

Requirements of the Revolutionary United Front

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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 reestablished 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 skillfully 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!

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