to establish a just peace. But at the moment, the unreformed political and electoral system prevents anti-imperialist and progressive presidential candidates. Revolutionary observers say that Chavez, Morales, Correa and Lula have been successful in elections within the ruling system of the big bourgeoisie and the landlords because they are not Left enough to frighten the US and the local reactionary classes although they are Left enough to get the votes of the workers and peasants by asserting a certain measure of national independence and some social reforms. At any rate, the NDFP has been trying hard to create conditions similar to those in Venezuela and other countries in which patriots and progressives are not killed by the reactionaries but are elected by advocating national independence, democracy, social justice, development through land reform and national industrialization and a patriotic and progressive culture.

ESQ: Do you think that an anti-imperialist and progressive candidate could be democratically elected as President within the next 20 years?

JMS: Yes, within 20 years, there is more than enough time for the crises of the ruling system and global system, the relentless struggle of the people for national liberation and democracy and the peace negotiations to generate conditions for the election of a President who is anti-imperialist and progressive, as in the countries of Latin America that you have mentioned.

ESQ: You were noted for steering the Philippine communist movement away from Soviet ideology in favor of Maoist thought. How would you characterize the current Chinese leadership's adherence to communist ideology or the ideals of Mao?

JMS: The post-Mao leadership in the Chinese Communist Party is the product of the Dengist counter-revolution and the fundamental shift from the socialist road to the capitalist road. By certain measures, China has become a major capitalist power. The post-Mao leadership in China does not really adhere to the revolutionary teachings of Mao and the previous great communist thinkers and leaders. But the prestige of Mao and the Communist Party in revolutionary times is being used by the current capitalist leaders of China to legitimize their rule.

ESQ: You wrote Philippine Society and Revolution under the name Amado Guerrero. Are there any of its organizing premises which you think are no longer applicable today?

JMS: The basic description of Philippine society as semicolonial and semifeudal, the need for a people's democratic revolution, the workers, peasants, and urban petty bourgeoisie as the motive forces of the revolution, the big compradors and landlords as the main adversaries and the socialist perspective of the revolution remain valid. I do not engage in nitpicking on my own work. The basic propositions remain valid. The US and local exploiting classes would not be so much bothered about the people's democratic revolution if this has lost its validity. The bankruptcy of the neoliberal economic policy has brought about a crisis that is comparable to the Great Depression and is generating social turmoil, wars of aggression and revolutionary wars on a global scale.

ESQ: Philippine Society and Revolution strongly articulates the imbalance of Philippine-US relations, as they had existed since 1898. However, with the withdrawal of the US bases and the lapse of highly imbalanced laws such as the Parity Act, the degree of intervention of the United States in Philippine affairs has seemingly decreased. Would you dispute that assessment?

JMS: Serious contradictions, not just imbalances, have characterized the relations of the US with the Philippines and the Filipino people. The US remains in control of Philippine economics, politics, military and culture at the expense of the broad masses of the people. Even without the flagrant US military bases, the US has controlled the puppet regime and the Philippine armed forces and police through advice, training, military supplies, and other means of control. Since the so-called war on terror by the US and more so since the so-called US pivot or strategic shift to East Asia, the US has been desirous of having more than forward stations inside Philippine military facilities. It is aiming to establish US military bases. At any rate, US air and naval vessels are patrolling the Philippines and the seas around more frequently under various pretexts. Since the economic reconstruction of Japan and Europe in the 1960s, the US has taken cover under multilateral economic and trade agreements, aside from bilateral ones, to continue dominating the Philippine economy and in effect even Philippine politics and culture. The US controls the Philippines through bilateral arrangements and through such multilateral agencies as IMF, World Bank, and WTO.

ESQ: The Canadian academic Dominique Caouette has been quoted as saying about the CPP-NPA-led armed struggle: "There was never one Philippine Revolution but several revolutions ongoing at the same time." Do you agree with this assessment?

JMS: The Philippine revolution is being waged simultaneously in various ways: politically, economically, socially and culturally. However, these ways are interrelated and coordinated even if distinguishable from one another. You can ask Caouette whether he agrees with me. The people's war answers the central question of revolution, which is to seize power. Even before nationwide seizure of power, local organs of the people's democratic government are already being established to displace the reactionary government. Socioeconomic revolution is going on through genuine land reform, promoting cooperative production and favoring Filipino-owned industries. The cultural revolution is going on. It is advancing the cause of a national, scientific and people-serving cultural and educational system. Revolutionary educators, writers and artists, scientists, and technologists and other cultural workers and the great mass of activists of the national democratic movement are waging a cultural revolution.

ESQ: What concrete products of this cultural revolution have had a marked impact on Philippine public life over the last few decades?

JMS: Since the 1960s, the cultural revolution along the national democratic line has continued inside and outside the schools and other institutions. It has popularized mass actions (the parliament of the street) to call for

substantive change. It created the First Quarter Storm of 1970 which presaged the EDSA uprising that overthrew the Marcos dictatorship. It has brought forward a new democratic type of thinking and mass activity in the progressive party list groups, in the trade unions and other mass organizations, in the professions and, of course, in the armed revolution. It has promoted the national language and literature as well as the regional languages and literature. It has generated thinkers, writers, artists, scientists, and technologists who are committed to serve the people.

ESQ: One of the defining characteristics of the Maoist revolutionary model was the adoption of armed guerrilla tactics. It is an approach that inevitably leads to deaths among guerrilla fighters, the military, and civilians caught in the cross-fire. When you think about the thousands of fighters and civilians who had lost their lives since the 1960s, what thoughts cross your mind?

JMS: My thoughts go to the Bible, which says that just war can be waged against injustice, oppression and tyranny. The daily violence of exploitation goes on even when the exploited people are not resisting. When people wage people's war or guerrilla warfare, they have hope and have a chance of winning. The Filipino people celebrate the revolutionary wars against Spanish colonialism, US imperialism and Japanese fascism. Violence from the oppressed and exploited comes after the fact of violence from the imperialists, the big compradors, the landlords and corrupt government officials to accumulate wealth and cause poverty and hunger and deprive the people of timely and sufficient medical care. Those who accumulate wealth and power control the Philippine state. With the support of the US, they use organized violence (military, police, the courts and prisons) to preserve and protect their privileges against the people. It is said that tens of thousands have been killed in the current civil war in the Philippines since 1969. More than 90 percent of them have been killed by the military, police and paramilitary forces of the reactionary state. They tend to kill many because most of the time they do not know who are the revolutionaries. Most of the victims are individuals and people who are merely suspected of being revolutionaries or of aiding the revolutionaries. It is not true that people are being killed merely in the crossfire. They are killed by the reactionary armed forces cold-bloodedly or in blind rage.

ESQ: Were you involved in any incidents wherein you had to take part as an armed combatant? How did those experiences (or those experiences of comrades) bear impact on the preferred strategies then of armed combat?

JMS: Whenever I expressed the wish to join a combat operation, the most responsible Party comrades and Red commanders dissuaded me from joining because supposedly my role was not in combat. But I was in the midst of firefights a number of times because our camp was being attacked by the enemy. During camping and marches, I simply had to share weal and woe and the risks with the Red fighters. I took active part in politico-military training for the Red commanders and fighters of the New People's Army and in planning and reviewing tactical offensives. We learned from each other how to carry out tactical offensives in line with the strategy of people's war. I joined the military exercises, including the analysis and simulation of a major tactical offensive. My favorite part in military exercises was to demonstrate how to shoot accurately with the rifle. I was a marksman in ROTC.

ESQ: Have you had the opportunity to encounter or communicate with a family member of a soldier who had died because of the armed conflict? If you had, what was that encounter like?

JMS: I have been approached by close relatives of those held as political prisoners of war by the New People's Army and I have helped them to the best of my ability. But I have not been approached by any family member of a soldier killed in the civil war. But if I were approached, I would express sympathy at a personal and humanitarian level. If the soldier came from the working class and peasantry, I could be tempted to say that he should have fought on the revolutionary side. But I would not yield to the temptation of moralizing or lecturing because it would run counter to the expression of sympathy and would be overstating the obvious that the exploited sometimes join the reactionary army because they have no other job opportunity.

ESQ: For many, the defining statistic of the armed struggle has been the number of lives lost. How would you convince them that despite that statistic, there was a point to the armed struggle, or that there is a purpose for it to continue?

JMS: I think that it is the system of oppression and exploitation that engenders the revolutionary armed struggle of the oppressed and exploited. The people fight back the more they are subjected to oppression and exploitation. Thus, the armed strength of the NPA has grown from the level of 6,100 high-powered rifles to nearly 10,000 contrary to the false claims of the Arroyo and Aquino regimes that the NPA has been reduced to only 4000 from a level of 25,000 in 1986. More people are joining the armed revolution because they abhor the daily violence of

exploitation and the gross and systematic violations of human rights. These are being committed with impunity by those in power. Like our revolutionary forefathers, our revolutionary contemporaries fight even harder because of the killing rampages of their enemy with superior military power.

ESQ: You are on record as saying that there have been hundreds of false charges made against you, many in connection with alleged killings of members of the NPA through purges made in the 1980s. Do you believe that these charges were made in connection with perceived split within the revolutionary movement by leaders that you have criticized such as Romy Kintanar and Popoy Lagman?

JMS: I was under maximum military detention from November 10, 1977 to March 5, 1986. From the time I was released, I became preoccupied with public speeches, academic lectures and press interviews until I left the Philippines on August 31, 1986. No chance for me to be involved in any of the wrongful killings, which were ascribed to Romy Kintanar and Popoy Lagman among others. But certain anti-communist quarters inside and outside of the reactionary armed forces deliberately try to confuse people by mixing up Kampanyang Ahos and other bloody witch-hunts of the 1980s with the Second Great Rectification Movement, which condemned and repudiated these crimes. The rectification movement was a campaign of ideological and political education within the CPP from 1992 to 1998 in order to correct major ideological and political errors which resulted in certain setbacks and even crimes.

ESQ: How would you define the degree of care that armed units of the CPP-NPA have taken in the protection of human rights, especially of civilians caught in conflict or of soldiers who have been captured? What actions should the current NPA take in response to the recent shooting of the wife of Vice-President Guingona by alleged members of the NPA?

JMS: The Red commanders and fighters of the NPA are sworn to uphold, defend and promote the human rights of the people. They are bound by the principles and policies of the CPP, NPA and NDFP in this regard. These include the Three Rules of Discipline and Eight Points of Attention, the Geneva Conventions and its Protocols and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law. The Red commanders and fighters cannot preserve their strength and win battles against the military superiority of the reactionary armed forces if they do not protect the national and democratic rights of the people. They have political superiority over the reactionary army because they are the best sons and daughters of the people, they fight for the workers and peasants and have the inexhaustible support of the people. The CPP, NPA and NDFP have already declared that there was a misencounter between an NPA checkpoint force and the security force of Mrs. Guingona as mayor, because the latter had refused to stop and had run over the NPA checkpoint. They have expressed regrets and have apologized to the Guingona family. Nevertheless, the NDFP Negotiating Panel has learned that further investigations are being made in order to test the previous findings and conclusions.

ESQ: The matter of “revolutionary taxes” exacted by the NPA on political candidates or business enterprises in the countryside has been often reported in Philippine media. What had been the justification for such a practice, and should that practice continue to this day?

JMS: The people’s democratic government has repeatedly made clear that it does not impose any tax on any candidate in the reactionary elections. The CPP has denied the claims of the reactionary government and other anticommunist entities that tax is imposed on electoral candidates. As a matter of united front policy, the revolutionary movement tolerates the electoral struggle of patriotic and progressive groups and elements. The people’s democratic government taxes permissible businesses. Taxation is a function of the people’s government. The tax revenues are used to finance the costs of administration, defense, land reform work, production assistance education, health work, cultural activities and other social services provided by the people’s democratic government and the mass organizations.

ESQ: How do you feel today about the so-called Declaration of Autonomy of the Manila-Rizal Regional Committee of the CPP? Is there a possibility of reconciliation or unification with the other perceived ideological-left movement represented by Akbayan? What accommodations in ideology should materialize in order that such reconciliation could happen?

JMS: The Second Great Rectification Movement and the consequent intensified mass work by the revolutionary forces in both urban and rural areas overcame all the wrecking operations done by elements who separated from the CPP and later exposed themselves fully as special agents of the reactionary government. The Popoy Lagman group became an even smaller and inconsequential group serving as organizers of yellow unions and

bourgeois politicians. Those previously misled by that group have returned to the CPP as early as 1994 according to reliable reports. There is no basis for reconciliation or unification of the CPP with Akbayan for the simple reason that Akbayan has always made clear that it is not communist and that it is not revolutionary but reformist. I have not seen any CPP statement condemning any dropout from the CPP for joining Akbayan.

ESQ: Do you believe that the changes to Philippine society that the armed struggle fought for can occur under the framework of the current Philippine Constitution?

JMS: The NDFP is seeking political and constitutional reforms through the peace negotiations because the constitution of the reactionary government, as it is now, will not allow basic social and economic reforms. The current constitution favors the property rights and interests of the big compradors and landlords as well as the US and other multinational firms against the toiling masses of workers and peasants and even against the middle class.

ESQ: Would the revision or the adoption of a new Constitution be among your negotiating points should peace talks resume with the government?

JMS: The third item in the substantive agenda of the peace negotiations is political and constitutional reforms. The Comprehensive Agreement on Political and Constitutional Reforms shall stipulate the constitutional reforms. We can anticipate proposals to simply amend the existing GPH constitution or to use the constitutions of the GPH and the people's revolutionary government as the basis for making a new constitution.

ESQ: Bayan Muna has been an active participant in Congress since the introduction of the party-list system. How do you assess the effectivity of Bayan Muna and similarly oriented parties in the Philippine legislature? Has the legislative role of Bayan Muna have had an impact on the role and tactics of the NPA?

JMS: The representatives of Bayan Muna and other progressive party list groups, which advocate national independence and democracy, have done well in proposing patriotic and progressive bills for the benefit of the people. Some of the bills pass with a tolerable amount of amendments and other bills are not passed or are mutilated by amendments. What the progressive party list groups can do in the reactionary Congress is extremely limited. It does not have much impact on the role and tactics of the NPA by way of changing them. Definitely, it does not persuade the NPA commanders and fighters to cease fighting and join the parliamentary struggle.

ESQ: What unexpected lessons did you learn during the decade or so you lived "underground" in the Philippines?

JMS: In the 1970s, I was sure and firm about the general line of people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war. But there were unexpected lessons to learn from the variables of the situation and from the surprises that the enemy tried to pull. Forced disappearances, arrests, torture and massacres by the enemy occurred frequently and suddenly and I had to think how to avoid or counteract these and how the revolutionary forces could move forward.

ESQ: What insights, if any, have you taken from Dutch or European politics or culture that you feel would find application in the Philippines?

JMS: We can learn from the history of Europe and The Netherlands that there must be a political will to break up the feudal system and carry out the industrial development of the Philippines. The liberal democratic revolution of the bourgeoisie and the revolutionary strivings of the industrial proletariat for socialism have contributed to economic, social, political and cultural development. If we can carry out genuine land reform and national industrialization, then we can create the broad base for political and cultural development. We can build a New Philippines that is independent, democratic, socially just, progressive and peaceful. Unlike the capitalist powers of Europe, we can strive to make all-round advances without engaging in colonialism and imperialism and without having a big bourgeoisie that has brought about the current crisis that is comparable to the Great Depression.

ESQ: Have you kept up with contemporary Filipino culture? What was the last Filipino movie that you had seen?

JMS: Of course, I have kept up with contemporary Filipino culture, including literature, music, dance, painting, sculpture, films and so on. I saw most recently the film *Migrante*.

ESQ: Have you thought about that first day upon your return to the Philippines? What do you see yourself doing on that first day?

JMS: I will have a big party with relatives and friends to exchange pleasantries and start renewing personal relations.

Build the Anti-Imperialist and Democratic Alliance in Senegal and the Whole of Africa Message to the Founding Assembly of ILPS-Senegal Chapter, August 26, 2017

As Chairperson of the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS), I wish to convey to you the warmest greetings of solidarity from the International Coordinating Committee, the commissions, the territorial organizations and all the member-organizations of the League on the occasion of the founding of ILPS-Senegal.

We congratulate the ILPS member-organizations in Senegal for their successful preparations. We are confident that the founding of ILPS-Senegal will result in the strengthening of the ILPS as an alliance of anti-imperialist and democratic forces not only in this country but throughout the African continent. You must fully take to account the various colonial and imperialist powers that have oppressed and exploited the African people until now.

French imperialism still plays a major strategic role in dominating and plundering Senegal and other African countries. It has a well entrenched system of exploiting natural resources ("Francafrique"). The currency (Franc CFA) in Senegal is regulated by the BCEAO that is directly under the control of the Banque de France. The Organization Internationale de la Francophonie propagates French as the language of the elite to facilitate trade with France. In the last five years, French imperialism has engaged in military intervention and aggression in Mali, Sahel, Centrafrique and Libya.

The founding of ILPS-Senegal is also important and timely in the light of US imperialism's attempt to use Senegal as a strategic foothold for launching military and other forms of intervention in the continent. Having failed to secure a suitable host country for the US Africa Command within the Africa itself, the US has signed security agreements with Senegal, Ghana and Gabon under which the three countries will host the "Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force–Crisis Response–Africa" that will work with local defense forces and governments every six months.

US imperialism seeks to expand its military presence on the continent in order to secure US monopoly capitalist interests, especially investments in the oil sector, notably in the Gulf of Guinea region, where experts say lie most of the continent's crude oil reserves. Moreover, through AFRICOM, the US aims to gain a strategic advantage over potential rival powers, like China and Russia, which are rapidly building their economic and political ties with African countries.

NATO forces led by the US is also using heightened terrorism in the region – which was set-off by the destruction of the Libyan state by US and NATO forces in 2011 – as pretext for launch even more military interventions. The strategic aim is to gain a strategic advantage over potential rivals as well as prevent popular resistance against imperialist domination and plunder.

The European Union has also been trying to impose "free trade" agreements on Africa since 2007, under the name of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) in order to lock African countries into legally binding agreements, which would allow European monopoly capital to get greater access to Africa's natural resources and markets.

The new "Scramble for Africa" and the current wave of Western military intervention will only intensify the imperialist plunder of Africa's natural resources and exploitation of the people.

The founding of the ILPS-Senegal, therefore, is an important step forward in confronting these challenges. We expect that the founding assembly will also serve as an occasion to study these trends and problems that you now face and seek solutions. We look forward to the resolutions and decisions that you take in order to uphold, defend and advance the rights and interests of your constituency.

We anticipate that the ILPS-Senegal chapter will further raise the level of political consciousness of member-organizations, their organized strength and their ability to mobilize themselves, their allies and the people in Senegal and beyond. You shall be in a better position to carry your mission forward and contribute to the advance of the ILPS on a global scale. Most importantly, it is a consolidation of your forces for greater struggles ahead in the face of the ever-worsening crisis of the world capitalist system.

Long live ILPS-Senegal!

Carry forward the anti-imperialist and democratic struggles of the people!

Long live the ILPS!

The preparation, establishment and growth of the People's Democratic Government (PDG) in the Philippines have been proclaimed and manifested by a series of basic documents, such as the following: the Program for a People's Democratic Revolution on December 26, 1968, the Guide for Building Organs of Political Power in April 1971, the Guide for Establishing the People's Democratic Government in October 1972, the Guidelines and Program of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) in 1973 and 1977 and the Declaration of Undertaking to Apply the Geneva Conventions of 1948, approved by the NDFP on July 5, 1996.

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, the PDG has grown and spread 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, as a result of revolutionary armed struggle and united front work against the US-directed reactionary government of big compradors and landlords. The rural-based revolutionary government and the urban-based reactionary government are co-belligerents in a civil war, which has been going on since the first quarter of 1969.

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 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 PDG has a comprehensive range of functions such as administration in general and overseeing programs and campaigns related to public education, mass organizing, land reform, raising production, finance, health, local defense, support for the people's army, cultural affairs and matters of simple arbitration or trial by the people's court. To carry out these aforesaid functions, the PDG must collect voluntary contributions from the people who benefit from gains made from the mass struggles and cooperative production and from compulsory taxes from private entities that are engaged in profit-making enterprises and are allowed to do so because their enterprises are beneficial and necessary to the people.

Voluntary contributions can be derived from gains made by the toiling masses as a result of raising wages of farm and non-farm workers, reducing land rent and interest rests, eliminating land rent and usury, raising prices of agricultural products at the farm gate, increasing agricultural and nonagricultural production and undertaking cooperative production for the entire community or for the benefit of the people's army. The most developed standards of voluntary contributions from workers and peasants have been related to trade union struggle and the implementation of land reform. The Revolutionary Guide to Land Reform is among the first extensive documents issued by the CPP to carry provisions on voluntary contributions as well as compulsory taxes from rich peasants, enlightened gentry and entrepreneurs and merchants related to agriculture, orchards, forestry, fishery and handicrafts.

The largest amount of grain contribution comes from the poor and middle peasants as a result of land reform and raising production. The largest amount of cash contribution come from the nonfarm workers in relatively large enterprises as a result of trade union struggle. Contributions are considered voluntary because the contributors can negotiate with the organs concerned what amount to pay by taking into account family needs and the current status of the crops and other means of livelihood.

In any kind of economic activity, in which an individual, corporation, partnership or any other entity makes profits by buying the labor power of others, fair wages must be made to the workers and taxes must be paid by the entity concerned to the PDG according to standards and rates determined by the appropriate organs. A certain

percentage of gross revenues of the private enterprise in the preceding year can be demanded by the PDG. The largest cash revenues of the PDG comes from compulsory taxation. Taxation is compulsory because failure to pay for it means the imposition of a fine in addition to arrears or the termination of the privilege and permit to operate the enterprise.

The PDG stands for the wise utilization and conservation of natural resources and for the economic development of the Philippines through national industrialization and land reform. It bans such enterprises as logging, mining and monocrop plantations, which plunder, destroy and pollute the environment, poison the streams and marine life, cause landslides, floods and drought, ruin the production of food staples, export solely and mainly primary commodities (logs, mineral ores and agricultural products) and limit the land available for land reform. Subject to taxation, profitable enterprises may be permitted to operate only if their raw-material production serves national industrialization and domestic food, shelter and other needs of the people.

The taxes collected by the PDG are small compared to that collected by the reactionary government but are used mainly for the social and economic programs for the benefit of the people and secondarily for the subsistence and administration work of the cadres of the PDG and for the maintenance and expansion of the New People's Army. The mass organizations of various types subsist and expand on their membership dues, cooperative projects and other resource-raising activities that they can undertake autonomously from the PDG.

In sharp contrast to the revolutionary government, the reactionary government collects taxes mainly from the working people and middle social strata in the form of income tax and excise taxes already added to the prices of goods and services that they buy and only secondarily at a lower rate from the big corporations and the top bracket of high income individuals. Under the neoliberal policy regime, the corporations and wealthy enjoy tax cutbacks while the working people and other impoverished masses suffer higher taxes and higher prices of basic commodities.

As a semicolonial and semifeudal country, the Philippines is dependent on raw material production for export and yet foreign exchange earnings always fall far short of the payment for imported manufactures and other products. The trade deficit is always aggravated by import of luxury products for the exploiting classes, military equipment and construction materials and equipment for upscale construction and graft-ridden infrastructure projects, which draw away resources from national industrial development and tie down the economy to a backward, agrarian, pre-industrial and semifeudal status.

The export earnings, the foreign exchange remittances of overseas contract workers, the earnings of call center workers and the now dwindling flow of speculative capital (portfolio investments in financial markets) are never enough to cover the trade deficit, the profit remittances and capital repatriation by the foreign monopolies and the amortization of the accumulated foreign debt. Thus, the foreign debt is ever mounting with the avilment of new loans even as the accumulated foreign debt also exacts a heavy toll on the economy.

The worst that the reactionary government does with its tax collection is to pay first for the amortization of the accumulated foreign debt with a large chunk of the budget, feed the insatiable corruption of the bureaucrats in handling business privileges and supply contracts with foreign and domestic companies, finance the military, police and paramilitary for controlling and suppressing the people and huge secret intelligence and operational funds for death squads and special operations.

The reactionary government likes to taunt the revolutionary movement for supposedly not having accomplished anything in 48 years of revolutionary armed struggle and yet it finds it necessary to negotiate peace with the NDFP as the representative of the revolutionary forces and people. It can only pretend to deny the nationwide existence and growing strength of the people's democratic government, the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army, the revolutionary mass movement and the alliances.

Since the founding of the New People's Army on March 29, 1969 by the Communist Party of the Philippines, the revolutionary forces and people have accomplished so much: from mere hundreds of CPP cadres and members to tens of thousands, from 9 automatic rifles to thousands (far beyond the AFP claim of 4000), from a few thousands of mass activists to millions and from the second district of Tarlac to more than 71 provinces and 17 regions of the country. The reactionary government boasts of being ready to fight for another 50 years. That is more than enough time allowance for the revolution to win total victory.

***Build the Broadest United Front
to Strengthen the Organs of Political Power
and the People's Democratic Government April 21, 2018***

Dear comrades and friends, with boundless joy, we celebrate the 45th anniversary of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. Celebrations are held in the Philippines, here in Amsterdam and in other countries where the NDFP or any of its member-organizations has an office.

I am proud to have been one of the founders of the NDF on April 24, 1973, less than a year after Marcos proclaimed martial law to impose fascist dictatorship on the Filipino people. We based ourselves on the work that had been done by the NDF Preparatory Committee since 1969 and on the strength of organizations that had been forced underground by martial law. We drafted and promulgated the NDF 10-Point Guidelines or Program. This document laid the ground for the NDFP elaboration in 1977 and the 12-point Program in 1994.

Since its founding 45 years ago, the NDFP has won great political victories as an indispensable and crucial weapon in coordination with the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army as the two other main weapons of the Filipino people in carrying out the general line of people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war.

To win these victories, great efforts have been exerted to arouse, organize and mobilize the broad masses of the people. Sacrifices have had to be made in the struggle against US imperialism and the local reactionary classes. For these victories, we salute and congratulate all the current 18 organizations comprising the NDFP. We honor their leaders and members for their contributions. We accord the highest honors to the martyrs and heroes.

The theme of this year's celebration is "Build the Broadest United Front to Strengthen the Organs of Political Power and the People's Democratic Government (PDR)". The NDFP has helped to build the local organs of political power at the barangay, municipal or city, district and provincial levels in 73 of the 81 provinces of the Philippines to constitute the people's democratic government. We are determined to help build more and stronger organs of political power.

The Filipino people have a people's democratic government confronting and fighting the reactionary government of the big compradors and landlords whose seat of power is in Metro Manila and other urban areas in the interest of US imperialism and local reaction. To build the revolutionary government, the 18 NDFP allied organizations have made various contributions.

In class terms, we have founded the NDFP on the basic alliance of the working class and the peasantry, won over the middle social strata such as the petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie, taken advantage of the splits among the reactionary classes and cooperated with temporary allies among them and acted to isolate, fight and defeat the enemy, usually the worst faction of the reactionary class that is in the service of US imperialism and seeks to perpetuate the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system.

In the process of building the united front for revolutionary armed struggle, the NDFP has engaged in activities and campaigns to promote and realize full national sovereignty, democracy, social justice, economic development through land reform and national industrialization, cultural progress, peace and harmony among the people and international solidarity. The NDFP has provided guidance and support to the people's democratic government for reaching the people in their millions and for gaining support from the people of the world.

In connection with the people's revolutionary struggle against the puppet reactionary government, we have emphatically called for building a broad united front although this is a constant line to bring to the NDFP the broad masses of the people who belong to various ethno-linguistic communities and who are both unorganized or organized in various parties, churches, civil organizations and even in the bureaucracy and armed forces of the reactionary government.

For the first time in the history of the NDFP, we refrained for about a year (2016-17) from denouncing the Duterte regime as a puppet reactionary regime to give it a chance to prove what Duterte meant by proclaiming himself to being "Left" and "socialist"; being against the US and the oligarchy; and being for reforms and for an independent foreign policy.

He seemed to be desirous of negotiating and making peace with the NDFP and the revolutionary forces and people that the NDFP represents. He also seemed agreeable to the necessary social, economic and political reforms demanded by the people to make a just and lasting peace. And he promised to amnesty and release all political prisoners even before the start of peace negotiations.

But alas, Duterte did not fulfil his promise. In his second year in power, he has turned very hostile to the NDFP and terminated the peace negotiations. We have therefore responded to his actions accordingly. In very recent weeks, however, he has offered to resume the peace negotiations. And we have agreed.

While there is yet no final peace agreement with any regime in the Philippines, the NDFP maintains the policy of waging people's war along the line of the people's democratic revolution, despite any kind of ceasefire agreement under certain circumstances. The broad united front with other forces opposed to the regime stays, even if peace negotiations imply the possibility of permanent truce and alliance with the reactionary regime.

We are glad that the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations can probably be resumed soon if certain obstacles and hindrances are removed by the Duterte regime. There is a need for the peace negotiations in the face of the worsening crisis of the Philippine ruling system and the world capitalist system. The broad masses of the people and even the legal opposition parties are for the resumption of the peace negotiations. There can be national unity and reconciliation, peace and development beyond partisan terms and loyalties.

The broadest kind of united front is desirable and possible with the unity of the entire people and all parties to uphold, defend and promote national and democratic rights against US imperialism and its diehard puppets in the Philippines. However, there can be no guarantee for the positive ultimate outcome of the peace negotiations that are expected to resume formally soon in Oslo.

What is important is for the NDFP to always stay on course with its commitment to be in the revolutionary service of the Filipino people and pursue social, economic and political reforms in order to lay the basis for a just and lasting peace.

The crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system in the Philippines and the crisis of the world capitalist system keep on worsening. We are confident that the Filipino people will prevail over the crisis conditions and advance towards total victory along the line of people's democratic revolution with a socialist perspective.

Long the National Democratic Front of the Philippines!

Long live the Filipino people and the Philippine revolution!

Long live international solidarity and the cause of just peace!

Role of Overseas BAYAN Chapters

in the National Democratic Movement Message to BAYAN-Canada General Assembly, January 19, 2019

Dear compatriots and friends, warmest greetings of solidarity to BAYAN-Canada! I am pleased and honored to be invited to speak to your General Assembly on the role of overseas BAYAN chapters. This is an important subject to discuss among those interested in BAYAN and the national democratic movement of the Filipino people.

BAYAN is a major member organization of the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS of which I am the Chairperson. However, I am not authorized to speak on its behalf. I can talk about its international workings only as an observer and admirer.

BAYAN is the most important legal multisectoral alliance of patriotic and progressive forces in the Philippines. It combines the organizations of the toiling masses of workers and peasants, urban petty bourgeoisie and middle bourgeoisie, the women, youth, professionals, religious and other sectors.

It takes up a wide range of concerns, including national sovereignty, democratic rights, economic development, social justice, patriotic culture and so on. It is such a highly developed comprehensive alliance of mass organizations that it represents in all the ILPS commissions on 18 concerns.

It is the strongest urban-based political formation seeking to transform the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system into a truly national and democratic system. It has proven its might in opposing the Marcos fascist dictatorship and all the succeeding pseudo-democratic regime and now the tyrannical, brutal and corrupt Duterte regime.

The overseas chapters of BAYAN play an important role by being a necessary part of BAYAN. They provide BAYAN-Philippines an indispensable international dimension. They serve to reach and engage the 10 to 12 million Filipinos abroad. These compatriots comprise more than 10 percent of the Philippine population and more than 25 percent of its labor force.

The overseas chapters arouse, organize and mobilize the overseas Filipinos in order to uphold, defend and promote their rights in relation to the conditions in their host countries and at the same time to continue being in touch with the motherland and to contribute what they can to the Filipino people's struggle for national and social liberation through the national democratic movement.

To arouse the overseas Filipinos in various host countries, BAYAN chapters provide the most useful and meaningful information and education about the Philippine situation, the needs and demands of the people and the status and prospects of the people's struggle for national and social liberation against foreign domination and the local exploiting classes of big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists.

To organize the overseas Filipinos, BAYAN chapters build their countrywide chapter committees and the organizations of various sectors, such as those of the migrant workers (Migrante), women (Gabriela), youth (Anakbayan), various types of professionals and various types of concerns, especially human rights. Each organization connect to its counterpart in the Philippines through the countrywide BAYAN committee as well as directly.

To mobilize the masses of Filipinos in various host countries, BAYAN chapters abroad plan and carry out campaigns and activities in order to stand for the rights and welfare of the members of various organizations and the Filipinos abroad in general and to extend moral and material support to the people in the motherland in their struggle for national and social liberation through concrete programs and projects.

BAYAN chapters abroad are not limited to arousing, organizing and mobilizing only the Filipinos abroad. They establish relations of friendship, solidarity and cooperation with the host peoples and other migrant peoples directly and through their organizations, parties and institutions.

Through solidarity and cooperation on various issues of common interests, all peoples of various nationalities in the host country can gain strength and improve their conditions in the workplace, institutions and communities. All of them need to stand up against the ultra-reactionary currents of fascism, chauvinism, racism, sexism and the like which arise in the crisis-stricken world capitalist system.

For the sake of advancing the national democratic movement in the Philippines as well as the just movements of other peoples, BAYAN chapters abroad develop the mutual interest and the means for cultural exchanges and exchange of visits between the people in the Philippines and the host countries.

Friendly visits, study tours or research, internship and integration programs have proven to be the most effective in promoting close relations between peoples and in developing the solidarity activists.

It is certainly helpful to the national democratic movement of the Filipino people that BAYAN chapters abroad encourage the organizations of other peoples to join international organizations like the International League of Peoples' Struggle and other international organizations and conferences focused on certain concerns, in which they can cooperate with Filipino organizations in a wider context.

I have come full circle by once more mentioning BAYAN in connection with the ILPS. I have tried to present what I think are the most important tasks that BAYAN chapters abroad do to fulfil their duty of serving overseas Filipinos and the national democratic movement. You have all the leeway to consider and improve on what I have presented. Thank you.

On the United People's SONA

against Duterte's SONA July 23, 2019

I congratulate the tens of thousands of people and their organizations for braving the rains to participate in the United People's SONA against Duterte's SONA and express the needs and demands of the entire Filipino nation against the treasonous, tyrannical, brutal, corrupt and deceptive rule of Duterte and his rapacious clique.

Duterte's SONA is a series of boasts and lies. At the very start, he boasts of his sham popularity conjured by paid poll surveys and the rigged mid-term election results and he threatens to continue his killing rampage by comparing himself to an ever fighting eagle determined to pounce on his powerless opponents to the end.

He continues with his pretense at fighting illegal drugs, crime and corruption. He cannot be farther from the truth because he has become the supreme protector of drug lords and drug smugglers, he has turned the police and military into his private army and main instruments of criminality and he has become the chieftain of an alliance of the most despicable plunderers.

He continues to promise falsely that he would raise the salaries of government employees. He makes it a point to give the public school teachers "a bit bigger" but far less than the doubling of salaries to ordinary soldiers and police personnel to bribe them to become his criminal instruments.

But he is at a loss as to how to raise the resources for raising salaries of all government employees, except by increasing the tax burden and raising the prices of basic commodities. By giving priority to doubling the salaries of armed personnel, he manifests a low regard for the public servants who render vital services, such as teachers, nurses, clerks and others.

He does not have any plan for developing the economy through national industrialization and genuine land reform. He avoids discussing the problems of decreasing production in manufacturing and agriculture, rising unemployment, low incomes and the practice of temporary or short-term low-wage work contracts.

He does not also have any plan to democratize the political system ruled by big comprador-landlord oligarchs and dynasties and dictated upon by imperialist powers. He is hellbent on aggravating his tyrannical rule and grabbing absolute powers through charter change and bogus federalism in order to establish a full-blown fascist dictatorship.

He refers to the National Task Force ELCAC in order to stress his US-aided scheme to destroy the revolutionary movement and his lack of interest in the peace process within the framework of The Hague Joint Declaration. He is using the all-out war against the revolutionary forces and people to accomplish his drive for fascist dictatorship.

Duterte discredits himself most by speaking as the apologist for China, trying to scare the Filipino people with the threat of war from China, claiming falsely that China is already in possession of the entire West Philippine Sea (not only the seven artificial islands) and insisting that the Filipino people are helpless. Once more, he exposes himself shamelessly as a traitor and paid agent of China by conceding the Philippine sovereign rights to China.

Duterte makes clear in his SONA that he has no intention of leaving a legacy other than the ignominious end of his treasonous, tyrannical, brutal, corrupt and mendacious rule. He practically goads the people to engage in all forms of struggle and keep on rising up in greater numbers.

In this regard, the United People's SONA is a signal for bigger mass protest actions.

The broad united front against the Duterte tyranny hopes that gigantic mass actions will arise to sway patriotic elements in the reactionary military and police to withdraw support from him. At the same time, the oppressed and exploited masses or workers are most desirous of greater advances and victories of the armed revolutionary movement in order to change the entire ruling system.

I convey jubilant greetings and militant solidarity to the leadership and membership of BAYAN-Central Luzon and to all delegates to its 7th Congress. Your theme: “Further Strengthen BAYAN-Central Luzon, Fight the Intensifying Crisis and Attacks against the People, Persevere in the Struggle for National Liberation and Democracy” is significant, appropriate and timely.

Your Congress is an important occasion for you to consolidate your ranks and prepare for further expansion and consolidation. You must sum-up your history from 1982 to the present, acknowledge the sacrifices and victories, honor the martyrs and heroes, rely on your strength, set your tasks in order to fight the Duterte terrorist regime and its imperialist masters, as well as the ruling classes that oppress and exploit the people, and advance the struggle for national independence and democracy.

Today, we are faced with the treacherous, tyrannical, murderous, corrupt and deceptive Duterte regime. This regime has formally imposed martial law in Mindanao since 2017 and has actually, implemented a fascist dictatorship nationwide. It wants to impose a fascist dictatorship actually and formally by throwing out the 1987 Constitution and usurp absolute power.

It is appropriate and important to sum up the history of BAYAN-Central Luzon. This was established when the Marcos fascist dictatorship seemed to be at its peak. But at its core, it had weakened due to the worsening crisis of the ruling semicolonial and semifeudal system; the Filipino people’s fight against the violation of national and democratic rights; the cruelty and greed of Marcos and his cohorts in government and in business.

In 1982, a few brave and known personalities from prominent families in Angeles City dared to lead the launch discussion assemblies that were engendered by anti-imperialist and democratic demands. Eventually, these meetings led to the formation of the Concerned Citizens of Pampanga (CCP). The CCP built branches in various parts of Pampanga province.

When Ninoy Aquino was assassinated upon his return to the Philippines on August 21, 1983, the discontent and anger of the people against the US-Marcos fascist regime further intensified. The call “Justice for Aquino!, Justice for All” reverberated rapidly throughout the country. This was simultaneous to the call of justice for the killings of youth leader Edgar Jopson and indigenous leader of the Cordillera, Macliing Dulag.

These calls were a signal for the people of Central Luzon to launch the first biggest regional mobilization attended by 5000 people in 1983 at the Angeles City Sports Center. Following this, the Damdamin ng Bayang Nagkakaisa (DAMBANA Sentiments of a United People) was established in 1984 and the call to oust Marcos reverberated even more. A People’s March from Angeles City to Plaza Miranda was held.

In relation to this, the campaign against the US military bases and nuclear power plant in Bataan intensified. Many people participated in the mass struggles. All these became the basis for the establishment of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan ng Gitnang Luzon (BAYAN GL - New Patriotic Alliance Central Luzon) in 1985 with its first Congress. A number of personages from Central Luzon joined the anti-imperialist alliance. The mass organizations that composed BAYAN-CL then were Alyansa ng mga Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon (AMGL- Alliance of Peasants in Central Luzon), Workers Alliance in Region III (WAR III), League of Filipino Students (LFS), and Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT). From these, the provincial chapters of BAYAN in Tarlac, Bataan, Aurora, Bulacan, Pangasinan and Nueva Ecija were rapidly established.

When the people rose up in EDSA from February 25, 1986, the fighting spirit and unity of the people in the region further heightened. More than 5,000 people marched to EDSA from different areas of the region. They joined the call to oust the US-Marcos fascist regime. This struggle was victorious.

Cory Aquino became president but the rotten system continued serving the interest of the big bourgeois comprador and landlord. On January 25-26, 1987, BAYAN-CL participated in a demonstration in Manila. During this time, the heinous Mendiola Massacre, where four peasants from Central Luzon (one from Bulacan, two from Bataan and one from Tarlac), were killed.

Instead of condemning and investigating the officers responsible for the massacre, Aquino declared war against the revolutionary movement and ended the ceasefire between her government and the NDFP on February

7, 1987. After three days, the regime of Cory Aquino committed the Lupao Massacre in Nueva Ecija where 17 peasants from the barrio were killed. Due to the massacres, BAYAN called for a Fact-Finding Mission and launched mass protest actions to condemn the regime.

It became clear that the Cory Aquino regime was anti-peasant and counterrevolutionary. It launched Oplan Lambat Bitag and many others were killed. The anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggles intensified. The people and the revolutionary forces had no choice but to intensify the armed revolution.

The call to demolish US military bases in the Philippines spread. In 1988, the Central Luzon Alliance for a Sovereign Philippines (CLASP) was established to intensify the anti-imperialist struggle. The unity of different sectors was strengthened and expanded and they launched different actions. In 1989, the students of UP Diliman launched Lakbayan (People's March) towards Clark Air Force Base (CAFB). BAYAN-CL held a huge protest action in front of CAFB. In 1991, the Senate decided not to retain US military bases in the Philippines.

In 1990, Mt. Pinatubo erupted and the Clark Air Force Base was almost buried in ashes. The eruption brought intense damage in the livelihood of the people of Central Luzon. Then the earthquake disaster of 1991 ensued. The CONCERN was established and acted to respond to the crisis brought about by these disasters and to help the victims.

Ugnayan was also established as an organization of victims of Mt. Pinatubo. Likewise, the Central Luzon Disaster Relief Center (CLDRC) was also established in the provinces of the region. Because of their collective struggle, the victims succeeded in asserting their rights to housing, resettlement and livelihood.

During his term from 1992, Fidel Ramos implemented neoliberal policies on the economy. He carried out widespread privatization of government corporations, public utilities and government prime land, including Fort Bonifacio. He facilitated the entry of foreign monopoly corporations into private construction, mining and other businesses. Foreign debt again increased. The outflow of profit became rapid. The economy became more backward.

The reactionary government and the NDFP agreed on The Hague Joint Declaration as the framework for peace negotiations in 1992. This was followed by other agreements. But the reactionary military kept putting obstacles to the negotiations. They are after nothing but the surrender of the revolutionary movement. The military campaign of suppression also continued.

On September 20, 1996 a meeting of the Regional Council of BAYAN-CL was held to resolve the conflict that was destroying the unity of the BAYAN membership. In this meeting the entire BAYAN secretariat was expelled because of grave violation of the anti-imperialist and democratic principles of the alliance. BAYAN focused once more on strengthening unity and consolidation.

In 1998, the Estrada regime approved the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) which allows the deployment of US military forces in our country. This was condemned by BAYAN as defiling our national sovereignty and the victorious eviction of military bases in the country.

Although Estrada signed the CARHRIHL, he violated the contents of the agreement. In 2001, the Erap Resign Movement erupted due to the people's discontent over Estrada's corruption and puppetry to the United States. The masses subsequently ousted Estrada.

In 2003, the Gloria Arroyo regime launched in Central Luzon Oplan Bantay Laya led by of Gen. Jovito Palparan which perpetrated abductions and killings of leaders and members of mass organizations almost daily. Many BAYAN leaders were killed. On November 2004, the horrendous Hacienda Luisita Massacre was carried out. This impelled formation of the Gloria Resign Movement.

In 2003, the office of BAYAN-CL was raided. Because of the grave violations of human rights by the regime, BAYAN appealed to the regional peace and order council in Clark. The ouster campaign intensified further following the "hello Garci" scandal of Gloria Arroyo.

Despite of the fascist attacks, the people slowly rose up and fought the violence. In 2009, a transport strike, participated by a large number of people in the region, was launched despite the illegal arrest of its seven leaders in Angeles City.

During the time of the regime of Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino starting 2019, BAYAN confronted the big issue of government corruption. BAYAN effectively led the struggle of the people against the Pork Barrel System and successfully launched the campaign participated in by a large number of the people that reached one million in the people's initiative to remove the pork barrel. A People's March was held to highlight the issue of corruption.

In 2012, the 10th anniversary for justice to the victims of Hacienda Luisita was commemorated. Up to now, the victim's lands have not been returned to them by the Cojuangcos-Aquinos. The people held the People's March to highlight the issue of justice for the victims of the massacre in conjunction with the issue of genuine land reform.

The peasants' People's March to Manila was repeated in 2014 to highlight once more the issue of genuine land reform. In 2016, the Central Luzon Alliance for Sovereign Philippines was reestablished and this became the school of "Tata Sensing Lecture Series." It launched several discussions, forums and anti-imperialist protest actions.

In 2018, the people of Central Luzon held a People's March anew because of the US-Duterte regime's worsening fascist suppression. Even church people were being killed—three were murdered and two of them were from the province of Nueva Ecija.

Demolition of urban poor communities and landgrabbing from peasants are widespread. On the western and eastern part of Central Luzon, so-called development projects are grabbing lands from the peasants and indigenous people. Duterte's Chinese imperialist masters are destroying the Zambales mountains to mine and haul off the soil to create artificial islands in the West Philippine Sea. In Tarlac, China also dominates the construction of the New Clark City that grabs land from the indigenous people and peasants.

Your resolve to fulfill BAYAN-CL's great responsibility and duty to unite and lead the multisectoral struggle of the region is precise. It is fine to reestablish BAYAN-CL provincial chapters and strengthen the membership of its national democratic organizations.

The 7th Congress of the New Patriotic Alliance-Central Luzon (BAYAN-CL) is historic. It is an opportunity to set the new tasks for the further strengthening and advance of your alliance. It is appropriate to thank and honor the long-serving leaders of BAYAN, especially those who have lost and dedicated their lives to the people.

I am hopeful and confident that your Congress will be completely successful to further strengthen BAYAN-CL to fight the intensifying crisis and attacks of the Duterte regime against the people, and achieve more victories in the struggle for national freedom and democracy.

Long live BAYAN Central Luzon!

Struggle for national freedom and democracy

Long live the entire Filipino people!

Dear colleagues, the International League of Peoples' Struggle is a united front of mass organizations for anti-imperialist and democratic struggle at various levels. Since its foundation in 2001, it has been international in scope. But to achieve depth, it must build its composite forces at the regional, national and local levels.

It can gain breadth at each level by having more mass organizations as components under every concern. It can also gain further breadth by being able to have alliance with other united front formations at any level. We may call this broadening the alliance for gathering the largest strength possible to isolate and overwhelm the adversary.

To build the ILPS at any level, you must know the situation within its geographic scope and you must bring together the mass organizations that you can at a given time. You must bring together delegations of these organizations in order to exchange views and experiences and to agree on a program of action and to elect the organ to lead the work and struggle consequent to the assembly.

I am glad that in your plan to establish the ILPS-Europe you appreciate its place in the structure of the entire ILPS and that you have made preparations for the establishment of this regional formation by knowing the situation in Europe, bringing together delegations from various countries, formulating a program of action and electing your regional leading organ.

On the formation of the ILPS-Europe

By forming the ILPS-Europe, you take into account and take advantage of the charter and program of the entire ILPS and proceed to focus on the conditions, concerns and demands of the people in the region and in the particular countries therein in order to pursue and advance the anti-imperialist and democratic struggle for socialism and solidarity in the interest of the people in Europe.

You must build ILPS-Europe as a united front of definite mass formations within its fold at the regional and national levels. You can draw to the fold of the ILPS more anti-imperialist and democratic organizations interested in any of the concerns of the ILPS. At the same time, you can have consensual, consultative and practical alliance and cooperation with other organizations that are independent of the ILPS but have a common interest with the ILPS.

As a result of the worsening crisis of the capitalist system in the world and in Europe, there are long-standing and new mass formations that are carrying out anti-imperialist and democratic struggles on a wide range of issues that are economic, social, political, cultural and environmental in character and affect the working class in general, the migrants and refugees, the women, youth, the intelligentsia and other sectors of society.

Monopoly capitalism has aggravated the exploitation of the proletariat and the rest of the people, especially under the policy of neoliberalism. It has inflicted on them unemployment, job insecurity, lower real wages, higher costs of living, erosion of social services, austerity measures, gender discrimination, dwindled opportunities for the youth, environmental degradation and higher taxation on the people (but not on the business corporations) on various pretexts.

At the same time, monopoly capitalism has aggravated the oppression of the people. Old and new laws, policies and practices are being used to curtail basic democratic rights and fundamental freedoms. The dominant means of information and education spread chauvinist, racist and fascist biases. Worst of all, fascist movements have arisen and collaborate with the coercive forces of the state against the people and the democratic forces.

You are building ILPS-Europe at a time that the proletariat and people in the region are rising up, as in other regions of the world, against the escalation of exploitation and oppression because of the neoliberal policy of unbridled greed, state terrorism, the rise of fascism and endless wars of aggression unleashed by US imperialism. Your struggle in Europe is necessarily linked to the struggles of the people on a global scale.

In harmony with the international united front

While building ILPS-Europe, you must also be in harmony with the international commitment and policy of the ILPS in united front with other international formations and individual organizations. At the moment, the ILPS is initiating jointly with the International Coordination for Revolution (ICOR) the formation of the International Anti-Imperialist and Anti-Fascist United Front (AIAIUF), which aims to include other international formations.

In this larger and wider type of international united front, the ILPS expects to amplify the joint and individual strengths of the participants, to agree by consensus on common tasks and actions and to maintain consultative and consensual relations among equals and mutually respecting participants. The participants have the right to independence and initiative and are not bound by democratic centralism. They have a common understanding to keep and increase their respective strengths and capabilities, to issue common or similar statements, to undertake united actions and campaigns on certain issues on certain agreed dates or periods of time. We can expect that the worldwide mass protests that have dramatically burst out since last year will continue to spread and intensify and take higher forms of struggle not only for regime change but also for system change. They signal the transition to greater anti-imperialist struggles and the resurgence of the world proletarian-socialist revolution. The rise of the anti-imperialist and democratic struggles is the consequence of the rapidly worsening crisis of the world capitalist system. The crisis of overproduction has been deepened and accelerated by the adoption of higher technology, the deliberate diminution of the real and nominal incomes of the working people, the rapid accumulation of capital in the hands of the monopoly bourgeoisie and the emergence of new imperialist powers in addition to the traditional ones.

Intensifying inter-imperialist contradictions

All the imperialist powers, traditional and new, appeared to get along well together under the auspices of neoliberal globalization for so long as they could exploit the working people in all countries and shift the burden of crisis to the underdeveloped and less developed countries. But the crisis of overproduction has worsened too fast as to upset the balance of strength among the imperialist powers to the extent that economic competition and political rivalry have become increasingly pronounced.

The most dramatic change has been the strategic decline of the US from being the sole superpower from 1991 to 2008 to being merely one of the powers in a multipolar world. China has developed its economy to an extent that it is deemed by the US as its chief economic competitor and chief political rival. The European Union itself is being shaken by the exit of Britain and is being strained by prolonged recession since the 2008 financial crisis.

The proletariat and people of Eastern Europe and the Russia are outraged by the far worsened conditions in the shift from revisionist rule to unbridled capitalism. They resent the rise of unemployment, the drastic loss of social services and the repressive measures. They have a strong desire for system change from capitalism to socialism.

The imperialist powers of Western Europe are still aligned mainly with the US and Japan in the IMF, World Bank and WTO, G-7, G-20 and the NATO but particular countries have certain needs that require them to have amicable relations with Russia and China. The alliance of the US and Western European powers is being tested and strained by the frequent US demands for sanctions and aggression actions against its enemies. Except in Southeast Asia where China claims 90 percent of the South China Sea and is aggressive, the US still remains the No. 1 troublemaker in the capitalist world. But it has declined precisely because of imperial overstretch by over-spending on overseas military bases and endless wars of aggression, and by having made major economic, trade and technological concessions to China until 2018.

As the inter-imperialist contradictions worsen, we can expect more efforts of the imperialist powers to shift the burden of crisis to the client states as well as to their own working class and middle class. We must pay close attention to how the monopoly bourgeoisie exploits the working class and how it generates chauvinism, racism, and fascism in order to obscure the roots of the crisis and preempt the rise of revolutionary forces.

The crisis of the world capitalist system that has unfolded since the financial crash of 2008 has remained unsolved by the monopoly bourgeoisie and has led to a deeper and graver crisis in this year of 2020. The neoliberal line of imperialist globalization has unravelled after more than 40 years of dominance.

While it runs and alarms most countries, the Covid-19 pandemic is being used by bourgeois governments to tighten social control and apply repressive measures. But it also serves to expose and underscore the anti-social character of monopoly capitalism and the gross depredations that neoliberal policy has wrought. The broad masses of the people are therefore aroused to rebel.

They are outraged that the monopoly bourgeoisie has long used the neoliberal mode of unrestrained exploitation and is using the pandemic as excuse to take financial bailouts and benefit from so-called stimulus packages. They are incensed that they are being subjected to worse conditions of low income, unemployment, homelessness, erosion of social benefits and deprivation of health care and other social services.

Build the mass movement through the united front

We can expect that in the months and years to come there will be an intensified class struggle between the monopoly bourgeoisie and the proletariat and the tug of war between fascist and anti-fascist movements in Europe as well as in other regions of the world. There is urgent need to build the mass movement through the united front of revolutionary forces in anti-imperialist and democratic struggles for national liberation, democracy and socialism. In Europe, we must be able to arouse, organize and mobilize the proletariat (including the migrant workers) and the middle class, which is shrinking and living precariously. The neoliberal economic policy has brought out the worst anti-social, anti-proletarian and anti-people character of monopoly capitalism. Whatever is the rate of growth of the GDP, it signifies the relentless rise of the unsustainable public debt for the benefit of the monopoly bourgeoisie, the maximization of private profit by squeezing the income of the working class, rise of unemployment, austerity measures, the erosion of social benefits and the shrinkage of social services.

In Western Europe, the proletariat and people of all countries suffer from the worsening conditions of economic and financial crisis, with those of certain countries suffering more than those in other countries. In Eastern Europe and in Russia, the proletariat and people are disgusted with the further deterioration of their conditions from the period of revisionist rule to the current period of unbridled capitalism.

As the crisis of the capitalist worsens, every ruling clique of the monopoly bourgeoisie uses the coercive apparatuses of the state to suppress the rise of the revolutionary mass movement and generates the currents of chauvinism, racism and fascism. The proletariat and people are thus challenged to fight back with the anti-imperialist and democratic movement for socialism.

Many issues are arising and crying for action by the broad masses of the people. But the main task is to build the mass movement through the united front of revolutionary forces and to advance the class struggle against the monopoly bourgeoisie and aim for socialism. The revolutionary forces in Europe must carry forward the anti-imperialist and democratic struggles in concert with the peoples of other regions and the entire world. Thank you.

Expand and Intensify the Mass Movement

within the Framework of a Broad United Front June 20, 2020

Dear fellow activists, militant patriotic greetings to all of you!

Current conditions in our country are favorable for expanding and intensifying the mass movement within the framework of a broad united front of the Filipino people for national liberation and democracy against the traitor, terrorist, butcher, plunderer and swindler Duterte regime.

All the evil characteristics of this monster have been flagrantly exposed during the past months because of its exploitation of the Covid-19 pandemic as an opportunity to seize emergency powers, inflict harsh lockdowns, kill innocent people, suppress freedom of the press and plunder hundreds of billions of pesos in the name of unfulfilled mass testing, care for the sick and relief for those who lost their jobs.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the erroneous policies of the Duterte regime have aggravated the existing intensifying crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system as a result of neoliberalism and state terrorism. We have reached a situation in which there is a consensus of the broad masses of the people that the Duterte tyranny is a plague worse than the Covid-19 and the Filipino people want to oust the tyrant from his throne.

Due to extreme restrictions, cruelty and extended militarist lockdown and unbridled plunder by the Duterte clique, the economy has sunk further and bankrupted the government and Duterte has further postured as being ferocious in order to terrorize and silence the Filipino masses. Despite the strong opposition of the people, Duterte insists on enacting into law the proposed bill which escalate state terrorism. This is even worse than martial law because it trashes the whole Bill of Rights of the 1987 Constitution.

Because of the intensifying crisis and the revulsion of the Filipino people, the Duterte regime is a paper tiger at the strategic level. It is rotten to the core and easy to resist and hit with effective blows. Even if the regime is a real tiger at the tactical level, because of its military, police and death squad minions, every crime it continues to commit will further result in the immediate, strong and wide resistance of the people to further isolate, weaken and defeat the Duterte regime.

The rapid expansion and intensification of the mass movement under the policy and tactics of a broad united front are timely. Strengthen the basic alliance of the working class and the peasantry, win over the middle social strata and take advantage of the splits among the ruling classes to isolate, weaken and defeat the treason, terrorism and tyranny of the Duterte regime.

Now that the contradictions between the US and China are sharpening, the double-faced policy and relations of the Duterte regime towards the two imperialist powers are splitting the ranks of the ruling classes and the regime. The pro-US side of the regime are angered by the stupid sell-out by Duterte of the sovereign rights over the West Philippine Sea to China even as it does not fulfil most of its promised loans that are onerous for the people.

Many reactionaries and even the US imperialists realize that Duterte cannot fulfil his promise to Trump to crush the armed revolutionary movement. Instead, this continues to grow stronger due to the worsening crisis, the oppression and exploitation of the people and due to the gross corruption of Duterte and his favorite generals in the procurement

of overpriced military equipment, theft of unaudited intelligence and discretionary funds and the faking of surrenders, encounters and projects.

Even among the ranks of military and police officials and personnel, there is a clash between Duterte's brutal and corrupt favourites on the one hand and those who abhor the brazen gruesome crimes of his henchmen on the other hand. There are low-ranking officers and ordinary troops who say that they are fed-up with the corruption of the high ranking officers, of the blind and inutile operations and the cruelty to the workers, peasants and indigenous people.

BAYAN itself is a united front of wide scope and composed of organizations of the toiling masses and middle forces. But it is important to further expand the united front until it takes advantage of the splits among the ranks of the exploiting classes. They should be motivated to reject the Duterte clique. Those opposing Duterte must be encouraged to completely repudiate the Duterte clique, withdraw support from him within the ruling system,

bureaucracy and apparatuses of state repression, and act to replace Duterte with his constitutional successor.

If this happens as in the overthrow of Marcos and Estrada in 1986 and 2001, the path will be cleared for the resumption of peace negotiations towards comprehensive agreements on social, economic and political reforms which shall be the basis for a just peace. If this does not happen, the people's war for national liberation and democracy will continue and further blaze.

The role of BAYAN is decisive in rousing the patriotic and fighting spirit in accordance with the general line of national liberation and democracy through studies, discussions and publications, strengthening of solid mass organizations and mobilization of organized and unorganized masses to continuously increase mass protests until the Duterte clique loses its capacity to rule and is ripe for overthrow.

The role of BAYAN in Metro Manila is decisive because here is the center of the reactionary system and government and the manifestos, actions and victories of the patriotic and democratic forces shall be a signal for the whole country. The overthrow of the Duterte regime will be hastened if the mass actions are victorious and will strengthen the spirit of the people in the bureaucracy and the armed forces of the reactionary government and they will reject and withdraw support from the Duterte clique.

We are at a time where the crisis of the ruling system and the crimes of the Duterte regime are ahead of our initiatives and actions in goading the broad masses of the people to fight the enemy who causes their sufferings. We have a correct analysis of society and program of action, solid mass organizations and traditional and modern means and methods to hasten the pace of our struggle and defeat of the enemy and to advance the national democratic movement.

Expand the united front and intensify the mass movement!

Oust the treacherous, cruel, corrupt and mendacious Duterte regime!

Long live BAYAN and the Filipino people!

Dear fellow activists, let me congratulate the Youth Movement Against Tyranny-Metro Manila for having arisen as an alliance of student councils, student publications, and youth formations in Metro Manila that aim to unite all freedom-loving Filipinos to fight tyranny and fascism, exemplified by the Marcos fascist dictatorship and now recurrent under the Duterte tyrannical regime.

Thank you for having invited me to be one of the speakers for the event, "*Martial Law Noon at Ngayon: Dissecting the Marcos and Duterte Regimes*". I appreciate Paaralang Joma Sison, YMAT Metro Manila, and UPM USC for spearheading this event, which is a major part of *Kontra Agos: Sa Paglaban at Paglaya*, the week-long commemoration of the 48th anniversary of the Marcos Martial Law declaration.

This is a time to remember the extreme suffering of the Filipino people under the Marcos fascist dictatorship and the heroic resistance of the people and their patriotic and democratic forces aboveground as well as the armed revolutionary movement in the underground and in the guerrilla fronts in the countryside. We must be inspired by the people's resistance that ultimately overthrew the Marcos fascist dictatorship. We can be highly confident that the Duterte scheme of fascist dictatorship will have a short life span.

Our commemoration is highly significant and purposive because today the people are again being confronted and subjected to an undeclared but real fascist dictatorship under Duterte. The open rule of terror has been a creeping reality in the Philippines since Duterte became the president in 2016 and has become full-blown, even without the formal declaration of martial law, since the enactment of Duterte's law of state terrorism.

We must understand why the fascist dictatorship occurred in the time of Marcos and is now recurrent in the time of Duterte. I propose to discuss the common ground of counterrevolution and revolution in the Philippines, the essential similarities and circumstantial differences between the fascist dictatorship of Marcos and Duterte and the prospects of the people's resistance.

The common ground for counterrevolution and revolution

The semicolonial and semifeudal society is the common ground for counterrevolution and revolution in the Philippines. It is a society in chronic crisis because the broad masses of the people are subjected to extreme forms of oppression and exploitation by the foreign monopoly capitalism of the US and its imperialist allies as well as by the local exploiting classes of the comprador big bourgeois, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists.

These oppressors and exploiters are collectively responsible for keeping the Philippines underdeveloped and impoverished and for profiting most from an economy that is a cheap source of mineral ores, export crops and labor in exchange for manufactures from abroad in the form of some depreciable capital goods and consumer goods. The chronic trade deficits as well as budgetary deficits keep the Philippines always in need of local and foreign loans.

In their rise to power, the political representatives of the comprador big bourgeoisie and landlord class, acquire the distinctive character of being bureaucrat capitalists by having the opportunity to use their public offices for personal enrichment through corrupt practices. These bureaucrat capitalists may priorly belong to big comprador and landlord classes or they acquire the character of these classes if they are bright boys and girls from the middle class.

The chronic economic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system tends to generate political crisis as it intensifies the contradictions among political parties or groups representing factions of the exploiting classes. Under conditions of worsening economic and political crisis, the president or chief bureaucrat capitalist can be tempted to take advantage of the crisis and use executive powers, especially martial law powers, in order to take over the entirety of the reactionary government and use this in a bid to break into the topmost level of the comprador big bourgeoisie.

You must recall that Marcos took advantage of the chronic economic and political crisis by orating that the social volcano was about to erupt in the country, that extraordinary measures would have to be adopted and that he would be the savior to make the Philippines great again. When he declared martial law on September 21, 1972, he said that he was saving the republic and building a new society and demanded that the people submit themselves

to the discipline of his fascist dictatorship. He invoked anti-communism and exaggerated the number of the Red fighters of the New People's Army to rationalize his fascist rule.

What was the real objective of Marcos in becoming a fascist dictator? It was to rob the people of USD 10 to 15 billion and stash this away in various banks and investment houses abroad, to get bribes from overpriced infrastructure projects and onerous foreign loans guaranteed by the Philippine state, to take over well-established big compradors firms like San Miguel Brewery Corporation, PLDT, Meralco and other corporations, to close down ABS-CBN and put up his own KBN and to buy expensive properties abroad.

What did Marcos do to serve notice that he can do anything to anyone who opposed his despotism and plunder of the country's national patrimony and social wealth? He caused the arrest and detention of at least 70,000 people and the torture of at least 35,000. Nearly 10,000 victims of human rights violations won their case against Marcos in the US after his overthrow. At least 3,257 activists, critics and political opponents were documented as disappeared, tortured and murdered.

Millions of people, especially workers and poor peasants, indigenous people and Moro people, were forced out of their land and homes. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, three million people were displaced in Mindanao, especially among the Moro people. All over the country, properties and businesses were confiscated to enrich the Marcos family, his business cronies, his political and military agents.

Duterte brazenly praises and emulates Marcos as his hero and idol. He is cruder than Marcos in openly admitting the mass murder of people and boasting of presidential protection and immunity for his armed minions who carry out the grave and systematic human rights violations. Like Marcos, his real objective in ruling with mailed fists is also to enrich himself from overpriced infrastructure projects and onerous loans., from other kinds of programs and projects that channel public funds to himself and his cronies and even from the smuggling of drugs and other contraband and casino operations of Chinese criminal syndicates.

While such political monsters of the ruling system as Marcos and Duterte can take advantage of the chronic crisis of the ruling system and abuse their presidential powers to engage in graft and corruption and wage counterrevolution, the same chronic crisis is aggravated by their crimes of plunder and mass murder and their escalation of the conditions of oppression and exploitation and drives the broad masses of the people to wage various forms of resistance.

The highest form of resistance, the people's war along the general line of people's democratic revolution, has grown in strength and advanced precisely because of the tyranny and fascism of rulers like Marcos and Duterte. The recurrence of the open rule of terror, despite thirty years of pseudo-democratic regimes from Aquino the mother to Aquino the son, shows that the chronic crisis has kept on worsening and that the ruling class cannot rule in a way to deceive the people effectively. The ruling system is completely rotten and the people's revolutionary struggle against one regime after another result in the accumulation of the people's strength against the entire ruling system.

The same semicolonial and semifeudal conditions and chronic crisis that breed despotic regimes, such as those of Marcos and Duterte, also provide the objective conditions for the development of the subjective forces of the revolution. The proletariat as class leader of the Philippine revolution can find the peasantry in the countryside as its most numerous and most reliable ally. In the countryside and among the peasants, the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army, the revolutionary mass organizations and the people's democratic government have grown from small and weak to big and strong nationwide.

Comparison of Marcos and Duterte as traitors and tyrants

Before he became president, Marcos hired so-called nationalist speech writers like Blas Ople and the like, spread the word that he was supportive of the Supreme Court decisions restricting the privileges of foreign investors and actually spoke against the sending of Filipino troops to Vietnam to join the US war of aggression against the Vietnamese people. But secretly he was soliciting campaign funds from the US corporations and assuring them of charter change for their benefit.

As soon as he became president, he did not make any significant move to change the semicolonial relationship of the Philippines with US imperialism, except to plead for the reduction of the 99-year lease of military bases under US Military Bases Agreement to 25 years. Early on in 1965 the Kabataang Makabayan and other patriotic and democratic forces launched demonstrations to demand the abrogation of all treaties, agreements and arrangements binding the Philippines as a semicolony to the US economically, politically, culturally and militarily.

Contrary to his pre-election position against sending the Philcag to Vietnam, he agreed with US President Johnson to send the Filipino troops to Vietnam. And the puppet Marcos was happy that Johnson called him his right hand man in Asia. When Johnson held his Manila Summit to round up support from his Asian puppets for the US war of aggression in Vietnam, Marcos used the police and military to arrest leaders of Kabataang Makabayan on October 23, 1966 (including myself as the KM chairman) and brutally disperse the demonstration of thousands of students at the Manila Hotel on October 24, 1966.

The brutal attack became the stimulus for the launching of the October 24th Movement to arouse, organize and mobilize the student youth for social investigation and integration with the youth and masses in factory sites, urban poor communities and peasant communities in the Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog regions. The protest mass actions and the campaigns of integration with the urban and rural poor raised the membership of Kabataang Makabayan from a few scores at its founding in 1964 to a few thousands in its first two years of existence.

Prior to his election as president, Duterte took the same demagogic path of Marcos, pretending to be a sympathizer and ally of the patriotic and democratic forces and even of the revolutionary movement even as he became increasingly notorious for engaging in the extrajudicial killing of suspected common criminals and drug users and pushers. He stood out in honoring the late Ka Parago, facilitating the release of prisoners of war captured by the NPA and promising to amnesty and release all political prisoners and to engage in serious peace negotiations with the NDFP.

Soon after becoming president, Duterte began his all-out war against the revolutionary movement under the pretext of letting his military continue Aquino's Oplan Bayanihan. It soon became clear that he was reneging on his promise to amnesty and release all political prisoners and that his objective in peace negotiations was merely to seek the capitulation of the revolutionary forces through a protracted ceasefire agreement. Even then, it was necessary for all patriotic and democratic forces, the peace advocates of various types and the NDFP to make just demands and propagate these, test Duterte and let him unfold his own character.

Within the period of June 2016 to June 2017, it became absolutely clear to the public that the Duterte regime was traitorous in trying to serve two imperialist masters, the US and China, for his personal gain; tyrannical and genocidal with a penchant for the mass murder of poor people and his opponents; plundering the public coffers and the economy in league with the big plunderers of previous regimes who had supported his electoral campaign; and swindling for personal and dynastic benefit. The peace negotiations could not go beyond the fourth round in April 2017. Then in May 2017 Duterte declared martial law in Mindanao not only against the jihadist groups in Mindanao but also against the CPP and NPA in the larger parts of Mindanao.

It has become absolutely clear that Duterte has been like Marcos, obsessed with gaining absolute power through brute force in order to enrich himself and his family. His mass murder of 30,000 people who have been arbitrarily listed as drug users and drug peddlars has been for the purpose of mass intimidation, corrupting the police with rewards and giving the message to everyone that he is capable of killing anyone opposed to his rule.

In escalating his military campaign of suppression against the people and the revolutionary movement, Duterte is applying the same methods that he applied in Oplan Tokhang. He turns into his criminal accomplices his loyal military officers by ordering them to murder suspected revolutionaries and feeding them money for every suspect killed as well as for fake surrenders and imaginary community development projects.

But Duterte cannot stay in power as a fascist dictator for as long as Marcos did, who totalled 14 years of fascist dictatorship. Duterte came to the presidency much older than Marcos and sickly with multiple serious ailments. He has bankrupted his own government and the entire Philippine economy through unbridled corruption and extreme overspending for the military and police, especially during the last six months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

He is liable to be squeezed out or squashed by trying to serve two conflicting imperialist powers, the US and China. The bureaucrats and military officers surrounding Duterte know that he cannot stay long in power and they are now engaged in an unprecedented plunder of public funds and the economy. The majority of military officers and personnel are disgusted with Duterte as a puppet of China. They frown at the corruption of the retired and active military officers close to Duterte and are sick and tired of military operations that are futile against the NPA but extremely abusive of the people.

The movement against tyranny or the broad united front against tyranny which took shape in the second half of 2017 has gained further strength and the capability of carrying out large protest mass actions. And it is

appreciative of the readiness of the vice president to succeed the president upon his incapacitation or resignation. The colossal crimes of the Duterte regime are bound to cause its ignominious downfall if it uses fascist dictatorship to rule the people beyond 2022.

Having signed into law his license for unlimited state terrorism, Duterte is poised to make a series of moves to arrest and kill en masse his critics and opponents and push the ratification of a fascist constitution that pretends to shift the country to federalism and parliamentarism. Remember that Marcos made his decisive moves for formally declaring martial law and imposing fascist dictatorship on the people in 1972, the year before his second four-year term ended in 1973. So be ready for probable surprise moves that Duterte will be making within the next year or so.

Prospects of the people's resistance against the Duterte fascist regime

The legal democratic forces as well as the revolutionary forces of the Filipino people are far stronger and are more experienced and tested than they were when Marcos planned and carried out his scheme of fascist dictatorship from 1969 to 1972. For Duterte to impose a fascist dictatorship on the Filipino within the next year or so is practically lifting a big rock only to let it fall on his feet.

It is instructive to review the years of 1969 to 1972. As early as 1969 to 1970, when the legal democratic forces were small and the revolutionary forces were even far smaller, it became clear that Marcos was determined to impose a fascist dictatorship on the people because of his pronouncements about the social volcano on the brink of eruption and his role as savior and also because of the off-the-record boasting of the propagandists and military loyalists of Marcos that he was serious with his plan to save the republic and build a new society.

What did the legal democratic forces do? They hastened their work of arousing, organizing and mobilizing the people. Militant mass actions arose not only in Metro Manila but also in various parts of the country. The First Quarter Storm of 1970 erupted and further mass actions occurred up to 1972. At the same time, the most advanced mass activists were already mentally prepared to go underground and have their own firearms in case of crackdown.

Thus, when the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus occurred in 1971, hundreds of mass activists went underground and thousands were prepared to do likewise if martial law would be declared. When martial law was declared on September 21, 1972, thousands of mass activists went underground. By 1974, they were deployed nationwide to strengthen the revolutionary forces in the countryside.

Parallel to the readiness of the legal democratic forces to go underground in case of crackdown, without giving up the legal and defensive political struggle in the urban areas, the revolutionary forces of the people carried out in earnest their ideological, political and organizational work in the countryside. The Communist Party of the Philippines had the foresight to reestablish itself on December 26, 1968 under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought and proceeded to found the New People's Army on March 29, 1969.

The CPP and all other revolutionary forces pursued the general line of people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war. The experienced guerrilla fighters from the old revolutionary movement were combined with the mass activists from the urban areas, who came from the ranks of trade unionists and educated youth. They learned to integrate the revolutionary armed struggle, land reform and mass-base building. They further built and strengthened the CPP, NPA, the revolutionary mass organizations, the alliances and the local organs political power that constitute the people's democratic government.

From one regime to another, these revolutionary forces have overcome all counterrevolutionary campaigns of suppression and have grown in strength through revolutionary struggle. The CPP has now tens of thousands of members. The NPA has thousands of Red fighters plus tens of thousands of members in the people's militia and hundreds of thousands in self-defense units of the revolutionary mass organizations. The members of the revolutionary mass organizations are in the millions. And so many more people are governed by the local organs of political power.

According to revolutionary strategists, the nationwide base of the revolutionary forces in 110 guerrilla fronts in 73 out of the 81 Philippine provinces is an ample launching base for tactical offensives for destroying and disintegrating the reactionary military, police and paramilitary forces and accumulating the armed strength to knock out the concentrations of armed power of the state in areas close to or inside the major cities in the future strategic offensive against the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system.

The NPA is steadily engaged in bringing about the maturation of the strategic defensive from the middle phase

to the advanced phase with the rapid multiplication of squads and platoons as combat units that can be easily combined as companies upon need. The stage of strategic stalemate will be characterized by frequent company-size and battalion-size operations and will be much shorter in time than the stage of the strategic defensive. The strategic offensive will be facilitated by the ever worsening crisis of both domestic ruling system and the world capitalist system. Such crisis is discernible even now.

According to Ang Bayan, the reactionary Armed Forces of the Philippines has only 140 maneuver battalions, of which, 35 are deployed in Luzon; 19 in the Visayas; and 83 in Mindanao (19 battalions in Moro areas, and 64 in NPA areas). Thus, close to 85 percent or 118 battalions are deployed against the NPA. Close to 55 percent of AFP units deployed against the NPA are in Mindanao, mainly in the eastern regions. Combined AFP and PNP troop deployment is highest in Southern Mindanao, followed by Southern Tagalog, Eastern Visayas, North Central Mindanao, Far South Mindanao and Negros.

The balance of strength between the revolutionary side and the enemy side is now far more favorable to the revolutionary side than during the time of Marcos dictatorship. The enemy side is still militarily superior but is on the losing side because it fights for US imperialism and the local exploiting classes, eats up a lot of public money and commits atrocities against the people. Even if it is still superior to the NPA in purely military terms, it is blind and deaf in its search and destroy operations because it lacks the support of the people and it is extremely vulnerable to the strategy and tactics of guerrilla warfare.

Based on the publications of the CPP, NPA and NDFP that I have read, the armed revolutionary movement of the people is determined and expects to inflict more casualties on the enemy side and seize more arms from it. The morale of the enemy side is running low because it is fighting for US imperialism and the local exploiting classes and for a regime that is notorious for treason, tyranny, mass murder plunder and swindling and is getting fatigued by too many fruitless operations and being exposed to the tactical offensives of the NPA.

It is a matter of historical truth that before a certain exploitative ruling system is overthrown, it does its worst in armed counterrevolution because it does not volunteer to surrender its power and wealth to the oppressed and exploited toiling masses of workers and peasants. But it is precisely because of extreme brutality and greed that the ruling system becomes more rotten and compels the people to wage armed revolution until they win total victory.

Long live the Youth Movement Against Tyranny-Metro Manila!

Oust the traitorous, tyrannical, murderous, plunderer and mendacious Duterte regime!

Advance the national democratic movement!

Long live the Filipino people!

The Struggle against

the Marcos Fascist Dictatorship ND Line Online Anakbayan-Europa, September 20, 2020 Questions by the Host

Edna Becher

1. Even before Marcos proclaimed martial law in 1972, revolutionary forces in the Philippines had been waging the national democratic revolution. How big was this movement before Martial law?

JMS: In the entire 1960s, the national democratic movement against US imperialism and the local reactionary classes of big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists grew steadily among the student youth, workers and peasants through activities to arouse, organize and mobilize them.

The Student Cultural Association of the University of the Philippines (SCAUP) made the first major mass action in the struggle for national democracy when it led 5000 students on March 15, 1961 to scuttle the anticommunist hearings of the Committee on Anti-Filipino Activities of the Lower House of Congress. Those hearings had persecuted the faculty members and student activists of the UP for writing patriotic and progressive essays.

The leading activists of the SCAUP subsequently generated study groups and seminars to promote the national democratic line of resuming the Philippine revolution among the students, young workers, peasants and professionals. They established the Kabataang Makabayan as a comprehensive youth organization in 1964.

The KM gained national prominence as an articulator and militant force of the national democratic movement in 1964. It worked with student organizations, labor federations of Lapiang Manggagawa and the MASAKA led by Felixberto Olalia. It spearheaded demonstrations that peaked with 25,000 rallyists in 1965 against the treaties, agreements and arrangements that bound the Philippines as a semicolony to the US.

It also led the youth demonstration against the so-called Manila Summit in which US president Lyndon Johnson rounded up the Asian puppet government to join the US in its war of aggression against Vietnam. The demonstration was violently dispersed but the student demonstrators were inspired to launch the October 24th Movement for carrying out social investigation and recruiting the youth in urban and rural poor communities.

In 1967-68, the KM led nationwide student strikes against reactionary school owners and administrators; and built school chapters nationwide. In 1969, the KM cooperated with jeepney drivers to carry out transport strikes against rising oil prices.

In the meantime, the Communist Party of the Philippines was established under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism with only 12 delegates representing more than 80 full and candidate members. And it soon established the New People's Army on March 29, 1969 with only a few squads in Tarlac but with a mass base of some 80,000 people.

The First Quarter Storm (FQS) led by the KM broke out in 1970. From January to March, a series of mass protests surged, with 100,000 to 200,000 youth and workers joining each protest action. As a result, the national democratic mass organizations increased their membership by leaps and bounds.

The violent dispersal of the mass actions which resulted in the killing and injury of mass protesters only served to arouse popular outrage, inspire further mass actions, drove many activists to study revolutionary theory and practice and embolden many activists to join the CPP and NPA.

The mass protests continued despite the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus in 1971 until the declaration of martial law in 1972. Against the strident threats of Marcos to declare martial law, the mass protesters shouted people's war as the answer to martial law.

On the eve of the declaration of martial law, the KM had a membership of 15,000. The revolutionary trade unions reached a membership of at least 30,000 and the peasant mass base was at least 200,000 mainly in Tarlac, Pampanga, Ifugao, Cagayan, Isabela and Nueva Vizcaya provinces in 1972.

The CPP membership was approaching 2000 and the NPA had more than 300 Red fighters with automatic rifles, excluding the people's militia with inferior weapons. Marcos exaggerated the number of NPA fighters as 10,000 in his declaration of martial law.

2. Please tell us about the First Quarter Storm. What were the significant mass actions? What did it achieve?

JMS: Metro Manila was the center of the FQS of 1970 but the mass actions spread nationwide. As I have already said, they ranged in size from 100,000 to 200,000. The storm broke out when Marcos ordered the violent dispersal of the students gathered before Congress after he delivered his state of the nation address on January 26, 1970.

The violent dispersal and the death and injury of the student demonstrators provoked further mass actions. The subsequent mass actions involved having assembly points in various parts of Metro Manila and then the demonstrators marched from those points, picking up more demonstrators and mass support along the way before converging on Congress, the presidential palace or the US embassy.

Following the violent dispersal of the rally before Congress on January 26, 1970, the KM mobilized 150,000 demonstrators to march to the presidential place on January 30. The presidential guards and Marines attacked the demonstrators and the demonstrators captured a fire truck to ram through the gate of the palace. A see-saw battle ensued at the Mendiola bridge, resulting in serious casualties on the side of the students and the reactionary side.

Marcos pleaded to the Movement or a Democratic Philippines (MDP) to stop the mass actions. But the KM decided that the mass movement must go on. The next demonstration in February gathered at Plaza Miranda in Quiapo, Manila and then proceeded to the US Embassy. The demonstrators broke into the gate of the embassy and vented their ire on the entire ground floor of the embassy.

The mass movement proceeded with major issues raised against US imperialism and the Marcos puppet regime. After the FQS, more demonstrations occurred on labor and land reform issues as well as on the US military bases and the US war of aggression against Vietnam until the declaration of martial law in 1972.

3. What was the effect of Martial Law on this national democratic movement?

JMS: The martial law declaration of 1972 served to inflame the revolutionary spirit of the Filipino people. They were outraged that Marcos was imposing fascist dictatorship on them in the service of US imperialism and his own selfish interests, despite his propaganda of saving the republic and building a new society.

Marcos outlawed all the legal forces of the national democratic movement and engaged in the mass arrest of their leaders as well as the leaders of the opposition Liberal party. The mass activists who could not be arrested went underground. In Metro Manila alone, 4000 mass activists went underground with the intention of joining the people's war in the countryside.

The CPP membership leaped to more than 2000. By 1974, most of the thousands of activists joining the urban underground were deployed nationwide to help build the Party, the NPA the revolutionary mass organizations, and the local organs of political power in so many regions nationwide.

Instead of being able to destroy the legal national democratic movement, with martial law and fascist dictatorship, Marcos unwittingly succeeded in helping the armed revolutionary movement by driving the mass activists from the ranks of the workers and educated youth to join the the CPP, NPA and the peasant masses in the countryside.

4. What were the different forms of resistance against the Marcos fascist dictatorship?

JMS: Despite the violence and terrorism of martial law, various forms of legal and illegal resistance were possible against the Marcos fascist dictatorship. Only those threatened with arrest, torture and death had to go underground. The civil rights and religious organizations tried their best to defend the human rights of the social activists, the disemployed print and broadcast journalists, the trade unionists and leaders of the conservative opposition.

There was no way Marcos could stop the patriotic and democratic forces among the workers, peasants, students, professionals, religious people and the legal opposition parties who carried on their daily work to express their views and among themselves, especially because Marcos insulted every one by closing all mass media that were not under his control and by trying to monopolize information.

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines was formed on April 24, 1973 to build and strengthen the broad united front against the Marcos fascist dictatorship. This united front was successful in coordinating the legal forms of resistance and the armed revolutionary movement. Anti-fascist publications circulated and lightning protest actions occurred.

Under conditions of martial law, both legal forms of struggle and the people's war flourished. That was why the Marcos fascist dictatorship was ultimately overthrown. In class terms, the working class as the leading class relied mainly on its basic alliance with the peasant masses, won over the middle social strata and took advantage of the splits among the reactionaries in order to isolate and destroy the power of the Marcos fascist regime.

5. The Bangsa Moro led by the Moro National Liberation Front also waged armed struggle against the Marcos dictatorship. Was there an alliance between the CPP and the MNLF? What was their relationship?

JMS: Nur Misuari and other key leaders of the Moro National Liberation Front got their political education and

training from Kabataang Makabayan, which propagated the right of national self-determination among all indigenous peoples in the Philippines. There was therefore a high level of common understanding between the MNLF and the revolutionary movement of the entire Filipino people.

There was at least an objective alliance between the MNLF and the revolutionary movement of the entire Filipino people in fighting the reactionary Manila-based government as the common enemy. The Moro nation's fight for self-determination had the effect of helping the revolutionary struggle of the entire Filipino people. Reciprocally, the struggle of the Filipino people helped the Moro people.

The CPP and all patriotic and democratic forces succeeded in countering the attempt of Marcos to use Christian chauvinism against the MNLF, the MILF and the Moro nation. The NDFP and the Christians for National Liberation advocated ecumenism and mutual respect between the Christian and Islamic believers. The military minions of Marcos committed atrocities against the Moro people but were condemned by the Filipino people for doing so.

The NDFP and the MNLF agreed to stand together as complainants on behalf of the Filipino and Moro peoples against the Marcos fascist dictatorship as defendant in the trial conducted by the International People's Tribunal in Antwerp, Belgium in 1980. Marcos and his criminal accomplices were convicted by the International People's Tribunal.

6. Was there an international support in the movement against the fascist dictatorship? If so, what kind and what was its significance?

JMS: There was abundant international support for the Filipino people and their just struggle against the Marcos fascist dictatorship. As early as 1969, we in the CPP anticipated that Marcos would impose fascist dictatorship on the people. Thus, we started to deploy cadres to conduct solidarity work in socialist countries, in certain countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, in the US, Europe and in the Asia-Pacific region.

The CPP formed committees and branches in whichever country it had Party members. These engaged in mass work in order to build Filipino community organizations and solidarity organizations with the host people. The NDFP also had its international political work. It was able to form alliances of Filipino organizations and solidarity organizations and develop diplomatic and proto-diplomatic relations with foreign governments and their agencies.

The CPP and the NDFP were open to alliance and cooperation with all Filipino organizations in opposition to the Marcos fascist regime even if they belonged to the conservative opposition. The national democratic organizations abroad were themselves alliances and could include Filipinos of various ideological, religious and political persuasions as long as they agreed to fight against the Marcos fascist dictatorship.

7. The assassination of Aquino in 1983 upon his return to Manila triggered an anti-fascist upsurge. How significant was this in the overthrow of the Marcos fascist dictatorship?

JMS: The Aquino assassination on August 21, 1983 triggered the gigantic mass actions that led to the overthrow of the Marcos fascist dictatorship in 1986. That was the biggest mistake of Marcos. It led to the firm conclusion of the US government that Marcos had become more of a liability than an asset to US interests. The US State Department and the Republican and Democrat parties were offended that Marcos resorted to murder to eliminate a political leader they thought could replace Marcos in a peaceful way.

The Catholic and other Christian churches were also offended. So were most sections of the big comprador and landlord classes that had long been offended by Marcos and his upstart cronies for engaging in flagrant plunder, monopolizing the infrastructure projects and grabbing the enterprises and assets of others.

The Ninoy Aquino funeral was attended by a million people. But the pro-Aquino forces did not have solid mass organizations for launching mass protests. In the interest of the broad united front against the Marcos fascist dictatorship, the forces of the national democratic movement cooperated with the pro-Aquino forces in mobilizing the masses in great numbers to seek justice and effect the overthrow of the Marcos fascist dictatorship.

8. Could you tell us about the EDSA uprising? How did it happen and what effect? How did the regime respond to it?

JMS: The biggest contradiction between the Filipino people and the Marcos fascist dictatorship became conspicuous with the rise of the mass actions after the Aquino assassination from 1983 to 1986 and the electoral rallies of the opposition during the campaign period for the presidential snap election of February 7, 1986.

As a result of the electoral cheating of Marcos through his control of the Comelec, the CPP immediately

announced intensified armed resistance. The legal democratic forces also announced the intensification of mass protests. Subsequently, Cory Aquino announced a campaign of civil disobedience and the Catholic bishops issued a pastoral letter proclaiming the Marcos regime as having no legal and moral foundation. The stage was set for unprecedented mass actions against the Marcos fascist regime.

Meanwhile the contradictions between the side of Marcos and General Ver on one side and defense secretary Enrile and General Ramos on the other side broke out into the open. The former side was able to foil the coup attempt of the Reform the AFP Movement (RAM) as the instrument of the latter side. From Camp Aguinaldo, the Enrile-Ramos side and the RAM called for public support before they walked over to Camp Crame. Cardinal Sin called for public support for the beleaguered military opponents of Marcos and Ver.

Using the radio Veritas broadcast station of the Catholics, Boots Aquino (Ninoy Aquino's brother) called on the people to assemble at the Isetann along EDSA. The forces of BAYAN, Justice for Aquino and Justice for All and Congress for the Restoration and Democracy were the first to appear in significant number. Thus, the great number of people started to build up along EDSA. Colonel Santiago called for volunteers to accompany him in seizing the broadcast station of KPN and the government. And 500 members of BAYAN-Quezon City accompanied him.

The people who occupied EDSA from Cubao, Quezon City to Makati, Rizal peaked to as high as two million people to block the Marcos loyalists from attacking the Enrile-Ramos side. Some 80 percent of the people responded to the calls of Cardinal Sin, using the Veritas broadcast station. Twenty percent of the people were mobilized by BAYAN. In the direct encirclement of the Malacanang Palace, more than 90 percent of the 100,000 people were mobilized by Kilusang Mayo Uno and the League of Filipino Students.

Marcos and Ver tried to use force against the Enrile-Ramos side but the gigantic mass of people along EDSA and around the palace was insurmountable. They blocked the army and marine convoys sent out by Marcos from Fort Bonifacio and Sangley Point. At the same time, the US embassy used General Ileto to neutralize the Marcos loyalists in the Philippine Army. He and US ambassador Bosworth remanded the orders of Marcos for the artillery bombardment on Camp Crame from the site of Imelda's Ministry of Human Settlements. Air force General Sotelo of Camp Basa Air Base was ordered to bomb Camp Crame but instead he defected to the Enrile-Ramos side.

At the end of his power, Marcos and his family had no choice but to be airlifted by US helicopters to the Clark Air Base and from there to Guam and further on to Hawaii. If Marcos took the road to escape from the palace, he would have been ambushed by one of the special platoons which had been deployed by the NPA in Manila.

9. What was the role of the national democratic movement in the EDSA uprising?

JMS: I have already pointed out the particular role of the forces of the national democratic movement in joining the great number of people at Edsa, in seizing the broadcast facilities of KPN and the government and the encirclement of the presidential palace in the final days of Marcos in power from February 22 to 25, 1986.

I have not yet mentioned many other important contributions of BAYAN, like their organizations in several regions and provinces building the united front against Marcos and persuading the pro-Marcos politicians and units of the AFP and Philippine Constabulary to withdraw support from Marcos.

The regional commander of the PC in Bicol General de Villa cooperated with BAYAN in neutralizing the pro-Marcos politicians in the Bicol region. The BAYAN organizations of Angeles City blocked the way of the convoy of Marcos loyalist troops headed by General Palafox coming from Camp Aquino in Tarlac.

But the biggest role of the national democratic movement in ultimately bringing down the Marcos fascist regime was its long resolute and active resistance in the legal forms of resistance as well as in the form of the people's war. As the Marcos fascist dictatorship reigned long and had the illusion of ruling forever, the organizations and local organs of political power grew in strength and spread nationwide.

The legal democratic forces were outlawed and had to go underground but they kept on launching lightning protest mass actions and new legal mass organizations also kept on arising, especially after Marcos pretended to lift martial law in 1981. However, as early as 1974 to 1975, the trade unions were able to carry out a nationwide strike in 300 workplaces; and in 1976 the student masses were already able to reestablish student councils in the UP and so many other schools.

The people's war was inspirational to the broad masses of the people during all the time that Marcos rode roughshod over them with his armed minions and with US imperialist support.

The heroic resistance of the CPP, NPA, the NDFP, the revolutionary mass organizations and the local organs of political power demonstrated to the broad masses of the people that it was possible to fight the fascist regime.

The inspiration of the revolutionary forces became even stronger when the economic, social and political crisis of the fascist regime and the suffering of the people became conspicuous from 1979 onwards. The budgetary and trade deficits were widening and international credit for the regime was tightening.

10. It was a time of social unrest and political instability. Why was the revolutionary movement not able to seize political power from Marcos at that time?

JMS: As of November 1985 when the Plenum of the CPP Central Committee convened, the New People's Army had already accumulated a total of 5,600 high powered rifles and was already operating nationwide in so many guerrilla fronts, in all rural regions and in the majority of Philippine provinces. That was not a small achievement from having only a few squads with only nine automatic rifles and 26 inferior firearms in 1969. But the strength of the NPA was not yet enough for destroying the armed strength of the enemy and seizing political power in the cities.

The advance of the NPA would have been more rapid if not for the subjectivist line gaining currency within the CPP in 1981 that the Philippines was no longer semifeudal but industrial capitalist and that it was wrong to follow the strategic line of protracted people's war of availing of the peasantry and the country as the social and physical terrain for maneuvering against the militarily superior enemy and for accumulating armed strength from stage to stage and from phase to phase in every stage.

The subjectivist line led to the Right opportunist line of turning the NDFP into a reformist united front by ending the class leadership of the proletariat supposedly to attract more people to the NDFP. But the worst political errors resulting from the subjectivist line were several "Left" opportunist lines of insurrectionism in several regions at several times. These insurrectionist errors resulted in severe losses of mass base and worse in the commission of crimes when the failure of line became a pretext for the so-called anti-DPA witchhunts. The Second Great Rectification Movement of 1992 to 1998 dealt with and rectified these errors and crimes through ideological and political education .

The Trotskyite urban insurrectionism of Popoy Lagman in the Manila-Rizal region presumed that it was enough for the workers to seize political power in order to win the entire Philippine revolution. And in Mindanao the Reyes-Quimpo Trotskyite Red Area-White Area strategy presumed that people's strikes so-called and armed city partisan warfare were the lead factor of the armed revolution, with the NPA as secondary factor trying to catch up with the urban actions by rapidly organizing companies in an absolutely vertical way without sufficient horizontal deployment of sufficient armed units for mass work and mass base-building.

11. You were part of this struggle against Marcos dictatorship. Can you share with us your experiences in participating in this struggle?

JMS: I am happy that I was able to contribute what I could to the ideological, political and organizational development of the revolutionary forces that struggled against the Marcos dictatorship. I took part in the development of labor, peasant and youth organizations and alliances during the entire 1960s. These led to the founding and development of the CPP, NPA, NDFP, revolutionary mass organizations and local organs of political power.

I was in the preparation of the revolutionary forces that anticipated the emergence of fascist dictatorship. From 1969 to 1972 I was already involved in the people's war against the increasing military actions of the Marcos regime against the people and from 1972 to my capture in 1977 I fought what was blatantly a fascist dictatorship. Together with many comrades, I faced the tremendous odds, dangers and risks to life, limb and liberty and became tempered by overcoming them in the course of struggle.

Even while I was under maximum military detention, I continued to fight in the best way I could up to my release after the downfall of Marcos in 1986. I was confident that the revolutionary comrades and the masses outside of prison were doing their best and were advancing the revolutionary struggle according to the founding principles and strategic and tactics already laid.

I was conscious of fighting from inside prison to demonstrate to the people outside that if I could fight under extremely limited conditions they could fight the enemy even more and better. I was never discouraged by the various forms of physical and mental torture inflicted on me. These only strengthened my determination to fight.

Since I went out of prison in 1986, I have continued to be guided by the revolutionary principles and to do the best that I could. I have been able to do ideological, political and organizational work to the best of my ability. By being a refugee abroad for a long time and no longer of the age for military combat, I can share my accumulated knowledge and experience with the people in order to offer lessons that they can study and learn from. Thus, I

keep on doing research, writing and participating in study sessions like this webinar.

We should be cognizant of the fact that it is now the task of much younger comrades to take advantage of the ever worsening chronic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system, the nationwide spread of the revolutionary movement and the deep roots of the revolutionary forces among the exploited masses. They can be more daring in the revolutionary struggle and accelerate the offensives for the maturation of the strategic defensive, move into the strategic stalemate and advance to the strategic offensive on time for the unravelling of neoliberalism, the rising tide of the anti-imperialist and democratic struggles and the resurgence of the world proletarian revolution.

Beloved compatriots, first of all, let me thank the Movement Against Tyranny Cebu for inviting me to speak on the theme of peace and the prospects for justice and reforms and to express warmest greetings of solidarity in the struggle for democracy against the tyranny of the Duterte regime.

I admire you and salute you for your firm commitment. I congratulate you for all the successes that you have achieved in arousing, organizing and mobilizing the broad masses of the people to fight for national and social liberation against tyranny.

1. Struggle for peace as key role of the united front against tyranny

As a broad united front, the Movement Against Tyranny seeks to fight for the national and democratic rights and interests of the toiling masses of workers and peasants, the middle strata such as the urban petty bourgeoisie and middle bourgeoisie and the anti-fascist sections and elements of the upper classes.

The MAT bases itself on the consensus of the various patriotic and democratic forces that strive to stop the anti-national and anti-democratic policies and actions of the Duterte tyranny and to end the reign of terror and greed that seeks to perpetuate imperialist domination and the ruling system of big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists.

The Duterte regime has sought to justify its tyranny, its ever-worsening use of state terrorism, as something necessary to end the armed revolution of the people, which it maligns as “communist terrorist”. On this false ground, it has terminated the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations and has proclaimed the nullification of all the agreements that have been made in these negotiations.

It completely obscures the fact that millions of the Filipino people and their revolutionary forces, including the CPP and NPA and other formations allied within the NDFP, have invoked the sovereign right of the people to rise up against the intolerable ruling system of exploitation and oppression and yet have agreed with the reactionary Government of Republic of the Philippines to engage in peace negotiations.

The GRP and NDFP mutually signed and approved The Hague Joint Declaration of 1992 as the framework agreement for peace negotiations. It declares the aim of the peace negotiations, which is to address the roots of the armed conflict and arrive at comprehensive agreements on social, economic and political reforms. It spells out national sovereignty, democracy and social justice as the basic guiding principles of the negotiations.

It sets forth the substantive agenda in the following sequence: respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, social and economic reforms, political and constitutional reforms and end of hostilities and disposition of forces. It provides the methods of arriving at comprehensive and related agreements through reciprocal working committees under the direction of the GRP and NDFP negotiating panels, respectively.

Since 1992, the Filipino people have nurtured the hope that the civil war between the revolutionary forces of the NDFP and the counterrevolutionary forces of the GRP be resolved through peace negotiations and that solutions of the social, economic and political problems that have caused the civil war be agreed upon in order to lay the basis for a just and lasting peace.

But there are forces behind and within the GRP that oppose serious peace negotiations with the NDFP in accordance with The Hague Joint Declaration and consent to such negotiations only as a means of outwitting and steering the NDFP towards capitulation or at least paralyzing the armed revolution or even splitting it over time through protracted indefinite ceasefire agreements.

Because of disruptive actions and extremely prolonged delays by the GRP, less than two years have actually been devoted to peace negotiations since 1992. It is a lie for the Duterte regime to claim that more than 25 years of peace negotiations have passed and yet these have not resulted in a final peace agreement. To make the length of time for peace negotiations sound more ridiculous, the regime claims that the peace negotiations had run for 30 years since the ceasefire negotiations of 1986 during the time of Aquino.

We must recall that on the very first day after the signing of The Hague Joint Declaration on September 1, 1992, GRP President Ramos proclaimed the formation of the National Unification Commission (NUC) for the purpose of “localized peace negotiations” under the auspices of the commission and peace and order councils of the GRP

between the reactionary military officers and their own military assets and a few renegades masquerading as “independent revolutionary” armed groups.

For two years, they tried to conjure the illusion that the revolutionary forces could be bought with paltry amounts and promises and were breaking up and surrendering in great number. Ramos agreed to allow the GRP representatives to engage in exploratory talks with the NDFP representatives only after he realized that the revolutionary forces have become more consolidated and stronger through the Second Great Rectification Movement.

The formal opening of the peace negotiations between the GRP and NDFP negotiating panels could be held only on June 26, 1995. On this occasion the Joint Agreement on the Formation, Sequence and Operationalization of the Reciprocal Working Committees was signed. But after the formal opening, the peace negotiations were disrupted for one whole year because of the GRP refusal to release the NDFP consultant Sotero Llamas.

There were still many more disruptions and delays which the GRP side was responsible for from 1996 to the end of the Ramos term in 1998. During their meetings, however, the GRP and NDFP panels were able to forge several important agreements. The most important of these agreements was the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) in compliance with the first item of the substantive agenda.

The CARHRIHL was forged by the negotiating panels in six months of concentrated work and was signed by the panels on March 16, 1998. The NDFP Chairman signed it promptly. But GRP President Ramos failed to sign it. The newly-elected GRP President Estrada signed it on August 7, 1998. But on May 31, 1999 the GRP issued its formal notice of termination of peace negotiations. The termination took effect on July 1, 1999 and did not resume while Estrada was in power up to January 2001.

The peace negotiations resumed on April 27, 2001 during the Arroyo regime. Both parties affirmed as valid and binding all bilateral agreements entered into since the 1992 Hague Joint Declaration. The Royal Norwegian Government (RNG) was accepted by both parties as Third Party Facilitator in the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations. But the second round of formal talks in Oslo, Norway from June 10 to 13, 2001 was recessed by the GRP by citing as cause the death of a notorious Marcos-period torturer who resisted arrest by the NPA.

From then on, the Arroyo regime sought to make peace negotiations impossible by requesting the US government to designate as terrorist the CPP, NPA and myself as “terrorist”, use such designation as lever demanding the capitulation of the revolutionary movement of the people, and reduce negotiations to disarming and demobilizing the revolutionary forces while keeping the indefinite suspension of the peace negotiations until the surrender of the NDFP. For more than nine years, there were no peace negotiations while Arroyo was in power.

One year after assuming the GRP presidency, Benigno Aquino III agreed to the resumption of the peace negotiations in Oslo on June 18, 2011. No substantial agreement of any kind was made. The GRP side showed no interest in negotiating the substantive agenda. It focused on seeking to nullify The Hague Joint Declaration and described it as a document of perpetual division. It had the illusion that it could defeat the armed revolution through military operations or mere palliatives.

It also refused to allow the release of the NDFP consultants who remained in prison in violation of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees. Despite the progressive background of some of its members, the GRP negotiating panel was controlled by clerico-fascists and pro-US military officers, especially at the level of the Office of the Presidential Advisor on the Peace Process.

If together with the US military officers the “soc-dem” Norberto Gonzales poisoned the peace negotiations during the time of Arroyo, so did the “socdem” Teresita Deles together with the pro-US military officers during the time of Aquino II. But the worst in the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations would still come when someone like Duterte, who at first proclaimed himself as Left and socialist, shortly thereafter would undertake the most vicious and most violent actions intended to kill the peace negotiations once and for all time.

2. Why and how the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations have been terminated

Before Duterte became president, he boasted of being close to the CPP, NPA and NDFP. He shouted “Long live the CPP and NPA!” every time he went to a guerrilla front in Mindanao to ingratiate himself with the revolutionary movement. And he wanted to be an NDFP consultant in peace negotiations. He was publicly advising the business entrepreneurs to pay their taxes to the people’s revolutionary government. He proposed to release all political prisoners even before the resumption of peace negotiations. He pledged to make peace with the revolutionary movement of the people.

As soon as he visited the first military camp after he became president in 2016, he began to differentiate his past as mayor of Davao City, whose political life depended on alliance with the revolutionary movement, from his current office as chief executive of the entire ruling system, in charge of all its coercive apparatuses and all the opportunities for plunder. At the exploratory talks in June 2016 to prepare for the first round of formal talks, it was already clear that he would not release all the political prisoners before the first round of formal talks in August 2016.

Surreptitiously he started his all-out war against the revolutionary movement under the guise of his military minions continuing the Oplan Bayanihan of his predecessor Aquino. Like Estrada, Arroyo and Aquino, he gave himself six months to one year to pretend to be for serious peace negotiations in order to consolidate his position within the reactionary government and at the same time try to hoodwink the revolutionary movement. Despite these stumbling blocks, however, the NDFP negotiating panel persevered in pushing for the release of political prisoners in definite batches to facilitate the peace talks.

The GRP and NDFP negotiating panels held the first and second rounds of formal talks in Oslo in August and October 2016. These were devoted mainly to the issue of realizing the promise of Duterte to release all political prisoners and to holding the initial meetings of the reciprocal working committees. In the first formal talks, an agreement was made to carry out reciprocal unilateral ceasefire to demonstrate goodwill and promote the peace negotiations. This ran for almost five months from late September 2016 to the first week of February 2017. The revolutionary forces upheld this ceasefire, the longest in the history of the peace talks, despite continued military operations by the GRP. The Duterte regime however mistook the NDFP's principled desire to push the peace talks as a sign of weakness.

In the third round of talks in Rome in January-February 2017 and in the fourth round of talks in Noordwijk aan Zee in April 2017, Duterte demanded protracted indefinite ceasefire and in effect the end of the people's revolutionary government by giving up vital functions of governance in exchange for a renewed promise of releasing all the political prisoners. The NDFP was firm with its stand that all the political prisoners must be released and the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER) must be forged before there can be any agreement on any extended mutual ceasefire.

To make credible his pretense at being serious in pursuing the substantive agenda of the peace negotiations, Duterte had appointed to the GRP negotiating panel persons respected by the NDFP as having an understanding of the national and democratic demands of the people. Thus, despite the maneuvers of Duterte and his pro-US security cluster to push the NDFP to a position of capitulation, there was substantial progress made in the negotiations of social and economic reforms. But the fifth round of formal talks, already poised to commence in May 2017, was aborted because the GRP demanded that the CPP Central Committee withdraw its call for intensifying the armed resistance in response to Duterte's proclamation of martial law to cover the entirety of Mindanao despite the fact that those whom he assailed as Muslim terrorists, who launched a military operation in Marawi City, were located in just a few definite and limited areas.

The proclamation, which invoked the Marawi siege only as pretext, was directed mainly against the revolutionary movement led by the CPP. The NDFP negotiating panel stood firm that it would not recommend the withdrawal of the call of the CPP Central Committee unless Duterte would first amend his martial law proclamation. Duterte refused to make the necessary amendment of his proclamation even as GRP Defense Secretary Lorenzana made a press statement that the proclamation did not target the CPP and the NPA.

Despite the impasse in the holding of the formal peace talks, due mainly to "war hawks" in the security cluster of the Duterte Cabinet, the GRP negotiating panel was able to get permission from Duterte to engage in backchannel talks so that the negotiation and drafting of the CASER would proceed. Indeed, most of the CASER mutual draft, especially the most important sections on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development and National Industrialization and Economic Development were done by the reciprocal working committees and were ready for negotiation at the level of the negotiating panels.

The proposed reforms in the CASER draft agreed upon by the GRP and NDFP reciprocal working committees would have delivered immediate and concrete gains for the people. The Duterte regime however revealed its insincerity when militarist hawks Esperon and Galvez disowned this draft including the work of their own economic policy officials who helped produce this. Brazenly sabotaging the peace talks, they declared that a CASER would be "treasonous".

Ultimately, Duterte and the pro-US retired and active military officers around him had their way. To discredit the peace negotiations in press statements, they harped on various lines like the peace negotiations had taken too long without any result, that the NPA was violating CARHRIHL as if there were no Joint Monitoring Committee to receive complaints, and that it was best to conduct “localized peace talks” ala NUC and at the same time escalate the all-out war against the CPP and NPA.

Withdrawal from the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations suited Duterte’s constant posture and image of being a strongman, ever willing to engage in extrajudicial killings as in the bogus war on drugs. Most important of all, it was consonant with the more cold-blooded aim of realizing his scheme of fascist dictatorship. The death of the peace negotiations was finally sealed on November 13, 2017 when Duterte pledged to US President Trump to annihilate the CPP and NPA.

Ten days after, on November 23, 2017, Duterte issued Proclamation 360 to terminate the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations. And on December 3, 2017 he issued Proclamation 374 to designate the CPP and NPA as terrorist organizations. These proclamations were intended to end the peace negotiations once and for all. They were the preparation for the issuance of Memorandum Order 32 on November 22, 2018 which placed the Bicol region, and the Negros and Samar islands under a “state of emergency,” the formation of the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) on December 4, 2018 and the enactment of the Anti-Terrorism Law on July 3, 2020 which has realized Duterte’s ambition of fascist dictatorship even without its formal proclamation.

I think that I have given you a full presentation of how Duterte has done more than enough to prove to all reasonable and peace-loving people that he premeditated the killing of the peace negotiations and that he has done more than enough to ensure that there can be no peace negotiations while he is in power. We cannot expect that the worsening crisis of the Philippine ruling system would persuade him to resume peace negotiations.

Duterte takes the one-sided view that the worsening crisis is his opportunity and justification to grab despotic power and the unlimited privilege of plunder in the style of his idol Marcos. He does not even know that by his own aggravation of the crisis with his reign of terror and greed, he has inflicted intolerable suffering on the people from the escalating conditions of oppression and exploitation and that the people and various patriotic and democratic forces are eager to oust him from power.

The only limitation to his power that Duterte seems to be aware of is his bad health condition which now limits his personal appearances before the public. But it is still important for him to project the image of being able to rule beyond 2022 through a fascist dictatorship and to keep in reserve his ability to rig the Comelec vote count, as he did in the 2019 mid-term elections, in order to install his daughter or some other stooge as his presidential proxy.

It is the duty of the Filipino people to assert their own sovereign power to catalyze the process of the disintegration and overthrow of the Duterte ruling clique. In this regard, it is important for the broad united front to rely mainly on the basic alliance of the working class and peasantry, win over the middle social strata and take advantage of the splits among the reactionary upper classes. The last two years of every incumbent president in the Philippines are normally his lameduck years, when centrifugal forces arise even within the ranks of the regime.

Duterte is in the worst situation as the public gets to know how much his crimes have devastated the Philippine economy and all other aspects of Philippine society, how extreme has been his greed for power and plunder, and how after all he is now physically debilitated and is mentally and morally deranged. The broad united front of the patriotic and democratic forces of the people have all the facts and all the political and moral advantage and resources to spotlight the reality that emperor is naked and has the ashen face of a dying tyrant—as was the situation in the waning years of Marcos’ dictatorial rule.

3. The significance of peace as the reign of justice and reforms in relation to the pandemic

The persistent character of the Philippines as a semicolonial and semifeudal country puts it in chronic crisis. As the continuing dominant economic power, US imperialism has kept it underdeveloped and limited to being a cheap source of raw materials, semimanufactures and cheap labor and an importer of finished products of higher value from industrial capitalist countries. Thus, the Philippines has suffered widening trade deficits and has been made more dependent on foreign direct investments and loans that are designed to keep it underdeveloped.

The rich natural resources of the country can be considered a boon to the Filipino people but it has been turned into their bane by foreign monopoly capitalism and the local exploiting classes of big compradors and

landlords and their political agents who play the role of bureaucrat comprador capitalists. These anti-national and anti-democratic forces are averse even to such bourgeois democratic reforms as genuine land reform and national industrialization.

Since the US nominal grant of national independence in 1946, the Philippines has been kept as a cheap source of mineral ores, timber and certain export crops, as Japan reconstructed and expanded its industry and then the East Asian tigers arose. In the international division of labor, the most that the Philippines could get as concession since the late 1970s has been a share in the semi-manufacture of garments and semiconductors and export of working men and women in addition to the production of raw materials for export.

Upon the ascendance of the neoliberal policy of imperialist globalization since the 1980s, the more the Filipino puppet leaders and technocrats have accepted as the comparative advantage of the Philippines the role of provider of raw materials and cheap labor and the status of underdevelopment in the Philippines. Their idea of development has not gone beyond giving priority to private construction, infrastructure building and the opportunities for pork barrel corruption and the perpetuation of the colonial pattern of production, consumption and trade and ever-increasing dependence on consumer imports, foreign investments and loans for the purpose.

Coming as the latest of the Filipino puppet presidents, Duterte has admitted since the beginning that he knew nothing about economics and has always depended on technocrats who follow the dictates of foreign monopoly capitalism and have disdain for the self-reliant development of the Philippines. Playing the role of the strongman, the cowardly weakling Duterte has poured increasing amounts of tax money to military overspending and to the corruption of the military officers on top of the ever-growing bureaucratic corruption.

The broad masses of the Filipino people have been deeply disappointed by Duterte's termination of the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations and the abortion of the CASER exactly at the time that this was in an advanced stage of mutual drafting and negotiation. The abortion coincided with Duterte's stepped-up drive for fascist dictatorship and the escalating opposition of his pro-US technocrats and military and ex-military officials to genuine land reform and national industrialization, describing these as running counter to the neoliberal economic policy and allowing communists to gain credit for the reforms.

By the time that the Covid-19 pandemic came, the chronic crisis of the ruling system had become very serious, further aggravated by the crisis of overproduction and stagnation in the world capitalist economy and the misuse of public funds by the Duterte regime. At first, Duterte underestimated the potential of the pandemic as he allowed more than half a million Chinese tourists to flow into the Philippines even after the WHO gave the warning about the pandemic in January 2020.

But since adopting the lockdown policy in March 2020, Duterte has considered it as one big opportunity for plunder and grabbing and exercising emergency powers on a broad range of social concerns. He promised medical testing, sufficient health personnel and facilities and economic assistance for those losing their jobs and means of livelihood. But the promise has not been fulfilled and instead Duterte and his gang have pocketed public funds and shared these with their fast-rising crony business allies, while up to now there is no clear accounting of Php 590 billion.

Aside from the big plunder perpetrated by the Duterte clique, even just in accounting for the massive Bayanihan I funds reallocated for Covid-19 response, he has used the prolonged lockdown (the longest continuous lockdown in the world from March 16 to the present) to intimidate the people with the sweeping coercive measures and excessive display of force by the military and police, the escalation of the bogus war on drugs and the so-called focused operations in the countryside, the enactment of the Anti-Terrorism Law which practically realizes Duterte's scheme of fascist dictatorship, and tighter control over such institutions as mass media and churches. This is far worse than the Marcos fascist regime because it combines the undeclared martial rule with the methods of mass murder and mass arrests similar to those of Oplan Tokhang, which are justified by a combination of pretexts such as fighting terrorism, fighting drugs and criminality, and fighting Covid-19.

In the name of fighting terrorism, the Anti-Terrorism Law enables widespread state terrorism or fascism. Under the direction of the Anti-Terrorism Council and the NTF-ELCAC, social activists, critics and political opponents of the regime are arbitrarily listed or tagged as "communist terrorists" or "enemies of the state"; publicly slandered and vilified; threatened with confiscation of bank accounts and property; and arrested and detained incommunicado without judicial warrant for a long period of time to allow the fascist criminals to torture and murder their victims and destroy the corpus delicti in the notorious style of the Duterte death squads.

By all indications, Duterte and his fascist gang have the illusion that, thanks to the pandemic and resulting lockdowns, they have further tightened their control over the people and have gained so much more power and wealth. They overlook the fact that the pandemic and lockdowns have exposed the rotten anti-people character of the ruling system; that they have further bankrupted the economy and their own government; and that they have further generated the conditions for the people to wage all forms of resistance.

As if the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns were not enough to expose the rottenness of the ruling system and rouse the people to resistance, a series of typhoons have struck the Philippines, causing landslides and massive floods that have destroyed food crops, homes and infrastructure, and paralyzing power, communications, transport and other essential services for many days. These have exposed the gross lack of resources for rescue, relief and rehabilitation and the criminal neglect of disaster preparations because of military overspending, bureaucratic corruption, and other mispriorities.

They have likewise exposed the serious damage to the environment by the logging interests (many now masquerading as agroforestry-based IFMAs), mining and quarrying and plantation corporations favored by foreign monopoly capitalists, the Filipino puppet leaders and the big compradors. The pointless construction of large dams has caused the inundation of farms, communities and nearby cities and yet the Duterte regime continues to promote the construction of these huge dams under its graft-laden infrastructure program.

The people are enraged by the heaps of abuse inflicted on them for a long period of time and by the immediate prospect of food scarcity, mass hunger, long-term loss of jobs and livelihood, and inflation. The understated negative growth rate of 11 percent was recorded at the end of the third quarter of 2020 due mainly to the pandemic lockdown. This negative growth rate is certain to worsen as a consequence of the typhoons and floods, not to speak yet of the droughts, pestilence and disease outbreaks that will follow.

In view of the overwhelming crisis of the ruling system, aggravated by the pandemic lockdown and the floods, the Duterte regime if smart should now be playing once more the peace card if only to try appeasing and countering the rising wave of mass indignation and resistance. Instead, it continues to go berserk in unleashing state terrorism because of sheer arrogance and hubris as well as the realization that it has no more maneuver time, credibility and resources to make its peace pretense credible and effective to any extent. It is now in its lameduck period of less than two years and is unwilling to give up the act and instruments of state terrorism that it has already acquired.

In sharp contrast to the intransigent position of the Duterte regime against the resumption of peace negotiations, there are those within the broad united front of patriotic and democratic forces who advocate the resumption of the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations—not to persuade Duterte to negotiate peace but to expose and condemn him as the enemy of peace and to rally the people to the call for peace against the state terrorism of his regime and to offer the prospect of resuming said negotiations after his ouster.

The newly-elected US President Biden has declared in a recent statement that he is critical of the trends of authoritarianism in Turkey, Hungary and the Philippines and that he is interested in the promotion of human rights and democracy in the countries which the US supports. This statement has perked up the conservative opposition, which has been nearly decimated and temporarily paralyzed by Duterte's demagoguery and patronage during the last four years but which is now hoping that the Duterte regime will start to self-disintegrate in its lameduck period of less than two years.

The conservative opposition is also banking on the Washington bipartisan consensus against Duterte's sell-out of Philippine sovereign rights over the West Philippine Sea to China. It remains to be seen, however, whether the US can restrain Duterte from realizing his ambition of ruling beyond 2022 or from rigging the 2022 presidential elections to install his proxy. And yet as it is, the US is already greatly increasing its support to the regime's counterinsurgency program with military aid tripling from US\$76 million in 2017 to US\$216 million in 2019.

The US has the power to restrain Duterte and even to prevent him from carrying out false flag operations and other preemptive measures which are calculated to damage the broad united front and yet put the blame on any of the opposition forces. But the US would probably embolden both the Duterte regime and the conservative opposition to stick to the line of suppressing the national democratic movement of the Filipino people under the guise of rabid anti-communism.

The broad masses of the Filipino people and the armed revolutionary movement have no choice but to be vigilant, stand firm in pursuing the people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war and avail of the

favorable conditions generated by the rapidly worsening crisis of the world capitalist ruling system and the Philippine ruling system. At the same time, they are for a broad united front committed to the general line of struggle for national liberation, democracy, peace, justice and basic social, economic and political reforms.

4. The advancement of the principles of human rights by the peace negotiations

The tyrannical Duterte regime is arrogantly overconfident that like the Marcos fascist regime it can impose a fascist dictatorship on the Filipino people by vilifying the revolutionary forces of the Filipino people as “communist terrorists” and unleashing state terrorism not only against suspected revolutionaries but also against all social activists, critics and opponents of the Duterte regime.

We are witnessing now the license provided by the Anti-Terrorism Law for red-tagging, threatening, arresting, detaining and killing an increasing number of people who exercise their civil and political rights to uphold, defend and promote their legitimate interests and who make lawful criticism and demands. Among the victims are leaders and mass activists of workers and peasants, national minorities, women, professionals, religious people and others.

It is of crucial importance to expose and oppose the Anti-Terrorism Law, the termination of the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations and the misrepresentation of the revolutionary forces, the legal democratic forces and all critics and opponents of the Duterte regime as “communist terrorists” and as “guilty by association” as they are arbitrarily listed by the NTF-ELCAC and the Anti-Terrorism Council.

It must be stressed first of all that the Hernandez political offense doctrine—that the charge of rebellion is political and cannot be complexed with common crimes or transmuted into the most heinous crime of terrorism—has not been overturned and therefore still applies. It must be likewise stressed that the Anti-Subversion Law of 1957 was repealed in 1992 because it was finally deemed a bill of attainder criminalizing the Communist Party, its officers and members without the benefit of trial and because legalization of the CPP was intended to create favorable conditions and atmosphere for the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations.

It must finally be stressed that the CPP and NPA cannot be misrepresented as terrorist, attacking the very people whose participation and support they seek for the revolution, and their officers and members can be held legally liable and chargeable for simple rebellion and cannot be subjected to the charge of terrorism in substitution of or in addition to rebellion. It has become even more unjust to make the charge of rebellion a nonbailable capital offense, discouraging the political solution of the ongoing civil war between the reactionary government and the people’s revolutionary government.

Focusing further on the issue whether the CPP and NPA are terrorist or not, it is absolutely clear legally and politically that they uphold, defend and advance the rights and interests of the people, have absolutely no interest in harming the people whose support and participation they seek. They have committed themselves to the international law on human rights and humanitarian conduct in the armed conflict. They adhere to the international conventions on human rights and the Geneva Conventions.

In 1996 the NDFP promulgated its Declaration of Undertaking to Apply the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Protocol I of 1977 and submitted it to the Swiss Federal Council as the responsible depository. This new declaration, in addition to the 1991 NDFP declaration of accession to Protocol II, further commits the NDFP, the CPP, NPA and other allied revolutionary organizations as well as the organs of political power to adhere to human rights and humanitarian conduct in war. Subsequently, the NDFP and the GRP mutually approved the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) in 1998. This agreement is of great historic and current significance.

Since the founding of the New People’s Army on March 29, 1969 by the CPP, the Basic Rules of the NPA has bound all its commands, units, officers and fighters to follow the Three Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points of Attention. These have ensured respect for human rights and humanitarian conduct. The political, economic, social, educational and cultural mass work of the CPP, the NPA and the revolutionary mass organizations have endeared themselves to the people in all the guerrilla fronts and areas governed by the people’s revolutionary government.

The broad masses of the people and the broad united front must condemn the Duterte regime for making the false charge of terrorism against the CPP and NPA, for terminating the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations and for trying to impose state terrorism or fascist dictatorship on the people. For these negotiations to resume in the future, the GRP must nullify the false charge of terrorism against the revolutionary movement and reaffirm all the

agreements that have been mutually approved by the GRP and NDFP.

The conservative opposition should be advised that it improves its position and chances by joining the consensus and struggle to render justice for all the victims of Duterte's reign of terror and greed and against all those who have committed crimes against them. Even right now, they are morally and politically obliged to join the people in demanding justice for all the victims of human rights violations, especially the victims of extrajudicial killings, and the immediate release of all political prisoners.

It is highly probable that Biden and the US imperialist "deep state" will promise to the conservative opposition to restrain Duterte and extract a pledge to continue the brutal anticommunist, antipeople military campaign but will still use the Duterte terrorist regime to the hilt and allow it to control and rig the 2022 presidential elections if held. The regime has an overwhelming advantage over the conservative opposition because of its control of the Supreme Court and the Comelec through the Duterte appointees and its success in rigging the 2019 mid-term elections and having overwhelming control over the Senate and the Lower House.

It is obvious that Duterte has already acquired enough power to use the Comelec voting process either to ratify charter change to make him fascist dictator or allow him to install a stooge as his presidential successor as well as to suppress all his critics and opponents with the use of the Anti-Terrorism Act. However, the factors against the perpetuation of Duterte's power is the certain worsening of the crisis of the ruling system, the further rise of the armed revolutionary movement and the legal democratic movement, the growing US-China conflict and the conservative opposition to Duterte's serving two conflicting imperialist powers for his selfish interest.

The broad masses of the people and the broad united front must call for international solidarity for the struggle to end the Duterte regime of tyranny, treason, butchery, plunder and mass deception. This regime must be held accountable for its crimes, and overseas bank deposits of its gang leaders must be traced and returned to the Filipino people. Duterte himself and his criminal accomplices must be brought before the International Criminal Court or before a Philippine court of the GRP or the people's revolutionary government for prosecution and trial.

While Duterte is still in power with the contradictory support of two conflicting imperialist powers, the US and China, the Filipino people and their patriotic organizations abroad must cooperate with the host people and other minority peoples to condemn the crimes of the Duterte regime, isolate it and work for moral, political and economic sanctions.

They must call on the US, European Union and New Zealand governments to end their listing of the CPP and NPA as terrorist because this listing is baseless and unjust. Before and after the listing, the CPP and NPA have never engaged in any act of terrorism in any foreign country. This listing by foreign governments has been invoked by Duterte's regime to make its own terrorist listing and emboldened him to engage in state terrorism in the name of anti-terrorism.

The Filipino people and all forces of the Movement Against Tyranny must be thankful for all the successes of the Filipino compatriots abroad and the international solidarity movement in exposing, condemning and making demands to stop the Duterte regime from committing gross and systematic human rights violations. All these achievements inspire the Filipino people to fight ever more resolutely and militantly to fight for their national and social liberation against the Duterte regime and the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system that this regime seeks to perpetuate.

Long live the Movement against Tyranny Cebu!

Advance the struggle for national independence and democracy!

Long live the Filipino people!

Unite and Fight for National Independence

and Democracy against the Duterte Fascist Regime and Its Imperialist Masters Keynote Speech at the Founding Assembly of BAYAN-EUROPE, December 12, 2020

Dear Fellow Activists, Thank you for inviting me to keynote the founding assembly of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-Eu-rope (BAYAN-Europe). I congratulate you, especially your elected officials, for this signal event which is based on the prior existence of a leading collective in charge of the prior development of several types of BAYAN organizations in Europe, like the Migrante, Gabriela and Anakbayan.

I salute all of you as the best possible assembly of patriotic and progressive Filipino organizations in Europe, with the most resolute and militant activists who are committed to carry forward the Filipino people's struggle against imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism and for national liberation and democracy in the Philippines.

Guiding principles of BAYAN-Europe

As an overseas regional chapter of BAYAN-Philippines, you are constitutionally mandated to take up the issues and struggles of Filipinos in Europe on the basis of the struggle for national democracy in the Philippines and you are guided by a clear declaration of principles in order to unite and act in unison on the concrete situation among various sectors of the Filipino community and take up their social concerns in relation to their motherland and to their stay in Europe.

You must uphold the national sovereignty of the Filipino people by asserting national independence and opposing imperialist domination and to unite the people and build their collective strength, anchored on the basic alliance of the workers and peasants as the foundation for establishing the people's democratic state which shall uphold civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

You must contribute what you can in order to build a self-reliant and progressive Philippine economy in repudiation of the imperialist and feudal stranglehold of the economy, carry out national industrialization and genuine land reform and to ensure the people's economic and social well-being and thus liberate the people from poverty, raise their standard of living, attain full employment, guarantee adequate and humane working and social conditions and better standards for health, education and housing.

You must stand for a patriotic, scientific and mass-oriented people's culture which seeks to break the colonial, feudal, patriarchal and bourgeois decadent culture that impedes social progress and people's participation in the movement for national and social liberation, to uphold the right to self-determination of the Moro people, the Cordillera people and other national minorities, and support their struggle against national oppression and their right to own and utilize their ancestral lands and other natural resources.

You must fight for women's liberation by destroying the basis of national, class and gender oppression and you must promote the participation of women, principally worker and peasant women, in a women's liberation movement that is vital, distinct and integral to the entire national democratic struggle. You must engage the young men and women and avail of their openness to revolutionary change and their energy to advance the national democratic movement.

You must participate actively in building international solidarity that is anti-imperialist and democratic, develop the closest relations with the workers and other oppressed peoples and with their organizations and movements and engage in mutual support and cooperation in the common struggle against imperialism and all forms of reaction and for just peace and all-round development of all peoples.

High importance and urgency of theme

The theme of your assembly is highly important and urgent: "Magkaisa! Labanan ang Pasistang Rehimeng US/China-Duterte! Makibaka Para sa Pambansang Kalayaan at Demokrasya!" This in consonance with your guiding principles and is responsive to the current intolerable suffering and outcry of the broad masses of the Filipino people for national freedom, justice and democracy against the traitorous, tyrannical, genocidal, plundering and swindling Duterte regime.

The Duterte regime is traitorous as it continues to serve the over-all dominance of US imperialism over the Philippines economically, militarily, politically and culturally. The US tolerates the gross and systematic human

rights violations in the Philippines and supplies all the software and hardware for the military suppression of the people's movement for national freedom and democracy in the name of anti-communism and antiterrorism. It is doubtful whether the presidency of Biden will be different from that of Trump who has openly supported Duterte.

While the US provides crucial support for the state terrorism carried out by Duterte, he has been able to tighten his grip on political power and engage in plunder. At the same time, he also gains privately from selling out to China the sovereign rights of the Filipino people in the West Philippines Sea. He has allowed China to build seven military bases in the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines, gain control over the national power grid and establish cell towers in the camps of the reactionary armed forces. In addition, he benefits from the illegal drug trade, casinos and other operations of Chinese criminal syndicates.

In running a tyrannical and genocidal regime, Duterte is applying the methods of extrajudicially killing tens of thousands of poor people in Oplan Tokhang to the current fascist campaign of rabid anti-communism and state terrorism in the name of anti-terrorism. Social activists, critics, human rights defenders and legal political opponents of the regime are arbitrarily listed as "communist terrorists", publicly tagged, condemned and framed up for arbitrary arrest, torture, extortion and murder with planted firearms and explosives as fake evidence.

Under conditions of the lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic, he promised mass testing, adequate health services and economic assistance to the people who would lose their means of livelihood. He has not fulfilled his promise but instead he and his Mafia-like gang have pocketed more than 500 billion pesos. Worst of all, he has railroaded the enactment of the Anti-Terrorism Law in order to realize his scheme of fascist dictatorship even before carrying out charter change and the proclamation of nationwide martial law as Marcos did in 1972.

Even before the pandemic, the crisis of the ruling system, like that of the world capitalist system, had worsened as to generate favorable conditions for anti-imperialist and democratic mass struggles. The pandemic has aggravated the crisis. At the end of the third quarter of this year, the growth rate of the Philippines was a negative 11.5 percent. It is expected to go down further by negative 6 percent. The Duterte regime has used the emergency powers given to him by the servile Congress to realign government appropriations in order to favor corruption by the high bureaucrats and military officers and funnel more funds for graft-laden military purchases and operations.

But Duterte is overconfident that if his poor health permits he can continue as fascist dictator beyond 2022 or if he is too sick he can pick and install a presidential proxy because he controls Congress, the Supreme Court and the Commission on Elections. Under the current circumstances in the Philippines, the oppression and exploitation of the people will escalate rapidly. And all forms of popular mass struggles will surge up, including legal democratic mass actions and the armed revolutionary movement. There are excellent prospects for the ouster of the Duterte reign of terror and greed, as exemplified by the previous ousters of Marcos and Estrada. And in this regard, BAYAN can play a major role in the broad united front against fascist tyranny.

However, to any extent that Duterte or his proxy can stay in power beyond 2022, the armed revolutionary movement of the people will grow in strength and will play an increasingly important role in the process of overthrowing not only the Duterte regime or its proxy regime but also the entire semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system. The struggle of the Filipino people against the Duterte regime coincides with the rising anti-imperialist and democratic mass struggles on a global scale against imperialism and all forms of reaction. These provide favorable conditions for the Filipino people's struggle for national and social liberation.

What BAYAN-Europe can do

The Filipinos in Europe have their own problems to face in Europe because of the worsening of the world capitalist system and the rise of chauvinist, anti-immigrant, racist and fascist movements. Because of deteriorating economic conditions abroad, hundreds of thousands of Filipino migrant workers have already lost their jobs have returned home, without any support from the reactionary government for their repatriation despite the fact it had fleeced them with all kinds of burdensome fees. The drastic reduction in the foreign exchange remittances of overseas Filipino workers has become a major factor in the negative growth of the Philippine economy.

But while you have problems to face in Europe, these are somehow related with the prior problems of massive unemployment and deteriorating socioeconomic conditions in the Philippines. There is no way we can escape our responsibilities to the Filipino people and our motherland. BAYAN-Europe is correct in describing itself in its own Constitution that that it is an integral part of the national democratic movement of the Philippines and its mission and purpose is to gather the broadest possible moral, political and material support for BAYAN-Philippines and

the national democratic struggle of the Filipino people.

You must serve as the regional information and campaign center in Europe for responding to the calls of BAYAN-Philippines and initiating campaigns and activities according to your own conditions and circumstances. You must fight not only for the rights and demands of Filipinos in Europe but also for those of our people in the motherland. You must do what you can to help them overcome their suffering and to help them bring to a new and higher level their movement to oust the Duterte regime and carry forward their national democratic struggle against the unjust ruling system.

In this regard, you must develop solidarity relations among peoples and organizations in Europe. You must make calls for, initiate or join campaigns, alliances and other formations on the basis of international solidarity guided by the principles of equality, mutual respect and mutual support. You must share experiences and lessons with the host people and other guest peoples in whichever country you are in Europe. In doing so, you must uphold and exercise your fundamental freedoms and democratic rights even as you stay within the bounds of law and democracy in whichever host country you are.

You must pay special attention to the fact that the European Union is one of the few state formations that have followed in 2002 the unjust and unlawful initiative of US imperialism in designating the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army and myself as "terrorists" and placing our names in the so-called terrorist list of the EU, despite the fact that the CPP, NPA and I have never engaged in any act of terrorism in any European country or any part of the world. It took me more than seven years of legal struggle before the European Court of Justice in order to have my name removed from the said list.

The names of the CPP and NPA have stayed in the list despite the fact that these are co-belligerents of the Philippine revolutionary government in a civil war under the laws of war and have never engaged in any act of terrorism anywhere in the world. Now, the Duterte fascist regime is using this unjust and unlawful "terrorist" listing to justify state terrorism in the Philippines and to extend his fascist methods of red-tagging, slandering, intimidating and threatening social activists, critics and human rights defenders abroad. You must be vigilant and be ready to frustrate the continuous attempts of the Duterte regime to extend its dirty fascist tactics against Filipinos in Europe.

You must find ways of persuading the European Union through the most respected statesmen, parliamentarians, human rights and peace organizations, parties and other organizations and movements to remove the names of the CPP and NPA from its so-called terrorist list in order to prevent its use in violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms and in order to promote conditions for respecting human rights in the Philippines and resuming the peace process between the GRP and NDFP in accordance with The Hague Joint Declaration of 1992, the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) and the principles and policies of the EU and the UN.

Since 1992, the NDFP has solemnly and mutually agreed with the GRP to engage in peace negotiations in order to address the roots of the armed conflict in the Philippines through comprehensive and profound social, economic and political reforms. But Duterte has terminated the GRPNDFP peace negotiations since November 23, 2017 in order to scapegoat the CPP and NPA, concentrate on all-out war and pursue his scheme of fascist dictatorship. Conditions must be promoted and realized for him to stay within the bounds of the constitutional limit of his presidential term and for peace negotiations to be resumed by the NDFP and a new administration of the GRP that respects The Hague Joint Declaration and CARHRIHL.

Long live BAYAN-Europe and all compatriots in Europe!

Long live the national democratic movement in the Philippines!

Long live BAYAN-Philippines and the Filipino people!

***Philippine History, Classes and Crisis,
and United Front***

Anakbayan Europe ND Line Online School, February 28, 2021

Objective

The study of Philippine history must be guided by the basic principles of historical materialism, Marxist political economy, and the teachings of Lenin regarding imperialism. This study centers on the people's history based on the development of the contradictions within society—the contradiction between the forces of production and the relations of production, the contradiction between the classes, and the contradiction between the old and the new.

It is the duty of every Filipino activists to study and deepen continually one's knowledge of the history of the Philippines. Only in this manner can the historical roots of the basic problems of the people and the semi-colonial and semi-feudal framework of Philippine society be understood. Only in this way can one comprehensively and deeply grasp the necessity of the people's democratic revolution and the basic task to liberate the Philippines from the burden of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

The fundamental conclusions drawn from the study of Philippine history may be used to guide the investigation and study the history and conditions of the regions, provinces, cities and municipalities, and even the barrios.

1. Can you tell us what are the principal characteristics of the country, the Philippines?

JMS: The Philippines is archipelagic, with 7,641 islands. The eleven largest islands are inhabited by 95 percent of the people. The country has a total land area of 300,000 square kilometers. It has forested mountains, fertile plains and rich marine and mineral resources. The natural resources are comprehensive and can sustain agricultural and industrial development.

How about the Filipino people?

JMS: The Filipino people now number nearly 110 million. They belong to various ethnolinguistic communities. Eighty-five percent belong to the Malay race. But they have a sense of Filipino nationhood as a result of fighting for national independence and democracy against Spanish colonialism, US imperialism and Japanese fascism. They have a national language which has spread through the educational system, mass media, political campaigns and commerce. They have a high level of literacy and have a large corps of skilled workers, professionals and technologists.

2. What was the social system in various parts of the archipelago during the arrival of the Spanish colonialists?

JMS: Upon the arrival of the Spanish colonialists in the Philippines in the 16th century, the Islamic sultanates in Mindanao were the most developed form of societies. In most parts of the Philippines, there were small societies characterized by patriarchal slavery and incipient feudalism. There were already urban areas with populations of 5000 to 20,000. At the same time, there were hill tribes and the primitive communal societies of the Aetas.

3. Is it true that Magellan 'got lost' while searching for the Spice Island, in the Moluccas, that's why he ended up in the Philippines – as they often teach at school at least during our youth ?

JMS: Magellan got snagged in the Philippines while he was on his way to the Moluccas. It was really his mission to find a new route for Spain in order to reach the Spice Islands by sailing on the Atlantic Ocean and through the Strait of Magellan (at the tip of South America) sailing across the Pacific to the Philippines before reaching the Spice Islands. Magellan had previously participated in the Portuguese conquest of Malacca in Malaysia and had taken from there his servant Enrique who came from the Moluccas.

How did the Spaniards colonize the country, then?

JMS: Magellan did not make a colonial foothold in 1527. He was killed by Lapulapu and his men on Mactan. The next expedition led by Legazpi on 1565 succeeded in starting the colonization of the Philippines. He established a Spanish settlement where Cebu City is now and was the first colonial governor until his death. From his Cebu base, he dispatched expeditions of his Spanish men and Visayan recruits to conquer other parts of the Visayas and Luzon. Subsequently, he would be able to get Spanish reinforcement from Acapulco, Mexico.

4. What was the principal feature of the colonial and feudal economic system maintained by Spanish colonialism?

JMS: The term colonial is distinctly political and the term feudal is distinctly economic. In conquering most of the Philippines and the people, Spain gained colonial power and authority over them and imposed on them a centralized system of administration. It also imposed the feudal system of giving land grants to military officers and colonial officials as reward for services to Spain and thereby they took control over large tracts of agricultural land and large numbers of peasants to till the land. This would become the foundation of the feudal system of haciendas.

5. What important development in Philippine society resulted in the Revolution of 1896?

JMS: When foreign trade accelerated between Manila and Acapulco and then between the Philippines and Europe in the 19th century, the friar estates expanded through outright landgrabbing at the expense of the natives (Filipinos), with the peasant masses most offended. A small number of Filipinos became educated at tertiary level, at first mostly priests in the first half of the century, and then professionals among the children of landlords, bureaucrats and merchants in the second half of the century.

The Filipino and mestizo priests launched the secularization movement to demand that the parishes be transferred to them from the Spanish religious orders. This caused a split within the Catholic church which resulted in the martyrdom of Fathers Gomez, Burgos and Zamora on February 17, 1872. Their martyrdom inflamed national consciousnesses against Spanish colonialism. The influence of the French Revolution reached the Philippine intelligentsia at first through European Masons and then through the Propaganda Movement based in Spain.

What is the basic character of the 1896 Philippine Revolution and how does it differ from the current revolution or social movement that is happening during our time?

JMS: The basic character of the 1896 Philippine Revolution was the old bourgeois-democratic type, heavily influenced by the bourgeois liberal ideology of the French revolution and was led by the intelligentsia who were offsprings of the native and mestizo landlord class, bureaucrats, and merchants. It was against the colonial and feudal system. Thus, it differs from the current bourgeois democratic revolution of the new type, under the leadership of the working class, guided by the theory of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and fighting for national and social liberation against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism,

6. One of the many disputable or debatable topics taught at school is that the US saved the Philippines from the Spaniards. Some of the modern and more audacious historical films represent else ways. How and why did the US-imperialist did actually colonize the country?

JMS: Let us be clear about the sequence of historical events. First the Filipino people founded the Katipunan on July 7, 1892 and then this revolutionary organization declared independence and started the armed struggle in 1896. It was only afterwards that US representatives approached the Aguinaldo government in exile in Hong Kong to pretend offering help to the Filipino people.

The real motive of the US was to grab the Philippines from Spain and turn it into a US colony through the Spanish-American War and then peace negotiations in 1898. The Filipino revolutionaries refused to accept the US as the new colonial master. Thus, the Filipino-American war broke out, with the US conquering the Philippines by killing 1.5 million Filipinos. Since its brutal conquest of the Philippines, the US has propagandized that it has saved the Filipino people from the Spaniards and from their own "savagery."

7. What social system did the US imperialist establish in the Philippines? Is it still visible up to today or has it been wiped off by the Chinese imperialism?

JMS: US imperialism established a colonial and semifeudal system in the Philippines from 1902 to 1946, interrupted by the Japanese occupation during World War II. Then from 1946 onward, the US has dominated and maintained in the Philippines a semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system. It remains this way up to now. The US is the most dominant imperialist power in the Philippines. Chinese imperialism is challenging it but is still far below in terms of foreign direct investments despite the big number of big and middle compradors of Chinese ancestry.

8. What are the main features of the economic system established by US imperialism in the Philippines?

JMS: The economic system set up and developed by US imperialism in the Philippines has the following main features: the dominance of the direct investments of foreign monopoly firms and loans of foreign monopoly banks over such domestic ruling classes as the comprador big bourgeoisie, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists who ensure the production of raw materials and agricultural products for export in exchange for the importation of finished manufactures, including producer and consumer goods. This is a semifeudal capitalist economy ruled

mainly by the comprador big bourgeoisie in tandem with the landlord class.

9. *What are the main features of the political system under the colonial rule of US imperialism?*

JMS: While the Philippines was its colony, US imperialism was in charge of the governance and administration of the entire country, including the development of its political system, economy and culture. When the Philippines became its semicolony in 1946 through the grant of nominal independence, the US retained its military bases and the property rights of its corporations and citizens.

It made sure to control all aspects of Philippine society through treaties, agreements and arrangements but allowed the domestic ruling classes to take responsibility for all levels of government, from the national to the lower levels. A system of elections and appointments has been established for the ruling classes to select political leaders and bureaucrats.

10. *How about the culture it propagated in the country – what are its main characteristics?*

JMS: US imperialism has developed a pro-US colonial mentality against national or patriotic thinking and behavior, liberal tolerance for all bourgeois and feudal ideas and notions, anti-communist intolerance, rejection of the tradition and continuing validity of the Philippine Revolution and aversion to the national and democratic rights and interests of the Filipino people, especially the toiling masses of workers and peasants.

11. *As Filipinos, we really take pride in ourselves for being revolutionaries. Dugong katipunero, sabi nga natin ; Tito, how did our ancestors resist during this period?*

JMS: Starting with the declaration of independence in 1896, our ancestors rose up in arms against Spanish colonialism and they succeeded in defeating it in 1898. And they continued the revolution against the US war of aggression that started on February 4, 1899.

12. *How about the Japanese, Tito, how and why did they invade us?*

JMS: The Japanese fascists and imperialists invaded the Philippines in 1941 and occupied our country until 1945. They presented themselves as enemies of Anglo-American imperialism and as friends of Philippine national independence and offered the Philippines a place in the so-called Asia co-prosperity sphere. They put up a puppet government but they were so brutal that the Filipino people waged a resolute war of national liberation against them.

13. *We have had three invasions by this time, how did the ruling class react or what did they do during this third invasion?*

JMS: The big compradors collaborated with the Japanese fascists, especially because the wealthiest among them were of Spanish ancestry and sympathized with the Spanish fascists. Other big compradors and many landlords tended to collaborate with the Japanese invaders.

What about the Filipino masses, how did they fight the Japanese?

JMS: The toiling masses of the Filipino people suffered the most from the severe oppression and exploitation by the Japanese invaders, especially the breakdown of production, inflation and brutality. They joined and supported the guerrilla movement against the Japanese invaders. The old Communist Party managed to form the Hukbalahap which succeeded in driving out the Japanese invaders from Central Luzon. The Igorot and Ilocano guerrilla fighters combined to wipe out 100,000 of 150,000 troops of Yamashita in the Cordilleras.

14. *Can you tell us the 'return-of-the-comeback' of the US-Imperialist in the country in 1946? Why and how did they return?*

JMS: The US had the superior air, naval and infantry assets to recover the Philippines from the Japanese. They also had the USAFFE guerrilla forces to cooperate with against the Japanese. The old Communist Party and the Hukbalahap did not develop armed strength beyond Central Luzon and some parts of the Southern Tagalog region and furthermore the Lava leadership of the old CP welcomed the return of the US.

15. *There was – and still is – a whole theatrical production under the US-imperialism. How did our society evolved then? What are the main features of a Philippine society under the claws of this Eagle?*

JMS: Well, the Philippines has remained semicolonial and semifeudal since the grant of nominal independence to the Philippines by US imperialism since 1946.

16. *Tito, how does the US maintain its control over the country?*

JMS: The US made sure that it got the Treaty of General Relations to continue dominating the Philippines by retaining US property rights and military bases. It made further treaties, agreements and arrangements to secure economic, military, cultural and political control over the Philippines. It has the most foreign direct investments in

the Philippines and has burdened the Philippines with loans.

17. *Last week, studied imperialism; how does the US maximize or maintain its control through the use of culture?*

JMS: Control of the Philippines by US imperialism through the use of culture has been effective from generation to generation because it has promoted the English language as the top language as well the so-called American way of life as supposedly the best, set up the public school system at all levels, it has promoted the higher training of academics and other professions in the US under scholarship and travel grants from the US government and private foundations, it has influenced the making of the curricula and choice of textbooks, it has dominated the mass media for information and entertainment, and so on.

18. *What about through international politics?*

JMS: Indeed, the hegemonic position of the US imperialism in international politics is always a major consideration of the Philippine reactionary state. The US binds the Philippines to bilateral and multilateral military treaties and involves the Philippines in US acts of military intervention and aggression, such as those against Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia and many other countries.

It involves the Philippines in various types of bilateral and multilateral economic and trade agreements. It has imposed the neoliberal economic policy regime on the Philippines. It uses diplomatic agents, advisory missions, academic institutions, mass media and think tanks to influence the thinking of all its client states with regard to international politics

19. *How did the Filipinos resist during this time and what did the puppet regime do to suppress this resistance?*

JMS: Since 1946, there have been some organizations and movements and outstanding leaders like Senators Recto and Tañada that criticized and resisted US imperialist dominance. Since the 1960s the national democratic movement of the Filipino people has resurged in order to struggle for national and social liberation from the three evil forces of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. Since 1968 and 1969, the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army have arisen to wage the people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war.

20. *Our next question is somewhat timely, Tito as we will talk about Marcos. We just commemorated the Barikada and the Diliman Commune, and of course, we will soon commemorate the EDSA Uprising. Tito, why did Marcos and his cronies declare Martial Law in the 70s?*

JMS: From 1969 onward, Marcos was harping on the line that the Philippines was a social volcano about to explode. Instead of solving the truly worsening crisis of the Philippine ruling system he was aggravating it and using it as excuse to beef up the military and police forces. He created incidents to justify the use of open terror by the coercive apparatuses of the state, He used several bombing incidents and then the Plaza Miranda grenade throwing incident as pretext for suspending the writ of habeas corpus on August 21, 1971. This was the key preparation for the martial law proclamation in 1972.

Talagang copy-cat si Duterte, ano po? What are the difference and similarities of Marcos and Duterte dictatorship?

JMS: Duterte indeed is a copy cat of his idol Marcos. Marcos was far more clever than Duterte, much younger when he started to plot his fascist dictatorship and still had plenty of allowance for taking foreign loans for showy infrastructure projects. In comparison, Duterte is now old, he is sick physically and mentally, he has bankrupted the economy and his own government because of corruption and military overspending and he has little allowance for borrowing from the crisis-stricken world capitalist system.

Best thing that can happen for the benefit of the Philippine revolution is for him to impose a fascist dictatorship on the people. He will be finished off in one or two years after that. Even right now he is the best recruiter of the CPP and NPA because of his traitorous, tyrannical, genocidal, corrupt and mendacious character.

21. *How did fascist dictatorial rule worsen the crisis of the semi-colonial and semi-feudal society?*

JMS: Absolute power through fascist dictatorship led to absolute corruption, with no restraint whatsoever. The broad masses of the people were revolted by both the violent abuse of political power and by the most scandalous corruption connected with the infrastructure projects and the foreign loans.

22. *Tito, enlighten us, or better yet, agitate us, remind us why we needed to fight. How did you, Tita Julie, and the rest resisted during the time of Marcos?*

JMS: We needed to fight the fascist dictatorship the best we could. We issued statements and other publications to encourage the people to fight the reign of terror and greed and to wage all forms of resistance, legal and otherwise. We did the best we could in helping build the revolutionary underground, waging every possible form

of open resistance and, most important of all, building the CPP, the NPA and the NDFP as revolutionary weapons of the Filipino people.

If you may give your opinion or observation, how are we doing now, are we giving you, us our forerunners any justice? What else can we do better?

JMS: The legal democratic forces and the armed revolutionary movement were much smaller and weaker from 1972 to 1986 than now. They are now much bigger and stronger nationwide and are deeply-rooted among the toiling masses. It should be easier now in less time to overthrow the projected fascist dictatorship of Duterte or to oust Sara as his dynastic successor through a repeat of the 2019 rigging of the elections.

Tito, There is a growing opposition against the fascism of Duterte, how can we maximize this?

JMS: The broad united front of patriotic and democratic forces should hold gigantic mass protest actions against the Duterte regime of terror and greed not only in the national capital region but on a nationwide scale.

If we see Hong Kong, Myanmar, South America, even our neighboring France and Germany, people are going out in AMASS! Do you see another People Power Revolution happening against Duterte?

JMS: Yes, I foresee the people's mass uprisings in the near future.

Pa-blast from the past naman po, Tito, how can we have a mass uprising against Duterte, any tips po?

JMS: The national democratic movement has a very deep and rich reservoir of experience, wisdom and methods for generating the mass uprisings similar to those in 1986. You can also expect the tyrannical regime to aggravate the crisis and problems and to make mistakes that will ignite the mass uprisings. Inflation, loss of jobs, mass hunger, mass murders and corruption will certainly rouse the people to rise up and overthrow the Duterte regime.

23. Tito, this is to give a factual answer to the skeptics, to those who were once part of the ND movement but become weary, to those who never believed in our struggle – please tell us briefly, how did the succeeding regimes up to Duterte exacerbated semi-feudalism and semi-colonialism?

JMS: Despite the constitutional ban on foreign military bases and forces in the Philippines, the US has been able to get these in effect through a series of military agreements like the MLSA, VFA and EDCA. This makes clear that the Philippines is a puppet state, a semicolony of the US. And of course, the Philippines is still a semicolony in an all round way: economically, politically and culturally. Under the US-imposed neoliberal economic policy regime, the Philippine economy remains semifeudal, a provider of cheap raw materials and cheap labor and importer of manufactured producer and consumer goods. It is deprived of genuine land reform and national industrialization.

24. Itong si Digong, Tito no, ilang ulit na niyang sinasabi na ayaw na niya makipagPeace Talks sa CPP-NDF-NPA In Lorraine Badoy/ Parlade manner!, with or without the Talks, the revolutionary forces and the patriotic or the ND forces continue to advance the struggle. How and why do you think the people and the Party do it?

JMS: It is absolutely clear that Duterte terminated the peace negotiations in order to carry out an all-out war policy and a campaign of state terrorism. The Filipino people have no choice but to wage all forms of resistance, especially armed revolution. Unwittingly, the Duterte regime is providing the favorable conditions for people's war by committing so many crimes of treason, tyranny, butchery and plunder.

CLASSES AND CRISIS

Objectives

A semicolonial and semifeudal society: this is the basic outline of Philippine society at present. We must grasp this objective truth firmly in order not only to understand correctly the real condition of society, the true nature and the roots of the debilitating crisis which has long afflicted the country, but also the correct revolutionary solution to this crisis.

This chapter sums up the principal issue of the country's history and present condition—by means of clarifying the mode of production and the corresponding state of politics and culture that US imperialism and its local puppets, the comprador-big bourgeoisie and the big landlord class, maintain. The crisis of the semi-colonial and semi-feudal society and its prominent manifestations in the crisis in economy, politics, foreign relations and culture are analyzed. This chapter also clarifies the classes in Philippine society and the basic exploitative and oppressive relations between the ruling classes and those who are dominated.

The correct analysis of the outline of classes in society is the foundation for understanding the basic character and the

principal tasks of Philippine revolution. Without understanding the class analysis of the semi-colonial and semi-feudal outline of present society, one cannot understand the character of the chronic crisis of Philippine society and why the objective motion of the basic contradictions of this system creates the most favorable situation for advancing the armed revolution. It will not be possible to advance the revolution steadily in the correct direction.

The correct understanding of the outline of classes in society is also the guide for the social investigation and research of the concrete conditions of the people in different levels and scope. This is the correct means of determining the concrete condition of the people and society. And this concrete analysis of the concrete condition of society is the most important basis for establishing the correct tactics and slogans for advancing the revolutionary movement and struggle of the masses of the people.

The correct Marxist-Leninist analysis of the history and present condition of the Philippines is one of the most important achievements of the re-established Party in elevating the overall level of theoretical and political knowledge, as well as revolutionary activity, of the Filipino proletariat and people. However, since the latter half of the 'Seventies, upon the influence of assorted revisionists, reformists and fascist propaganda on the supposed capitalist development in the Philippines, certain elements within the Party began to declare and to encourage the casting of doubt on the semi-colonial and semi-feudal analysis of the country's social system. This questioning served as the basis for all sorts of doubts to be placed on the line of the people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war, supposedly in an effort to "develop," "refine," and "adapt" it. These efforts resulted eventually in grave deviations of insurrectionism and military adventurism combined with bourgeois populism, economism and a united-front line which collided with and liquidated the leadership of the Party and the socialist perspective of the people's democratic revolution.

With the Second Great Rectification Movement (SGRM), we are once again clarifying and further deepening the understanding of Party cadres and members of the correct class analysis of Philippine society as the basis for steadily and correctly upholding the revolutionary line of the Party.

1. What is the crisis of the semifeudal and semicolonial Philippines?

JMS: The crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal Philippines arises from the continuing domination of the country by US imperialism despite the nominal grant of independence in 1946. There is an irreconcilable contradiction between the dominance of US imperialism and the desire of the Filipino people for real national independence.

The US has entrusted the local exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords and their political agents, the bureaucrat capitalists, to govern the people from the national to the local levels. For the ruling classes to stay subordinate and compliant, the US has kept the Philippine economy semifeudal, dependent on the production of agricultural products and raw materials for export and on the importation of producer and consumer goods, unable to produce basic metals, basic chemicals and machine tools.

This perpetuated colonial exchange of raw material exports and manufactured imports has consigned the Philippine economy to trade deficits that makes it ever dependent on foreign loans. Since the 1970s, the Philippines was allowed to produce a few semimanufactures for export and also to export cheap labor. But these have not resulted in the national industrialization of the country. There is always a grave contradiction between the policy to keep the Philippine underdeveloped and impoverished and the people's desire for industrial development on the basis of its comprehensive and rich natural resources.

Why is it ever worsening?

JMS: The US and other foreign monopoly capitalist connive with the local exploiting classes to maintain the semicolonial and semifeudal relations for their mutual profit taking despite the growing population, unemployment and mass poverty on the one hand and the need for industrial development and social justice on the other hand.

2. What is the most dominant class in a semifeudal society?

JMS: The most dominant class in a semifeudal society is the comprador big bourgeoisie, which is the chief financial and trading agent of foreign monopoly capitalism. It often overlaps with the landlord class because of their need to produce agricultural products for export. Big compradors are often big landlords.

Do we have the same dominant class in the cities as well as in the countryside?

JMS: The comprador big bourgeoisie is based in the cities. Most of the landlords are based in the countryside.

Let us talk about the urban petty bourgeoisie Tito, how are they being exploited?

JMS: The urban petty bourgeoisie includes the intelligentsia and petty entrepreneurs and merchants. The

intelligentsia receive fixed incomes termed as salaries and the entrepreneurs and merchants have fluctuating incomes within a certain range. The urban petty bourgeois can be in a very precarious situation when inflation arises and their incomes fall short of their subsistence needs. They are in the danger of losing their white collar jobs or joining the proletariat.

How about the workers, Tito? How bad is the exploitation of the workers under the Duterte government, especially under this pandemic?

JMS: The workers and peasants have suffered the most under the Duterte regime, especially during the pandemic. The workers were deprived of wages because of the lockdown. And they did not receive the promised economic assistance and mass testing. They have no income and yet prices of basic commodities have been rising fast.

3. How do the comprador-big bourgeoisie and the big landlord class use the neo-colonial state?

JMS: They finance the bourgeois political parties and candidates in order to dictate the policies of the neocolonial state. Their own family members and political agents become the bureaucrat capitalists who represent and favor the interests of the big compradors and landlords.

4. What may be considered as the main periods of intensified crisis in the history of the neocolonial state?

JMS: The main periods of intensified crisis have been during the fascist dictatorship of Marcos and now the tyrannical rule of Duterte.

5. Tito, please briefly explain – as review, what do we mean by culture?

JMS: The term culture encompasses the ideas, beliefs, customs, social habits, the level of intellectual development, the language, literature, music and arts, cuisine, mode of dressing and ornaments of an entire community.

By this definition of 'culture' ; what is then crisis of the Philippine culture based upon?

JMS: The crisis has arisen from the use of culture to oppress and exploit the broad masses of the people. The Filipino people have been subjected to cultural domination that is colonial and imperialist, feudalist and obscurantist and prejudicial to the toiling masses of workers and peasants. Therefore, the people's democratic revolution fights for a national, scientific and mass culture.

What are the dominant forces in our culture?

JMS: The dominant forces in current reactionary Philippine culture are US imperialism, the Catholic Church and the local exploiting classes of big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists. They set the rules, patterns and direction of the reactionary culture.

6. How do the US and the Catholic Church promote the anti-scientific culture?

JMS: The US has utilized science and technology in the service of monopoly capitalism or imperialism but is anti-scientific by violently opposing socialism as the way to respect the social character of the forces of production and to do away with the selfish anti-social character of the private capitalist appropriation of the product of labor.

As a matter of theology or philosophy and in its long history , the Catholic Church has super-imposed belief in the supernatural and dogmas on science. It has a historical record of obscurantism and hindering the advance of science and giving legitimation to the reactionary interests of exploiting classes as well as to colonialism and foreign monopoly capitalism.

But of course, better than US imperialism., the Catholic Church has adjusted its doctrines in response to the needs and demands of the oppressed and exploited classes. Under the influence of the Second Vatican Council and the theology of liberation, the Christians for National Liberation has arisen and become an outstanding participant in the NDFP and in the revolutionary struggle of the people.

7. What are the guiding principles in recognizing classes and differentiating them from one another in society?

JMS: First of all you have to know the mode of production at the material or economic base of society: the forces and relations of production. The forces of production are the people in production and the means of production at their disposal. The relations of production refer to the ownership of the means of production, the organization of labor and the distribution of the product of labor. Thus, you can find out what are the exploiting and exploited classes in an exploitative class society.

8. Tito, we are often mixed up with 'big-comprador landlords', 'compradors', and 'landlords' , and can you tell us the main characteristics of each?

JMS: I have already defined the comprador big bourgeoisie as the chief financial and trading agents of foreign monopoly capitalism. They are often big landlords themselves because historically and currently they use haciendas or plantations to produce export crops. But, there is a far greater number of landlords who use the traditional way of exacting land rent from their tenants in the production of food crops for domestic consumption..

9. Who are exploited and oppressed in a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society? Why are they exploited?

JMS: In the semifeudal economy of the Philippines, the basic exploiting and oppressive classes are the big compradors and landlords and the basic exploited and oppressed classes are the workers and peasants.

What are the main characteristics of the national bourgeoisie, rich peasants and middle peasants?

JMS: The national bourgeoisie is called the middle bourgeoisie because their enterprises are not as big as those owned by the imperialists and the big compradors. The rich peasants are sometimes called the rural bourgeoisie. They do token farm work themselves but in the main hire farm workers and rent out work animals and implements that they own. The middle peasants earn just enough to subsist.

Can we ally with the middle-class, rich and middle peasants and the national bourgeoisie against the ruling class and the US-Imperialism?

JMS: In the anti-feudal united front in the countryside, the proletariat and the Party rely mainly on the basic alliance of the poor peasants and farm workers, win over the middle peasants, keep the rich peasants neutral and take advantage of the contradictions between the enlightened gentry and despotic landlords in order to isolate and defeat the latter as the enemy.

In the national united front, the proletariat and the Party rely mainly on the basic alliance of the workers and peasants, win over the urban petty bourgeoisie and the middle or national bourgeoisie and take advantage of the splits among the reactionaries in order to isolate and defeat the imperialists and the worst of the reactionaries as the enemy at every given time.

Tito; we hear the term; despotic landlord, what is it? Is there such a thing as non-despotic landlord – aren't they all despotic since they own the land of our farmers?

JMS: Despotic landlords are those who have local political authority and act as local tyrants, deal harshly with their tenants and even incur blood debts. Enlightened landlords follow the laws and rules regarding land reform issued by the people's democratic government. They agree with the land reform policy and in return they get concessions.

10. Tito, who are the proletariat? What are their main characteristics?

JMS: The proletariat can be strictly described as the industrial workers in factories, warehouses, trading enterprises, mines , transport lines, operation of farm machines and other enterprises where the workers are paid wages. The traditional seasonal farm workers who receive wages and do not operate farm machines are also called rural proletariat.

Say for instance, you are a factory worker or a miner; are you automatically a proletariat? What if I am not a worker at all but I adhere to the principles of the proletariat, am I a proletarian then?

JMS: I have already explained which are the industrial workers, the modern proletariat by occupation. But it is also possible for an industrial proletarian to gain the status of the proletarian revolutionary by becoming a Communist Party member. Some who do not originate from the proletariat can also become a proletarian revolutionaries by remolding themselves ideologically and politically and joining the Communist Party.

Who are the lumpens or the semi-proletariat?

JMS: The lumpens refer to anti-social elements. They may be dispossessed and disemployed elements who turn to anti-social or criminal activities to earn a living. They are vulnerable to recruitment by the enemy against the proletariat, unless the revolutionary organizations know how to handle them. Examples of the lumpens are those who engage in thievery, scamming, peddling illegal drugs, operating gambling and prostitution dens and cattle rusting.

11. Do we have a special group in our society? Who are they then?

JMS: You can define a certain special group according to occupation, gender, race, nationality, religion or otherwise in order to acknowledge it as worthy of attention and consideration. The individuals belonging to a special group may belong to different classes.

12. Tito, a series of attacks on the national minorities have already occurred just at the start of the year.! We could only wish that there was a Dragon Dance and that they took Duterte with them! Why are they being oppressed? What is

their social condition?

JMS: Indeed, the national minorities are being terribly oppressed. They are being subjected to state terrorism, including the bombing and destruction of their homes. Their right to self-determination is being violated. They are being driven out of their ancestral domain so that the landgrabbers, the plantation owners, the loggers and mining corporations can take over the land and plunder the natural resources.

How about the settlers; what is the social condition of the settlers?

JMS: The settlers are mostly poor peasants who come from other parts of the country. They go to the land frontier and to the ancestral domains of the indigenous people. They are peasant class brothers of the indigenous people and can be accommodated. They can be united against those foreign and domestic exploiters and oppressors who wish to grab the land and other natural resources.

On Duterte's Friend-and-Foe Relationship with the Legal National Democratic Forces

in 2016-2017 March 6, 2021

This longish abstract of the paper, "Friends and Foes: Human Rights, the Philippine Left and Duterte, 2016-2017" by Jayson Lamchek and Emerson Sanchez describes accurately and adequately, in general and in the main, the "friend-and-foe" relationship (dual tactics) between Duterte and the legal national democratic forces (BAYAN and the Makabayan Bloc). It is far superior to the rubbish output of the so-called soc-dems and Trotskyites obsessed with misrepresenting the relationship of Duterte and the CPP in 2016-2017 and holding the CPP responsible for Duterte.

BAYAN as a "friend" to Duterte was such only insofar as it made friendly gestures to encourage him to adopt its people's agenda and to engage in peace negotiations with the NDFP, without giving up its condemnation of Duterte's neoliberal economic policy and violations of human rights. There was never a formal alliance between BAYAN and Duterte. The abstract correctly states that BAYAN made its first mass protest against Duterte on the issue of burying Marcos as a hero as early as November 25, 2016 and big street protests on December 10, 2016 against human rights violations.

There was an alliance between the MAKABAYAN Bloc with the pro-Duterte supermajority in the Lower House of Congress. And the abstract correctly points out that said bloc bolted out of the supermajority as early as September 15, 2017 and denounced the Duterte regime as a fascist, pro-imperialist and anti-people government.

In 2016 Duterte wanted to appoint three cabinet members as CPP representatives but the CPP and NDFP told him to appoint them on their own individual merits as legal personalities and not to prejudice the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations by appointing cabinet members as CPP representatives. The abstract falls short of explicitly noticing how the CPP and NDFP frustrated the attempt of Duterte to compromise them with the cabinet appointments.

The abstract abundantly presents the legal and political integrity and autonomy of the legal national democratic forces but sometimes lets the term "Left" cover both the armed people's democratic revolution led by the CPP and the legal democratic forces and at no instance does it state categorically that the CPP, NPA and NDFP never had an alliance with the Duterte regime. The civil war never stopped despite the temporary reciprocal unilateral ceasefires and the glowing remarks and gestures of the NDFP, the legal democratic forces and the peace advocates to encourage Duterte to engage in peace negotiations with the NDFP.

The best evidence that there was never an alliance between the Duterte regime and the armed revolutionary movement is that that there had to be peace negotiations between two parties contending in a civil war, that these negotiations had rough sailing from the beginning because of Duterte's failure to fulfill his promise to amnesty and release all political prisoners and that Duterte eventually terminated the peace negotiations on November 23, 2017 and went further by designating the CPP and NPA as "terrorist" organizations on December 5, 2017.

Keynote Speech to the Video Conference
to Celebrate the 48th Anniversary of NDFP April 24, 2021

Dear compatriots and friends, I wish to thank my Filipino compatriots in the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and the Friends of the Filipino People in Struggle/ Friends of the NDFP for inviting me to serve as the keynote speaker in the celebration of the NDFP 48th anniversary celebration.

I wish to speak on the important role of the NDFP in the Filipino people's struggle for national liberation and democracy since its founding on April 24, 1973. In the process, I shall cite the NDFP's struggles, sacrifices and achievements.

The NDFP's most important role in the democratic revolution is to arouse, organize and mobilize the broad masses of Filipino people in their tens of millions and to seek international solidarity, support and cooperation. For the purpose, it encompasses 18 allied organizations representing all patriotic and progressive classes and sectors of Philippine society belonging to various political tendencies, ethno-linguistic communities and religious beliefs.

The allied organizations include the Communist Party of the Philippines, New People's Army, Revolutionary Council of Trade Unions, Katipunan ng mga Samahang Manggagawa Pambansang Katipunan ng Magbubukid, Malayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan, Kabataang Makabayan, Katipunan ng Gurong Makabayan, Makabayang Samahan Pangkalusugan. Liga ng Agham para sa Bayan, Lupon ng Manananggol para sa Bayan, Artista at Manunulat para sa Sambayanan, Makabayang Kawaning Pilipino, Artista at Manunulat para sa Sambayanan, Makabayang Kawaning Pilipino, Revolutionary Organization of Overseas Filipinos and their Families, Christians for National Liberation, Cordillera People's Democratic Front, Moro Resistance and Liberation Organization and Revolutionary Organization of Lumads.

The NDFP has been successful at promoting and building the revolutionary organs of political power at the grassroots and higher levels, expanding and consolidating all its allied organizations, broadening the national united front against every unjust regime, carrying out diplomatic and solidarity relations and raising resources for the advance of the people's democratic revolution.

The NDFP was conceived, born, developed and tempered in the crucible of the struggle against the US-supported Marcos fascist dictatorship. It worked hard to fight, isolate and defeat the dictatorship and made sacrifices, including martyrdom and imprisonment of many of its adherents. Ultimately, it played a decisive role in the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship in 1986.

Thereafter, it has responded positively to every serious expression of every post-Marcos regime to engage in peace negotiations. But always in the interest of a just peace, it has rebuffed and opposed every attempt to make the revolutionary forces capitulate and let the enemies of the people reign without resistance.

During the time of Ramos, the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations succeeded in forging the Hague Joint Declaration of 1992, which set forth the aim and purpose of addressing the roots of the armed conflict through basic economic, social and political reforms and provided the substantive agenda and methods of negotiating and making the necessary agreements.

More than ten important agreements have been made, including the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL), the first of the four items in the substantive agenda.

The negotiations have been long drawn because every post-Marcos regime has used them for only the first six months or so of their terms of office to consolidate their political positions. Uniformly, they have cited the pro-US and anti-communist military officers of the reactionary armed forces as the obstacle to the progress of the peace negotiations.

In the case of the current regime, Duterte exposed its bad faith in peace negotiations by adopting and stepping up its all-out war policy against the revolutionary movement, by committing atrocities and blaming them on the CPP and NPA and failing to fulfil Duterte's promise to amnesty and release all political prisoners.

The Duterte regime allowed its pro-US and anti-communist retired and active military officers to sabotage the peace negotiations exactly when these were going relatively fast in the making of the Comprehensive Agreement

on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER).

Following the order of the US President Trump, the puppet Duterte issued Proclamation 360 to terminate the peace negotiations on November 23, 2017 and Proclamation 374 to misrepresent the CPP and NPA as “terrorists” on December 5, 2017. Further, he formed the National Task Force to End Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) in 2018.

Worst of all, he signed the Anti-Terror Law of 2020 for the brazen purpose of state terrorism. He has used red-tagging in order to pave the way for the arbitrary arrest, torture and murder of social activists, critics, oppositionists, human rights defenders and even the NDFP peace consultants who are entitled to the protection of the JASIG.

Duterte has terminated the peace negotiations in order to scapegoat the CPP and NPA and cite them as pretext for engaging in state terrorism and perpetuating his traitorous, tyrannical, mass murdering, plundering and swindling rule. He openly worships and emulates the toxic memory of the fascist dictator.

He hopes to do better than Marcos in trying to destroy the revolutionary movement when in fact the chronic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system has become far worse than during the time of Marcos, due to the catastrophic consequences of neoliberalism, bureaucratic corruption and military overspending. The crisis is further aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The revolutionary strength of the CPP, NPA and the NDFP and other revolutionary forces of the people has become greater than ever before. Thus, Duterte and all his armed minions present themselves as fools by threatening every year to destroy the NPA and in effect admitting their failure to do so in the previous year, despite the most terrible forms of brutality and extortion inflicted on the people.

The ground for the people’s democratic revolution through protracted people’s war will remain fertile so long as foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism persist. These are the root causes of the armed revolution which will persevere until it wins total victory and usher in the socialist revolution.

The Duterte regime is practically in the final year of its legal term. But it is trying to stay in power, with Duterte as fascist dictator or with his handpicked successor who will continue his tyrannical rule. In these circumstances, the NDFP is again playing a major role in bringing about the broadest possible united front to fight, isolate and overthrow the Duterte tyranny.

Upon the advent of a relatively patriotic and democratic government, the NDFP will continue to be open to peace negotiations in accordance with the mandate from its 18 allied organizations. It is but logical to expect that the armed revolution will further intensify if Duterte or his surrogate manages to stay in power or if another rabid anti-communist regime takes over and pursues the same counter-revolutionary policies like those of Duterte.

The NDFP can be relied upon to do whatever it must do in order to advance towards a just peace of national independence, genuine democracy, economic development through land reform and national industrialization, social justice, cultural progress and international solidarity with all peoples of the world. In any case, the NDFP will always need the support of the Filipino people and the peoples of the world.

The Filipino people and the NDFP are confident that the new democratic revolution will ever win greater victories in the Philippines as the crisis of the domestic ruling system worsens and compels them to fight back and as the world capitalist system worsens and the peoples of the world rise up and wage mass struggles against imperialism and all reaction. Thank you.

Philippine Elections 2022:

Concerns and Prospects Answers to questions from Malaya Movement in Canada

May 22, 2021

JMS: According to the Philippine Constitution, Duterte is required to step down in June 2022 and before that to allow the holding of elections in May 2022. Candidates for the presidency and lower offices are supposed to register with the Comelec within the first quarter of this year.

It appears that Duterte himself is interested in fielding his daughter as presidential candidate, with him as vice presidential candidate. Presuming that the elections would be held in 2022, 1Sambayan spearheaded by former Supreme Court Justice Antonio Carpio is lining up presidential candidates of the opposition for such elections.

But there are indications that Duterte wants to follow the example of Marcos. He can use nationwide martial law, the antiterrorism act and charter change as means for laying aside the presidential elections of 2022 and staying in power as a fascist dictator. In the crucial months of June to October, we shall see further indications of what Duterte wants to do.

JMS: If Duterte decides to allow the elections in May 2022, he shall enjoy an overwhelming advantage over the opposition parties and candidates. His crony Denis Uy owns the which is the partner firm of Smartmatic. He controls the vote count as he did in the midterm elections in 2019. He was able to reconfigure the results in order to gain majorities in both houses of Congress and the majority of local executive officials.

It is a source of wonder for me why the opposition has not taken up the issue of electoral cheating in the 2019 elections and act as if this did not happen. Even before the holding of the 2022 elections, if these would be held, It should now be the concern of the people, about the issue of having clean and honest elections.

Having cheated in the 2019 elections, Duterte is even more motivated in cheating in 2022 because of the highest stake in store for him.

JMS: It is of decisive importance to have a clean electoral process. But even now and during the electoral campaign period, the Filipino people expect the opposition to take up the most substantial issues, such as the crimes of treason, tyranny, extrajudicial killings and corruption, which the Duterte regime has brazenly committed. The opposition must demonstrate that it is concerned about these issues and is willing to take all the necessary steps to deal with these crimes, punish the culprits and bring about new policies for the benefit of the people.

Other than the concern regarding clean electoral process, what else are other immediate and substantive concerns that should be discussed now and during the electoral campaign period

JMS: If elections were to be held at all, they are of crucial importance to the lives and future of the Filipino people in connection with national independence, democracy, economic development, social justice, all-round progress and peace. With regard to the issue of national independence, the people and opposition must confront the overall dominance of US imperialism over the Philippines and the sell-out of maritime and sovereign rights to China in the West Philippine Sea.

The entire people must be determined to do away with the tyrannical laws such as the antiterrorism law of 2020 and presidential issuances of the same nature. In plain terms, democracy must be upheld and realized, Genuine land reform and national industrialization must be pursued in order to achieve social justice and economic development. There must be all-round progress in the Philippines. The peace process may be resumed to achieve a just peace by addressing the root causes of the armed conflict.

JMS: There should be a broad united front of patriotic and progressive forces to confront the Duterte regime in the electoral and other fields of struggle. Duterte can cheat in elections not only because it controls the system of voting and vote count and also because it has the means of propaganda to make the regime appear extremely popular despite the most outrageous crimes it is committing.

To make itself popular the regime uses paid poll surveys, troll armies, prostitutes in the government media and government agencies. The propaganda is not only to drum up worship for Duterte but also try to discredit his critics, social activists, workers, peasant, women, youth and the revolutionary movement,. This propaganda vainly intends to seek approval for every political act of the regime in connection with staying in power through elections or other means,

JMS: If and when Duterte cheats in the 2022 elections, the broad masses of the people should be ready to rise up in the same way that they rose up when Marcos was elected in 1986 and overthrow the regime and install a truly democratic form of government. Recent history has proven to us that it is possible to do away with those who engage in dirty and dishonest elections. To be able as in 1986, the way to overthrow the usurpers of governmental authority, can be overpowered by the broad masses of the people as a result of a broad united front that combines the strength of the basic toiling masses of workers and peasants, the middle social strata and the enlightened troops of the reactionary classes, including the reactionary armed forces.

JMS: Nevertheless, so long as the exploiting classes are not overthrown by the exploited classes, those who emerge as presidents pursue antinational and antidemocratic policies because they come from the exploiting classes of big comprador, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists in the current crisis stricken semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system, the main trend is for the ruling classes to be incapable of ruling in the old way. There is only a slim hope for fluctuations between extremely repressive and less repressive regimes.

JMS: It is an absolute necessity for the patriotic and democratic forces of society to arouse, organize and mobilize the . It is not enough to engage in the electoral form of struggle alone and wait for the next elections after frustration in the previous one. It is not also enough to rely on the various forms of legal struggle between elections. That is the reason why there is fertile ground for the growth in strength people's democratic revolution. That is a fact that we must at least recognize before deciding to join the revolution or to advocate peace negotiations.

JMS: Because of the persistence of imperialist domination, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, the revolutionary mass movement in the Philippines continues to grow and the Duterte regime continues to fail in its ambition to destroy it. The campaign of state terrorism with the use of NTF-ELCAC and the ATL and ATC is failing . But we can expect Duterte to boast in his last SONA this forthcoming July that he has succeeded in wiping out the revolutionary movement. He has no reason not to allow the 2022 elections. At the same time, he must engage in cheating to win the elections.

JMS: The entire Filipino people, including the overseas Filipinos must pay close attention to the situation and trends in the Philippines, especially in the last year of Duterte's constitutional term. The Duterte regime cannot be trusted. It is hell-bent on doing everything foul to keep itself in power and avert the possibility of Duterte being tried and punished not only in Philippine courts but also in the International Criminal Court with regard to crimes against humanity.

All overseas Filipinos concerned with freedom and justice have stakes in the situation and developments of their motherland. In principle and real terms, they still have their relatives and friends in their motherland and many of them wish to return to a Philippines that enjoys the bounty of full national independence, democracy, social justice, economic development and all-round progress.

Overseas Filipinos have the special duty of building their strength as a community abroad in order to be of help to the motherland and to gather moral, political and material support from all other peoples in the spirit of international solidarity.

Expand and Intensify the Mass Movement

Under the Framework of a Broad United Front

Message to BAYAN Metro Manila All Leaders' Meeting

June 20, 2021

My dear fellow activists, militant patriotic greetings to all of you!

The conditions in our country today is favorable for expanding and intensifying the mass movement under the framework of a broad united front of the Filipino people for national liberation and democracy against the traitor, terrorist, butcher, plunderer and swindler Duterte regime.

All the evil characteristics of this monster have been flagrantly exposed during the past months because of its exploitation of the Covid-19 pandemic as an opportunity to seize emergency powers, inflict harsh lockdowns, kill innocents, suppress free press and plunder hundreds of billions of pesos in the name of unfulfilled mass testing, care for the sick and relief for those who lost their jobs.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the Duterte regime's erroneous policies have aggravated the existing intensifying crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system as a result of neoliberalism and fascism. We have reached a situation where the broad masses have a united view that Duterte tyranny is a worse plague than the Covid-19 and the Filipino people want to oust the tyrant from his throne.

Due to extreme restrictions, cruelty and extended militaristic lockdown and unbridled plunder by the Duterte clique, the economy has sunk further and bankrupted the government and Duterte has been posturing as fierce to terrorize and silence the Filipino masses. Despite the strong opposition of the people, Duterte insisted to enact into law the proposed bill which would intensify state terrorism. This is even worse than martial law because it trashes the entire Bill of Rights of the 1987 Constitution.

Because of the intensifying crisis and the hatred of the Filipino people, the Duterte regime is a paper tiger at the strategic level. It is weak to its core and easy to resist and hit with effective blows. Even if the regime is a real tiger on the tactical level, because of its military, police and death squad henchmen, every crime it continues to commit will further result in the people's strong and wide resistance to further isolate, weaken and defeat it.

The rapid expansion and intensification of the mass movement under the policy and tactics of a broad united front is timely. Strengthen the basic alliance of the working class and the peasantry, persuade the middle class and take advantage of the split among the ruling classes to isolate, weaken and defeat the treachery, terrorism and tyranny of the Duterte regime.

Now that the contradictions between the US and China are escalating, the double-faced policy and relations of the Duterte regime towards the two imperialist powers are splitting the ranks of the ruling classes and the regime. The pro-US side of the regime are angered by Duterte's stupid sell-out of the sovereign right of the Philippines to China which does not fulfil most of its promised onerous loans.

Many reactionaries including the US imperialists realize that Duterte cannot fulfil his promise to Trump of crushing the armed revolutionary movement. Instead this continues to grow stronger due to the worsening crisis, the oppression and exploitation of the people and due to the gross corruption of Duterte and his favorite generals in the procurement of overpriced military equipment without audit, the intelligence and discretionary funds and the faking of surrenders, encounters and projects.

Even among the ranks of military and police officials and personnel, there is a clash between Duterte's brutal and corrupt favorites on the one hand, and on the other, those who abhor the brazen gruesome crimes of his henchmen. There are low ranking officers and ordinary troops who say they are fed-up with the corruption of the high ranking officers, of the blind and inutile operations and the cruelty to the workers, peasants and indigenous people.

BAYAN itself is a united front of wide scope and composed of organizations of the toiling masses and middle forces. But it is important to further expand the united front until it takes advantage of the splits among the ranks of the exploiting classes. They should be motivated to reject the Duterte clique. Those opposing Duterte have to be pushed to completely repudiate the Duterte clique, withdraw its support from within the ruling system, bureaucracy and apparatuses of state repression, and act to replace Duterte with his constitutional successor.

If this happens, such as the overthrow of Marcos and Estrada in 1986 and 2001, this will clear the path for the

resumption of peace negotiations on comprehensive agreements on social, economic and political reforms which shall be the basis for a just peace. If this does not happen, the people's war for national liberation and democracy will continue and further blaze.

The role of BAYAN is decisive in inflaming patriotic and fighting spirit in accordance with the general line of national liberation and democracy through studies, discussions and issuances, strengthening of solid mass organizations and mobilization of organized and unorganized masses to continuously increase mass protests until the Duterte clique loses its capacity to rule and is ripe for overthrow.

The role of BAYAN in Metro Manila is decisive because it is the center of the reactionary system and government and the issuances, actions and victories of the patriotic and democratic forces shall be a signal for the whole country. The overthrow of the Duterte regime will be hastened if the mass actions are victorious and will strengthen the spirit of the people in the bureaucracy and the armed forces of the reactionary government and they will reject and withdraw support for the Duterte clique.

We are at a time where the crisis of the ruling system and the crimes of the Duterte regime are ahead of our initiatives and actions in pushing the broad masses to fight the enemy who cause their sufferings. We have a correct investigation of society and program of action, solid mass organizations and traditional and modern instruments and methods to hasten the pace of our struggle and defeat of the enemy and to advance the national democratic movement.

Expand the united front and intensify the mass movement!

Oust the treacherous, cruel, corrupt and mendacious Duterte regime!

Long live BAYAN and the Filipino people!

June 27, 2021

As Founding Chairman of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and Chief Political Consultant of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), I welcome the Commentary of the Christians for National Liberation (CNL) on the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, which calls on all Christians to participate in the transformation of social realities in the new millennium and which proposes “an integral and solidary humanism” capable of creating a new social, economic and political order founded on the dignity and freedom of every human person.

I commend and congratulate the CNL for responding to the call and proposal of the Compendium and for seeking to consolidate the ranks of Christians in accordance with their love of God and their brethren for the purpose of greater service to the Filipino people in their struggle for national and social liberation against foreign monopoly capitalism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

I fully agree with the democratic and ecumenical proposition that Christian believers and nonbelievers can enjoy in common the freedom of belief and thought; and at the same time dialogue and cooperate in order to analyze social issues, formulate the program or course of action and strive to achieve the common good of the people. We can differ on the First Great Commandment but we can easily agree on the Second Great Commandment and work together in loving and serving the people.

The CNL is excellently qualified to put forward its Commentary on the basis of its long experience, sustained work, sacrifices and achievements in working with other revolutionary forces within the NDFP and with the broad masses of the people since 1972 in the people’s democratic revolution against the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system dominated by US imperialism and administered by the state functionaries of the local exploiting classes of big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists.

I appreciate that the CNL inspired by the love of God is critical of how hatred of atheism and communism has been used to limit and slant the social doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church in favor of monopoly capitalism and deny the common good in scientific socialism. The CNL explains very well the history and contexts of the papal encyclicals, the phenomenon of modern revisionism, the intensification of inter-imperialist contradictions, the recrudescence of fascism in tandem with neoliberalism, the rise of anti-imperialist and democratic mass struggles and the resurgence of the irrepressible forces for national liberation, democracy and socialism.

It is just for the CNL to heed the demand of the masses and call for the end of the system of exploitation and oppression that cause poverty and the violation of human rights. Under the neoliberal policy regime, the poor, deprived and oppressed toiling masses have increasingly suffered in the last more than four decades. Thus, the CNL proposes interrelated mass movements in the struggle against poverty and inequality.

So long as the social doctrine of the Church limits the possibility of social transformation within the confines of monopoly capitalism, the common good cannot be attained and the dignity, unity and equality of all the people cannot be fulfilled. The economic systems and political structures of capitalism and the earlier forms of exploitative societies (slave and feudal) have run counter to the original egalitarianism of Jesus Christ and Christianity.

Christians and non-Christians can agree on how the contradiction between capital and labor runs and how it can be resolved. The social character of production has been rising tremendously, with collective labor and higher technology, but the private character of appropriating the product of labor by the monopoly capitalists has become even more rapacious. Therefore, the only way to resolve the contradiction is to intensify the economic and political struggles in order to defeat imperialism and establish socialism.

The neoliberal policy of imperialist globalization has rampaged for so long and victimized the proletariat in the industrial countries and peoples in underdeveloped countries like the Philippines. Under these circumstances, the call of the Church for a “humanism of work” cannot be achieved within the framework of monopoly capitalism. Christians and non-Christians must unite to end the globalized system of exploitation and oppression in the Philippines and in other countries being carried out by the multinational and transnational corporations.

The escalating conditions of exploitation and oppression of the people of the world have included the worst forms of terrorism by the US and other imperialist powers in the form of puppet tyrannies, military intervention

and wars of aggression. These have destroyed the lives of more than 25 million people as well as their social infrastructure in many countries since the end of World War II. But the imperialists and their puppets like Marcos and Duterte hype as the worst terrorists all those who oppose the atrocities and do the painstaking work of arousing, organizing and mobilizing the masses.

In the face of the intolerable and degrading conditions of oppression and exploitation, the suffering people have no choice but to defend themselves and fight back in accordance with the encyclical teaching on just war against tyranny, oppression and the daily violence of exploitation. The unjust violence of imperialism and the reactionary states has become so intense and widespread that the people are reasonably justified to wage revolutionary armed struggle for national liberation, democracy and socialism in the Philippines and in other countries, especially in the global South. In any case, the common objective of Christians and non-Christians is to build and establish worldwide peace by liberating humanity from any form of national and class exploitation, oppression and enslavement.

The CNL is admirable for answering the call of the Compendium to safeguard the environment as a common good and a common responsibility. The multinational and transnational corporations of monopoly capitalism extract superprofits and keep the Philippines underdeveloped and impoverished by plundering the natural resources of the Philippines and the cheap labor of the toiling masses. They pose threats to the very existence of the planet Earth. These include global warming or climate change, depletion of the ozone layer, habitat destruction and extinction of species, air pollution, water pollution, groundwater depletion and contamination, chemical risks, and dumping of industrial garbage to underdeveloped countries.

It is an essential task of all Filipinos, Christians or otherwise, to protect and rehabilitate the environment from the depredations of the imperialists and their local collaborators. It is for the common good that all the Christian churches in the Philippines and the Filipino revolutionary organizations through the NDFP complement one another in order to safeguard the Philippine environment from being devastated further.

Even as the Christians and Marxists differ on belief and thought, they can complement one another and cooperate in the building of human societies where truth, justice, peace, love, equality and liberation would exist for the economic, political, cultural and comprehensive development of the toiling masses of workers, peasants and national minorities. We have seen the cooperation of Christians and Marxists in the people's war as well as in the process of peace negotiations in promoting the social, economic and political reforms needed to lay the foundation of a just and lasting peace.

I admire the CNL for condemning imperialism as the Beast of the Apocalypse pictured in the Book of Revelation, a global satanic power that is sucking the sweat and blood of billions of the world's toiling masses and that is being served by the "false prophets", such as the US Central intelligence Agency, the bourgeois politicians and businessmen, the reactionary army and police of the imperialist powers and their fascist puppet states, the pseudo-Christian and pro-imperialist evangelists of today.

I appreciate the CNL for criticizing and repudiating such pseudo-Christians as those who belong to the Partido Demokratiko-Sosyalista ng Pilipinas (PDSP) and who play with such catch phrases as Christian "democracy" or "social democracy" and Christian "socialism" or "democratic socialism" to mislead Filipino Christians towards hating and denouncing Marxism, the people's democratic revolution, scientific socialism and communism. The PDSP serves as an instrument of US imperialism, feudalism, bureaucrat capitalism and state fascism in maligning and suppressing the Filipino people's struggle for national and social liberation.

Both Christians and Communists have a long sense of history. But the former have an indefinitely longer one in which Christianity is supposed to provide daily inspiration to the lives of its following and the spiritual comfort to those who are in the throes of pain, suffering or death in any future society. Communists concede that their party and the socialist state are no longer needed after socialism graduates into the classless society of communism. But of course, both Christians and Communists are fulfilled that whatever contribution they make for the common good of mankind run beyond their mortal lives, whatever are the prognostications about the longevity of Christianity and Marxism.

There are rabid anti-communists who try to frighten the Christians by claiming that on the way to socialism communists engage them in a united front only to persecute and suppress them in socialist society. Let us always remember that Friedrich Engels severely scolded Herr Eugen Dühring when he invoked science and socialism to suggest that forcible means be used to do away with religion. Engels categorically declared that it is precisely in

violation of science and socialism to do violence to the fundamental right and freedom of belief and thought.

When Marx and Engels said that religion is the opium of the people, it was to criticize and repudiate the misappropriation of religion by the exploiting classes to befuddle the exploited and render them powerless. We are all happy that the CNL has both the religious and scientific optimism and looks forward to working and cooperating with communists in the entire epoch of socialist society that follows the people's democratic revolution.

Socialist states have always guaranteed in their Constitution this right and freedom. Christians and Communists have worked together well in socialist societies. They are never bothered by projections and speculations about the future after socialism. They are not obsessed with personal and sectional rewards and are in fact willing to pay the supreme sacrifice for the just cause whenever necessary. They are confident that whatever they contribute to the current common good and to the further social development of humanity will continue as indestructible creative energy in the lives of the people generation after generation.

Initial questions

1. *Why is united front work against the ruling class important for the Filipino proletariat? What are the requisites for this work?*

JMS: Although the Filipino industrial proletariat is the most progressive productive and political force in the Philippines and has the capability to lead the new democratic revolution towards socialism under the guidance of the theory of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, it is a minority and needs to form and rely on a united front so that it can unite with the broad masses.

Through the united front, the proletariat forms the basic alliance of workers and peasants. They constitute more than 90 percent of the Filipino people. This is the basis of the general line of the people's democratic revolution and the strategy of protracted people's war of surrounding the cities from the countryside.

Apart from the basic alliance of workers and peasants, the proletariat must also attract the middle strata of the petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie, take advantage of the contradictions among the reactionaries and isolate and defeat the most reactionary section of the ruling classes of the big bourgeoisie, the landlords and bureaucrat capitalists. The most reactionary part is defined as the enemy at all times.

2. *What are the bases and contexts in the history of the proletariat that gave rise to the work on the united front? Can you share the experience of the following countries?*

a. Russia

JMS: In Russia, the parties of the Mensheviks, Socialist Revolutionaries, Constitutional Democrats and others were in competition with the Bolsheviks (party of proletarian revolutionaries) in the theory and practice of revolution. But they were united in a united front against Tsarism.

They represented the different classes and strata of society in the united front that was often informal and sometimes bilateral. Before the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks had an alliance with the Socialist Revolutionaries at a time when they had the majority in the peasant soviets.

b. China

In China, throughout the Chinese Revolution, the class line of the Communist Party of China in the united front was: build the basic alliance of workers and peasants under the leadership of the proletarian class; encourage the middle strata of the petty bourgeoisie and middle bourgeoisie to join, take advantage of the contradictions among the reactionaries; and isolate and defeat the enemy, the part of the reactionary classes that are accomplices of the imperialists.

The CPC allied with the Guomindang against the warlords of the north in 1925 to 1927, the two fought during the agrarian revolution from 1927 to 1936, re-allied against Japan from 1937 to 1945 and fought again during the Civil War from 1946 to 1949. The policy of united front based on concrete conditions was carried out at each stage of the Chinese revolution.

c. Vietnam

In Vietnam, the policy of the Vietnamese Communist Party in the formation and development of the united front was similar to that of China due to the similar social conditions. The leadership of the proletariat relied on the basic alliance of workers and peasants, mobilized the middle strata and isolated and defeated the enemy.

The Vietminh was formed as a formal united front against Japanese fascism during WW II and the restoration of the French colonialists. The north of Vietnam was liberated and became the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The south, on the other hand, remained in the hands of the French colonialists and reactionary puppets as US imperialist intervention intensified.

South Vietnam formed a formal united front, the South Vietnam National Liberation Front, to start and carry out the war of liberation from US imperialism and the puppet Republic of South Vietnam. The SVNLF continued to exist until US imperialism was defeated and the whole of Vietnam was liberated in 1975. Subsequently, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was established.

3. *Did the work on the united front exist after the establishment of socialist society (as in China during Mao's time). If so, what was the form of this work?*

JMS: Even though the country became socialist, a united front was still needed to unite the various patriotic and democratic classes and forces in building a socialist society. At every level of the state, up to the People's Congress, there were councils and conferences that implemented the united front. They were ensured to participate in socialist revolution and construction.

4. Before the formal establishment of the People's Republic of China, the CPC convened a national consultative people's conference composed of various parties/organizations of the democratic classes and even the left side of the GMD. Some of them played a role in the new state. Could this also be a possibility in the Philippines in the future?

JMS: In the Philippines, the CPP will follow as a good example what the CPC did before formally establishing the People's Republic of China, which is to convene a national consultative people's conference to unite the parties/or-ganitions of the democratic classes and even the left part of the nationalists so they can participate and contribute to the people's democratic republic

5. Can you narrate to us your study and experience on united front work when you were still in the legal democratic movement in the 1960s? What are the important lessons to be learned from these?

JMS: When I was still a student activist at UP from 1959 to 1961, I was a follower of the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism but our small organization, Student Cultural Association of the UP, was not enough to fight the anti-communist forces inside and outside UP.

We upheld the principle of the separation of church and state, we emphasized the progressive liberal line and united with the conservative liberals against the secular-religious star personalities of the anti-communists. By 1961, SCAUP mobilized fraternities, sororities and other organizations on campus to stage a protest of 5,000 students in front of and inside Congress.

To develop the united front in the legal struggle, we, advanced activists, joined the Lapiang Manggagawa (Workers Political Party), participated in studies, organized unions and strikes since 1961. We also connected with peasant organizations and deployed social investigation teams and did mass work in communities in Metro Manila and the countryside. In 1964 we established Kabataang Makabayan (Patriotic Youth) as a comprehensive youth organization. It was a united front of youth coming from different social classes.

We have also connected with politicians, economists and other nationalists carrying the interest of the national bourgeoisie. Subsequently, we established the Movement for the Advancement of Nationalism as an open united front in 1966-1968. We were not contented with the legal struggle. We reestablished the CPP under the guidance of the theory of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in 1969 and also founded the New People's Army in 1969.

6. On the other hand, please tell us your experience in the work of the united front when you were already on the path of armed struggle against the US-Marcos dictatorship? What important lessons could be learned from this?

JMS: Through people's war, we brought the national united front to the highest level, especially the basic alliance of worker and peasant classes. However, the relationship between the middle strata and the nationalists, and anti-fascist groups among the reactionaries continued and developed.

When Marcos proclaimed martial law in 1972, many in the patriotic and democratic organizations that Marcos had made illegal joined the secret movement. In 1973, we established the National Democratic Front as the secret united front and the framework of unity and action of secret patriotic and democratic forces.

As the people's war expanded and intensified, CPP cadres and members excelled in carrying out the anti-feudal united front. Under the leadership of the working class, we relied mainly on the poor peasants and farmworkers, we encouraged the middle peasantry to fight, we neutralized the rich peasants, we took advantage of the conflict between enlightened and despotic landlords to isolate and defeat the power of the despotic landlords.

Thus, armed struggle, agrarian revolution and the establishment of guerrilla fronts or revolutionary bases were well integrated. In these mass bases, Party branches, army units, mass organizations and local organs of political power grew.

7. In your long experience as the NDFP chief political consultant in the peace talks, how was the conduct of the united front and what were the important lessons learned from it?

JMS: It is important to call for a just peace and to have negotiations for its implementation through comprehensive agreements on social, economic and political reforms. If anyone rejects this call, like the brutal and corrupt Duterte regime, he will be separated from the desire of the broad masses of the Filipino people.

The call for a just peace is in line with the policy of the united front of the patriotic and democratic forces to have patriotic and democratic unity and structures that implements full national independence, democratic rights,

development through land reform and national industrialization, patriotic, scientific and mass culture and a foreign policy against imperialism and all reactions.

The NDFP has expanded and strengthened its united front through calls for peace talks. The NDFP has presented its program. Many were attracted and agreed with this program and many also just wanted to try peace talks for the good of the people. Because the Duterte regime destroyed the peace talks and launched state terrorism, the stance of many that the people's democratic revolution must be advanced through people's democratic revolution has also become stronger.

8. As the Chairman of the International League of Peoples' Struggle, how has the work of the united front been applied on a global scale and what important lessons can be learned from it?

JMS: Indeed, the International League of Peoples' Struggle is a very formal and organized united front of anti-imperialist and democratic mass organizations at the international level. These include the organized masses of the worker and peasant classes and the middle bourgeoisie and the progressive parts of the institutions opposed to the imperialists and reactionary forces.

The ILPS has become attractive to many anti-imperialist and democratic mass organizations because of its broad framework of unity in the political arena, maintaining the independence of each participating organization and the ability to unite with many organizations and act simultaneously on 20 major concerns or issues against the oppression and exploitation by imperialism and reaction. Thus, the ILPS has become the largest, strongest and most militant alliance in the world.

9. In your opinion what would cause damage (or based on experience, have caused damage) if policies are not implemented or wrongly implemented with regard to any of the classes in the united front and the class enemy?

JMS: The revolutionary movement will be greatly damaged if the united front is neglected and the CPP and the working class are separated from the broad masses who are not proletarian. This error is ultra-Left or Left opportunism. That is what the counterrevolutionary Trotskyists want, to act pure or purist proletarians and who are not in need of allies.

On the other side of this is the error of Right opportunism. This means that the CPP and the proletariat have no independence, they only tail the bourgeoisie and very dependent on the united front, on the bourgeois allies, and dull in their struggle against the enemy. The united front should be an instrument of the CPP and the proletariat in arousing, organizing and mobilizing millions upon millions of people to advance the people's democratic revolution through people's war.

10. Why is it important to firmly adhere to the antifeudal line in the countryside? What would be the consequence if the policy here were wrong?

JMS: It is important to hold firmly to the anti-feudal line in the countryside in order to arouse, organize and mobilize the peasantry for the agrarian revolution which is the main content of the people's democratic revolution.

Without the antifeudal line, the revolution would lose the strength and support of the largest class in the Philippines, the basic alliance of the working class and the peasantry would not be formed and the largest and deepest source of the people's army fighters would be lost. The CPP and the NPA would lose wide space for maneuvering and for building and strengthening mass organizations and local organs of political power.

11. Why is it important for the urban mass movement to always hold firmly to the organization of the following: (a) mainly of workers (industrial and service) and other urban poor and (b) of the urban petty bourgeoisie especially among the students and other sections of the intelligentsia?

JMS: Before reaching the strategic offensive, which is the last stage of the people's war, the legal growth and action of workers (industrial and service) and other urban poor and urban petty bourgeoisie especially among the students and other sections of the intelligentsia are important in exposing and condemning the gross oppression and exploitation by the ruling regime and system.

During the strategic offensive, the role in the uprising and insurrection of the workers and other urban poor is important. They are the main force because they are in control of the city and are interested in the victory of the revolution. They can help the people's army's offensive in the seizure of power in the cities.

The importance of the petty bourgeoisie is secondary to the masses of workers and urban poor but they play very important and decisive role in their tasks such as in propaganda, protest actions, professional and technical experience, knowledge of deployment and weakness of the enemy. They can encourage their relatives and friends in the reactionary military and police to surrender or to help instead of fighting.

12. *Can a united front (of personalities/parties/organizations with very different orientations and methods of action) exist in the framework of having a common goal even without a formal alliance, front or organization?*

JMS: A united front (of personalities/parties/organizations with very different orientations and method of action) can exist in the framework of having a common political goal to fight and defeat an enemy, a despicable reactionary regime or a foreign aggressor.

There could also be informal or organized alliances or fronts. The allies have an understanding that they will not fight one another but focus on fighting and defeating the common enemy. In the fight against the Marcos fascist dictatorship, there was a strict formal and organized alliance of the forces within the NDFP. But the CPP had no written or organized alliance with any bourgeois party that was also opposed to the Marcos fascist regime.

13. *Is there any other framework by which a united front can be formed aside from unity against the common enemy? If yes, what are its examples?*

It is an essential requisite that the forces in a united front have a common enemy. It is also possible that there is a complex situation where there are two enemies and these two are also enemies. The common saying that the enemy of your enemy is your friend does not always hold true.

It is not correct and appropriate to call the Chinese imperialists ally of the CPP simply because US imperialism is its opponent in their inter-imperialist struggle. China could be an ally against US if it stops its interference in the West Philippine Sea. The struggle between the Filipino people and Chinese imperialism is a big issue because of its claim and occupation of the West Philippine Sea and its violation of the sovereign and maritime rights of the Philippines.

14. *In your opinion, what should be the direction of work in the united front under the electoral framework of the coming 2022 elections?*

JMS: The legal patriotic and democratic parties and organizations are free to participate in the electoral and other legal united fronts of other parties and organizations that fights the Duterte regime. As revolutionary forces, the CPP and NDFP are intentionally outside of the electoral process of the reactionary government.

15. *There are those who say that the coming elections is an unfolding pattern—comparing it to the 1986 Snap Elections of Marcos-Cory Aquino and the Arroyo faction -Liberal Party (Noyonoy Aquino). Is there such a possibility or could there be such a scenario? What are the lessons from the chaotic game of bourgeois politics could be learned/reviewed by the movement and the toiling masses?*

JMS: If the US wants to drop or junk Duterte like it did Marcos in 1983 to 1986, the US can easily do this to Duterte. Even now, behind the scenes, the US can tell Duterte not to run in the elections and cheat for his daughter and himself. The US controls Smartmatic and it can prevent Duterte's cheating. Duterte has some remaining power to pretend he is disobeying the US but not enough for him to prevail over his imperialist master. What is evil of the US is if it first uses Duterte for the bloody suppression of the revolutionary movement.

If, in the worst possibility, the US allowed the Dutertes to continue to rule through state terrorism and the 2022 elections, the ground for people's war would surely be even more fertile because of Duterte's huge crisis and the severe crisis of the Philippine ruling system, combined with the crisis of the world capitalist system. The people's democratic revolution would be further strengthened through people's war. It would coincide with the vast and intense turmoil in the world.

16. *For you, what will be the tasks of the mass movement in the broad united front if the winner were: a) Go/Duterte or Sara/Duterte. (What is the future of the united front in case the Dutertes return to power?)*

a) *Go/Duterte or Sara/Duterte*

JMS: Should they continue to rule, this means that they have a license from the US to further intensify state terrorism or fascism. As far as possible, further expand the united front and intensify the legal struggle. And because of the probability of the Dutertes' continuing brutality, the masses of activists must be prepared to join the people's war as when Marcos declared martial law.

b) *Anti-Duterte Opposition*

JMS: Among the bourgeois or conservative opposition, more will be angered and stay with the legal united front, but there will also be some who will suck up to the Dutertes true to the character of traditional politicians.

17. *Is Ouster the firm call in case the Dutertes remain in power? Will the allies hold on to the call for Ouster if this indeed were the call?*

JMS: Legal patriotic and democratic organizations and the united front must strive to work together to oust the

Dutertes should they remain in power through state terrorism and electoral fraud. There is the probability that under such circumstances, anti-Duterte groups from the military would emerge and withdraw support once they see that the masses have risen up similar to what happened against Marcos in 1986 and against Estrada in 2001. Should this be the course of events, the majority of the conservative opposition would remain in the united front because they are the ones most likely to replace Duterte in power.

18. During the rectification movement we fought fiercely against various types of rejectionists. In the current situation, is it right to give or is there room to deal with known social-democratic, Trotskyite or yellow personalities or organizations? What is the appropriate stance and dealing with them?

JMS: The legal patriotic movement and the revolutionary movement are now stronger than they were during the time of the Second Great Rectification Movement in the 1990s. If these little groupings of anti-communists pretending to be more progressive than communist are just quiet, just leave them be especially if they are attached to some allies. But be observant. If they attack through words, they should also be attacked through words so they will not cause damage.

19. What is your view on the presidential team-ups or presidential line-ups that are coming out today?

JMS: It looks like the relatively positive front runners are Leni Robredo, Isko Moreno and Manny Pacquiao. Mark what I say “relatively positive”. But I am sure that they are far better people as leaders than the brutal and corrupt Duterte.

20. The state is harassing and attacking the Makabayan bloc and even the national democratic mass organizations left and right. What would you advise?

JMS: The resistance must be intensified and efforts must be made to oust the Dutertes from power. Those who are threatened to be arrested and killed by the military and police must be careful enough and be prepared to join the war. If you remember, the activists’ call against Marcos was “People’s war is the answer to martial law.”

21. Red-tagging of legal and democratic organizations (affiliated with NDMOs or open critics of the government) is the clear mechanism used by the militarist machinery. Often this kind of story is linked to your past statements, that said groups are just fronts of the armed revolution. In parrying and rejecting these lies/attacks of the fascists, are there any arguments or simple explanation that you could give to new activists which they could use as guide for expanding the united front?

JMS: The fascist strategy and tactics of Duterte and the Anti-Terrorism Council is to celebrate Duterte as a leader while all his opponents are evil, and to consider the communists, revolutionaries and activists as the worst among them and to brand them as terrorists.

Be firm in exposing and condemning the monstrous crimes of Duterte as a traitor, fascist, murderer, plunderer and swindler and define his responsibility for the rapid worsening of the economic, political and health crisis. Truth will prevail over Duterte’s fascist propaganda.

22. In the previous webinars we launched, your statements have been clear and challenging to some politicians to thoroughly attack the increasingly stinking image of Duterte and his minions, fully recognize the legitimate and long-standing calls of the national-democratic ranks, and join them. In today’s twists and turns of the situation, can we say that there are enough to lay the basis and actively firm up relations with them (Isko Moreno et.al) based on the principle of the united front?

JMS: The Duterte regime is in a state of rapid isolation, decay and putrefaction. It is clear that the claims by paid hacks that the monster is popular is a lie. Many of Duterte’s former followers or quiet observers are now openly distancing themselves and criticizing him. They must be encouraged to participate in the expanding united front against the regime of the fascist, executioner, plunderer and swindler Duterte.

Additional questions:

1. What do you think are the principles that should always be remembered and what results should arise from the legal alliances entered into by the legal and progressive forces?

JMS: The legal and progressive forces have a duty to fight for the national and democratic rights and interests of the Filipino people through various forms of legal struggle. These forces represent various class and sectoral interests and have formed an alliance or united front against the common enemy, the most reactionary forces that are the worst tools of imperialism and the exploiting classes.

The leadership, initiative and independence of the working class and its Party must be carried out In building alliances, the working class must rely on its basic alliance with the peasant class. These two classes composed

more than 90 percent of the population. Attract the middle strata of the petty bourgeoisie and middle bourgeoisie. Take advantage of the contradiction among the reactionary forces of the exploiting class. Isolate, fight and defeat the most reactionary forces of the exploiting classes. The narrowest target of the broadest front is the treasonous, tyrannical, executioner and plunderer Duterte regime.

2. Could you share an example, past or present, of a coalition government of opposing forces in a civil war? What was the consequence and what positive and negative lessons can be learned from it?

JMS: The revolutions led by the working class and its party in Russia, China, North Korea, Vietnam and other countries were successful because these simultaneously used the weapons of proletarian revolutionary leadership of the party of the working class guided by Marxism-Leninism, the people's army in armed struggle and the united front.

Even if the leadership of the working class and its Communist Party were prominent, it leans on the united front and uses the coalition of patriotic and democratic force to build each level of the people's government, in the stages of the new democratic revolution and socialist revolution, through assemblies, councils and congresses.

3. Like the NDFP, revolutionary political fronts existed in the past and present in various parts of Latin America (EZLN in Mexico, FSLN in Nicaragua, FMLN in El Salvador etc.). What was the outcome and what is your critical analysis of these?

JMS: In the last four decades of the 20th century in Latin America, united fronts emerged that declared themselves to be the leadership of the revolution rather than under the revolutionary party of the working class.

But they have not been more successful than the revolutionary movements clearly led by the Communist Party and the working class. They eventually emerged as mere social democrats and were easily pressured and manipulated by the imperialists and the local bourgeoisie, even in cases where the popular front had overthrown a tyrannical regime like Somoza in Nicaragua through armed struggle.

In the Philippines during the 1980s, the Right and Left opportunists said that "vanguardism" of the working class and Communist Party was wrong and that the correct leadership should come from the united front. They even reversed the history of Vietnam and stated that it was not the Communist Party of Vietnam which led the struggle against the aggression of France, Japan and the US but it was the fronts of Vietminh and the South Vietnam National Liberation Front.

4. What do you think are the objective and subjective factors that seated the "leftists" in governments in Latin America? Did the proletarian party and work on the united front play a role in these countries?

JMS: The so-called "pink tide" in Latin America, which elected social-democratic leaders such as Hugo Chavez of Venezuela (1998), Luis Ignacio Lula da Silva of Brazil (2003) and Evo Morales of Bolivia (2006), and other more unstable leaders abroad, to the highest positions, had united fronts led by social democrats which usually included in the alliance a legal Communist Party, which was weak because this did not have a people's army and a strong basic alliance of workers and peasants.

The "pink tide" leaders can be commended for promoting national independence and socialism. But they maintain the capitalist system and the exploiting classes. It is not socialism that they build but largely only the increase of benefits and social services and the reduction of the worst forms of exploitation and oppression of the toiling masses. Thus, they earn the ire of the US imperialists and local exploiting classes who always use the elections, parliament, judiciary and military, to overthrow or weaken the social democrats.

The Revolutionary Movement

in the Philippines Today Address to the Book Launch of the Spanish Edition of *Philippine Society and Revolution*, September 26, 2021

Dear comrades and friends,

I welcome all the participants in this web launch of the Spanish edition of *Philippine Society and Revolution*. I thank Templando el Acero for publishing the book, Paloma Polo and Venceremos for organizing this book launch and Malcolm Guy of the International League of Peoples' Struggle for his technical assistance. It is a high honor for me to be with all of you and to speak on the current situation of the revolutionary movement in the Philippines.

Philippine society persists as semicolonial and semifeudal. It is afflicted by foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. It is dominated chiefly by US imperialism, with the new imperialist power China trying to seize the West Philippine Sea. The basic exploiting classes are the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class. The basic exploited classes are the proletariat and the peasantry. And the intermediate social strata are the middle bourgeoisie and the urban petty bourgeoisie.

Philippine society is in chronic crisis. This has rapidly worsened under the neoliberal policy regime. The socioeconomic and political crisis has become so grave that it has resulted in the escalation of oppressive and exploitative conditions and in the reappearance of Marcos-type state terrorism under the current Duterte regime. This regime seeks to destroy the revolutionary movement. But its glaring crimes of treason, tyranny, mass murder and plunder are rousing the people to rebel and join the revolutionary movement.

The Communist Party of the Philippines

Since its reestablishment on December 26, 1968 under the theoretical guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, the Communist Party of the Philippines has proven to be effective as the revolutionary party of the proletariat leading the Filipino people's new democratic revolution with a socialist perspective. It has become successful at building itself ideologically, politically and organizationally and overcoming all the strategic campaign of military suppression from the time of the Marcos fascist dictatorship to the present.

The CPP has developed central and lower organs of leadership capable of applying the theory of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism on the concrete conditions of Philippine society and in the practice of the Philippine revolution. Study courses of theoretical and political education are carried out at the basic, intermediate and advanced levels for all Party cadres and members to raise the level of their revolutionary education at the rate that they are collectively and individually capable of.

The basic course ensures understanding of Philippine history, current circumstances, class struggle and revolution. The intermediate course involves comparative study of the Philippine revolution with other significant revolutions in the world. The advanced study course includes the study of the classical and current Marxist-Leninist-Maoist works in philosophy, political economy, social science, strategy and tactics, the international communist movement and the anti-imperialist solidarity of all peoples and nations of the world.

The CPP has set forth the general line of people's democratic revolution with a socialist perspective and the general strategic line of protracted people's war of encircling the cities from the countryside. While it considers and develops itself as the leading force of the Philippine revolution and instrument of the Filipino proletariat and people, it is also determined to wield and develop the New People's Army as the embodiment of the worker-peasant alliance and as weapon for defeating the enemy and seizing political power and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines as the instrument for realizing and accelerating the unity of the broad masses of the people in their millions against the enemy.

The CPP has drawn its cadres and members from the revolutionary mass movement, the various types of mass organizations and institutions, the urban and rural communities, the different places and lines of work, the people's army and the revolutionary organs of political power that constitute the people's democratic government. As a result, the Party has grown in membership from a few scores in 1968 to tens of thousands at present and exists in all provinces of the Philippines.

The CPP is guided by the principle of democratic centralism. This means centralized leadership on the basis of democracy. The CPP has a nationwide system of organization that is deeply rooted among the toiling masses of

workers and peasants. It has organs of leadership at the central, interregional, regional, provincial, district, municipal and village levels. And it is at the lead and core of the New People's Army in the guerrilla bases and zones. It is the leading component in the local organs of political power.

The New People's Army

The New People's Army carries out the principal task of revolutionary armed struggle, which is the people's war, for overthrowing the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system and enabling the people's democratic republic of the Philippines to arise under the leadership of the proletariat. The NPA follows the strategic line of encircling the cities from the countryside in order to accumulate armed and political strength before the nationwide seizure of political power in the cities.

The probable stages of the protracted people's war are the strategic defensive, strategic stalemate and strategic offensive. The NPA is now in the stage of the strategic defensive within which the NPA makes use of the countryside as the wide area for maneuver, avails of the support of the peasantry and the rural proletariat. The NPA is now waging extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare and launching tactical offensives with a variety of units, including teams, squads, platoons and companies.

The NPA is determined to increase its weapons and its platoons and companies, make the enemy bleed from thousands of wounds and change the balance of strength towards the maturation of the strategic defensive and pave the way for the strategic stalemate in which the NPA shall carry out frequent tactical offensives by companies and battalions to further change the balance of forces. The aim is to build the battalions and regiments for the nationwide seizure of the cities in the strategic offensive.

The NPA is now operating in all rural regions and in 74 out of the 81 provinces of the Philippines. It has more than 110 guerrilla fronts, consisting of guerrilla bases and zones. It uses the major tactics of concentration, dispersal and shifting. It conducts a war of fluid movement to frustrate and defeat the enemy's so-called campaigns of intelligence-driven focused military operations. The military, police and paramilitary forces of the enemy are hated as instruments of oppression and butchery by the broad masses of the people and do not have the numerical strength to cover more than 10 percent of the Philippine archipelago at any given time.

The people's war is integrated with the agrarian revolution in order to gain the wide and deep support of the peasantry and the rural proletariat. The agrarian revolution consists of the sequence of the minimum and maximum land reform programs, depending on the strength of the mass movement, the CPP and NPA. The minimum program consists of rent reduction, control of interest rates and elimination of usury, raising of farm wages, improving prices of farm products at the farm gate and increasing production in agriculture and sideline occupation through rudimentary forms of cooperation among the peasants. The maximum program is the confiscation of land from the landlords and landgrabbing corporations and free distribution of the land to the peasants and farm workers.

The people's war is also integrated with the building of the mass base under the leadership of the CPP and with the assistance of the NPA. The mass organizations of workers, peasants, youth, women, cultural activists and children are built. The local organs of political power are also built. They are formed according to the line of antifeudal united front, with the party of the proletariat relying mainly on the poor peasants and farm workers, winning over the middle peasants, neutralizing the rich peasants, taking advantage of the splits between the enlightened and despotic landlords and delivering the main blow against the despotic landlords.

The local organs of political power constitute the people's democratic government and take charge of administration, land reform, production, social services, defense, settlement of disputes among the people, disaster relief and environmental protection. The NPA personnel who are in thousands are augmented by such reserve and auxiliary forces as the people's militia units with members who are in the tens of thousands (at least a platoon in every village) and the self-defense units of mass organizations (except children below 18 years of age) with members who are in the hundred of thousands.

Under the direction of the CPP, the NPA has its own program of politico-military education and training in order to raise constantly the fighting spirit and skills of the Red commanders and fighters. NPA units are educated and trained to undertake combat duty, mass work, propaganda, production and the organization and training of the people's militia under the local organs of political power and the self-defense units of the various mass organizations.

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) is the most consolidated formal organization for carrying out the national united front policy of the CPP. It follows and realizes the revolutionary class line of developing the basic alliance of the proletariat and the peasantry, winning over the urban petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie, taking advantage of the contradictions among parties and factions of the reactionary classes of big comprador, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists and uniting the nation against foreign monopoly capitalism.

The NDFP has 18 allied organizations: the CPP, NPA, Revolutionary Council of Trade Unions, Katipunan ng mga Samahang Manggagawa (trade unions), Makabayang Kawaning Pilipino (government employees), Pam-bansang Katipunan ng Magbubukid (peasants), Malayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan (women), Kabataang Makabayan (youth), Katipunan ng Gurong Makabayan (teachers), Makabayang Samahan Pangkalusugan (health workers), Liga ng Agham para sa Bayan (scientists and technologists), Artista at Manunulat para sa Sambayanan (artists and writers), Lupon ng Manananggol para sa Bayan (lawyers), Christians for National Liberation, Cordillera People's Democratic Front Moro Resistance and Liberation Organization, Revolutionary Organization of Lumads (Mindanao tribes) and the Revolutionary Organization of Overseas Filipinos and their Families.

The NDFP is a comprehensive united front of patriotic and progressive organizations. But within each class or sector, it carries out the united front policy. It carries out all forms of struggle in order to arouse and mobilize the broad masses of the people in their millions to join and support the people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war. The main form of struggle it promotes is armed struggle and it works hard to develop the basic alliance of the proletariat and peasantry and win over the middle social strata. But it also promotes and engages in peace negotiations in order to propagate the program of the people's democratic revolution and to call for social, economic and political reforms as the basis of a just and lasting peace.

The NDFP observes closely the contradictions among the parties and factions of the reactionary classes of big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists to determine the enemy to fight at every given time and to develop the broad united front against such enemy among the local reactionaries. The NDFP also observes closely the economic, political and military interventions of the US and other imperialist powers in order to unite the people against these and to make them vigilant to the probable ultimate that the current civil war can turn into a war of national liberation in case of foreign aggression by US imperialism or any other imperialist power.

The NDFP promotes the organization of overseas Filipinos for the purpose of uniting and mobilizing them in support of the people's democratic revolution in their motherland. It carries out solidarity work along the anti-imperialist and democratic line by informing and encouraging foreign organizations and personages to support the Philippine revolution, cooperate with the organization of overseas Filipinos and develop partner relations with progressive or revolutionary organizations in the Philippines.

The NDFP engages in diplomatic and proto-diplomatic relations. It has relations with friendly governments which are anti-imperialist and progressive as well as with governments that have assisted in the holding of the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations abroad. The work of the NDFP in developing proto-diplomatic and diplomatic relations is aimed at immediately informing the international community about the Philippine situation and the Philippine revolution and gaining international support for the revolutionary movement.

Prospects of the Philippine Revolution

The US imperialists and their rabid puppets have long wanted to destroy the revolutionary movement in the Philippines, especially since the founding of the NPA under the leadership of the CPP in 1969. But the Filipino people, especially the toiling masses, have not only preserved their revolutionary forces but have made them stronger nationwide from decade to decade, frustrating the 14-year Marcos fascist dictatorship and every US-designed strategic campaign of military suppression unleashed by every puppet president, from Marcos to Duterte.

The CPP and the entire revolutionary movement have prevailed over the campaigns of suppression and mass deception by US imperialism and the local reactionaries as well as over the setbacks inflicted on the socialist cause and national liberation movement by modern revisionism and by the neoliberal policy, state terrorism and wars of aggression launched by the US and other imperialist powers. The most important and most decisive factor in the advance of the Philippine revolution from victory to victory is the self-reliant implementation of the correct line of people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

The chronic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system continues to worsen rapidly, inflict on the people extreme conditions of oppression and exploitation and goad the broad masses of the people to join or support the revolutionary movement. The recrudescence of the open rule of terror like that of the Marcos fascist dictatorship in the form of the tyranny and state terrorism of the Duterte regime proves the decadent and moribund character of the ruling system.

The Filipino people are confident of prevailing over all the campaigns of counterrevolution and advancing the new democratic revolution towards the goal of socialism. The revolutionary forces are further growing in strength on the basis of their long experience and accumulation of knowledge and skills in waging people's war. They are favored by the rapid worsening of the crisis of both the domestic ruling system and the world capitalist system. The latter is now characterised by the accelerated strategic decline of US imperialism and the sharpening contradictions among the imperialist powers, especially the US and China.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the restoration of capitalism in the former socialist countries due to revisionist betrayal has resulted in the addition of two major imperialist powers, Russia and China, to the traditional imperialist powers headed by US imperialism and has further led to the rapid worsening of the crisis of global capitalism and the sharpening of inter-imperialist contradictions. The US and China used to be close partners in propagating and implementing neoliberalism. Now, they have become bitter political rivals and economic competitors.

The continuing upsurge of anti-imperialist and democratic mass struggles on a global scale against neoliberalism, fascism and wars of aggression is the consequence of the worsening crisis of global capitalism, the intolerable conditions of oppression and exploitation and the increasing inability of the imperialist powers to stabilize their own system. The widening and intensifying anti-imperialist and democratic mass struggles are the prelude to the resurgence of the world proletarian revolution.

***On the Short-Term and Long-Term
Prospects of the Struggle for National
and Social Liberation October 2, 2021***

Dear colleagues and friends, I wish to thank the leading committee and member-organizations of the Philippine chapter of the International League of Peoples' Struggle for inviting me to be one of the speakers in the third part of the educational webinar series on the national democratic struggle in the Philippines. I agree with the declared objectives of the webinar series.

The first part on September 11 was on understanding the roots of the crisis of semicolonial and semifeudal Philippines and second part on September 25 was on imperialism in a multipolar world: where does the Philippines stand? Today, the third part is on the Filipino peoples' struggle for national and social liberation, development, and lasting peace.

I am assigned to discuss the short term and long-term prospects of the national and social liberation movement in the Philippines. I propose that two-thirds of my speech are on the prospects. But I shall use the first one-third of the speech to discuss the current conditions that favor the struggle for national and social liberation to lay the basis for the prognosis.

1. Current conditions that favor the struggle for national and social liberation

The persistent semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system, which is dominated by foreign monopoly capitalism and directly run by the comprador big bourgeoisie, the landlord class and the bureaucrat capitalists, is in ever worsening chronic crisis. The escalating conditions of exploitative and oppressive conditions drive the people to assert and fight for their national and democratic rights and interests.

Since the end of the Marcos fascist dictatorship, the revolutionary forces and people led by the Communist Party have been willing to engage in peace negotiations in order to confront the basic problems of the Filipino people, such as imperialism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, which are the roots of the civil war, and to work out comprehensive agreements on social, economic and political reforms as the basis for a just and lasting peace between the belligerent forces.

But under every post-Marcos regime, the ruling reactionaries followed the pattern of pretending to be for peace negotiations and eventually bowing to US imperialism and the pro-US reactionary armed forces as objectors to the further progress of the peace negotiations. The Ramos regime seemed to be truly interested in the peace negotiations because it agreed to The Hague Joint Declaration of 1992 as the basic framework of peace negotiations and several other major agreements but failed to sign the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, already initialled 1996 by the GRP and NDFP negotiating panels.

The worst of the post-Marcos regimes is the current one of Duterte after promising in the 2016 presidential elections that he would amnesty all political prisoners and negotiate a peace agreement. But in less than a year, it became evident that he was out to sabotage and terminate the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations in order to scapegoat the CPP and the NPA and use state terrorism in the style of Marcos to pursue his own ambition of fascist dictatorship.

He continued Aquino's Oplan Bayanihan until he adopted his own Oplan Kapayapaan in January 2017. On May 23, 2017, he included the CPP and NPA as targets of martial rule in Mindanao. On November 23, 2017 he terminated the peace negotiations, on December 5, 2017 he designated the CPP and NPA as "terrorist organizations". He launched focused military operations against the revolutionary forces and mass base in certain regions. And on December 4, 2018 he created the National Task Force-Elcac to red-tag social activists, peace advocates, human rights defenders and target them for abduction, torture and murder. He applied against them the same brutal methods applied in the bogus war on drugs.

Since then, the Duterte regime has increasingly manifested its character as traitorous, tyrannical, addicted to extrajudicial killings and obsessed with plunder. He has acted as the puppet to US imperialism in order to obtain advice and weapons for the armed counterrevolution as well to Chinese imperialism in order to sell out Philippine sovereign and maritime rights over the West Philippines Sea and to seek personal benefit from lopsided loan

agreements and from the smuggling out of mineral ores to China and smuggling in of illegal drugs, rice and other commodities and from gambling operations and human trafficking by Chinese criminal syndicates.

Under the brutal and corrupt Duterte regime, the semicolonial and semifeudal conditions have become far worse than ever before. The exploitation and oppression of the toiling masses of workers and peasants have escalated as never before. Unemployment, low incomes, destruction of livelihoods and mass poverty are rampant while inflation is raging. When Duterte became president in 2016, the public debt was Php 5.9 trillion incurred by all previous governments since 1902. Now, it is Php 11.16 and will be Php 13 trillion next year, more than double in one presidential term of six years.

Under the neoliberal policy, the regime has wasted limited resources and rising local and public debt through unbridled bureaucratic corruption and profligacy, military overspending at the expense of social services (education, health and so on), depressed production in agriculture and manufacturing in favor of the big compradors and their foreign principals, debt-fuelled and import-dependent consumption and rising debt burden due to huge budgetary and trade deficits. The debt bubble is unsustainable and about to burst.

The global crisis that began with the 2008 financial meltdown was, by end-2019, was again taking a steep fall when Covid-19 began to spread worldwide, pushing more than one-third of all countries to go into general lockdowns. These served to ensure what is widely perceived as the start of a Great Depression even worse than that of 1929 onward. The Philippines, being heavily dependent on the global capitalist system, is now drowning in a tsunami of collapsing international trade and supply chains, capital flows, and labor markets. By early 2020, the country began to feel the impacts of this global tsunami in terms of the sudden drying up of overseas jobs and tourist arrivals.

The chronic crisis of the ruling system was already rapidly worsening when the Covid-19 pandemic hit the country in early 2020 due to the regime's earlier decision in November 2019 to continue the influx of tourists, especially half a million Chinese tourists and casino players. Duterte has taken advantage of the pandemic by pressing Congress to give additional emergency powers to the executive, especially to his narrow militarist clique masquerading as an "inter-agency task force against emerging infectious diseases" (IATF-EID).

He then used these powers to short-circuit regular governmental processes, tightly control people's movements and other civil rights through lockdowns, realign already budgeted funds supposedly for mass testing, medical treatment and economic assistance to the people severely affected by the lockdowns, and then siphon massive amounts of funds in tens and hundreds of billions of pesos into his own pocket and those of his gang-mates by overpricing and faking purchases of supplies. This hijacking of public funds and loans surpasses any robbery done previously in the history of puppet presidents.

Duterte has also used the pandemic and the extreme lockdown restrictions to railroad the Anti-Terror Act of 2020 which is a license for state terrorism. This is a key move in his scheme to realize a fascist dictatorship. And the retired and active generals he has been corrupting and using to promote fascism and militarize the civilian departments and agencies of the reactionary government are happy to have a law of state terrorism in order to commit atrocities freely against the people and steal from them larger amounts of public money under such pretexts as Enhanced-Comprehensive Local Integration Program, Community Support Project and Barangay Development Program.

They have the notion that they can defeat the revolutionary movement of the people by blaming it for the underdevelopment, mass poverty, oppression and exploitation done by the imperialists and exploiting classes, by offering palliatives and false promises of development, by unleashing state terrorism and military and campaigns of suppression and by facilitating landgrabbing by bureaucrat capitalists and domestic and foreign owners of logging, mining and plantation companies. But the reactionary armed forces, police and paramilitary units are never enough to terrorize and control the 111 million Filipino people and the highly motivated revolutionary forces, especially the people's army that is still waging the people's war.

Duterte and his armed minions boast from month to month that they can totally destroy the revolutionary movement of the people by using these programs in combination with focused military operations. But in fact, they steal most of the funds by faking lists of NPA surrenders and death casualties, faking intelligence, psywar and combat operations and by faking community development projects. The open rule of terror, as previously exercised by Marcos from 1972 to 1986, failed to destroy the armed revolution and only succeeded in generating the conditions for its nationwide expansion, especially among the toiling masses of workers and peasants and the

intelligentsia. The Marcos path of state terrorism is the same path of failure that Duterte has taken.

There is no way that the Duterte regime can destroy the revolutionary movement. The rapidly worsening conditions of oppression and exploitation are driving the people to carry out various forms of struggle for national and social liberation in both cities and the countryside. The legal forms of mass struggles in the cities have been irrepressible. And the rural-based armed revolution is even far more difficult to suppress because the CPP and NPA are using the strategy and tactics of protracted people's war to carry out the people's democratic revolution.

In both cities and countryside, there is no way for the enemy to stop the time-tested processes of recruiting, training and deploying people as cadres and members of the CPP, NPA, the mass organizations, alliances and local organs of people's democratic power. The enemy will have to kill so many noncommunists before it can kill one communist. The indiscriminate abductions and murders being done by the enemy are futile and have succeeded only to goad the revolutionary forces to increase their ranks from the millions of oppressed and exploited masses.

Enemies and detractors of the people's democratic revolution led by the CPP have maliciously claimed that it is already a proven futile project by failing to seize political power in Manila during the last 52 years. We must recognize that the CPP has scored a great achievement in defeating so many campaigns to destroy it and has succeeded in building the CPP, NPA, revolutionary mass organizations, alliances and the local organs of political power constituting the people's democratic government on a nationwide scale in an archipelago, on a self-reliant basis and without the advantages of cross-border connection with any socialist bulwark, such as that the Chinese and Indochinese revolutionaries had during and after World War II.

II. Short-term prospects of struggle related to the 1992 presidential elections

We can be certain that the Duterte regime will not be able to destroy the armed revolutionary movement before the 2022 presidential elections. But it keeps on drumming up the psywar line that it will be able to do so before the end of 2021 or 2022 to try to deceive the people and persuade the US to support the continuance of Duterte's power through a stooge. We are certain that the social, economic and political crisis of the ruling system will deteriorate faster than ever before, will rouse the broad masses of the people and the organized forces of the national democratic movement and the conservative opposition to intensify mass protests and will isolate the Duterte regime.

The more notorious Duterte has become because of his grave crimes and the grave deterioration of the economy, he is touted as extremely popular by paid poll survey firms, most of local and Western bourgeois mass media and the Duterte, Marcos and related troll armies. This phenomenon is the result of the fear factor not only among the deprived and insecure masses but also among members of the exploiting classes who are protective of their interests and are afraid of Duterte's vindictiveness. But as in the time of Marcos from 1982 to 1986, the reality of the escalating conditions of oppression and exploitation and the rapid discredit and isolation of Duterte is increasingly crying out louder than the propaganda churned out by his regime and his agents.

Right now, Duterte ruling clique is the target of public outrage and mass struggles because of its betrayal of the people by personally profiting from relations with the Chinese state and criminal triads, the rampancy of illegal drugs under the dominance of the Duterte crime family, the unprecedented high proportions of plunder by Duterte, his business cronies and favorite generals before and during Covid-19, his notorious alliance with his predecessors in plunder (Marcos, Arroyo and others), widespread corruption among the high bureaucrats and military officials and the extrajudicial killings and other atrocities perpetrated in the bogus war on drugs and in the armed counterrevolution.

The Duterte policy and campaigns of state terrorism, characterized by abductions, torture and mass murders, takeover of civilian functions by the reactionary armed forces and widespread daily acts of systematic abuse against the masses in the guise of "strict enforcement of health protocols" are inflicting intolerable suffering on the people, driving them to join the various forms of resistance and impelling some of the people who have relatives in the reactionary military, police and paramilitary forces to turn against the Duterte ruling clique as the chief oppressor and exploiter of the people. Even among the armed minions of the Duterte regime, there is a system of favoritism, corruption and bullying at the expense of the lower officers and enlisted personnel.

There are manifestations of the structure of Duterte loyalists cracking up at a faster rate even if for a while Duterte tried to use his propaganda machinery to conjure the illusion that he is immune to the usual phenomenon of a sitting president becoming a lameduck in his last year and his blessing for his chosen successor is a kiss of

death. He rigged the 2019 mid-term elections to gain control of both houses of Congress and to strengthen his clique's hold on local governments.

But in the Senate some of his key apologists in the recent past are now active in exposing the extreme cases of corruption in which Duterte and his cronies are directly involved. Certain governors and mayors have also become bolder in their own assertions of local authority against the worst of Duterte's arbitrary impositions. Whether related or not to their own plans in the approaching 2022 elections, these are clear-cut signals to the electorate and the opposition that they have begun to be more vocal in their own anti-Duterte criticism and to distance themselves from his narrow clique.

It is a source of widespread speculation whether the current exposés in the Senate of Duterte's corruption and cronyism, the intensified campaign of religious leaders to denounce his crimes, the growing clamor among certain business groups against Duterte's extreme favoritism and arbitrary impositions amid the bankrupt economy and the decision of the International Criminal Court to investigate the extrajudicial killings in the bogus war on drugs are definite indications that major domestic and international forces which he used to ignore or make fun of are now determined to junk him as an intolerable liability to the entire ruling system.

Many people are still wondering why there are yet no clear signals from the US authorities that they cannot take the risk of letting Duterte continue his rule through his daughter or another stooge and allow China to acquire more advantages in the Philippines. And there is yet no sustained campaign by retired generals to expose Duterte's crimes and prepare the active disgruntled officers of the reactionary armed forces and police to express their rejection of a commander-in-chief who has betrayed their trust.

In contrast, China, the Chinese cronies directly around Duterte and the Chinese criminal triads in the business of casinos and smuggling continue to support Duterte for their own purposes. The biggest gains made by China under the Duterte regime include its successful building of artificial islands as military bases in the West Philippine Sea, control of its marine and mineral resources worth so many trillions of dollars, control of the national power grid, insertion of cell towers in AFP military camps and smuggling out of mineral ores from open pit mines all over the archipelago. China and Chinese private interests can easily put their money on the Duterte slate in the forthcoming 2022 elections.

In the meantime, the Duterte ruling clique appears to be confident of retaining US support if only because Duterte is still useful in the bloody counterrevolution. It still appears that he can continue to use to his advantage his incumbency as president, the bureaucracy and the military machinery, the relentless flow of his press releases to the corporate media and black propaganda campaigns of his troll army. And most important of all, with regard to the 2022 presidential elections, there is yet no visible counter to his complete control of the Comelec and TIM-Smartmatic. Not even a Namfrel-type of independent body with a mass-based network has arisen, with legal authority to mirror instantly the Comelec vote count from the precinct level upward.

The 1Sambayan has already taken the initiative to put forward the line that there must be one presidential candidate to challenge the candidate put up by the Duterte dynasty and thus facilitate the electoral victory of the opposition candidate (like Cory Aquino in 1986 against Marcos) and generate a mass uprising to topple the fake victory of the Duterte candidate. Indeed, if there would be three or more presidential candidates, it would be easier for the beneficiary of Duterte's rigging the 2022 presidential elections to claim that the opposition lost because it had split its votes.

It is widely presumed that that Duterte is confident of being able to rig the 2022 presidential elections and does not have to take the high risk of proclaiming a "revolutionary government", even though some of those who were his previous sycophants in Congress have become disgruntled or have been rejected by him. Nevertheless, all patriotic and democratic forces must be vigilant and be ready to fight any attempt of Duterte to impose a fascist dictatorship through the proclamation martial law nationwide and the use of the ATA to carry out mass arrests and mass murders.

According to sources close to Duterte, he retains the option of either rigging the 2022 presidential elections or proclaiming nationwide martial law in order to retain power and prevent his arrest either by order of the International Criminal Court for the extrajudicial killings in the bogus war on drugs, the Philippine courts for charges of corruption now being exposed in the Senate or the people's court of the people's revolutionary government for all the grave crimes that he has committed. He is uncertain whether he can escape to China or any country in order to avoid arrest.

The imminent possibility of a prolonged Covid-19 pandemic and failures in the mass vaccination strategy, a new financial meltdown, or major outbreaks of social unrest, have their own dynamic which could greatly impact the short-term political and socioeconomic conditions in the Philippines. This may include changed priority levels that the US and China (as two imperialist powers with major Philippine stakes) may give to the 2022 presidential elections.

In any case, the national democratic movement and the conservative opposition are obliged to form a broad united front against the Duterte ruling clique to denounce its gross and systematic crimes against the people and to prepare against the immediate prospect of Duterte's rigging of the 2022 presidential elections. Such a broad united front can allow the national democratic mass movement to continue calling for the ouster of the Duterte regime. The possibility of ouster can gain reality only when Duterte loses control of his own reactionary armed forces and police as Marcos did in 1986 and Estrada in 2001.

It is not an idle exercise in futility for the national democratic movement to keep on calling for the ouster of the Duterte regime. The call can help to intensify the people's hatred for the crimes of the Duterte regime and to step up the efforts of the broad popular movement to oust Duterte. Without such call, the possibility of ouster before or after the presidential elections is given up in advance. Such a call of the national democratic movement and the broad united front must result in large and sustained mass struggles of the workers, peasants, and other progressive sectors in their millions on a nationwide scale. It can also be inspiring to the people in their revolutionary armed struggle for national and social liberation.

In the coming years from 2022 to 2028, if it is necessary for the Filipino people and their revolutionary forces to wage the armed revolution, they will have excellent conditions and opportunities for bringing about the maturation of the advanced phase of the stage of strategic defensive in the people's war and the beginnings of the strategic stalemate in certain provinces and regions. We are assuming that despite current enemy campaigns of suppression the CPP and NPA will further excel at carrying out the strategy and tactics of guerrilla warfare on the basis of an ever growing and deepening mass base and that the crisis of both the domestic ruling system and the world capitalist system will continue to worsen.

III. Long-term prospects of the people's democratic revolution with socialist perspective

If the Duterte ruling clique continues to rule the people by rigging the 2022 presidential elections, the patriotic and democratic forces must arouse, organize and mobilize the people to rise up to topple the usurper of power in the same manner as Marcos was removed from power in 1986. If that were not immediately possible, then the people have to proceed to continue the struggle for some longer time, even if only to oust the fake president.

We must recall that the 1986 snap elections and people's uprising were preceded by more than two years of gigantic and sustained nationwide mass campaigns, united front developments, such as JAJA, CORD, NAJFD and the people's congresses (BAYAN and KOMPIL), and major street mobilizations with peak strength in the hundreds of thousands of participants in major cities, from the 1983 Aquino assassination onward.

The extension of the power of the Duterte ruling clique cannot last very long because Duterte has already bankrupted the economy and the reactionary government and the broad masses of the people cannot tolerate for a long while a ruling clique that is extremely detestable because of its crimes of treason, tyranny, mass murder, plunder and swindling. The longer such a clique remains in power, the faster will all forms of revolutionary struggle develop and advance against the entire ruling system

If an opposition presidential candidate wins, it is possible that he or she will stand or pose for a while as the patriotic and democratic opposite of Duterte and will probably offer the resumption of peace negotiations to the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. Such a new president has to come on top of the crisis that the Duterte ruling cliques has so extremely aggravated. And there is the need for the broadest possible national unity to address the roots of the armed conflict and achieve a just and lasting peace. In this case, the peace negotiations can be resumed by reaffirming all previous agreements and improving the safety and immunity guarantees for the negotiators, consultants, resource persons and staff of the two negotiating panels.

But it is also possible for the winning opposition candidate to accept the dictates of US imperialism and pro-US military officers to continue the campaign of Duterte to destroy the revolutionary movement or to pretend to engage in peace negotiations but only to seek the capitulation of the revolutionary movement. The Filipino people and the revolutionary forces must therefore be ready to continue the revolutionary armed struggle without any let-up. If there are peace negotiations but the reactionary government turns out to have no serious interest in

attaining a just peace, then the NDFP can disengage anytime from such a waste of time.

The recrudescence of the Marcos fascist dictatorship in the form of the Duterte state terrorism with worse forms of mass murder and corruption proves the moribund character of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system. There may be regimes that pose as bourgeois democratic, like the ones from Aquino the mother to Aquino the son, but they will continue to perpetuate the daily violence of exploitation and military campaigns of suppression against the toiling masses of workers and peasants and revolution. The compelling reasons for the revolutionary movement will continue.

The multiplication of guerrilla platoons and companies and increase of guerrilla fronts on a nationwide scale and the continuance of extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare will characterize the strategic defensive stage of the people's war from the middle phase to the maturation of the advanced phase. The platoons will continue to develop localized stalemates with the local police forces in many towns and the viability of organic companies in many guerrilla fronts in many provinces and regions will indicate the advance towards the stage of the strategic stalemate. The further advance from the strategic stalemate to the strategic offensive will be relatively fast but it is too early to dwell on it now in this webinar.

The enemy will continue to be unable to stop the expansion and consolidation of the CPP, the NPA, the revolutionary mass organizations, alliances and the local organs of democratic political power. The CPP will expand and consolidate its ranks in both cities and countryside. The NPA will develop its forces in the guerrilla fronts and expand towards the urban areas. The revolutionary mass organizations will expand and consolidate even faster than the CPP and NPA. The alliances will expand their constituents and influence. And the local organs of democratic power will multiply at the grass roots and will develop to higher levels of self-government.

The conditions for the people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war will become more favorable. Within the Philippines, the reactionary state will become more unable to control the various armed organizations of the Moro people and other national minorities whose continuing struggle shall benefit from the advance of the revolutionary forces led by the CPP. The latter will in turn benefit from the advance of the armed struggle of the national minorities.

The people's democratic revolution shall be basically completed upon the seizure of political power and the establishment of the people's democratic republic under the leadership of the CPP and the proletariat. This shall mark the start of the socialist revolution, with all the transitory measures. The national united front shall be maintained and further developed to ensure the fulfilment of the remaining tasks of the new democratic revolution and the success of socialist revolution and construction.

The commanding heights of the economy shall be socialized. Land reform shall be completed and agricultural cooperatives will advance from one level to a higher one. National industrialization shall be carried out by the socialist state and the patriotic sectors. A national, scientific and mass culture shall thrive. Foreign relations shall be based on independence, friendship, equality and cooperation and shall serve the purpose of development and peace against imperialism and all reaction.

The worsening crisis of the world capitalist system will aggravate the crisis of the domestic ruling system. And the advance of revolutionary movements and anti-imperialist and socialist states abroad will favor the advance of the Philippine revolution. At the same time, the Philippine revolution will contribute to the advance of the revolutionary movements and anti-imperialist and socialist states abroad.

It is of particular significance for those who are interested in the Philippine revolution's medium-term and long-term prospects to analyze and monitor more closely the frequent convulsions of the global capitalist crises, the worldwide resurgence of the anti-imperialist and democratic movements and the fast-worsening rivalries among the imperialist powers, especially between the US and China.

The Philippines and neighboring countries in Southeast Asia lie in a long "belt of flash points" in the worsening US-China rivalry, and every major tremor in this region may produce twists and turns in the country's socioeconomic and political situation, including possible realignments among the factions of the exploiting classes. Such developments will provide the Philippine national democratic movement with more opportunities for it to advance solidarity work and participate in a broad united front along the anti-imperialist and democratic line.

The international relations of the Philippine revolutionary movement adhere to the principle of proletarian internationalism among the communist and workers' parties, the international solidarity of peoples and the international united front of all anti-imperialist and democratic forces. In the course of the people's democratic

revolution, the revolutionary forces of the Filipino people develop mutual understanding and cooperation with corresponding forces abroad. Such relations shall develop further in the course of socialist revolution and construction.

Message to Bayan-USA on the Cyber Launch
of *The People's Democratic Revolution* October 9, 2021

Dear compatriots and friends, first of all, I wish to express my warmest greetings of solidarity to the sponsor and organizer of this event, BAYAN-USA; my co-speakers Prof. Pao Yuching and Renato Reyes, general secretary of BAYAN-Philippines; and to all of you who are participating in the launch of my book, *The People's Democratic Revolution*. I thank all of you for making this launch possible.

The book that is being presented to you today fittingly comes after the *Critique of the Philippine Economy and Politics* in the Sison Reader Series published by the International Network for Philippine Studies. It discusses the programmatic solution to the basic problems of foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism that afflict the Filipino people in a semi-colonial and and semifeudal society.

By reading the book, you can find out how the program of people's democratic revolution has been spelled out, propagated and carried out in the last 52 years in the Philippines in the context of the constant interests and policy shifts of US imperialism and the chain of puppet regimes representing the local exploiting classes of big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists.

The people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war has overcome so many campaigns of military suppression under the direction of US imperialism from the time of the Marcos fascist dictatorship through the pseudo-democratic regimes of Aquino, Ramos, Estrada, Arroyo and one more Aquino to the current Duterte tyrannical regime which has been trying hard to surpass the Marcos regime in acts of treason, in the use of state terrorism, mass murder and wanton corruption.

In trying to serve two conflicting imperialist powers, Duterte has put the Philippines in an extremely bad situation. He depends on the US for the military suppression of the Filipino people's revolutionary movement. At the same time, he has allowed China to build military bases on seven artificial islands in the West Philippine Sea. Then, he mixes up the China Telecom cell towers and US military facilities and personnel under the Visiting Forces Agreement and the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement in the same military camps of the reactionary armed forces.

Taking advantage of the Covid-19 pandemic, Duterte has caused hundreds of billions of pesos to be placed under his personal discretion and disposal in order to commit plunder in unprecedented volume and speed in the entire history of the Philippines. He and his cronies have the huge amounts of public money that are supposed to be for mass testing, medical supplies and economic assistance to the unemployed, He has further militarized the government and has railroaded the so-called Anti-Terror Act in order to legalize his brazen acts of state terrorism.

The people's democratic revolution has scored great achievements since 1968. The Communist Party of the Philippines has grown from a few scores of members to tens of thousands, the New People's Army from 9 automatic rifles in one provincial district to thousands on a nationwide scale, revolutionary mass organizations from tens of thousands of members to millions, the National Democratic Front of the Philippines from a few allied organizations in 1973 to the current eighteen and the local organs of political power constituting the people's democratic government in 74 out of the 81 provinces of the Philippines.

The reactionaries scoff at the fact that the people's democratic revolution has not yet taken over the presidential palace in Manila after five decades of revolutionary struggle. But a new democratic government has already arisen in the countryside. The great victories of the people's democratic revolution have been achieved in an archipelagic country, without cross-border advantages and in the context of major setbacks in the world proletarian revolution due to the revisionist betrayal of socialism and the rampages of neoliberalism, state terrorism and wars of aggression.

The chronic crisis of the ruling system in the Philippines is rapidly worsening and is generating far more favorable conditions for the revolution than ever before. Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, the crisis was already severe. But it is even more severe now. The Duterte regime has aggravated the bankruptcy and crisis of the system by siphoning huge amounts of resources to bureaucratic corruption and military overspending, masterminding the understated and even undocumented export of mineral ores and fruits and the smuggling in of prohibited drugs and all sorts of consumer products and allowing the accelerated outflow of superprofits and debt service

payments to foreign monopoly firms and banks.

When Duterte became president in 2016, the accumulated public debt of the Philippines was only Php 5.9 trillion. Now, it is Php 11.6 trillion and will be surely more than 13 trillion by 2022, more than double the debt in 2016. The budgetary and trade deficits are widening fast. And the sources of revenues and foreign exchange are decreasing. The global depression is decreasing the demand for cheap raw materials and cheap labor from the Philippines. And the resort to foreign loans cannot be the solution because there is a global plague of unsustainable public debts.

The reappearance of the open rule of terror under the Duterte regime is a clear manifestation of the decadent and moribund character of the ruling system. The regime has terminated the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations and vowed to destroy the revolutionary movement as well as the legal democratic movement for advocating full national independence, democracy, economic development through genuine land reform and national industrialization, a national scientific and mass culture and the international solidarity of peoples.

State terrorism is running wild in the Philippines. And the regime of terror and greed pretends to be anti-terrorist by equating the people's democratic revolution with terrorism. The campaigns of red-tagging, abductions, torture and mass murder directed against social activists, workers, peasants, women, youth, lawyers and other professionals, religious leaders and human rights defenders are sharpening the people's desire for revolutionary change and are compelling more and more of them to join the armed revolution as in the time of the Marcos fascist dictatorship.

Even then, the Duterte regime tries to deceive the people that he will conduct free and honest elections in 2022. But the people cannot be deceived. They know that Duterte has corrupted the reactionary armed forces and police and turned them into his criminal accomplices and that he controls the Commission on Elections and the TIM-Smartmatic partnership. He himself has confessed that he must do everything to keep his dynasty and ruling clique in power in order to avert his arrest on warrants of arrest issued by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity and by the Philippine courts on charges of plunder.

It is reasonable for the legal democratic forces to be in broad alliance with the conservative opposition in electoral struggle to expose and oppose the grave crimes of the Duterte regime, to counter its scheme for rigging the elections, to try to promote the election of patriotic and progressive candidates and to prepare the people for resistance against the actual rigging of the elections.

The Duterte regime offends the people and unwittingly favors the people's democratic revolution, whether he proceeds to hold and rig the presidential elections in 2022 or carry out false-flag operations to postpone the elections indefinitely in order to proclaim martial law nationwide and declare a pseudo-revolutionary government. The fluidity in the political situation pertains not only to the alignments and realignments in relation to the 2022 elections but also to the possibility that Duterte would undertake false flag operations or invoke the pandemic to postpone the elections in order to remain in power. The broad masses of the people and the revolutionary movement must be prepared against any criminal move of the Duterte regime.

The crisis of the world capitalist has been rapidly worsening since the financial meltdown of 2006-2008. All major contradictions in the world are intensifying, such as those between labor and capital, between the imperialist powers and the oppressed people's and nations, between the imperialist powers and the anti-imperialist states and among the imperialist powers themselves. The strategic decline of the US has accelerated. What used to be touted as the biggest partners in promoting the neoliberal policy of imperialist globalization, the US and China, have become the arch political rivals among the imperialist powers.

The rapid worsening crisis of the world capitalist system has resulted in the upsurges of anti-imperialist and democratic mass struggles all over the world, especially after the so-called Great Recession developed into the Great Depression of the entire world, from 2014 onwards. These mass struggles are prelude to the resurgence of the world proletarian revolution. Both the crisis of global capitalism and the resistance of the people of the world favor the advance of the people's democratic revolution in the Philippines.

The Filipino people must advance their own revolution not only to uphold, defend and promote their own national and democratic interests against the imperialists and the local reactionaries but also to contribute the most they can to advance the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat and peoples of the world for national independence, democracy and socialism. Even as millions of Filipinos are abroad, they are in a position to support the Philippine revolution as well as the revolutionary struggles abroad and carry forward the international solidarity of

the peoples of the world.

Thank you.

Let me discuss three kinds of viewpoints regarding the prospective 2022 presidential elections. These are the viewpoints of the revolutionary movement led by the Communist Party of the Philippines; the legal patriotic and democratic movement involved in the electoral struggle; and the competing conservative or reactionary parties and groups that wish to preserve the imperialist-dominated ruling system of big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists who can otherwise be called corrupt politicians.

1. The revolutionary movement adheres to a people's democratic constitution, builds its own system of government and elects its officials to organs of political power. It seeks to overthrow the ruling system which is run by the comprador big bourgeoisie and landlord class and their political agents who can be classified as bureaucrat capitalists who operate the conservative political parties or groups that coalesce and compete periodically in connection with elections, such as the prospective presidential elections in 2022.

The chronic socioeconomic and political crisis of the ruling system has worsened so much in the last 60 years. The reactionary decadent and moribund character of the ruling system is well exposed by the Marcos fascist dictatorship monopolizing political power from 1972 to 1986, followed by a series of pseudo-democratic regimes and resurrected from 2016 to 2022 in the form of the tyrannical rule or state terrorism of Duterte.

In common among all the reactionary regimes, including the fascist ones and the pseudo-democratic ones is antagonism to the struggle of the people's revolutionary movement for national independence, people's democracy, social justice, economic development through genuine land reform and national industrialization, expansion of social services, a national, scientific and mass-oriented culture and independent foreign policy.

By its nature and objective, the revolutionary movement seeks to overthrow the entire ruling system and establish the people's democratic state by carrying out the people's war. It is prohibited by the reactionary state from participation in the electoral exercises of the ruling system. And it does not participate in the 2022 presidential elections but it pays serious attention to these. It can comment on them for the edification of the people.

By all indications, the Duterte ruling clique will rig the 2022 presidential elections as in the 2019 mid-term elections because it controls the reactionary armed forces, the Comelec and the private company in charge of the electronic vote count and because the tyrant and proven cheat Duterte wants the election of a new president who will prevent his arrest upon the warrant of the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity or upon the warrant of the courts of his own government whose Senate is now exposing his grave crimes of corruption.

Despite the 1Sambayan's call for a united opposition against the Duterte regime, there is now a multiplicity of presidential opposition or independent candidates that present themselves as opposing or competing with the openly allied Duterte and Marcos groups. The authenticity of an opposition presidential candidate as opposition can be measured only by the substance and degree of opposing and condemning the crimes of the Duterte and Marcos regimes and presenting a program of government in opposition to treason, tyranny, mass murder and plunder.

The broad masses of the people should also be called upon to be vigilant and militant against the continuing possibility that Duterte would use either terrorist acts of his own making or the pandemic as pretext to declare a nationwide martial law or a presidential pseudo-revolutionary government, postpone the elections indefinitely and rule by decree as Marcos did in 1972. From sources close to Duterte, he has not yet dropped completely the option of doing away with the 2022 elections.

2. The legal patriotic and democratic forces and people that constitute the national democratic movement adhere to the 1987 Constitution of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines. They assert, defend and promote the national and democratic rights of the Filipino people and seek reforms along the national democratic line through various forms of legal activities and campaigns on a daily basis and through periodic electoral and other political exercises of the ruling system.

Their viewpoint in participating in the 2022 presidential elections is to help cause the election of a president, vice president, senators, members of the Lower House and local officials whom they can rely on and cooperate in advancing the just cause of full national independence, democracy, genuine land reform, national industrialization, social justice, expansion of social services, a patriotic, scientific and mass-oriented culture and

independent foreign policy.

The legal patriotic and democratic forces participate in the elections of the ruling system despite the overwhelming advantages of the exploiting classes of big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists in having accumulated political power and private wealth that enable them to prevail in electoral and other political exercises and impose on the people anti-national and anti-democratic policies.

So far, the forces of the national democratic movement like the Partido ng Bayan and Makabayan Bloc have been unable to field their own presidential candidate and they have not been able to elect any of the few senatorial candidates they have fielded since 1987 despite the superlative qualifications of these candidates. The reason is obvious. They do not have the money that imperialist, big comprador and landlord interests provide for nationwide campaigns and effective advertising in the corporate mass media.

They have been able to afford only the campaigns that party list groups can afford. And they have been able to elect a small number of candidates to the Lower House of Congress. These are a mere minority but have been outstanding in exposing the serious ills of the ruling system and the anti-national and anti-democratic policies and actions of those in power and in proposing reforms and pushing bills to oppose the oppression and exploitation of the people and ameliorate their dire conditions.

But the ultra-reactionaries of the ruling system cannot tolerate the party list groups in the Makabayan Bloc and wish to eliminate them by disqualifying them as “terrorist”, displacing them with fake party list groups masquerading as those of the marginalized and under-represented but actually organized and financed by the major reactionary parties or brazenly using the state terrorism under the so-called Anti-Terror Act in order to red-tag Makabayan Bloc party list groups, candidates and campaigners and subject them to harassment, abduction, torture and murder.

It is reasonable for the Makabayan Bloc to take the viewpoint of engaging in a broad united front against the ultra-reactionary or fascist alliance of the Duterte and Marcos dynasties, support only those genuine opposition parties, groups and candidates that also support the Makabayan Bloc. The mass following of this national democratic formation among the patriotic and progressive classes and sectors cannot be belittled. It runs in the millions if not cut down by electoral fraud.

The Makabayan Bloc can play an even bigger role than competing for a few seats in the electoral struggle in any of the following possible events: Duterte rigs the 2022 presidential elections and sustained mass protests are necessary or it postpones the elections indefinitely or he declares nationwide martial law, suppresses the anti-fascist mass movement and compels a great number of the members of anti-fascist parties, groups and activists to join the revolutionary underground and armed revolutionary movement in the countryside.

3. Political competition among the conservative or reactionary parties, groups and leaders is most intense before and during the presidential elections. This is the time in which the stakes are highest for the rival reactionary formations and leaders and for the financiers among the foreign capitalist interests, the big compradors and landlords. The electoral victory goes to the presidential candidate who excels at demagoguery and making false promises and gets the most campaign money from the aforesaid vested interests and from previous bureaucratic corruption.

But usually an incumbent president who apparently has the most ability to put together the biggest amount of campaign money cannot use it effectively in favor of his chosen successor because he stashes away a big part of the money and, more importantly, has for so long offended the people with his grievous crimes, unfulfilled promises and the much-worsened social conditions. It is not true that Duterte is an exception to the rule that an incumbent president becomes a lameduck within the last year of his term.

The so-called popularity of Duterte that has been built up by his own demagogic statements and behavior, his murderous tactics of mass intimidation in the bogus war on drugs and in the anti-communist counterrevolution, the traditional obeisance to authority and the huge amounts of money spent on the poll survey firms, troll armies, radio broadcasters and presstitutes of the corporate media and professionally anti-communist academic pedants and commentators, has become ineffective. Duterte himself has admitted that his own bid for the vice presidency has been rejected by the majority of the people in secret polls that he has commissioned.

He is now increasingly beset by complaints of retired and active officers of the reactionary armed forces who are outraged by his traitorous sell out to China of Philippine sovereign and maritime rights in the West Philippine Sea, the series of actions now being undertaken to investigate him for crimes within the jurisdiction of the

International Criminal Court, the exposé of his colossal crimes of corruption in Senate hearings, the fragmentation of his previous political loyalists and following and complaints that he has put away too much money abroad in his secret private accounts without providing for his candidates in the 2022 elections.

The broad masses of the people are wary about Duterte's obvious attempt to confuse them. After the criticism that the Sara-Rodrigo tandem was too greedy, Duterte has been dishing up the possibility of being vice-presidential candidate to his valet Bong Go, then his fellow crook Bongbong Marcos and most recently to his top butcher Bato de la Rosa. There are also former allies of his who claim that they are running for president independently but who are widely suspected as his agents for splitting the opposition. Indeed, it will help Duterte to rig the 2022 elections if he will be able to cite the multiplicity of presidential candidates as cause for the defeat of the opposition.

The 1Sambayan has chosen the incumbent vice president Leni Robredo as presidential candidate and Senator Francis Pangilinan as vice presidential candidate. They have no record of loyalty to or alliance with Duterte and have the most credibility as opposition candidates. Even then, there is enough time for the presidential and vice presidential candidates who have recently distanced themselves from Duterte to prove their opposition credentials by hitting him hard for his grave crimes of treason, tyranny, mass murder and plunder and by presenting their own program of government in opposition to the rotten record of Duterte.

Makabayan Bloc is expected to engage in mutual support and cooperation with the best possible allies from the conservative formations that hit hardest the Duterte regime and that put forward a program of government which is opposed to the anti-national and anti-democratic record of Duterte and which approaches or concurs with the national and democratic program of the Makabayan Bloc on as many points as possible. It is essential and desirable that the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations will be resumed in order to negotiate and make comprehensive agreements on social, economic and political reforms as the foundation of a just and lasting peace.

The broad masses of the people, the legal patriotic and democratic forces and the armed revolutionary movement will certainly welcome the promise of any presidential candidate to let the GRP resume the peace negotiations and make the comprehensive agreements with the NDF to lay the basis for a just and lasting peace. But so long as the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system persists, no elected president from any of the conservative or reactionary parties can be trusted without the accomplishment of the required agreements. Until then, the Filipino people have all the reason to continue their new democratic revolution through protracted people's war.

On the Limitations of the Reactionary Elections

Questions from Paaralang Jose Maria Sison, November 16, 2021

1. Despite the many limitations of reactionary elections against progressive forces and advance masses, why should we take advantage of the democratic space no matter how small this is?

JMS: If we follow the desire of Duterte, the military, NTF-Elcac and Anti-Terrorism Council, the progressive forces and advance masses will lose whatever space there is. But they cannot just do what they want against the democratic rights and capability of the progressive forces, advance masses and their sympathizers who advocate democratic rights.

To date, the desire of the fascists to disenfranchise the whole Makabayan Bloc and its partylist group from the 2022 elections through red-tagging and petitions with the Comelec has remained unfulfilled. The capacity of the Makabayan Bloc in the field of legal struggle cannot be minimized even if this Bloc is harassed by the fascists and the partylist system is being made a mockery and sullied by the dynasties and reactionaries.

It is not right that the progressives and the advanced masses just let go of the legal struggle including electoral struggle. They must fight to expose the anti-people and anti-democratic character of the reactionaries and fascists. They should not surrender whatever space they have gained from their legal struggle, including electoral. In fact, they must strive to establish a systematic legal party that is active, not only during several months in every three years, but daily.

2. Aside from fielding senatorial or partylist candidates, is there anything else the progressives can do to widen this democratic space?

JMS: Since the fall of the Marcos dictatorship, the habit of the traditional politicians to switch parties and insert themselves within the party or alliance under the new president has become pronounced. And every election, different groups emerge representing themselves as opposition party once the president and his/her ruling party or alliance stink.

Because many parties compete every election, a big minority vote can elect the president like Ramos, Estrada, Arroyo, Noynoy Aquino and Duterte. For the 2022 elections, major parties and presidential candidates on the side of the opposition, including that of the ruling party, are just improvised.

In the face of such confusion among the reactionaries, the advanced masses can dare establish a progressive electoral party, prepare its own congress and program and choose a complete slate of candidates for all the positions at stake. Unfortunately, this could not be done by the national democratic movement for the 2022 elections because no preparations were made during the past three years.

Perhaps, this is possible for the coming 2025 and 2028 elections, unless in the coming years there will be a fascist dictatorship that will arrest and kill the opposition and force them to go underground and launch revolution similar to the period of the Marcos dictatorship. If this happens, it is better for them to join or stand with the Communist Party of the Philippines and participate in armed revolution.

3. What can we say is the “correct political bearing” that the legal, progressive and democratic forces should maintain during the conduct of the 2022 elections? How to avoid swinging “Left” or “Right”?

JMS: The most striking problem is that the two senatorial candidates and partylist groups of the Makabayan Bloc are just “saling pusa” (token candidates) despite the fact that BAYAN and the legal national democratic movement are far more gigantic compared with the Liberal Party, Akbayan, Magdalo and improvised groups of Manny Pacquiao, Isko Moreno and others. Part of the problem is the lack of a national democratic party especially created as the machinery for elections.

It is correct that the Makabayan Bloc accepted the invitation of 1Sambayan to have a representative. But when candidates for president, vice president and senators were being chosen, it became clear that the Pink Party or Alliance was the result of 1Sambayan and at its base was the Liberal Party plus Akbayan, Magdalo and other groups. They refused the inclusion of Neri Colmenares in its senatorial slate. It appears that the Pink Party and Leni were swayed by the red-tagging even as they want to profit from the anti-Marcos and anti-Duterte line and the following of the national democratic movement.

Nevertheless, it is good that Leni is open to studying the program of the Makabayan Bloc to see what points she agrees with. It is also good that last November 9 Leni stated her pledge to dissolve the NTF-Elcac and that she wants a favorable situation for the continuation of peace negotiations between the GRP and NDFP. Leni has an

advantage of being the longest opposition among the presidential candidates and had the initiative to agree with a number of important points in the program of the Makabayan Bloc.

It is good that the Makabayan Bloc has its own national democratic program, has an anti-Duterte and anti-Marcos stand and encourages the candidates of several parties to agree to most of the points of the national democratic program if they are to be voted by the advance masses of the Makabayan Bloc. These are the standards and measures of how patriotic and progressive the candidates are. If they agree to the program of the Makabayan Bloc they will attract the votes of the supporters of the Makabayan Bloc.

“Left” is the belief that the candidates of the Makabayan Bloc, even with no funds for TV and radio ads, can win if there are less candidates and prominently featured in Facebook. “Right” is to suck up to any presidential candidate without consideration to his/her points of agreement with the Makabayan Bloc program. There should be respect for the Makabayan Bloc because it has the correct program, and the national democratic movement has far bigger following than the bloc or command vote of the Iglesia ni Kristo, and more effective in offensive propaganda and in carrying issues.

It is true that the refusal of Leni Robredo to include Neri in the senatorial slate of the Pink Party is comparable to what Cory Aquino did in November 1985 when she distanced herself from BAYAN on electoral matters because she was told to do so by the US even though there was strong cooperation between BAYAN and the yellow forces during mass protest actions since Marcos killed Ninoy Aquino in 1983. Nevertheless, because of the cheating of Marcos, the EDSA uprising, the surrounding of Malacanang Palace and downfall of Marcos, happened. In the face of Duterte definitely cheating in the 2022 elections, the anti-Marcos and anti-Duterte line is important to fight the continuing rule of the fascists and plunderers.

4. In your view, is it possible to establish a broad united front against Marcos-Duterte if the opposition is not united due to the many presidentiables and there are militarist and anti-progressive elements that are boxing out the Makabayan Bloc?

JMS: A broad united front against Marcos and Duterte is still possible even if there are three or four major presidential candidates stating that they are opposition or independent from Duterte. The candidate that hits the Duterte regime and the Marcos-Duterte tandem the hardest will be believable as the genuine leader of the legal opposition.

Based on the present situation, Leni Robredo is the front runner as being a credible opposition candidate. Thus, she will emerge as the credible winner against the cheating of Duterte, while Duterte will say his candidate won because the opposition was split.

But whoever will sit as president or whatever happens after the 2022 elections, the crisis in the Philippines will continue to worsen and there will be chaos in the Philippines due to all the crimes of Duterte such as treason, tyranny, murder, plunder, squander of military funds and acquiring too much debt. The people’s democratic revolution will strengthen whether Duterte imposes what he wants upon the people or not.

If Duterte succeeds in cheating and the Marcos-Duterte or Duterte-Marcos rises to power, fascism or state terrorism will surely continue. If Leni wins, the US will still do what it can to dictate upon Leni to continue the armed counterrevolution similar to what Cory Aquino did when she became president. We should have no illusion that imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism will disappear through elections.

5. In your opinion, what should be the proper dynamics and relation between the progressive party lists and the national democratic mass organizations during the 2022 elections?

JMS: The Makabayan Bloc and the NDMOs should help one another in spreading the national democratic program, hitting the Dutertes and Marcoses as enemies and supporting one list of patriotic and progressive senatorial candidates. It is up to the presidential candidates to prove who is the closest to the program of the Makabayan Bloc.

Based on the strength of the Makabayan Bloc and the NDMOs, the Makabayan Bloc could select progressive candidates on the municipal, district and provincial levels. In my view, the Makabayan Bloc will establish alliances with local candidates with a good record and stature. They should also prepare for the establishment of a solid legal party that is national democratic in nature for 2025 and 2028.

6. What key issues should the progressives firmly hold on to during this coming 2022 and why?

JMS: Duterte and his cohorts must be held accountable for the crimes of treason, tyranny, murder, plunder and swindle. The use of the next regime by Duterte to exonerate himself from his responsibility for his crimes

must be frustrated. Duterte and his collaborators must be punished for their crimes, they should return to the people what they have plundered and victims of human rights violations must be compensated. The Anti-Terror Act must be repealed and the National Task Force-Elcac and Anti-Terrorism Council dissolved. Political prisoners must be amnestied and released and compensation must be given to the victims of Duterte's tyranny and terrorism.

The Philippines should have full national independence from imperialists, democracy for the toiling masses, economic development through genuine land reform and national industrialization, social justice, support for those who lost their jobs and employment due to the pandemic and constriction of the economy, expansion of social services (education, health and housing), advance of national and scientific system of culture and education, self-determination and upliftment of national minorities and independent foreign policy for peace and development of all peoples of the world.

Peace negotiations between the GRP and the NDFP must be resumed based on agreements forged in accordance with The Hague Joint Declaration. Strengthen the protection of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees for the negotiators, consultants, resource persons and staff against surveillance, kidnapping and murder perpetrated by the Duterte regime. In relation to this, localized peace talks under the control and surveillance of the enemy are not allowed. Fast track the negotiations and the forging of agreements on basic social, economic and political reforms.

7. What do you think should be the political gains of the progressives from the 2022 elections whether their senatorial candidates win or lose?

JMS: The national democratic program will be widely spread, the dynasties and Marcos-Duterte gang will further be condemned and isolated, more people will be mobilized and will learn how to establish a legal patriotic and progressive party that will not only be a token party. If the Dutertes and Marcoses continue to be in power due to cheating, they will surely heighten fascism or state terrorism to suppress the Filipino people. This then will result in massive mass uprisings and strengthening of the armed revolution.

8. It has been quite a long time since there was an anti-imperialist, patriotic and democrat such as Claro Mayo Recto, Lorenzo Tanada and Jose W. Diokno in the senate? What do you think is the factor for this?

JMS: There is a general decay of the ruling system and the nature of the reactionary parties. Under this situation, an anti-imperialist and democratic leader should stand out. But no patriotic and progressive party was able to establish a machinery for elections and daily legal struggles. Those who are like the types of Claro Mayo Recto, Tanada and Jose W. Diokno are Neri Colmenares, Chel Diokno, Erin Tanada and other former Otso Diretsos. But they were cheated in 2019. And it is likely that the cheating will be repeated in 2022.

9. In a post-2022 elections scenario, what must the progressives do if the winners are (a) from the opposition or (b) Marcos-Duterte tandem?

JMS: If the opposition wins and Duterte cannot stop a president from the opposition from taking office, push for the resumption of the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations and undertake reforms. But be vigilant because the US will do everything it can to have a hold and dictate upon the new president. We must learn from the experience when Cory Aquino obeyed the dictates of the US when she became president after the ouster of Marcos. If the Marcos-Duterte tandem wins, the civil war will surely continue and the condition for revolution will be more favorable.

10. In your opinion, what lessons did the progressives learn from a few progressives and pro-environment personalities temporary holding positions in the Duterte cabinet? If such positions are offered once again by the next winning president, what should the attitude of the progressives be towards such offers?

JMS: In 2016, Duterte's claim that he was Left and socialist, and wanted to have peace, was a mere ploy. But his monstrosity fully manifested after a year and a half. He wanted to make it appear that the three or four progressives he appointed to his cabinet were representatives of the CPP and that the CPP has surrendered to his regime. But I immediately told Duterte that they were appointed as patriotic individuals with high capability and diligence.

It is unclear if in 2022, there will be a president who would offer cabinet post to someone patriotic and progressive. If that happens, they should be appointed based on their individual merit as a patriot, capable and diligent and not as representative of the CPP nor the NDFP. They will not last long in the cabinet if they are called representatives of the CPP or NDFP.

11. What would be the effect on the alliance with the anti-Dutertes, many of whom are pro-Leni if, for example, the

national democratic movement chooses a different candidate (based on being anti-Duterte/Marcos, an open platform favorable to the people, including resumption of the peace talks)?

JMS: It is good if there is a presidential candidate who is anti-Duterte and anti-Marcos, and his/her open platform, which includes the resumption of the peace talks, is favorable to the people. Whether he/she is chosen by the Makabayan Bloc as its presidential candidate or not, the united front against Duterte and Marcos shall continue to exist.

It is likely that the strongest opposition party will win in 2022, but it is also more likely that Duterte will cheat. It is very easy to cheat with the electronic “dagdag-bawas” (add-subtract), especially when there is multiplicity of presidential candidates. During the 1986 elections, there was a boycott policy simultaneous with Cory Aquino distancing from the Left. But in the end, when she was cheated by Marcos, everyone united and mobilized to oust Marcos.

12. What do you think of the tactics of Laban ng Masa to field a presidential candidate?

JMS: They are daring. But it is difficult to hope that their candidates for president and vice president will win due to the lack of machinery and funds. The national democratic movement is far stronger if it had used the past three years to prepare for the 2022 elections and tried more or less to have a complete slate of national and local candidates, and ready to forge alliances with different parties that have a patriotic and progressive program.

Dear fellow activists in BAYAN Metro Manila, I am grateful for your invitation to give a message at your gathering on the theme of rising and advancing in the face of the worsening crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system and intensifying oppression and exploitation. I will try to provide knowledge, lessons and combat duties that must be performed in the immediate and long-term to rise and rise from the vile rule of the Duterte regime in Metro Manila.

The re-emergence of the overt reign of terror in the Marcos era during the Duterte era is a sign that the ruling system of oppression and exploitation has not disappeared even after the overthrow of the Marcos fascist dictatorship in 1986. US imperialism and domination continue. of the local reactionary classes of big bourgeois compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists.

State terrorism under Marcos and under Duterte is the same. Its re-emergence under Duterte is the result of the continuing decay of the ruling system. Even in the regimes from mother Cory Aquino to son Noynoy, the exploitation and oppression of the toiling masses continued to worsen and military campaigns were launched to suppress the legal patriotic and democratic forces and the armed forces of the people's democratic revolution.

Marcos failed in his scheme to crush the revolutionary movement through 14 years of fascist dictatorship. He only aggravated the crisis and further strengthened the revolutionary movement. Duterte will be even more disappointed by his boast that he will crush the revolutionary movement before the end of his term. The revolutionary movement will grow stronger because Duterte has further corrupted the ruling system due to his treacherous, mass murdering , plundering and swindling regime.

He has bankrupted the economy and his own government through relentless thievery, militarization, destruction of local production and over-dependence on the export of cheap raw materials and cheap labor power and on rapid borrowing. He took advantage of the pandemic to further accelerate plunder, intensify state terrorism and borrowing. The Filipino masses are now experiencing widespread unemployment, low incomes, poverty and rising prices of food and other basic needs.

If the 2022 elections are clean, the tandem of Bongbong Marcos and Sara Duterte and other Duterte candidates will surely be defeated. But Duterte controls the Comelec and the agency for the electronic vote count. He will surely cheat because he does not want to be arrested to be brought before the International Criminal Court in connection with his crimes in the murder of alleged drug addicts and illegal drug dealers. He is also afraid of being brought before the Philippine courts in connection with his crimes of plunder and murder of mass activists, critics and human rights defenders and advocates of just peace.

The Filipino people must frustrate the bogus election of the Marcos-Duterte tandem. Should this rise to power, Ferdinand Marcos Sr.'s and Duterte's treachery, terrorism and plunder of the nation's wealth at the highest levels of the ruling system would continue. The Filipino people must overthrow the monsters Marcos and Duterte in the quickest way as they overthrew Marcos in 1986 or in any necessary longer period. The role of BAYAN Metro Manila is key and decisive in preparing and carrying out a national mass uprising to overthrow these monsters. The regions always look to the course of events in Metro Manila as the center of the country.

To carry out its fighting tasks, BAYAN-Metro Manila must always grasp the national and global situation and issues in the framework of the program of the national and democratic movement. It must always strengthen and expand its organization through meetings and courses of study regarding the issues. This should be done in factories, communities, schools and other institutions. It is also a good idea to have publications and webinars to discuss important topics and issues. You have a wide reach.

We must launch campaigns and activities to mobilize the masses, promote correct policies on issues and fight the wrong policies of those in power and any narrow interest. Protest actions against policies of oppression and exploitation are important. Use information and education campaigns for comprehensive propaganda and for solid organizing. BAYAN Metro organizations must be strengthened so that they can trigger giant mass actions.

Strengthen the united front to reach the millions of masses and increase the number of activists who will join the organizations of BAYAN Metro Manila as well as BAYAN National. Even though you are committed to the legal patriotic and democratic movement in Metro Manila, your advance helps the people's forces on a national scale

as their advance also helps you. You must also increase the influence of BAYAN Metro Manila to reach out to your compatriots abroad and their foreign allies in the anti-imperialist and democratic struggle.

- Long live BAYAN Metro Manila!
- Advance the national democratic movement!
- Long live the BAYAN and the Filipino people!

Thank you for being with us today, Joma—Professor Sison,

At *New Naratif*, we cover democracy movements in Southeast Asia, and after hearing your interview on *Guerilla History*, which is another podcast I enjoy, I thought our readers would benefit from learning more about your movement and your interpretation of democracy.

And I wanted to start off with a bit of personal family history to let you know how I first learned of the communist movement in the Philippines: My great-great-grandfather was born into slavery in Mississippi and was emancipated as a young boy, and went to the Philippines during the Spanish American War, during the conquest of the Philippines, as a US Army medic. He stayed in the Philippines after the war and settled in Laguna, where my family is from. We have a story about his son, my great-grandfather, being abducted by “communists”, who I presume were Huks, and he held for one night, until a neighbour vouched for him, saying he was a “neutral guy”, and the communists released him, but they took away all his clothes, and he came back in his underwear.

My grandfather also says he remembers hearing gunshots at night and keeping the lights off to avoid the fighting. He says the bodies of slain communists were displayed in San Pablo City, and “their bodies were torn up by bullets”.

So all my life, I've learned about communists in the Philippines from people who grew up in fear of them, but in recent years, after living in Myanmar, Cambodia and Thailand and working as a journalist at *New Naratif*, I've developed an appreciation for the achievements of the Communist Party of the Philippines and for the National Democracy movement.

So my first question is: What would you say to a working-class Filipino who grew up in fear of communist insurgents?

JMS: In my personal experience, I met in the late 1950s and 1960s many good communists who were workers and peasants who had participated in the Huk rebellion in Santa Cruz, San Pablo City and other towns of Laguna.

In answer to your first question, I state that my first task is to learn from the Filipino worker that you have cited why he has a fear of communist revolutionaries. Most likely, he would refer to certain personal conditions and experiences how his fear arose. He might not even mention the constant anti-communist campaign generated by the the US and the current ruling system in the Philippines as a major cause of his anti-communist fear.

Then I would try to understand and analyse the concrete circumstances and the fear. Further, I would explain to him why he feels beholden to his capitalist employer. I would certainly explain in simple terms how he is exploited, how surplus value is extracted from the total value that he creates with his labor power. If you were to do mass work among the exploited people, you would discover that they are often grateful to be employed by their exploiters and thereafter become preoccupied with hard work to earn a living.

It takes a communist or a revolutionary mass activist to make the social investigation first in order to be able to explain class exploitation to an exploited class in easily understood terms. It took a Rizal to dispel the false illusions of the colonised indios that Spanish colonialism was a divinely-ordained paradise as the Spanish friars had preached. The moment you can explain how exploitation is carried out, the exploited masses begin to understand their plight and dislike their exploiters.

What is National Democracy, and how does it differ from the Philippines' current form of government?

JMS: National democracy means a social and political system with full national independence from imperialist powers and real democracy for the people, especially for the toiling masses of workers and peasants. The current Government of the Republic of the Philippines is dominated by US imperialism and other foreign powers through unequal treaties, agreements and arrangements, and is run by the local exploiting classes of the comprador big bourgeoisie, the landlord class and the bureaucrat capitalists.

The CPP's mass base has fluctuated widely over the years. Why is that? How would you characterise the mass base today?

JMS: The current mass base of the CPP runs into millions today. It is several times bigger than the 3.5–7 million voters estimated by bourgeois politicians as the voting potential of the CPP mass base. The actual mass base is a far cry from the 1968–69 mass base of the CPP, which included 30,000 workers, 80,000 peasants, mainly from Tarlac, and 20,000 youth. From 1968 to the current year, there have been fluctuations or even zigzags in the growth of the CPP mass base. But the general course is growth and advance.

It is impossible to have a straight line of advance from year to year due to the tremendous odds and the active efforts of the reactionaries to suppress the revolutionary movement. But the ever-worsening crisis of the ruling system and escalating conditions of oppression and exploitation favor the continuity and advance of the revolutionary forces. The mass base of the CPP includes its own local branches, the revolutionary mass organisations of workers, peasants, youth, women and so on, the local units of the people's army, militia and self-defense units and the local organs of political power.

Can you describe the material conditions in the Philippines that make Marxism–Leninism–Mao Zedong Thought the most appropriate approach to socialist revolution there?

JMS: The political and socioeconomic conditions of the Philippines are semicolonial and semifeudal. They require a new national democratic revolution under the class leadership of the working class in consonance with the era of modern imperialism and the world proletarian revolution. Thus, Marxism–Leninism–Mao Zedong Thought is the correct and most appropriate guide and approach to the current state of people's democratic revolution as well as to the consequent stage of socialist revolution.

You continue to weigh in on Philippine electoral politics and have expressed support for Bayan Muna candidates. Do you believe there is a parliamentary road to socialism?

JMS: I take the revolutionary viewpoint with regard to Philippine electoral politics under the current ruling system. The electoral process is controlled and manipulated by the local exploiting classes of big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists, with decisive and often covert intervention by imperialist powers—currently the US and China are most active behind the scenes. It is only with regard to the legal united front—distinct from the united front for armed struggle—that I would be encouraging parties and candidates of the toiling masses, middle forces and anti-fascist reactionaries to expose and oppose the Marcos-Duterte alliance. This is in the revolutionary context of trying to isolate, weaken and destroy the current enemy, which is the Duterte regime.

So far, only a few patriotic and progressive candidates have been elected through the party list system but even this has been hijacked by the reactionary political dynasties. At the current price, you need 450 million pesos for TV and radio ads to have a chance of being elected as senator on the false premise that Duterte would not rig the 2022 elections. There is no parliamentary road to socialism in the Philippines. Socialism is impossible here without the basic completion of the people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war. You cannot leap to socialism while US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism persist and a traitorous, tyrannical, mass murdering, plundering and swindling regime is ruling the Philippines.

There are two vanguard parties—two communist parties—governing countries in Southeast Asia today, in Vietnam and Laos. Neither appear to be successfully transitioning from socialism to communism. If the CPP were to establish a dictatorship of the proletariat, how would you learn from those cases in order to complete the transition to a classless society?

JMS: Lenin pointed out that it would take a whole historical epoch to build socialism and transition to communism after the overthrow of the state of the bourgeoisie. And in the experience of the Soviet Union, the socialist revolution and construction carried out by Stalin became subject to attack by the modern revisionism and capitalist restoration started by Khrushchev in 1956. Mao pointed out that classes and class struggle continued in socialist society, and the danger of modern revisionism and capitalist restoration persisted. After only five years of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the capitalist roaders regained ground in China and would be able to overthrow the proletariat in October 1976.

I presume that the ruling communist parties in Vietnam and Laos have been heavily influenced by the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and later on in China, especially in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The collaboration of China with the US in promoting the neoliberal policy of imperialist globalisation in four decades has had a heavy impact on Indochina. Now, after the decoupling of the US and China, these two imperialist powers are competing with each other to become dominant in Indochina.

The CPP has already learned a lot of lessons from the revolutionary experience as well as from the setbacks of the working class and the socialist cause due to modern revisionism and capitalist restoration in former socialist countries, which took some decades coincident with the imperialist policies of anti-communism, neocolonialism, neoliberalism, neofascism and wars of aggression. But the need and hope for the resurgence of the world proletarian revolution and the socialist cause are becoming more and more obvious as the addition of Russia and China to the ranks of imperialist powers has only served to intensify all major contradictions in the world capitalist

system.

You spent time in Indonesia in the 1960s. How did the Communist Party of Indonesia and its demise influence your political development?

JMS: I learned that if the Communist Party does not build a people's army together with a rural mass base that party would be vulnerable to mass slaughter by the reactionary army anytime. It is not enough to develop a strong legal united front like NASAKOM and depend on the open electoral struggle and recruiting members of the PKI and mass organisations for legal struggles. I agree with the 1966 Self-Criticism of the PKI Politburo which concluded that the Indonesian revolution could not be successfully undertaken without the coordinated building of the Communist Party, the people's army and the national united front. The lack of a people's army led the PKI away from the Chinese road of revolution and from the dictum of Comrade Mao that without a people's army, the people have nothing.

There are many socialists today who disavow Marxism-Leninism because of its proponents' tendency to carry out deadly purges. Mass graves and testimonies by former NPA members indicate that the CPP is no exception. Is this a blemish on the CPP's record?

JMS: In the case of the CPP under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism, it was the handful of anti-Marxist and anti-Leninist renegades who were responsible for the deadly witch hunts from 1985 to 1991. After carrying out timely rectification movements from one region to another, the CPP undertook the Second Great Rectification Movement (SGRM) nationwide as an educational movement from 1992 to 1996 to identify the subjective errors that led principally to "Left" opportunist errors, and secondarily to Right opportunist errors, and to expose thoroughly how the "Left" opportunists committed self-defeating errors like military adventurism and building too many unsustainable companies at the expense of mass work and then launching campaigns like Kampanyang Ahos to generate hysteria and blame "deep penetration agents" for military setbacks and drastic reduction of the mass base.

The SGRM, or Second Great Rectification Movement, was successful in ideological, political and organisational terms. Marxist-Leninist principles were upheld and propagated at every level of the CPP and the NPA. The correct principles and methods of investigation, evaluation of evidence, prosecution and trial of suspects were taught to everyone by the CPP. The CPP made sure that the errors were understood and rectified. The NPA was retrained and redeployed for guerrilla warfare and mass work. From year to year, the mass base that had been lost due to "Left" opportunism were recovered and expanded. Recruitment of mass activists and CPP members expanded rapidly. Without the SGRM, the CPP would have disintegrated and would not have lasted this long. But because of the SGRM, the CPP and the entire people's democratic revolution have been advancing and winning significant victories until now.

Leftist politicians in the Philippines today seem to have more to gain by denouncing the CPP than by supporting it. How can you fix that?

JMS: So-called Leftist politicians, including renegades and dropouts from the revolutionary organisations and from the legal national democratic movement are so few in comparison to those tens of thousands of CPP members and millions of people who persevere in the struggle. Indeed, the few rascals gain more for themselves privately by denouncing the CPP and then collaborating with the authorities of the reactionary government and taking employment in the bureaucracy or even in the intelligence services. There will always be a few careerists and speculators joining any part of the revolutionary movement for a while. The solution to this problematic phenomenon is to be alert and be discerning, keep up the educational work to raise revolutionary morale and ensure the recruitment and training of revolutionaries who are unquestionably dedicated to the revolution.

There have been several widely publicised instances of prominent Philippine revolutionaries becoming counter-revolutionaries. How do you interpret this phenomenon?

JMS: Life in the revolutionary movement is a life of difficult and risky struggle against tremendous odds. That is a well-known fact. Those who join the revolutionary movement know the difficulties and risks to limb, life and liberty and are commendable for rising up to the challenges. But when captured by the enemy, some revolutionaries can weaken in revolutionary spirit and become vulnerable to offers of an easy way out of prison. There can be offers of jobs and other material rewards in exchange for denouncing the revolutionary movement. Remember that in so short a time after his capture in Palanan, Aguinaldo agreed with the US imperialists to issue a peace manifesto and call for the surrender of all revolutionaries.

You seek to transform the Philippines' semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system. Walden Bello (whom I previously worked for and has put me on a path toward radical politics) seeks to combat US imperialism and corporate-driven globalisation. Don't you have more to gain by collaborating than by undermining each other?

JMS: There is something more to gain for the revolutionary movement if Walden Bello would become an ally rather than an adversary. It is up to him. For instance, every time he delivers a blow against the Marcos-Duterte alliance, every time that he criticises neoliberalism and the whole range of imperialist globalisation, and every time he speaks up against the violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity by China in the West Philippine Sea, he is well-appreciated by the legal national democratic forces as well as by the revolutionary movement. He has gained points among the patriotic and progressive forces. He is appreciated for proposing that a new administration of the [government] should resume peace negotiations with the NDFP and for teaming up with the Makabayan senatorial candidates on a number of issues. There are issues that can be easily and immediately resolved. And there are issues that can be resolved consequently.

What is your response to the recent removals of NDFP books from university libraries? Is freedom of expression a tenet of your political philosophy?

JMS: The recent removals of NDFP books from university libraries amount to fascist book-burning by the Duterte tyranny. The military minions of Duterte in National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict think that the removal of NDFP books would intimidate faculty members and students. On the contrary, these intelligent people would assert the freedom of thought and belief and the freedom of expression and would demand the return of the NDFP books and also laugh at the military for stupidly forgetting that in this digital age it is difficult to stop the circulation of digital copies.

Like Hugo Chavez who became an anti-imperialist and democratic leader, the military officers of GRP should read the CPP and NDFP publications, learn how to work for a just peace and stop obeying the self-defeating bloodthirsty orders of Duterte. In the history of the old democratic revolution and in the new democratic revolution, officers have transferred from the reactionary side to the revolutionary side. General [Raymundo] Jarque, and other outstanding military officers like Colonel Dante Simbulan, Navy Captain Dan Vizmanos and Army Captain Crispin Tagamolila have openly repudiated US imperialism and the oppressive ruling system.

Freedom of expression is a tenet of my political philosophy. I adhere to the basic democratic rights and fundamental freedoms at the levels of the individual, organisation, class and nation. As materialist-scientific philosophy, critique of political economy and social science putting scientific socialism forward, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is on the high road of modern civilisation and comes as the latest peak after the advances from humanism and science in the Renaissance, reason in the Enlightenment and the principle of sovereign will of the people and democratic rights in the French revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and rise of the proletariat as gravedigger of capitalism.

Your involvement in the CPP's two great rectification movements has been described by others as a sign of humility and a willingness to admit past mistakes. Can you describe any mistakes that have been especially educational to you?

JMS: Thank you for the compliment. A communist party cannot grow in strength and advance if it does not know how to identify mistakes within its scope and rectify them through the timely and periodic sessions of criticism and self-criticism or through rectification movements of a wider scale and longer duration in the case of big mistakes that have resulted in grave damage. Like everyone, I have my own share of mistakes. The biggest and most educational to me was my capture on 10 November 1977. I paid for that mistake by being tortured in solitary confinement for more than five years and being imprisoned for more than eight years and three months.

Joma, can you give our listeners a summary of how you ended up in prison, in solitary confinement, and why?

JMS: My capture in 1977 involved a cluster of mistakes, like for instance, I could have avoided riding on a motorcycle between 10 in the evening and midnight, when the motorcycle traffic was so scarce during that period, and I could be easily spotted wearing my white eyeglasses. I could use dark glasses. Comrades told me not to move, and to stay overnight [in Pangasinan], but I overruled them because I was in a hurry to get to another appointment in La Union. So the enemy spotted me when I crossed a certain gasoline station, and so I was captured. And naturally in my position, I would be subjected to either death or imprisonment. I was expecting I could be killed, but I think that the political animal Marcos thought that he could use me as a trophy—at the least as a trophy. But anyway, there was no evading the torture, the physical torture, to which I was immediately subjected, starting from the day of my arrest.

I underwent the famous American-style water cure. The cleverness of that kind of torture is it leaves no mark. For six hours, I was subjected to water cure. I also had a session of fist blows on the body, but I noticed that they were not hitting me on the face, so I thought that they were not out to kill me. But anyway, the worst kind of torture was the solitary confinement—it's the worst kind of torture, much worse than those hours of torture during my early weeks in prison. I was in solitary confinement for so long. The physical and psychological torture is built into the circumstances—you don't talk to anyone, except occasionally with the guards who deal with you. So I can sympathise with Julian Assange for being kept in solitary confinement, especially because he is not actually guilty of any crime, except for performing his role as a journalist and exposing the crimes of US imperialism. So I believe that for being subjected to that kind of torture, solitary confinement, he should be released immediately.

Why was I tortured? The purpose of torture is to break your political will, and the way is to make you betray persons and places where other important persons in the revolutionary movement would be. So the questions that were addressed to me were meant to break me, break my will and betray my comrades. I did not submit to the will of the enemy, and I knew when they were outrightly and subtly trying to pick my brains and to extort information from me. I had already rehearsed so many times that kind of situation. I had rehearsed so many times getting killed in a NPA camp because of enemy attack or when marching from one point to another, and also I had rehearsed so many times how I would react to enemy tricks and torture if captured.

What are the CPP's greatest achievements to date? What do you aim to achieve within the next 10 years?

JMS: The greatest ideological achievement of the CPP is the application of the universal theory of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism on the concrete conditions of the Philippines and in the concrete practice of the Philippine revolution. In the process, the CPP thinkers and leaders have contributed to the development of said theory. The CPP has been able to propagate dialectical and historical materialism among tens of thousands of party members and hundreds of thousands of revolutionary mass activists through basic, intermediate and advanced study courses to enable them to study and analyse domestic and international conditions and issues and adopt the correct strategy and tactics for waging revolution.

The greatest political achievement of the CPP is the adoption of the program of people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war and the successful implementation of this general line of action. Thus, the CPP has proven itself as the leading force of the proletariat and entire people in the revolution. It has aroused, organised and mobilised millions of the Filipino people and successfully wielded and developed the revolutionary armed struggle and national united front as weapons of the people against the enemy. It leads the NPA, the revolutionary mass organisations, alliances and the local organs of political power, which constitute the people's democratic government. This government is responsible for mass education, production, health and other services, internal security and self-defense, arbitration of disputes, environmental protection and disaster relief.

The greatest organisational achievement of the CPP is upholding the principle of democratic centralism and growing in strength nationwide. From its small beginnings in 1968 to tens of thousands of party cadres and members, the CPP has expanded nationwide and is deeply rooted among the toiling masses of workers and peasants. It has branches and groups in the urban and rural areas in 74 out of the 81 provinces of the Philippines. It operates as the leading core at all levels of the people's democratic government, local communities, guerrilla fronts, organisations and institutions of various types.

In the next 10 years, I expect to see greater victories in the people's democratic revolution in the Philippines. The counterrevolutionary currents like anti-communism, neocolonialism, modern revisionism and neoliberalism have run long courses and have proven to be bankrupt. It is high time for the revolutionary movements in the Philippines and abroad to demonstrate their strength and score new brilliant victories in the struggle for national liberation, democracy and socialism.

As regards to what I can do personally, I will continue to comment on Philippine and global issues. I will ensure that my written works are systematically collected and preserved for study by the current and further generations of revolutionaries in the Philippines and abroad. My books have been published chronologically by various publishers since the 1960s. But the International Network for Philippines Studies is also publishing the Sison Reader Series, with volumes on at least 35 general topics and themes.

Thank you Joma.