

Open Communist Party

From the Committee of the

The following Open Letter was forwarded to *A World to Win* by the Information Bureau of the RIM. It is published in full; the subheads have been added by AWTW.

To the Central Committee
Communist Party of the Philippines

Comrades,

It is with the most dramatically conflicting emotions that the Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement has viewed the unfolding of events over the past year in the Philippines. On the one hand that infamous tyrant and imperialist puppet, Ferdinand Marcos, has been forced to flee from his throne, hounded by the wrath of millions of his aroused subjects, into the hands of his awaiting master. This was truly a sight which gave joy not only to the Filipino revolutionaries and oppressed, but to proletarians and oppressed the world over.

Yet at the very moment when the Filipino ruling regime was wracked by crisis and instability, as millions stormed into the streets and the imperialists manoeuvred to shore up their deteriorating position, at that critical juncture, which contained opportunities as well as dangers for the revolutionary struggle, your party, a party which arose out of the same history of revolutionary struggle as have many in the RIM itself, a party which has thousands of men

and women under arms and which has set ablaze a people's war throughout the Philippines, was left paralyzed by the march of events, or worse, trailing in their wake. Indeed, the inability of the CPP to find its bearings amidst the political crisis and ultimate fall of the Marcos regime in order to carry forward the revolutionary war has now given rise to political crisis in the CPP itself, and even to mounting tendencies towards outright capitulation.

This situation has arisen after several years in which Marxist-Leninists around the world have viewed with concern your party's silence on the urgent questions confronting the international communist movement. After hailing Mao and the Cultural Revolution at the time of his death, you then turned around and supported Hua Guo-feng's reactionary coup d'état a short time later; since then you have ignored the virulent assault on Mao Tsetung Thought and the Cultural Revolution which has spewed forth from revisionists and reactionaries around the world, including China, and it now appears that you have made your peace with Soviet social-imperialism. In view of this and especially the perils which immediately confront the CPP, the international communist movement would be shirking its duty if it were to remain silent. Thus we call on you, the leadership and membership of the CPP, to grapple

seriously with the problems of line which threaten the revolutionary character of your party and the people's war it is leading.

This is a matter of serious importance not only for the destiny of the Philippine revolution, but for the proletarian revolutionary movement around the world. At its founding the CPP declared that the Philippine revolution was a component part of the world proletarian revolution. And indeed it is. The CPP itself was born in the flames of the international battle against revisionism led by Mao Tsetung, especially the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. At that time young revolutionaries in the Philippines revolted against the stifling reformism of the revisionist party, the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP), and, on 26 Dec 1968, the 75th anniversary of the birth of Mao Tsetung, declared the establishment of a new communist party, guided by Mao Tsetung Thought, which it hailed as "the acme of Marxism-Leninism." Immediately thereafter the CPP unleashed people's war to carry out the New Democratic Revolution in the Philippines as the first step on the path to socialism and communism, which the party said would be realised only after "many cultural revolutions."

Since that time, the CPP, though faced with martial law and a bloody counter-insurgency war, has

Letter to the of the Philippines

Revolutionary Internationalist Movement

nonetheless grown from a relative handful, armed with a few revolvers and a handful of ancient rifles, into a party of many thousands, leading the New People's Army (NPA) and the National Democratic Front (NDF). Today even the U.S. imperialists must admit that the CPP has become a threat to their continued domination of the Philippines. These developments are a profound affirmation of the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought on which our party was founded.

At the same time, the current situation of crisis in the party and the danger of capitulation threatening it are reflections of tendencies which arose and grew in the CPP over the years to depart from these principles. At stake here is not adherence to some abstract dogma, as some would have it, for it is a profound truth that, as the *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* observes, "Without upholding and building on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, it is not possible to defeat imperialism, revisionism and reaction in general." The real stakes involved are the victory or defeat of the Philippine revolution itself, and the profound impact — positive or negative — developments there have on the proletarian revolution throughout the world. Summing up the roots of these errors and finding the ways and

means to rectify them is a pressing task for the Filipino revolutionaries today.

Aquino — Vacillating Ally or Sworn Enemy?

Among the most serious indications of the turn in the CPP's line is its treatment of the Aquino government. Innumerable spokesmen for the imperialists and for the new government itself have made abundantly clear that one of the key reasons Marcos had to go was that his regime could not defeat the liberation movement. As the *Economist* put it in a 15 Feb 1986 cover editorial entitled, "Now, Go!": "The longer President Marcos clings to power, the likelier he is to bring on the deluge. . . . It could lead to the storming of Malacanang presidential palace, the closing of America's two biggest bases in Asia and a communist takeover of this archipelagic aircraft carrier." A leading member of Aquino's entourage spoke even more bluntly: "What is going to beat the Left is not the Marcos government. It's a new regime based on the moderate opposition."

Aquino herself has repeatedly argued that the guerrillas should lay down their arms now that Marcos has gone, and she has recently backed this up with the threat that if they don't, the military will pursue the counter-insurgency war until victory, with her support, and that she

will "take up the sword" herself. She has publicly divided the guerrillas into three distinct groups: "those who found themselves joining the rebels to escape the abuses of the Marcos regime — they are ready to come down and join the rest of the people; those who won't come down until they see our proposals; and the hardcore — they will never give up. We may not be able to win them over but we can isolate them. Our economic and social policies will do just that."

Is this anything less than a declaration of war? Isn't the crucial point of Aquino's effort to paralyze, split and isolate the revolutionary combatants so that the military can then finish them off?

Yet the CPP has followed a policy of tailing the Aquino government. In your initial response to the Aquino government's call for a ceasefire 18 March 1986, the CPP Military Commission and the NPA leadership "sincerely acknowledged the popular support gained by President Corazon Aquino," hailed her "positive efforts" and added their "hope that these progressive moves will gather momentum towards the solution of the more fundamental problems confronting our people." Furthermore, the March 1986 issue of *Ang Bayan*, the political organ of the CPP Central Committee, states that, "Mrs Aquino needs popular



support for the measures which, with liberal and progressive forces in and out of government, she intends to pursue." Elsewhere it says, "President Aquino and her progressive allies are enjoying popular support in their moves to dismantle the machinery of fascist rule in the country and pursue other democratic reforms."

Just which reforms are the CPP talking about? Can it be possible that you are wishing well to Aquino's political tinkering which she herself proclaims is aimed at splitting up and isolating the NPA? Are these the "progressive moves" which you hope will "gain momentum"? And could it possibly be any clearer that the main military structures Aquino intends to dismantle are *your own*?! And what does all their talk of "professionalizing the army" and "ridding it of cronyism," etc. amount to: "dismantling the machinery of fascist rule"? Not at all, for here too the imperialists and their agents have repeated that these changes are exactly for the purpose of *making the army more efficient in its pursuit of the revolutionaries*.

Moreover, it should be clear by now that a more general point of Aquino's reformism is to lull the

newly awakened masses back to sleep. For it is as true of the Philippines today as it was of Russia in 1905 that, as Lenin put it, "historic situations arise when reforms and particularly promises of reforms pursue *only* one aim: to allay the unrest of the people, force the revolutionary class to cease, or at least slacken, its struggle." ("A Lecture on the 1905 Revolution") Doesn't this accurately characterise the Aquino government's activity — minor reforms or *promises* of reform, like the supposed agrarian reform which has been postponed over and over again, which are designed to assure the masses that all is being taken care of *for* them, so that the "parliament of the hills and streets" can be adjourned and the parliament of the (new) puppets can assume unchallenged sway in the land?

The Political Bureau "Self-Criticism"

The summation of these events by the CPP Political Bureau, including in its "self-criticism" in the May 1986 *Ang Bayan* of the CPP boycott of the snap elections, propels the CPP even farther in the same mistaken direction. The "self-criticism" says that the political

assessment on which the boycott policy was based erred in that it "overestimated U.S. capacity to impose its subjective will on local politics" and "underestimated the bourgeois reformists' capabilities and determination to engage the Marcos regime in a decisive contest for state power." It goes on to note that the CPP "missed opportunities" because of such erroneous assessments of the situation. According to the "self-criticism," the CPP failed to seize the chance to hook up more closely with the Aquino forces, ride along on the anti-Marcos tide, and, implicitly, to wield significant influence within the new government (one "senior Party member" complains openly that "the left was not part of the machinery" of the anti-Marcos electoral campaign activity). Thus the CPP compounds its errors by seriously underplaying the reactionary essence of the Aquino forces, exaggerating their independence from U.S. imperialism, and concluding that it was too "sectarian" towards them. Far from acknowledging the necessity to have persevered in the people's war and delivered blows at the weakened ruling regime, on the contrary, based on your support for Aquino you argued *against* stepping up the armed struggle!

The Philippine ruling class was, and is, seriously split into rival factions, but Aquino and the forces around her are very much connected to U.S. imperialism and acting in its interests, and tied in to the feudal and semi-feudal elements in society. U.S. Secretary of State Schultz hails her, U.S. Defense Secretary Weinberger rushed her 100 million dollars worth of military aid in order to "support the new democracy" there, Reagan rolled out the red carpet for her while holding Marcos at arms length in Hawaii, *Time* magazine selected her "Woman of the Year," bankers from the Club of Paris to Washington and Tokyo have rescheduled debts on terms *notably more generous* than those for Marcos under the open banner of "Rally Round Mrs Aquino" — despite the overall world financial crisis — such events are daily fare, yet you

offer up an analysis that you "overestimated" U.S. influence on the situation and "underestimated" the "capabilities and determination" of the "bourgeois reformists," and you go on to say that it is the "military bloc" and not the "civilian bloc" that "enjoys U.S. support"!

The political support you are rendering Aquino and the promotion of the bourgeois-democratic illusions which underpin this policy are a reversal of correct verdicts which your own party reached years ago. In *Urgent Tasks*, adopted by your Central Committee in 1976, you warned that the "alliance of the Macapagal, Aquino, Lopez and Manglapus groups is not idle" (emphasis added), and noted that "U.S. imperialism has already assured this alliance that it should do what it can to stand in reserve in the face of Marcos' growing unpopularity."

What happened to this correct verdict? Is the class character of Mrs Aquino different from that of her husband? Was Commander Dante wrong when he said that Mr Aquino was just one of those politicians who ride on the backs of the people (*Ang Bayan*, 15 March 1978). In fact, what has changed since 1976, when Aquino's opposition to Marcos was considered part of the "splits among reactionaries," is not the *Aquinos'* class character but *your* political line. Isn't this evidence that you should have heeded your own warning in *Urgent Tasks* on the necessity to "deliberately and clearly link the anti-fascist movement to the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist movements." "Otherwise," you warned, "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."

Smashing the Reactionary State Apparatus — or "Reorganizing" It?

These errors regarding the Aquino government are linked to increasingly reformist notions of the state. In the May 1986 *Ang Bayan* your

Central Committee divides the existing state power into a "civilian bloc" and a "military bloc" — the former, you say, is composed of a "coalition of liberal and progressive personages" and the latter of the "bigger, more organised armed conservative and reactionary forces." According to you, "the progressives and liberals have the initiative" and "can be drawn to support the people's demands or can be neutralised" while the latter "enjoys U.S. support" and must be fought.

This point is worth quoting at more length:

"For the conservatives, especially those who have had a taste of fascist power, naked repression is still the best response against the revolutionary movement. In their view, the Aquino government's popularity and its conciliatory calls are just useful for tricking and weakening the revolutionary movement, the easier to crush it.

"The liberals and progressives, on the other hand, recognise the legitimacy of fighting an unjust social system. They earnestly desire to pursue genuine peace through principled negotiations, to enable the Aquino government to tackle the social roots of the people's struggle. . . .

"The conservatives are hellbent on keeping to the old semicolonial and semifeudal framework, and they are acting as the principal tools of U.S. monopoly capital for this purpose."

Ang Bayan goes on to mention Aquino forces who "oppose" the conservatives on issues of imperialist bank loans and "have begun to see the destructive effects of imperialism," and argues that for the U.S. imperialists "Mrs Aquino remains an unknown political factor."

These views are as wrong as they are dangerous. Are the Aquino forces "opposing" imperialist penetration? Not at all. Certainly Aquino has sought better terms for loans, but that's just the point: what she's sought is *better* terms, not at all *an end to imperialist dependency*, or even a step towards such an end. The same with the U.S. military bases: she seeks *better*

terms for the leases, but *not at all* to kick the bases out. Hasn't she backed off her promise to do this, now that she's finally in power? And what do you think of her calls to strengthen ASEAN, the U.S. imperialists' regional military alliance? On the issues of most fundamental importance to the imperialists, she comes through for them every time.

And is it the case that the Aquino forces are opposed to the repressive tactics of the military and committed instead to a policy of conciliation so that they can really "tackle the social roots of the people's struggle"? Such views cannot be attributed to mere naiveté. The ruling classes *always* use counter-revolutionary dual tactics — as Lenin put it, they always have need of both the hangman and the priest (or of the "carrot and the stick" as this tactic is often popularly referred to). These are the dual tactics of *the system*, of the ruling classes overall, and even the most brutal fascist regime uses reform and deception, just as the most liberal bourgeois democracy uses torture chambers and pogroms. Which role any given person plays in this reactionary division of labour should deceive only those who are unaware of what *class* rule means. In fact, it often happens that one person can play *both* roles, even at the same time. For example, it was the fair-haired youthful U.S. President J.F. Kennedy who gushed on about democracy and justice and modernisation programs in the Third World on the one hand, while at the same time he threatened the armed nuclear might of U.S. imperialism as he did in the Cuban missile crisis, or presided over bloody counter-insurgency wars, as in Vietnam.

You argue that, "If U.S. imperialism had its way it would make Aquino boot out the progressives and liberals from the government, or it would get rid of Mrs Aquino herself the moment she definitely sets out on a nationalist path." (*Ang Bayan*, May 1986) This is a continual theme of yours, while you minimise or even ignore completely the possibility that the U.S. could have *Mrs Aquino herself* lead a counter-insurgency war to wipe out the revolution. . . even though she

has repeatedly promised that she would "take up the sword" if it becomes necessary! More to the point, she has *already* picked up the sword — she is already at the head of the state, serving as its symbol of legitimacy, as the guarantor of its stability and its law and order, with the support of reaction worldwide, and presiding over its massacres, as of the unarmed peasants in front of Malacanang Palace, and then receiving them afterwards to shed a few crocodile tears of pity. Yet your analysis would lay the responsibility for this recent massacre wholly at the feet of the so-called "military bloc," and thus objectively wipe Aquino's hands of the blood shed by the state she heads, whose power rests firmly on the guns of the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines), the police and — it must be added — the U.S. imperialists. The army shoots, Aquino complains, they shoot again, she cries, they shoot yet again, she appoints commissions of inquiry. It reminds us of Peru's Alan Garcia and his commission of inquiry after 350 revolutionary prisoners were executed in cold blood. These tactics are all the more effective if the vanguard abdicates its responsibility to expose such counter-revolutionary dual tactics to the masses and lead them in struggle against the ruling classes and their state.

You must face your own responsibility in this matter too. Didn't you teach the peasants that there was a section of the state power that was for them, that looked after their interests, and that the "liberals and progressives" "had the initiative" and wanted to "tackle the social roots of the people's struggle"? If they then march with empty hands against the guns and bayonets of the state's repressive apparatus, do you bear no responsibility?

With this line of supporting the progressive reforms of the "civilian bloc" against the "military bloc," the CPP has also set itself up to be whipped back and forth by infighting within the Philippine ruling class. The so-called "civilian bloc" dangles promises of democratic reform to entice the NPA fighters down (as Aquino openly said she would) and points to the menace of

the fascist military as the constraint on their ability to implement their reforms, and then the revolutionaries rush to help strengthen the "civilian bloc" against the "military bloc" so as to realise the promise of the new regime. As you put it in *Ang Bayan*, "we should be alert to and thoroughly oppose all the moves of the reactionary forces, especially of those who are most likely to menace Mrs Aquino with a coup threat." Every menace of a coup d'état becomes a new occasion to rally around the "fragile democracy" (and thus a new occasion to forget the class nature of the regime as a whole and the people's war against it...). José Maria Sison, the founding chairman of the CPP CC, in a recent interview with a Western magazine, went so far as to say: "In case of a military coup d'état, the NPA could place itself at the service of the 'People's Power' of Mrs Aquino." Though Sison's present relationship to the CPP is not clear to us, the CPP leadership has not distinguished itself from Sison's political activity, and his statement flows out of the same logic as the CPP's general line. Yet if the task of the people's army is reduced to defending Aquino and the "reformist bourgeoisie," will the people still have an army?!

Here a word must be said about those in your party who, in order to promote the self-criticism that the CPP failed to "get in on" the Aquino movement, have drawn comparisons to the February Revolution in Russia in 1917, saying that what has been (or at least could have been or still could be) achieved was the kind of "dual power" that existed for a time in Russia, that "People's Power" represents this at least to some extent, and it is this that is actually being defended, much as the Bolsheviks had to defend and strengthen "dual power" there. First, this analogy is just wrong. The Soviets in Russia were organs of the masses themselves which carried out certain functions of political power *apart from* the established provisional government. If you want to talk about "dual power" in the Philippines, talk not of the "people's power" movement

of Aquino, but of the political power that rests on the armed revolutionary peasants in the countryside. Second, in the months following the February Revolution, what Lenin sought above all was to dispel illusions about the new provisional government, to unmask its bourgeois character, to show how one of its key goals was to raise the banner of revolution in order to head off a genuinely revolutionary movement. Talking about the "progressive character" of the newly installed provisional government was not Lenin's work, it was the work of his Menshevik opponents.

All this talk of "people's power" and "civilian blocs" opposed to "military blocs" is not so different from the theories of the state promoted by the Soviet revisionists — the offspring of their theory of the "state of the whole people" — which have set up the masses of people for more than one bloody ambush. Specifically, all this recalls the Indonesian Communist Party's "theory of two aspects in state power." In the self-criticism made later by the Political Bureau of their Central Committee, they explain that, according to their previously held theory, "within the state power of the Republic of Indonesia there existed two aspects, the 'anti-people aspect' consisting of comprador, bureaucrat capitalist and landlord classes on the one hand, and the 'pro-people aspect' composed mainly of the national bourgeoisie and the proletariat on the other hand." Following this analysis, they had concluded that "a miracle could happen in Indonesia, namely that the state could cease to be an instrument of the ruling oppressor classes to subjugate other classes, but could be made an instrument shared by both the oppressor classes and the oppressed classes. And the fundamental change in state power, that is to say, the birth of a people's power, could be peacefully accomplished by developing the 'pro-people aspect' and gradually liquidating the 'anti-people aspect.'" Under the influence of such thinking, the Indonesian revolutionaries and people were disarmed and completely unprepared for the savage attacks launched by the Suharto

government, in which hundreds of thousands were massacred.

Your own party is intimately familiar with this tragedy. Yet what do you say about the Philippine state power, following the analysis quoted above about the division of the government into the "civilian bloc" of "liberals and progressives" and the "military bloc": "These questions are reflective of the intense fundamental struggle between the imperialists, big bourgeois compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists, on the one hand, and the middle and lower strata of society, on the other hand. *It has never happened before that a contradiction as intense as this is reflected within government itself.*"

(*Ang Bayan*, May 1986 — emphasis added) Here is your Philippine version of the Indonesian "miracle" — an unprecedented event, a state fundamentally rent in two, no longer the organ of repression of the ruling classes, but now "an instrument shared between the oppressor classes and the oppressed classes," as the Indonesian CP argued. Where is the difference?

Indeed, isn't it based on this very analysis, that "People's Power" has captured a section of the state, that you have begun to talk less and less of smashing the repressive armed forces of the Philippines and instead lay out as principal tasks of the CPP "the struggle to dismantle the structures of fascist domination. *Part of this is the thorough reorganisation, reorientation and cleansing of the entire Armed Forces of the Philippines.*" (*Ang*

Bayan, April 1986 — emphasis added) Isn't this the same as the Indonesian CP's call to "gradually liquidate the 'anti-people' aspect in state power"? Isn't this talk of "reorienting" and "cleansing" the AFP moving further and further away from the revolutionary task of "the destruction of the apparatus of state power," without which "the liberation of the oppressed class is impossible," as Lenin put it? And isn't this same line reflected in the CPP CC's call to scale down the NPA's armed struggle, first to "active defense," then later to a ceasefire? Why step up the war, after all, if "people's power" is already in possession of a key part of the state apparatus?

"Except for State Power, All is Illusion"

In part the CPP's erroneous conception of state power is linked to a misplaced effort to uphold the "power of the masses of people." As *Liberation*, the organ of the NDF, puts it: "Let us remember that it was the struggle of the people behind Corazon Aquino, the courageous widow of assassinated opposition leader Benigno Aquino — and not the U.S. — that ousted Marcos." This seemingly anti-U.S. argument is a key support for the idea that "People's Power" has captured a section of state power.

Certainly it was the masses who laid down their lives against Marcos



A WORLD TO WIN 1987/8

For years the CPP followed a policy of self-reliance. Here a fighter trains with homemade wooden gun.

and U.S. imperialism, and certainly it was they who took to the streets at the final hour. Moreover, the imperialists made it quite plain that one of their main reasons for withdrawing support from Marcos was their fear that the people's war would continue to gain strength under his regime.

But it is not new that while the masses do the fighting and dying, the ruling classes zealously guard state power — and once again it is exactly the question of state power, particularly of the repressive apparatus of the army and police, that the CPP obscures. And, to put it concisely, "Except for state power, all is illusion."

Although *Liberation* presents this stand as going up against the U.S., the U.S. imperialists have actually promoted the same theme. The 3 March 1986 *New York Times* notes that most coverage in the Western media of the rise of Aquino has portrayed the U.S. as reluctantly bowing to the democratically expressed "will of the Filipino people." But for the imperialists, presenting Aquino as the expression of the "will of the people" is cynical justification for stepping up military and economic aid to the "new democracy" to be used among other things against the liberation war itself. And while the U.S. imperialists have indeed used the fall of Marcos to try and polish up their image of supporting vicious dictatorships around the world, they are not unaware of the need to work to preserve a certain respectable distance from Aquino herself, at least for now. As the *Economist* editorial observed, "A Mrs Aquino installed by the Americans would lose the legitimacy the voters had given her."

We should bear in mind the bitter experience of Indonesia, where promoting illusions of a fundamental division in state power and of a genuine "people's power" in control of or represented by one section of the state set the masses up for a bloodbath. Further, this line inevitably leads away from the only path to the genuine liberation of the oppressed: the thorough-going smashing of the old reactionary state power.

Reducing the Enemy to a Small Clique

These bourgeois democratic tendencies are associated with certain errors that arose over the years as the CPP made alliances with broad class forces against Marcos. While some such efforts might have been correct, it is crucial to note, as the *Declaration of the RIM* argues, that "this can only be carried out successfully if the party maintains its leadership, utilising such alliances within the overall and principal task of carrying the revolution to completion *without making a strategic stage out of the struggle against dictatorship* since the content of the anti-fascist struggle is nothing other than the content of the new democratic revolution." (emphasis added) By the late 1970s the anti-fascist struggle began to be regarded by the CPP as taking priority over the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle. The target of the revolution tended more and more to be reduced to a fascist clique — Marcos and a handful of his cronies — and the class nature of the state and the imperialist and feudal system of which Marcos and his clique were a part receded into the background.

In 1976 *Urgent Tasks* stated that the CPP "must give first place to the anti-fascist movement." By the early 1980s *Ang Bayan* referred ceaselessly to the Marcos regime as the "dictatorship" and to the movement against it as the "anti-dictatorship front" (Dec 1980). Theoretical underpinnings for narrowing the target to Marcos and his clique were elaborated; in October 1983 an "Urgent Message" by the CPP CC put forward the view that, "Under martial law, the fundamental contradiction between U.S. imperialism and the local ruling classes, on the one hand, and the Filipino people, on the other, took on a sharper form. The principal conflict is now between the people, on the one hand, and U.S. imperialism and the Marcos clique of comprador big capitalists, big landlords and big bureaucrats, on the other." It discussed other changes wrought by martial law: "State power was now the monopoly of the US-Marcos clique. In the ensuing period, it moved to con-

solidate that power. It turned the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) into a vast private army of its own, and the bureaucracy, including the government financial institutions, into its private preserve."

Since the state was now said to be the "private preserve" of the U.S.-Marcos clique, opposition bourgeois and landlord sectors began to be treated as if they were no longer really part of the ruling classes. As the "Urgent Message" stated: "Bourgeois liberal oppositionists *have ranged themselves with the people*, as have more and more businessmen. In increasing numbers, the politically advanced bourgeois liberal oppositionists now declare themselves in favor of armed struggle. Even anti-Marcos bourgeois compradors and landlords are now openly protesting against the regime." (emphasis added) And: "Under present conditions in Philippine society, the national united front also attracts the bourgeois liberal sections of the comprador bourgeoisie and landlord class to further isolate the dictatorship and concentrate the heaviest blows against it." And in the countryside: "a considerable number of landlords could be won to the revolutionary land program on the basis of their anti-dictatorship stand." There has been no basic change in this analysis since then, including with the formal lifting of martial law.

In this way the role of the state as an organ of class rule was obscured — it was now the "private preserve" of Marcos and a handful of cronies, no longer the protector of the *class* rule of the landlords, compradors and imperialists — and class alliances were expanded in a permanent fashion and very broadly, as the fight against Marcos and his cronies more and more was treated as a completely separate stage of struggle with no connection to the new democratic revolution.

This process of narrowing the target of the revolution and widening class alliances reached its climax with the snap elections. Throughout the CPP's agitation concerning the recent elections, the "moderate opposition" was targetted only because their own participation in



22 January 1987. Troops of the Aquino regime opened fire on a peasant protest demanding land reform. At least 18 were killed and over 100 wounded.

the elections was said to play into Marcos' hands, since the purpose of the elections was said to be his efforts to legitimise his rule. The CPP even repeatedly stated that the snap election was held at the initiative of Marcos (*Ang Bayan* Dec 1985). Similarly, it was argued that legitimizing Marcos was the U.S. imperialists' point in going along with Marcos' election manoeuvre.

The U.S. was undoubtedly surprised by the speed with which events moved in the Philippines, and most of all by the explosion of the masses themselves. But they have been manoeuvring for quite some time now to strengthen the hand of the ruling class opposition and to prepare for replacing Marcos, all the more so since it became apparent that Marcos was in bad health, both physically and politically. These particular elections were to play a significant role in this process. There is in fact much evidence that the elections were held not at the initiative of Marcos, but at that of the U.S. Furthermore, there were numerous signals of what the U.S. was up to in the Philippines — the increasing efforts of the U.S.

to "distance" itself from Marcos, as it became known in official U.S. parlance, which ranged from U.S. complaints about the handling of the General Ver case to exposure of Marcos' fake WW2 exploits, to mounting efforts, especially from U.S. Democratic Party politicians like the liberal imperialist Teddy Kennedy, to unite the bourgeois opposition and to present them as the representatives of the people and the hope for a "restoration of democracy," at whatever point this proved to be necessary.

But in the CPP perspective, it was more and more the tail that wagged the dog: Marcos fully in control, Marcos the real power, U.S. imperialism (and other Philippine ruling class sectors) watching on the sidelines or at best able only to react to Marcos' manoeuvres.

This line also came out sharply with the post-election defection of Enrile, long-time Minister of Defense under Marcos, and Ramos, also a general under Marcos and now Army Chief of Staff, the military revolt that signaled that the rug had been finally pulled out from under Marcos. *Liberation*, official

organ of the CPP-led National Democratic Front, actually polemicised against the idea that the U.S. had anything whatsoever to do with this manoeuvre and declared that Enrile and Ramos' defection "gave the U.S. as well as Marcos a massive shock." Come now! Whether or not the U.S. literally arranged such a defection, Enrile and Ramos are both long-time chiefs of the U.S. puppet army in the Philippines, both trained in the U.S., advised by the U.S., with extensive contacts with U.S. intelligence. Moreover, these so-called military "reformists" were regarded by the imperialists themselves as key to the succession. Again as the *Economist* editorial noted, "If these would-be reformers were quietly assured of both diplomatic support and a big infusion of military resources to help them get on with their proper job of fighting the communists, they might be emboldened to refuse to enforce a new Marcos clamp-down; and they might well carry their troops with them." Need the scenario have been spelled out any more clearly? And this editorial, (Continued on page 68)

Philippines

(Continued from page 39).

from 15 Feb 1986, was made *before* Ramos and Enrile's manoeuvre.

Far from these puppet generals' act really "shocking the U.S.," it is much more the case that *the CPP's tendency to reduce the target to Marcos blinded you to the larger manoeuvring by U.S. imperialism and its key agents in achieving the transition.* This led to the incongruous situation where the CPP was trying to target Enrile and Ramos as leading elements in the "fascist structures still to be dismantled," but at the same time the NDF was obscuring their real nature as imperialist puppets by trying to somehow uphold their revolt and claim that it had nothing whatsoever to do with the U.S. Is it any wonder that many of the masses were left confused and disoriented, and thus all the more susceptible to Aquino's efforts to sweep these fascists' bloody crimes under the rug as she and the U.S. worked to smooth over differences and stabilise a new ruling coalition?

Furthermore, your assessment that the elections were simply an exercise by Marcos to legitimise himself, your focus on the corruption and manipulation Marcos used to rig the elections, and your subsequent conclusion that he was bound to win, amounted to a bourgeois democratic critique of the elections, as if the *problem* were that they were not being held under fair or just conditions and that the bourgeois opposition consequently did not have a real chance of winning, a theme which you repeated over and over in your election agitation.

Because of all this, the CPP was not prepared to deal with the manoeuvrings of U.S. imperialism, which resulted in a significant number of middle forces, some of whom had been influenced by the CPP, to be drawn into the electoral path and brought under the sway of pro-U.S. reactionaries. As the election approached, even many members of the CPP, including some in leadership, began to go with the tide and advocate participation in the polls.

The CPP, in its "self-criticism"

and elsewhere, has also criticised the boycott policy for its passivity; but what it means by "passivity" is that the party failed to join up with the Aquino forces and the electoral tide and sat out the snap election. Such activity would have been no better, to say the least, than the passivity manifested by the party around the election.

What the election offensive cried out for was a bold revolutionary response: exposing the manoeuvring of *all* the bourgeois forces, conducting revolutionary Marxist education on the nature of the state and the elections as part of that, and the launching of revolutionary offensives in the countryside to strengthen and highlight the only real alternative to the reactionary imperialist-dominated state power: the new embryonic state power of the masses themselves, based on their armed struggle. Especially in the cities the CPP needed to go against the petit bourgeois prejudices that were being swept up into a big tide by the imperialist programme as represented by Aquino. And there *was* a basis to do this. The CPP itself noted that the peasants were hardly drawn onto the Aquino bandwagon, and certainly there was unprecedented in-fighting in the ruling classes' own ranks. Yet the CPP failed to seize on this or to make efforts to step up the military struggle or to meet the political offensive in general.

It is sometimes the case that, for many reasons, including the narrow base of support for the ruling classes in the oppressed countries, sections of them come into sharp conflict with the dominant ruling cliques and the dominant imperialist power(s). But, especially in the context of imperialism's deep worldwide crisis, things can change very rapidly and such forces can be swiftly brought onto the seats of power (as was Aquino, who never really opposed U.S. imperialism at all). This requires that even when such forces are not yet in power the proletarian vanguard must prepare the masses to understand their class character so that they are not disoriented by any changes in the form of rule which might accompany the rise of these opposition

forces to power. The proletariat cannot let down its guard on the grounds that these reactionary forces are in conflict with another section of ruling strata currently in power.

That there exist serious deviations in your understanding of state power is further indicated by the revised programme of the NDF, which came out in early 1986. (While the NDF is not the same as the CPP, your party founded it and leads it, and it was the NDF that negotiated the ceasefire with the Aquino government.) Consider how the NDF describes the way in which the new people's democracy will be organised:

"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.

"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. . . ."

What "genuine modern-day republic" in today's world did you have in mind as a model — India, perhaps, or West Germany? All modern-day republics have class content! Yet there is no difference here from what any bourgeois democracy inscribes in its formal documents. New democratic revolution relies on the masses; the organs of revolutionary political power it establishes — first in base areas and, upon victory, nationwide — grow out of and are built on *the fighting detachments of the masses themselves*, on organisation formed and forged in the furnace of revolutionary war, just as the masses themselves are tempered and gain the consciousness required to rule in the process of the revolu-

tionary struggle and especially revolutionary war. These are the genuine forms of popular power, not the bourgeois electoral institutions of the "modern-day republic" enshrined in the NDF Programme, which have been perfected over decades of experience in channeling the masses' discontent into voting booths in order to yield all power to so-called representatives who stand over them, alienated from them, and ultimately ruling them. Furthermore, these sham democratic institutions of the West have a pitiful, ludicrous character in the oppressed nations, which can afford only the thinnest democratic trappings for their repressive apparatus (as, for example, in India, the "World's Largest Democracy," where the army is called out to establish order every few days!).

Yes, new democratic revolution is a bourgeois democratic revolution, but it is a bourgeois revolution of a new type; as Mao pointed out, it is led by the proletariat, it forms part of the world proletarian revolution and goes up against imperialism; it opens the door to capitalism but it opens the door to socialism even wider. Experience has proven that only the proletariat can lead the new democratic revolution, and it can do so only by *rejecting the form and content of the old-style bourgeois revolution* and establishing a dictatorship of the revolutionary classes led by the proletariat to suppress the comprador-feudal forces. This understanding is not reflected at all in the NDF Programme. Infatuated with these forms of bourgeois democracy, is it any wonder that as the imperialists and the Filipino ruling strata sought to use the elections for their own ends the CPP was unable to go up against this, expose it and present a genuinely revolutionary alternative?

Given these bourgeois-democratic roots of the CPP's errors, it is doubly disturbing that criticism emanating from leading centres of the CPP goes even further in the same direction. The Editorial Board of *Praktika*, the "bilingual theoretical journal of the Party in the national urban centre," argues in its first issue that a major cause

of the erroneous boycott line was, "First place should have been given to creating a broad anti-fascist unity committed principally to overthrowing the fascist dictatorship," that the boycott error was "just the latest and, perhaps, the costliest manifestation of a tendency to slur over the anti-fascist movement and to give undue importance to the comprehensiveness of national democratic politics in formulating tactics in the open mass movement," and it speaks of "rabid insistence on a national democratic orientation."

This turns reality upside down! Was the CPP's failure to grasp the dynamics of the snap election crisis due to *not giving enough emphasis to fighting Marcos*? Or wasn't it due instead to *narrowing everything down to Marcos alone*, failing to see the larger functioning of imperialism and its local appendages, its manoeuvrings and preparation for replacing one puppet with another?

In like manner, the National Student and Youth Department writes: "Cory Aquino has clearly proven that she is a staunch and steadfast anti-fascist. Hence, she is an ally, i.e., she is an objective tactical ally of the national-democratic movement. True, Aquino may flip-flop on issues concerning imperialism and feudalism. But she has also shown in words and in deeds her determination to wipe out fascism." Not only is Aquino's character wrongly portrayed, but she is proclaimed an ally of the "national democratic movement" even if she is pro-imperialist and pro-feudal! Opposing fascism without thoroughly opposing feudalism and imperialism inevitably means reducing oneself to supporting bourgeois democratic masks on imperialist domination in the oppressed nations. In Latin America, U.S. imperialism has played the game of trying to whip the masses back and forth between military juntas and civilian rule for decades, and the revisionists and social-democrats have rendered them great service in promoting the pursuit of parliament and other democratic trappings.

This is the context in which should be situated the CPP "self-criticism" that the boycott

"directly and openly went against the desire of the broad masses to pursue the anti-fascist struggle by means of critically participating in the elections." Others have concisely summarised this as "violating the will of the people," and failing to apply the "mass line." But isn't it the task of communists to help combat illusions and certainly not to trail such illusions, specifically illusions about Aquino? And after all, whose "will" did this boycott violate: that of the workers and peasants, or that of the bourgeoisie? All of this treats the mass line as a public opinion poll — not as requiring the application of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought to unleash the masses and synthesise their experience in revolutionary struggle. Should the majority of people in England favour voting for Thatcher, would your "mass line" require the vanguard to go along with this too?! Isn't this yet more evidence of deeply rooted bourgeois-democratic tendencies infecting your party?

More on The United Front

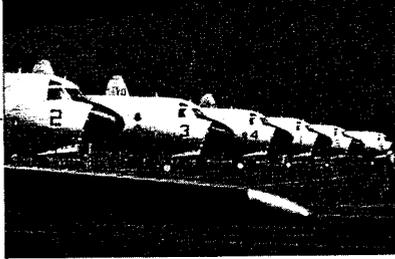
As pointed out earlier, the tendency of the CPP to narrow the target of the revolution to a single clique and to obscure the class nature of the state is linked with errors made in broadening the class alliances the proletariat enters into in its quest for power. Even as the CPP was busy drawing all sorts of forces into the NDF and other mass organisations, it neglected to grasp sufficiently the basic point by Mao Tsetung that, "It is also necessary to combat the error of identifying the programme, policy, ideology, practice, etc., of the proletariat with those of the bourgeoisie, and neglecting the differences in principle between them. The error here consists in neglecting the fact that the bourgeoisie (and especially the big bourgeoisie) not only exerts an influence on the petite bourgeoisie and the peasantry, but does its utmost to influence the proletariat and the Communist Party in a strenuous effort to destroy their ideological, political and organisational independence, turn them into an appendage of the bourgeoisie and its political party, and ensure

that it will reap the fruits of the revolution for itself or its political party alone." ("Introducing *The Communist*")

Today it is a fact that the U.S. imperialists and the reaction have managed to affect the alignment of class forces especially in the cities and have temporarily brought under their influence and outlook large numbers of the more bourgeois and petit-bourgeois forces. This, in itself, hardly constitutes a fatal blow to the revolutionary movement — far less, in any event, than if the representatives of the proletariat forget Mao's point and allow *themselves* to become obsessed with or fall under the influence of these other class forces.

Unfortunately this is the direction that the CPP's recent "self-criticism" takes, when it raises that one of the party's more serious errors was underestimating the "capabilities and determination" of the "reformist bourgeoisie" — this at a time when the national bourgeoisie and some other middle forces have, by uniting around Aquino, actually shifted significantly *away* from the revolutionary camp! And just what does your term "reformist bourgeoisie" mean anyway? Not only does it blur over the politically vital distinction between the comprador bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie, but it also substitutes a new main division within the bourgeoisie: between supposedly fascist and "reformist" sections.

Furthermore, this gaping at the "reformist bourgeoisie's" strength must be placed in the context of the practical measures the CPP is taking, based on this assessment, specifically your scaling down the armed struggle and concluding a ceasefire, while promoting parliamentary work in the cities, for instance, around the Constitutional Commission hearings. Isn't this repeating the error Mao warned of, and taking up the bourgeoisie's programme, which centres on this sort of work in the cities, and trying to compete with them on their own turf? This forgets the important analysis made by your own party in its early years, that, "The danger of cooperation with the national bour-



Sailors from Subic Naval Base in the Philippines, perhaps the U.S.'s single most vital foreign military base.

geoisie is that there is always a tendency to consider political activity in the cities as the principal form of political activity." (*Main Tasks of the Party*) Or as you put it even earlier: "In line with Mao Tsetung Thought, the Party must consciously shift its centre of gravity to the countryside. All previous party leaderships have suffered failures that were singularly characterised by political activity that had its centre of gravity in the city of Manila." (*Rectify Errors and Rebuild the Party*, 1968)

In part the CPP's obsession with trying to maintain organisational unity at all costs with these various bourgeois forces, particularly the national bourgeoisie, reflects a tendency to treat them as a constant and stable ally of the proletariat and to forget or ignore the previous assessment made in *Philippine Society and Revolution* by Amado Guerrero, the *nom de guerre* of José Maria Sison, which argued that, "The correct policy is to unite with (the national bourgeoisie) only to the extent that it supports the revolution at a given time and at the same time to criticise it appropriately for its vacillations or tendency to betray the revolution. This policy will always keep us vigilant."

Lacking vigilance, you tended to ignore that the truly firm ally of the proletariat in the oppressed coun-

tries is the poor peasantry, that the foundation for the united front is the agrarian revolution and people's war, that the relations between the proletariat and the national bourgeoisie will generally follow a zig-zag course, and that it is only by making advances in the people's war that the national bourgeoisie might be drawn into a united front (or at least neutralised) under proletarian leadership — and not by scaling down the people's war and centring the party's work on the bourgeoisie's own terms and turf.

Reversing the Verdict on Soviet Social-Imperialism

The portrayal in *Ang Bayan* over the last few years of oppressed countries in the thrall of the Soviets as "revolutionary" is part of a larger reversal of the CPP's longstanding verdict on the Soviet Union itself. Beginning in the early 1980s the CPP dropped all references to "social-imperialism," and refers increasingly to "the socialist countries" and to the "great progress" in "socialist construction" going on in "more and more countries." Apparently this even includes China, despite Deng Xiao-ping's backstabbing of the Philippine revolution. Who else this includes became clearer recently when, following crescendoing praise for the Soviet neo-colonies like

Cuba, a report appeared in the March 1986 *Ang Bayan* on the 27th Congress of the CPSU which refers to the "socialist economy" of the USSR and uncritically repeats Gorbachev's supposed "calls for peaceful coexistence" and "striving for world peace."

What, might we ask, has changed since, for instance, 1980, when your Central Committee referred repeatedly to "Soviet social-imperialism" and noted the danger of "interimperialist world war" between the two rival blocs?! Or since the late 1970s when you denounced the leadership of Angola and Vietnam as "pawns of Soviet imperialism"? In recent years the reactionary imperialist nature of the USSR has been demonstrated with the invasion of Afghanistan, the smashing of the workers movement in Poland, and the rapidly escalating war preparations on the part of both imperialist blocs. The class character of the Soviet Union is a question of crucial importance for the international communist movement, yet your party — which not only had its origins in the battle Mao launched against Soviet revisionism but which also denounced Soviet social-imperialism for over ten years — has not publicly issued a single word in explanation of your change of line!

It must be said frankly that this lack of explanation over the years for reversing a verdict on such a question is singular testimony to the deterioration of your grasp of the decisiveness of revolutionary principles in leading proletarian revolution, not to speak of your commitment to struggling over cardinal questions within the international communist movement.

The Soviet question is bound up with another vital question of revolutionary principle: that of self-reliance in the revolutionary struggle. In an interview with *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Satur Ocampo, who was named to head up the ceasefire negotiations with the Aquino government, replied to a question on external aid that, "depending on the level of armaments that the AFP would utilise against the NPA, the NPA would determine whether external sources

of arms would be necessary." Such questioning of whether external aid would be "necessary" has appeared more and more frequently alongside continued upholding of "self-reliance" in other interviews with leading CPP figures. Isn't it apparent that treating the Soviet Union as "socialist" prepares the path for accepting military aid, particularly in case of difficulty — or at least using the threat of such aid to "strengthen" potential CPP bargaining positions in any future negotiations?

Taking up such a position would represent yet another sharp reversal of your earlier line, when you issued such bold revolutionary declarations on the need for "self-reliance" as the following, in *Urgent Tasks*: "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. Caught by surprise in any one of so many possible situations, a full enemy squad can be easily overpowered by our militia with bolos or even with bare hands. The most important thing is the people's revolutionary determination and wisdom." Do you now regard this as "infantile naiveté"? — if so, it is far preferable to the "maturity" of opening your arms to those you earlier denounced so fiercely and righteously.

It is also unfortunate that it is on *nationalist* grounds that you seem prepared to judge friends and enemies. As the NDF Programme puts it, "We wage people's war on the fundamental principal 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 organisations abroad. *Those who extend such support prove themselves true friends of the Philippine revolution and the Filipino people.*" (emphasis added) Would Soviet arms trickling in, or even flowing into the Philippine revolutionary movement really prepare you to hail them as "true friends of the Filipino people"? And what of the people of

Afghanistan? The nationalist blinders on your eyes that steer you towards such conclusions forget even the history of the Philippines itself — after all, U.S. imperialism sent in arms and men to throw out the Spanish colonialists. . . and then turned around and established their own domination. The character of the Soviet Union is imperialist whether or not they give *you* arms — and even if they do, it will only be with the same ends and means as they did to the Vietnamese, Angolans, etc. Once you swallow this bait, the hook sticks deep — the Vietnamese leadership eclectically combined talk of "self-reliance" with support for "fraternal" Soviet aid, and their promises faded away into the bitter reality of Soviet naval forces in Cam Ranh Bay.

This question has been hotly debated in the Philippine revolutionary movement, and for a long time your party took a better line. Again, to hail the Soviets and their puppets as "socialist" can only open the door to accepting their "fraternal aid" and ultimately to collaboration with these enemies of the Filipino people.

The CPP has also opened the door to Soviet "aid" in the economic development of the country, which is one important way in which Soviet social-imperialism attempts to penetrate the oppressed countries. In Angola, for example, the Soviets actually gave material aid to the MPLA liberation movement, then, once it came to power, encouraged it to nationalise certain strategic holdings. But was that anything but a mere change in legal form? Did it do anything to really restructure internal relations in Angola and break its dependency on imperialism — or didn't it just take new forms? In fact, using the leverage the Soviets had built up over the years of the liberation war, and with its protégés in control of the state sector, the Soviets further secured their hold with military aid and advisors (Cuban, E. German, etc.).

The CPP appears, unfortunately, to be less and less averse to this kind of "development." Issues of *Ang Bayan* over the past two years

have hailed the "victories" of the "revolution" in Angola, Nicaragua, etc. The January 1984 *Ang Bayan* reported: "For the first time Cubans are masters of their own country." In these words, President Fidel Castro described what the revolution has achieved for the people of Cuba." Yet Castro presides over a one-crop sugar economy as dependent as ever on an imperialist overlord, only now the Soviets, and, in exchange for the financial infusions necessary to keep Cuba afloat, has turned over the command strings of the entire society to his Soviet masters, so that now Cuba's soldiers jump to the bark of Russian generals!

Finally, while you speak of "international solidarity" with other revolutionary movements, in reality your party, especially through the NDF internationally, concentrates on "solidarity work" with Catholic Church groups, social democrats, revisionist trade unions, etc. Any one of these initiatives might be justified, but it is impermissible to forget that the firm real allies of your people's war, which at its birth you declared part of the world proletarian revolution, are the workers and oppressed of all countries, and their genuine revolutionary leadership, the Marxist-Leninists. Your conception of "international solidarity" departs from the correct proletarian internationalist viewpoint.

What Road to Power?

Closely related to the errors already noted — particularly the narrowing of the target of revolution, the promotion of bourgeois democratic forms, the obscuring of the necessity to smash the reactionary state power, and your new openness to social-democracy and social-imperialism — is a conception emerging within the CPP CC of another road to political power, one which is different from and opposed to the Marxist-Leninist path and one which cannot enable the CPP to achieve its original goal of overthrowing "imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism."

The essence of this road is that it calls into question the strategy of protracted people's war in the

Philippines, and instead argues the possibility of achieving power more rapidly through uprisings in the city combined with compromises with sections of the ruling classes; it models itself to a large degree on the experience of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua.

In June 1984 *Ang Bayan* printed an article entitled "Long Live the Nicaraguan Revolution!" As the title indicates, the article lauds the Sandinistas, specifically their land reform. It goes on to hail the Sandinista land reform as offering "a good example of the correct approach to revolution" and "blazing a new path in agrarian struggle" — this despite admissions in the article that the Sandinistas "have placed no limit on land ownership and guaranteed the right to private landholdings as long as the landowners. . . make the land produce efficiently," and that the "Sandinista government believes that the continued existence of a mixed economy in the countryside is not only politically expedient but economically advantageous." Whether or not this is a new path to agrarian struggle — and it seems to be only too familiar — it is most definitely not a "correct approach to revolution."

The article goes on to say that the developments in Nicaragua "speak well for the policies and tactics undertaken by the national leadership" and that "the history and struggle of the Nicaraguan people have much in common with our own." Of particular interest is the favourable assessment given to the "broad popular front" set up by the Sandinistas "which included various political groups with different political tendencies" and "was supported even by anti-Somoza groups within the local ruling classes." Here the resemblance to some of the policies already adopted by the CPP — efforts to unite with ruling class opposition forces, the narrowing of the target to the Marcos clique, etc. — are striking.

Since that time, the "Sandinista" road has been the subject of an important discussion in your party. Satur Ocampo, for instance, in the interview with the *Far Eastern Eco-*

nomie Review cited earlier, stated that, while the CPP still considered the armed struggle principal, "it doesn't leave out the possibility of achieving its ends through political means. Now we are looking more towards the probability of developing a very strong unarmed movement among the people with a moral force that would enable the people's forces, armed and unarmed, to overthrow the Marcos dictatorship with as little bloodshed as possible."

This holding out of the "possibility of achieving the CPP's ends through political means" is an eclectic formulation typical of the revisionist parties, and stands opposed to a long-standing fundamental principle of the CPP. As put in an early *Ang Bayan* (19 March 1971): "Holding high the spirit of the Paris Commune, Chairman Mao teaches us that, 'Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.' This is not only the essence of the people's democratic revolution under the leadership of the proletariat in China but of every revolutionary battle led by the proletariat during the 100 years since the Paris Commune. *No movement or proletarian party has ever seized political power without having followed the principle of armed revolution.*" (emphasis added)

Unfortunately, there is reason to believe that the unleashing of "self-criticism" in the CPP has been accompanied, at least in certain quarters, not by determination to deepen an understanding of the path of people's war, but by open flirtation with this Sandinista path. Both major articles in the aforementioned *Praktika* seem to support this path, and a series of papers by a certain Marty Villalobos, described as "a senior Party member," which are circulating for discussion in your party and in the Philippine revolutionary movement, openly do so. Villalobos' papers have the merit of being a clear and concise statement of a thoroughly opportunist line which should be vigorously repudiated by your party.

The critique launched in *Praktika* is ostensibly against the boycott policy, but, as the authors

from the National Youth and Student Board note, "behind the boycott tactics lurk the deep-rooted problems concerning. . . the whole strategy and tactics of the Philippine revolution." Both articles sound the battlecry, "Dare We Win?" — the theme is that the recent events offered (and perhaps still do) the possibility of linking up with and leading much broader forces in the city, including many liberal democrats, towards the successful seizure of power by the revolutionaries, and that the failure to do this, the "slurring over" of the "anti-fascist component of the united front," and the underestimation of work in the cities resulted in the fact that "the revolutionaries ended up without a medal" — which appears to mean above all that they didn't maximise their influence in the new government.

These same themes are taken up by Villalobos, and generalised. For Villalobos, the root evil behind these "failures" is the strategy of protracted people's war itself. He argues that protracted people's war is a gradualist strategy that is responsible not only for the boycott position but more generally for the CPP missing the opportunity for leading a successful Sandinista-style "insurrection" in the cities. Speaking of protracted people's war, he says: ". . . victory against the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship would only be achieved in at least five years, maybe seven years, or even ten years. While the CPP- NDF were preparing for the leap *in the next few years* into the next substage of the strategic defensive. . . the Marcos fascist regime was toppled in three months. There can be no evidence more damning than this that the Party was pursuing an incorrect strategy." ("On the Insurrectional Strategy") Villalobos argues that, while protracted people's war was suitable for a certain period, the CPP should have gone over to an "insurrectional strategy" several years ago, at the time of the major urban demonstrations following Benigno Aquino's assassination.

He enumerates the differences between protracted people's war and the "insurrectional strategy": (1)

"the insurrectional strategy is more urban-centred, since the mass movement, which is the focal point of the struggle in the insurrectional strategy, converges mainly in the cities." (2) "In the insurrectional strategy, the political forces play the decisive role and the military forces the supportive role. Humberto Ortega, commander-in-chief of the Sandinista People's Army, . . . clarified: 'The mass movement is the focal point of the struggle and not the vanguard with the masses limited to merely supporting it.'" (3) "In the insurrectional strategy, victory is envisioned in a relatively much shorter time. . . ." (4) "In the insurrectional strategy, guerrilla warfare is intensified but it does not develop into regular mobile warfare or positional warfare." Instead, the insurrectional strategy envisions combining general strikes, mass uprisings, and guerrilla warfare to defeat the government. (5) "A flexible policy of alliances with opposition bourgeoisie may be considered a distinct feature of the insurrectional strategy." Finally, the insurrectional strategy counts on support from powerful forces internationally; Villalobos specifically cites the Socialist International (France's Mitterand, Spain's Gonzalez, Peru's Alan Garcia, etc.) as potential supporters to be courted.

Might this be "faster" than protracted people's war? Perhaps — but if so, for one simple reason: Villalobos' scenario has nothing whatsoever to do with uprooting *a system* of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. In rejecting the path of people's war for the Philippines, Villalobos has rejected revolution altogether.

How could this strategy be expected to overthrow imperialism and feudalism when, despite its claim to promote the role of the masses and all its feigned humility about not "limiting the masses to supporting the vanguard," it raises unity with bourgeois and international forces above relying on the masses and raises the city above the countryside in a land where the great masses of exploited and oppressed are peasants? It is indeed noteworthy that the peasants figure only in passing in Villalobos'

papers. There is a logic to this however: why mobilise the millions of peasants in people's war if the plan is to retain a "mixed economy" and large private landholdings anyway? Nor are the peasants of much use if one's strategy relies not on rousing a mighty red army, of which peasants would definitely form the bulk, but on demonstrations, strikes, etc., and especially parliamentary work with the ruling class opposition and diplomatic work with social-democratic imperialists. For Villalobos the word "masses" doesn't mean the masses of oppressed and exploited, but the urban middle forces, and especially the national bourgeoisie and the ruling class opposition. This is the heart of Villalobos' "insurrection strategy": rejection of making the workers and peasants the focal point of the revolutionary strategy.

The Sandinista path seeks to mobilise the revolutionary forces to contend with the bourgeoisie on their grounds and on their terms; it stands in stark opposition to Mao's defiant statement of military strategy, "You fight your way, I'll fight mine" — while the reactionaries base themselves on their technological superiority, on ignorant conscripted soldiers, and military doctrines suited to these features, the proletarian revolutionaries base themselves on the conscious mobilisation of the masses of people. In the Philippines, this means, above all, the peasantry. While the strategy of people's war must be able to take account and make use of the kind of urban upheavals that you have recently experienced, it is still true that the countryside is principal and that protracted people's war is the basic path for the Philippine revolution, as your party spelled out at its origins.

All this is a reflection of the truth that there are no easy short-cuts to victory in revolutionary war, for there is no easy way to destroy the enemy's repressive apparatus (i.e., smash the existing state power) and uproot centuries of class rule along with all the old habits, traditions and ideas which prop it up, nor to prepare the masses to run society themselves. Yet this is what

Villalobos' "insurrectional strategy" amounts to above all: the illusion of an easy, quick path to victory, easy and quick because it *bypasses* any real revolution. Genuine revolutionaries have only too often sought to pursue such shortcuts, especially in times of mass upheaval, when principles are jettisoned as it appears that bending to nationalism and bourgeois democracy offer quick paths to victory.

Villalobos continues this same tact in his raising of the political struggle above the military struggle, as if this too promoted the role of the masses. Quite the opposite. The armed struggle is, as Mao put it, the highest form of struggle because it is the seizure of power by the masses, the battle to destroy the old state and establish the new, and thus to take control of and reorganise all society. In Villalobos' view, guerrilla warfare is not a means for mobilizing the masses, especially the poor peasants, over time so as to build the red army and eat up the old state power and finally destroy its repressive apparatus altogether; no, instead of correctly viewing guerrilla warfare as a critical component of protracted people's war, guerrilla warfare is just one more *means of pressure* to be brought to bear, along with strikes, demonstrations, and political and international pressure from bourgeois forces. This is no revolutionary strategy for seizing and holding power through armed struggle, and it certainly has nothing to do with the Bolsheviks' mass insurrection and all-out civil war to establish proletarian rule. This is just reformist mush, a slightly warmed-over version of the Cuban foco-ist theory, which has always combined peaceful mass movements with a dash of guerrilla warfare and a big helping of support from bourgeois forces.

Everything about this version of the "insurrectional strategy" points not at the overthrowing of imperialist-backed rule, but a different goal: the mere toppling of *one clique* of the ruling classes, and at most the establishment of some bourgeois democratic trappings. Look at what Villalobos himself holds up as such "damning" proof

of the failure of the protracted people's war strategy: that while it envisioned victory only after a number of years, Marcos was toppled in three months. All this is proof of is that what Villalobos thinks the revolution is all about is *getting rid of a single clique*. Is this the goal of protracted people's war — or isn't it overthrowing the entire imperialist-feudal system, liberating the Filipino people from all forms of oppression as they embark on the path of abolishing class society, as part of the world proletarian revolution?

Villalobos virtually admits that his is not a program for a real rupture with imperialism. In lamenting how up to the present, "unfortunately the Chinese influence has been more pervasive (than the Sandinista)," he says that one major difference between the two is that the objective of the Chinese model is "complete victory of the democratic forces," whereas that of the Sandinista model is "decisive victory of the democratic forces." What a difference a word makes! For the Chinese revolution did indeed shatter the reactionary state apparatus of Chiang Kai-shek and his U.S. backers, imperialism was tossed out on its heels, and the revolution was continued for several decades against all imperialism. But this is *not* Villalobos' goal. He openly acknowledges his willingness to settle for less — and anything less than a "complete" break with imperialism can only mean settling for resting in the embrace of imperialist relations, for breaking with centuries of class society and with continuing imperialist encirclement will be a most arduous uphill battle.

The real lesson of the Sandinista path is summed up by the statement in the *Declaration of the RIM*: "History proves the bankruptcy of an 'anti-imperialist front' (or similar 'revolutionary front') which is not led by a Marxist-Leninist party, even when such a front or forces within it adopt a 'Marxist' (actually pseudo-Marxist) colouration. While such revolutionary formations have led heroic struggles and even delivered powerful blows to the imperialists they have been proven to be ideologically and

organisationally incapable of resisting imperialist and bourgeois influences. Even where such forces have seized power they have been incapable of carrying through a thorough-going revolutionary transformation of society and end up, sooner or later, being overthrown by the imperialists or themselves becoming a new reactionary ruling power in league with imperialists."

The Ceasefire Negotiations: Tit-for-Tat?

In the last few months your party has sat down at the negotiating table and concluded a ceasefire with the representatives of a government that defends the "three mountains" of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism that still rest on the back of the Filipino people. This action sharpens even further the serious questions facing the CPP. Leaving aside whether the negotiations are a legitimate tactical step, we are compelled to ask: what politics are in command of these negotiations?

Mao Tsetung noted that "Sometimes not going to negotiations is tit-for-tat; and sometimes, going to negotiations is also tit-for-tat." And as he pointed out, "How to give 'tit-for-tat' depends on the situation." ("On the Chungking Negotiations") Mao himself of course sat down with Chiang Kai-shek to conduct negotiations, but he was always clear that armed revolutionary warfare is the only road to genuine liberation and he never harboured or promoted any illusions about the nature of Chiang Kai-shek and his U.S. masters or the possibility of achieving fundamental change through the negotiations. On the contrary, even as they opened negotiations with the KMT, Mao led the CCP in exposing Chiang Kai-shek's fascist repression of the people, his character as a representative of the compradors, feudals and bureaucrat capitalists, his ties to the U.S., and his preparations for launching a civil war to re-establish the old order. Furthermore, he pointed out that the main danger would be "failing to struggle hard and in making a voluntary gift to Chiang Kai-shek of the fruits which should go to the people," and

he called on the party and the troops "to be mentally prepared well in advance (for civil war). This is a very important point, and it makes a world of difference whether or not there is such preparedness." (The Situation and Our Policy after the Victory in the War of Resistance against Japan)

You too have been negotiating — but what politics are leading? What are you preparing your cadre and troops for, when instead of exposing those with whom you negotiate, you promote illusions about their "progressive" character, about the "democratic reforms" they are engaged in, and you hide and obscure their ties to imperialism? And what, after all, are *they* preparing for — with imperialist military aid pouring in on a heightened scale, economic debts being renegotiated, while all the imperialists pull together to support the Aquino government — if not restabilizing the old order, through a bloody civil war if necessary? It must be asked bluntly: are these negotiations, in your view, a means to advance people's war to thoroughly smash the old reactionary order and establish a revolutionary dictatorship of the people led by the proletariat? Or is it the case that guerrilla warfare is being reduced to just one among several means of bringing leverage against the government for achieving some other, ultimately non-revolutionary, objectives, which you hope the negotiations are serving to advance?

Departing from Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought Means Death for the Revolution

We have analysed above some of the key erroneous trends that have infected the line of the CPP over the past years and have given rise to the current situation in which a party founded on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, on the strategy of people's war led by the proletariat, with the goal of establishing the revolutionary democratic dictatorship led by the proletariat and moving forwards towards classless society through many cultural revolutions, has more and more given way to a party mired in crisis and on a dangerous

path. We cannot sum up the full process that gave rise to this situation — but one thing can be said with certainty: the dangerous tendencies infecting your line are bound up with your refusal to deal correctly with the cardinal questions of line in the international communist movement which arose in the wake of the death of Mao Tsetung and the reactionary coup d'état in China in 1976.

Whether or not you acknowledged it, and despite advances in your own armed struggle in the Philippines, the reversal of proletarian rule in China and the subsequent attacks on Mao Tsetung Thought and the Cultural Revolution dealt a serious blow to the international communist movement and raised profound questions of political and ideological line. These put revolutionaries around the world to a test: whether or not to rise up against the reactionary onslaught on Mao Tsetung Thought and defend it as the highest pinnacle yet reached by the world proletarian revolution, as the "acme of Marxism-Leninism," as your party once put it.

At the time of Mao's death, the CPP circulated a statement by its chairman upholding Mao Tsetung Thought and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and condemning the revisionist line of the unrepentant capitalist roader Deng Xiao-ping. Shortly thereafter, the CPP turned around and hailed the reactionary coup d'état of Hua Guo-feng and virulently denounced the so-called "Gang of Four," though without any real explanation or analysis of the class struggle in China. Since that time, as Deng was brought back, as the policies of the Cultural Revolution were reversed one after another, as the attacks on Mao Tsetung escalated in China and around the world, the CPP stood, and still stands, silent. You also turned a deaf ear to the efforts of genuine Marxist-Leninists trying to regroup internationally to wage a riposte to these attacks.

Agnosticism or indifference to this battle in fact amounted to indifference to the battle to defend the revolutionary science of the proletariat and thus to indifference to advancing the world proletarian

revolution itself. As our movement declared in its *Declaration*, "Upholding Mao Tsetung's qualitative development of the science of Marxism-Leninism represents a particularly important and pressing question in the international movement and among the class-conscious workers and other revolutionary-minded people in the world today. The principle involved is nothing less than whether or not to uphold and build upon the decisive contributions to the proletarian revolution and the science of Marxism-Leninism made by Mao Tsetung. It is therefore nothing less than a question of whether or not to uphold Marxism-Leninism itself." And, as was quoted earlier, "Without upholding and building on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought it is impossible to defeat revisionism, imperialism and reaction in general."

This is proved by the history of the CPP itself. Its very origins were a product of the battle launched by Mao Tsetung against revisionism. In the Philippines, it was forced to break with and expose the revisionist PKP, which had declared its own supposed "principled independence" from the "Sino-Soviet split," and soon showed just where that centrist path led as it slid further than ever into the Soviet revisionist grip and wound up capitulating to Marcos in a ceremony broadcast on television. At that time you declared that Mao Tsetung Thought was "the line of demarcation between true and false revolutionaries" — is that any less true today? Has this changed because the forces attacking Mao Tsetung Thought appear stronger and have intensified their attack, having seized state power in China. . . or isn't it the case that defending the contributions of Mao Tsetung to Marxism-Leninism is more than ever a fundamental line of demarcation between revolution and revisionism, and that Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought is the basis for the international communist movement to regroup and advance? It is ironic that the end result of your wrong assessment of the developments in China (i.e. your support for the reactionary coup

d'état) and your refusal to correct this view has not been to trail Chinese revisionism but rather to get closer and closer to the Soviet Union!

Furthermore, the CPP's apparent abandoning of its line upholding the necessity of "many cultural revolutions" and of continuing revolutionary struggle against the new bourgeoisie which is inevitably engendered under socialism — nothing on any of this has appeared for years now in the CPP press — means that it would be impossible for you to preserve national independence even if it were won by force of arms. For in the oppressed countries, without the proletariat's continual victory over emerging new bourgeois forces and its on-going revolutionisation of the production relations, it is impossible even to develop a relatively self-sufficient economic system and thus prevent the re-emergence of neocolonial relations of dependency, much less advance in the direction of communist society. The reactionary coup d'état in 1976 in China illustrated this, as the new revisionist bourgeoisie quickly reversed verdicts and re-opened China's door to imperialist economic penetration and undid the achievements in building an independent socialist economy.

In sum, the depths of the ideological and political deterioration of the Party, which results in no small way from the refusal to take a clear stand between Mao Tsetung Thought and revisionism, have become truly alarming: — The class nature of the regime you were fighting was lost sight of, the necessity to smash the entire repressive apparatus increasingly downplayed, bourgeois-democratic notions of "modern-day republics" were promoted, as wrong conceptions of the path and goal of the revolution have come to the fore; — The proletariat has been progressively subordinated to other class forces, imperialist puppets are promoted as "progressives" and "reformists," and one of the original strengths of the CPP, that of rallying the peasants in a genuine people's war as the main force for revolution, is increasingly put on a par with (or even subordinated

to) united action with bourgeois strata in the cities; — Imperialist countries are treated as socialist ones, dependent countries as independent revolutionary regimes, and eventually the necessity or possibility of completely rupturing with imperialism begins to give way to "practical" plans to come to terms with imperialism, possibly under the banner of the "necessity" of Soviet aid.

The "insurrectionary strategy" is one important manifestation of these dangerous tendencies, but it is not the only such manifestation.

Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought is the Key to the Philippine Revolution!

Despite whatever twists and turns the revolution might be obliged to pass through, in the final analysis the situation is excellent for persevering in the people's war and making genuine advances towards the revolutionary goal. The imperialists themselves understand this clearly — their accelerated military aid is not a sign of strong, confident expansion, but of their sober awareness of the fragility and vulnerability of the ruling regime. They can offer no fundamental solution to the profound crisis gripping the Philippines.

But in order to advance the armed struggle it is necessary to carry on two-line struggle as well. The central political question facing the Philippine revolution today is the question of persevering in people's war and continuing on the path of Mao Tsetung. But this cannot be reduced to simply continuing to carry out armed actions, for political errors have been distorting the character and role of the armed struggle. The experience of the Huk Rebellion of the 1950s, when thousands of armed fighters under the leadership of the old communist party, the PKP, were led to defeat, has already provided the basis for showing that only a correct line based on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung can lead to victory. Without defeating erroneous lines, continued advance of the people's war will be placed in jeopardy; yet at the same time such rectification must be carried out in the course of

carrying on and advancing the people's war, for opportunist and capitulationist tendencies must be defeated both in theory and in practice.

Today's conditions of great danger and great opportunity in the Philippines make it all the more urgent that the leadership and membership of the Communist Party of the Philippines rise to the challenges before you and carry out your obligation to the Filipino people and the international proletariat. But fulfilling these noble obligations is not simply a question of intentions; it is above all a matter of political and ideological line. For the crisis in which the CPP finds itself caught today is not brought on, as some currents argue, by the party's Marxist-Leninist line and hence by its allegedly dogmatic and sectarian character, but on the contrary it is a crisis brought on by *the failure to systematically take up and apply Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought*. Resolving this crisis demands not the abandoning of revolutionary principles in pursuit of some illusory shortcut, but a return to them in order to sum up the serious errors committed, rectify them and then move ahead to advance the Philippine revolution as part of the world proletarian revolution.

In conclusion, it is worth citing from the Report to the 10th Party Congress of the Communist Party of China: "Chairman Mao teaches us that 'the correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political line decides everything.' If one's line is incorrect, one's downfall is inevitable, even with the control of the central, local and army leadership. If one's line is correct, even if one has not a single soldier at first, there will be soldiers, and even if there is no political power, political power will be gained. This is borne out by the historical experience of our Party and by that of the international communist movement since the time of Marx. . . . The crux of the matter is line. This is an irrefutable truth." □

Fraternally,
Committee of the RIM
March 1987