

REBOLUSYON

**Theoretical and Political Journal of the Central Committee
of the Communist Party of the Philippines**

REAFFIRM OUR BASIC PRINCIPLES AND RECTIFY ERRORS

**Adopted by the
10th Plenum of the Central Committee
July 1992**

REAFFIRM OUR BASIC PRINCIPLES AND RECTIFY ERRORS

**Central Committee
Communist Party of the Philippines
July 1992**

[Editorial Note: This is the final document as amended and approved by the Central Committee of the Party. This supersedes the draft presented by CC Chairman Armando Liwanag and the version amended and approved by the Executive Committee of the Central Committee.

This is an internal Party document. Party cadres can make copies of this document only upon authorization by higher organs. New and unpublished data presented in this document can be published only upon the permission and authorization of higher organs of the Party.

Because this is a summing up of major errors and shortcomings and also a rectification document, there is a preponderance of criticism rather than of celebration of the achievements of the Party.

This is the principal document of the ongoing rectification movement. It is supplemented by the General Review of Important Events and Decisions From 1980 to 1991.]

LET US REAFFIRM the basic revolutionary principles of the Party on the 23rd anniversary of its reestablishment. These are our guiding light in taking stock of and celebrating the accomplishments of the Party as well as in confronting certain long-running problems and unprecedented setbacks.

Our basic principles are set forth in the documents of reestablishment such as “Rectify Errors and Rebuild the Party”, the Party Constitution and Program. As proletarian revolutionaries, we must always measure ourselves according to these principles.

These principles run through the following: adherence to the theory of Marxism-Leninism, repudiation of modern revisionism, the class analysis of Philippine society as semicolonial and semifeudal, the general line of new democratic revolution, the

leading role of the working class through the Party, the theory of people's war and the strategic line of encircling the cities from the countryside, the united front along the revolutionary class line, democratic centralism, the socialist perspective and proletarian internationalism.

Through the years, the overwhelming majority of Party cadres and members have adhered to these basic principles and have won great victories in carrying the Philippine revolution forward. The Party played an outstanding role in the long struggle against the U.S.-Marcos fascist dictatorship up to the end and comprehensively and profoundly advanced the Philippine revolution to a level higher than at any time in the past.

Under the guidance of the Party's general line, correct tactics against the U.S.-Marcos fascist dictatorship, policy on the step-by-step, all-sided and consistent pursuit of the armed revolution and through the courageous struggles and sacrifices by Party cadres and members and by the revolutionary masses, the Party, the people's army, the mass movement and the revolutionary united front reached in the mid-1980s a level unprecedented in scope and strength since the Party's reestablishment, far beyond the highest level ever achieved by the armed revolution under the leadership of the old merger party.

At the same time, there have been gross deviations and errors which have caused grievous damage to the Party and the revolutionary mass movement. There have also been other errors and shortcomings, which although not as serious, have nonetheless caused damage or served as a drag on the advance of the revolution. Impelled by petty bourgeois impetuosity and subjectivism in the face of the vigorous advance of the revolution and the rapid decline of the U.S.-Marcos fascist dictatorship, there emerged inside the Party certain concepts of "advancing" the revolution that deviated from the basic principles and the theory and line of people's war, flew away from concrete conditions and the actual strength of the revolutionary forces and overreached for a quick victory by skipping the necessary stages for advancing the revolution.

The worst among these is the line combining the desire for urban armed insurrection and army "regularization", that in the countryside encouraged military adventurist actions and the purely military viewpoint and, in the cities, actions and ideas of putschism and worship of the spontaneous masses. The obsession with urban insurrection and the premature buildup of higher but as yet unsustainable military formations (companies and battalions) and top-heavy staff structures, deprived the

countryside of cadres urgently needed for mass work. These are misrepresented as adjustments or refinements on the theory and practice of people's or otherwise as a superior theory or strategy. Thus, we are plagued by a reduction of mass base and other concomitant problems that in gravity are also unprecedented in the experience of the reestablished Party.

The serious deviations and errors were not identified, criticized and repudiated for a long time. These were allowed to spread and influence a portion of the Party organization and created a great amount of disorientation and damage, and then to harden to the point of rejecting criticism and rectification, and now to a degree these threaten the very life of the Party and the revolutionary movement.

However, the correct line and those who adhere to it still prevail and can further prevail over the wrong line. It should be made clear, however, that we are still far stronger in several respects than in 1968, 1977 or 1980. The entire strength of the Party, the people's army and the mass movement in the countryside and the cities is more or less at the level we reached in 1983 or 1984. If we rectify the deviations and errors and take firm steps towards the correct course, the strength that we have achieved and maintained until today is sufficient for us to continue advancing towards the last phase of the strategic defensive. There is firm ground for further leading the masses (arousing, organizing and mobilizing them) and launching the offensives (mass actions and armed tactical offensives) that we are capable of.

The enemy is daydreaming when he boasts of being able to defeat the Party and the people in 1992 and 1993. The ruling system is wracked by an ever worsening political and economic crisis. There is increasing violence among the political factions of the exploiting classes. The preindustrial semicolonial and semifeudal economy continues to be plundered by the local exploiting classes and the multinational firms and banks. The crisis drives the broad masses of the people to resistance and provides the fertile ground for the armed revolution and the legal democratic movement.

We must stand firmly as proletarian revolutionaries like the Bolsheviks did when capitalism expanded rapidly to become modern imperialism in the period before World War I and the classical revisionists dominated the Second International and also like the Communists did when they fought fascism during another period before, during and after World War II. We must stand firm and fight now in another dark period when capitalism seems to be unchallenged and unbeatable as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the revisionist ruling parties and regimes

and their replacement by undisguised bourgeois class dictatorship and capitalist regimes.

The chronic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal social system is ever worsening and provides the conditions for the development of our protracted armed revolution. We see the ever-growing contradictions among the capitalist powers, between them and the increased number of debt-ridden neocolonies, between the local ruling classes and their foreign masters on the one hand and the oppressed and exploited peoples and nations on the other and between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

All the counterrevolutionary campaigns of violence and deception will fail if the Party sums up its experience well, criticizes, repudiates and rectifies the major errors and deviations that have seriously damaged the Party and the revolutionary mass movement and now threaten their very life. The Party can further strengthen itself by basing itself on previous and continuing achievements, conducting criticism and self-criticism in an all-round rectification movement and correctly setting forth the new tasks.

In the face of enemy assaults and of deviations and errors that have caused serious damage to the revolutionary forces and the people, we call on all Party cadres and members to reaffirm our basic principles, identify and rectify the major deviations, errors and shortcomings and strengthen our Party ideologically, politically and organizationally.

Despite the adverse results leading to the drastic decline in our strength in certain areas, there are still some elements who persist in their impetuosity and there are others who swing from an ultra-Left position to a Rightist position. It is of crucial importance that we trace the ideological, political and organizational roots of our major errors and shortcomings, understand the circumstances in which these arose and recognize their harmful effects, so that we can correctly take our bearings and strengthen the Party and the revolutionary mass movement.

There can be countless specific achievements and specific problems to cite. But our main objective in this document is to identify, criticize and rectify those major deviations, errors and shortcomings that have had the most considerable impact on the current status and further development of the Party and the revolutionary movement. While we conduct a wideranging review and study of our past practice and current circumstances, this is not intended to replace the summings-up and

assessments of varying scope that must still be undertaken.

In general, the Party still has considerable strength and vitality needed to solve the long running problems and overcome the unprecedented setbacks. We can further strengthen ourselves and carry the revolution forward.

I. IN THE FIELD OF IDEOLOGY

AS PROLETARIAN REVOLUTIONARIES, we have availed ourselves of the great treasury of Marxist-Leninist theory and have drawn from it the basic principles that guide our revolutionary cause in the stages of new democratic revolution, socialist revolution and communism. We must continue to do so, or else suffer the fate of the revisionist ruling parties (including their camp followers) that started to revise and depart from basic revolutionary principles more than three decades ago and would eventually disintegrate during these last few years.

Without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement. We can persevere in revolutionary struggle, promote the rights and interests of the people, stay on the correct line and win further victories only if we have firm ideological moorings. We must therefore undertake theoretical studies seriously.

Political studies and activism are absolutely necessary in order to arouse, organize and mobilize the masses. But these are not enough. We must not limit ourselves to the study of the national situation from time to time. We also must not swing and sway with the current hype in the bourgeois mass media nor with pressures of unstable and unreliable allies. We must constantly be clear about our theory and our ideas. We must constantly be clear about the interests of the proletariat and the oppressed people in our own country and throughout the world.

We must maintain and further develop our Marxist-Leninist stand, viewpoint and method. We must constantly improve our knowledge of the materialist philosophy, historical materialism, political economy, scientific socialism, the new-democratic revolution, party building, people's war and the building of the united front.

Since the reestablishment of the Party, theoretical study has had three levels: the basic level focusing on Philippine history, society and revolution and our own basic documents; the intermediate level, on the comparative study of the Philippine

revolution with the Chinese and other revolutionary movements, using our seven-volume selections from Mao's works; and the advanced level, on the basic principles of Marxist-Leninist theory, using the most important works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao for reading and study by individual Party members and by Party branches.

But since the late 1970s, we have increasingly departed from the foregoing structure of theoretical education and given less attention to the works of Mao. Writings of lesser importance and lesser relevance to our revolutionary struggle have gained more attention from Party members although in a superficial manner.

Also since the late 1970s, except for the basic Party course and other sporadic educational drives of limited coverage, there has been a gross lack of study courses and study materials for theoretical education at the intermediate and advanced levels. New translations into Pilipino of the basic documents of our Party's reestablishment and other important basic writings were made and distributed in 1981-82 but only in limited number. The works of the great communist thinkers and leaders have also become scarce and unavailable to the Party rank and file.

Low Level of Theoretical Education

THE UNDENIABLE CONSEQUENCE of this neglect of theoretical education is the widespread low level of theoretical knowledge among Party cadres and members, especially among those recruited since the late 1970s. There is a growing failure to evaluate the revolutionary experience of our own Party and people as well as foreign revolutionary experiences, past and current. There is also a growing failure to identify, criticize and combat the petty bourgeois ideas and influences that emerge inside and outside the Party and are allowed to mislead our Party members and the revolutionary masses. Cadres with a low level of theoretical knowledge have been organizationally promoted and are prone to serious deviations and errors not only in ideology but also consequently in political and organizational work.

There is wide ground for subjectivism, including the dogmatist and revisionist trends, to arise within the Party. Instead of having a comprehensive, complete and all-sided view of things and theoretical development from a proletarian revolutionary stand, there is a narrow, one-sided and fragmentary view of these, depending on which deviation certain elements wish to promote.

For instance, there are elements who exaggerate the current role of their urban

area of work and eclectically take out of historical context certain dramatic events, like the Petrograd and Moscow uprisings, the Vietnamese uprising of 1945, the Tet offensive of 1968 and the Nicaraguan final offensive of 1979 - in order to insist on the “autonomous/specific dynamism of urban struggle” (apart from the entire strategy) and devise a “new strategy” of armed urban insurrection and dogmatically superimpose it on or counterpose it to the entire theory and practice of people’s war.

People’s war does not exclude armed insurrection at the appropriate time, like the widespread revolutionary uprisings in many Philippine provinces in 1896-98 and 1898-99 against Spanish colonial rule and then against the U.S. war of aggression and those in Central Luzon in late 1944 and early 1945 against the collapsing Japanese forces. In their respective times, the Philippine revolutionary army and the Hukbalahap were the rallying points of the organized and spontaneous masses.

A successful popular insurrection is premised on the disintegration of the counterrevolutionary army and on the existence of a new armed revolutionary force among other factors. To deny the necessity of developing people’s war and building the people’s army in stages, while the enemy force is still intact and not yet disintegrating, is not only to demagogically take advantage of a natural desire for quick victory but to lead the revolutionary forces to self-destruction.

Even when the wholeness of a certain thing or process is well perceived and even when the two contradictory aspects are recognized, errors have been committed either in identifying which are the principal and the secondary aspects under certain conditions at a given time; or after identifying the principal aspect, in completely or virtually denying the secondary one.

Take for instance the current of thought leading to the boycott error of 1986. The central leadership was correct in declaring that the 1986 snap presidential election was farcical and that Marcos would cheat and win the Comelec count. So up to a given set of circumstances and within a certain period of time, the principal aspect was obviously for Marcos to remain in power. Indeed, Marcos would “win” by Comelec count and Batasang Pambansa (the legislative) proclamation.

But the secondary aspect could rise to the principal position upon a change of circumstances, like the U.S.-engineered military mutiny and the popular uprising that arose due to the convergence of both the organized reactionary forces (including

the Catholic Church) and the progressive forces. As early as November 1985, the high potential of the secondary aspect rising to the principal position was already discernible.

In the handling of contradictory aspects, error can also arise from trying to combine or reconcile the principal aspect with the secondary aspect. According to dialectical materialism, an entire thing or process can be understood by knowing both the principal aspect and the secondary aspects or in a complex thing or process, both the principal and the secondary contradictions.

For example, one line is correct, like the strategic line of encircling the cities from the countryside in accordance with the theory of people's war. Another line is wrong, like aiming for total victory or a share of power with the bourgeoisie soon, without necessarily building the people's army in stages until it is strong enough to smash the bureaucratic-military machinery of the reactionary state in the cities. Thus, Party cadres, including those on the enemy manhunt list, concentrate in urban-based staff organs for the purpose of "preparing" for armed insurrection; and the people's army is pushed to build prematurely and unsustainably large combat formations and topheavy military staff.

The wrong line is not at all identified as such because it pays lip service to the theory of people's war and the leadership of the Party and also because it uses Party cadres and rides on - even while it undermines - the existing urban and rural mass base and contains certain elements of short-term validity like more effective offensives by bigger military formations before the mass base is greatly reduced or lost.

Proposals for shifting to an "insurrectionary" strategy or the diminution of importance of base building and the antifeudal struggle have been rejected, but these have not been thoroughly criticized. Worse, they have been allowed to persist in other guises such as aiming for the decisive victory of the revolution by means of the "strategic counteroffensive" within the strategic defensive and "seizing opportunities" by means of an urban insurrection combined with "regularization" for the strategic counteroffensive.

There is in effect a blending of the correct and wrong lines which allows the latter to make a big headway until the Party wakes up to the ultimate losses. In the absence of a clear and consistent criticism and rejection of what is wrong, the compromise allows the error to work like a parasite on the correct body of principles,

the Party, the people's army and the revolutionary mass movement.

The grossest example of failing to recognize the principal and secondary aspects of a certain thing or process pertains to Ahos Campaign (the anti-informer hysteria in Mindanao). The grave violations of civil rights, the unjust taking of the lives of comrades and other individuals and the attendant devastation of the revolutionary forces by this campaign are so strikingly clear and revolting. Yet for some time the campaign was deemed correct on the premise that it probably succeeded in eliminating real deep penetration agents even if hundreds upon hundreds of good comrades and innocent people were victimized and killed.

Various reasons which are extraneous or of indirect relevance to the flow of events under the responsibility of the Mindanao Commission from the early 1980s to late 1986 are cited as the basic causes of Ahos Campaign. These cut off the real connection among the wrong ideological, political and organizational line; the resultant setbacks; and the anti-infiltrate hysteria. The worst proposition put forward by some elements is that Ahos Campaign was a revolutionary success.

The People's War and the Two-Stage Revolution

IT IS NOT a matter of arbitrary choice that in the structure of theoretical education a large part should be allotted to the study of the works of Mao and the Chinese revolution. Mao represents a stage of theory and practice which is a major development of Marxism-Leninism. His works bring Marxism-Leninism deeper into the East. And these arose from semicolonial and semifeudal conditions basically similar to those of the Philippines.

The Chinese and the Vietnamese examples of people's war bear closer relevance to the current people's war in the Philippines than any other armed revolution abroad. These examples demonstrate that the chronic crisis of the semifeudal conditions is the ground for a protracted people's war and, to this day, they remain the best available and most relevant to our struggle.

We have learned basic principles from the Chinese revolution and Mao's works as the Vietnamese revolutionaries have. We have applied them according to our own conditions, never copying dogmatically nor mechanically any pattern of experience. Let us cite some important differences from the Chinese experience in people's war.

- (1) In addition to using the countryside to divide and weaken the forces of the enemy, we have used the archipelagic character of the country to further divide and weaken them.
- (2) The Chinese people's army used regular mobile warfare and established extensive base areas during the strategic defensive. Like the Vietnamese, we have done so with guerrilla warfare and guerrilla bases and zones.
- (3) A whole period of agrarian revolution involving peasant uprisings and confiscation of land preceded the more successful campaign of rent reduction and elimination of usury during the anti-Japanese struggle. We have pursued what we call the minimum program of the agrarian revolution before the maximum program.

The objective conditions and the subjective forces of the current Philippine revolution are such that it can fulfill the two-stage revolution (new democratic and socialist) first defined by Lenin and elaborated on by Mao. The Philippine revolution is therefore similar to the Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Cuban and other revolutions which could proceed from the new-democratic to the socialist stage. In this sense, our revolution belongs to a level higher than that of revolutions that have had to emerge from more backward colonial and even racist political and economic domination (like much of Africa) or those in which the revolutionary leadership is not determined to make a socialist revolution (like in Nicaragua).

The worst kind of dogmatism resulting in the worst damage to the Party is the superimposition of the Sandinista paradigm or some aspects of or events in the Vietnamese revolution outside of their historical context on our successful practice of people's war in order to push for insurrectionism and the unacknowledged revival of the Jose Lava idea of quick military victory to push the purely military viewpoint and military adventurism. The seed ideas for these started to sprout and grow in influence at first within the central leadership in the early years of the 1980s, emerged as a clear insurrectionist line in Mindanao in 1983, and was subsequently propagated on a nationwide scale from the mid-1980's onward within the frame of the program for the "strategic counteroffensive".

In its documents of reestablishment, the Party took into full account the most important and essential facts of Philippine history and circumstances, in the class struggle and revolutionary movement in our country. In the ideological field, the most outstanding achievement of the Party is the integration of Marxist-Leninist

theory and concrete Philippine conditions. This involves the identification of the basic conditions and current character of the Philippine revolution, its motive forces and enemies, its strategy and tactics, its tasks and its socialist perspective.

The Party made a criticism of the various subjectivist errors - dogmatist, empiricist or revisionist, and “Left” or Right opportunist - of the previous leaderships of the first Communist Party (1930-38) and the merger party of the Socialist and Communist parties (1938 onward).

Among the major subjectivist and opportunist errors criticized and repudiated was the Jose Lava adventurist line of quick military victory, building battalions and companies without building (through painstaking mass work) an extensive and deepgoing mass base as their foundation. When we forget lessons from our own history, we are bound to repeat the errors.

The line of spontaneous mass uprising and urban armed insurrection looks new and trendy because it flaunts the Sandinista paradigm or some paragraphs taken from some Vietnamese writings. But in fact, this line is also an unacknowledged recycling of the Sakdalista *alsa puto*, which had been correctly criticized and repudiated since the time of Comrade Crisanto Evangelista. As proletarian revolutionaries, we must learn from various revolutionary experiences abroad but we must know how to evaluate them according to their world significance, national context and relevance or applicability to our own people’s struggle. It is a manifestation of low theoretical understanding, subjectivism and opportunism to rate any Sandinista leader as more significant or more relevant than Mao in terms of seizing political power and making social revolution. We must read the self-criticism of the FSLN after it lost power in ten years’ time.

We must grasp the fact fully that U.S. imperialism and the reactionary classes in the Philippines are not easy pushovers. Making revolution is not simply a matter of choosing from foreign models the easiest way to seize power. Otherwise, the coup d’etat made by progressive army officers in the Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) would be the best model. Since 1969, it has been necessary to wage a protracted people’s war in order to accumulate strength and build the organs of political power in the countryside. To rush the process of ultimately seizing the cities with notions of spontaneous mass uprising and quick military victory is to feed the small fish to the shark, to plunge into setbacks and defeats.

From the mid-1970s onward, there seems to be a penchant among certain cadres

for studying Bolshevik history and the works of Lenin. By itself, this is a good thing. It is even better if this is done within the context of our comprehensive theoretical education. But the effort by certain elements to apply the Bolshevik model on the Philippine revolution and at the same time diminish the importance of the works of Mao Zedong - which are the more relevant to the conditions of the Philippines - has encouraged a trend to deviate from the comprehensive structure of the basic, intermediate and advanced levels of theoretical education.

The apparently avid students of Bolshevik history and Lenin eventually overfocused on the issue of the 1978 and 1986 elections and neatly divided themselves into the boycott and participation sides of the debate. Because the Party was banned by the enemy from participation, the boycott side always came out winner in the internal debates. Despite objections of Party cadres to the formulation of the issue as well as practical suggestions from them, the Party center did not fully take into account how our Party conducted itself in the 1969 and 1971 elections and, of course, in reactionary institutions and organizations and how the Vietnamese comrades during the Vietnam war overrode the electoral exercises staged by the Saigon regime.

In late 1986 and 1987, there was the promotion of a tactical course on “political leadership” concentrating on Bolshevik history and strategy and tactics and on Lenin’s work. The intention was to correct the erroneous application of the strategic and tactical principles of the Bolshevik revolution on the EDSA uprising and the post-EDSA political situation. At the same time, a Leninist course was promoted by the Manila-Rizal Regional. Committee among their leading cadres. Because there were practically no other courses undertaken, these courses had the effect of squeezing out the further study of the theory and practice of people’s war, encouraging an urban orientation which was used by some elements for pushing the notion of insurrectionism.

Priorly in 1981, a view emerged within the central leadership itself and spread among some parts of the Party that neither the Bolshevik model nor the Chinese model is applicable to the Philippines. This further pushed the tendency to lessen the reading and study of the works of Mao and to deviate from the appropriate structure of our theoretical education.

It was further encouraged by attacks on Mao Zedong in China with regard to the great leap forward and the great proletarian cultural revolution as well as by the lessened militance of the Chinese party in the world anti-imperialist movement.

Albeit, the Chinese Communist Party did not attack Mao for his teachings on the new democratic revolution and the socialist transformation of Chinese society. These teachings continue to be valid and enlightening to the Philippine revolutionary movement.

The dogmatic ambush was not only on the appropriate structure of our theoretical education but also on what should be our efforts to sum up our own rich experience of people's war and raise it to the level of theory. Instead, there is the preference to go back to a single foreign example or to a part of it in an attempt to validate an erroneous line - the line of urban insurrectionism - and to superimpose it on our living practice of people's war.

Even while total victory has not yet been achieved in the new democratic stage of the Philippine revolution, the Party has acquired a lot of experience which can be studied and raised to the level of theory. It has created various forms of revolutionary forces. It has built Red political power in a considerable portion of Philippine territory. It has yielded writings that are significant. But petty-bourgeois faddists get bored with the line of the Party and see no great achievement unless the cities are seized.

Even at the present stage, the development of the Philippine revolutionary movement is of a level higher than that of other revolutionary movements which are better known in the international press mainly because of the more backward forms of oppression (like outright colonialism and racism) that they contend with or because their national status has gained recognition in United Nations resolutions. But those who do not seriously study theory underrate the achievements of the Philippine revolution and overrate foreign models on the basis of mere coverage in the world mass media and not on the basis of the potential and actual advances on the path of the two-stage revolution.

Worst Kind of Disorientation

THE WORST KIND of disorientation started to emerge in 1981 in the form of the concept of the "strategic counteroffensive" (SCO) and "three strategic coordinations", which originated from the central leadership itself. The concept of the "strategic counteroffensive" - before it became the principal vehicle for the nationwide propagation of the combination of urban insurrectionism and "regularization" after the 9th Central Committee Plenum in 1985 - already carried the notion of a rapid

shortcut to regular mobile warfare which was set as the principal form of warfare during the strategic defensive; encouraged the desire for insurrection, which was regarded as a means of rapidly strengthening the army and of advancing towards a higher strategic stage or a decisive victory; propagated the concept of coordinated political and military offensives nationwide; and factored in the possibility that such offensives would lead to the achievement of a decisive victory in the revolution.

The concept of “three strategic coordination” stresses the strategic significance of the coordination of the struggles in the countryside and the cities, political struggle and armed struggle, and domestic work and international work, but in a way that deviated from the strategic line of encircling the cities from the countryside. It upheld the view that the main force of the revolution is the worker-peasant combination, instead of the peasant masses in order to reduce the emphasis on the party’s work in the countryside and shift to the urban centers instead of strengthening the basic worker-peasant alliance in pursuit of the line of encircling the cities from the countryside in the protracted people’s war. It emphasizes the importance of widespread political mobilizations to directly build the mass base for the armed revolution but with the tendency of substituting this for or putting this above painstaking work of organizing the peasant masses. It set a 60-40 balance between work in the countryside and work in the cities, consonant with the view that the principal stress on the countryside could shift to the cities because of some supposed changes in the situation whose levels and limits were unclear. Furthermore there were the ideas that encouraged the tendency to expect support from outside the country.

This concept (three strategic coordinations) was formulated in the attempt to clarify the tasks and the course for advancing under conditions that the guerrilla fronts and the guerrilla units were rapidly growing in strength and the fascist dictatorship was rapidly declining. But impelled by petty-bourgeois impatience and subjectivism, the issues were prematurely focused on the leap towards the strategic stalemate and strategic victory in a situation where the necessity was to take advantage of favorable conditions for consolidating initial victories, further fortifying the nationwide spread of our mass base and spreading out our guerrilla forces, transforming our initial guerrilla bases and consolidated zones into wider and stronger bastions of the revolution, and hasten the weakening not only of the fascist dictatorship but of the entire reactionary ruling system.

There was open impatience even among some leading cadres over the protraction

of the people's war. There were those who spoke out as if the protraction of people's war were the subjective desire or else borne of a lack of determination or imagination rather than the demand of objective conditions and the objective process necessary for building revolutionary strength and weakening the forces of reaction. Thus was the door opened for the emergence and growth of such illusions as taking short routes leading to a strategic leap, rushing to advance towards strategically decisive engagements through regular mobile warfare or urban insurrection and belittling or skipping painstaking work of building an expanding and deepening mass base; and thus also developed the penchant for eclectically picking and sewing up disparate fragments of foreign experiences - from such revolutions as those of Nicaragua, Vietnam and Zimbabwe - to build a "strategy" for hastening our advance and our victory in the revolution.

In Mindanao, the concept of the three strategic coordinations was implemented by the commission of the Party in the island as policy despite the decision of the central leadership to subject this to further study and discussion (Cf., *"Mga Tala sa Estratehiya at Taktika ng ating Digmang Bayan"*, 1982). This was quickly approved by some cadres, particularly those who had expressed doubts over the practicability and appropriateness of building revolutionary bases and conducting antifeudal struggles in the countryside of the island. In their concept of comprehensively advancing the struggle in the island, the frame of the strategic coordination or combination of the countryside and the cities was superimposed on the strategic emphasis given to work in the countryside. Another conspicuous result was the concept and practice of intensifying "politico-military struggles" in Davao City and other urban centers in the form of all-out partisan warfare, sweeping propaganda, confrontational street actions and combinations of these.

Further driven by the initial impact of partisan warfare in Davao City from 1982 and later on by the upsurge of antifascist protest in the urban areas after the Aquino assassination in 1983, the Mindanao Commission took hold of some phrases (especially that of "seizing opportunities" used in August 1945 uprising and "strategy of war and uprising" in south Vietnam in the 1960s) from the writings of Vietnamese revolutionary leaders on their own people's war but gave them an urban insurrectionary twist, incorporated ideas of spontaneous mass uprisings and armed urban insurrection from Central America into the theory and practice of people's war and devised the "Red area (military struggle) - White area (political struggle)" schema that systematically deviated from the strategic line of encircling the cities

from the countryside and favored uprisings and insurrections as the “highest form of political struggle to be achieved”. (Cf., *“Batayan sa Pagpapaunlad at Papel ng Kilusan sa Puling Purok sa Buong Estratehiya ng Digmang Bayan sa Mindanao”, 1984.*)

Manifesting a lack of understanding of basic theory, the Mindanao Commission in several major documents redefined the term “political” and counterposed it to or put it on the same plane as “armed” or “military”. Political struggles are defined by these documents as “those that are based principally on popular forces and armed strength of the masses or political forces waged principally in urban areas” while “armed struggle” is defined as “principally launched in the countryside and principally relying on the armed forces or the army focused on the objective of defeating the military force of the regime”. (Cf., *Ibid.*, p. 6.) Our armed struggle, which is a people’s war, is denied its character as a revolutionary political mass movement. The mere wish for an armed urban insurrection virtually relegates our people’s army into being merely a “regularized” military force not unlike that of the enemy’s.

Let us remind ourselves without end that the people’s war has a revolutionary political nature and that the people’s army itself is an armed mass organization. Our people’s war is within the framework of the national democratic revolution. And within the antifeudal framework, there is the necessary political integration of armed struggle, genuine land reform and mass base building. Our people’s war is a revolutionary political mass movement encompassing all forms of struggle, legal and illegal, armed and nonarmed. And a people’s army is able to grow and prevail over a vastly superior enemy military force *essentially* because of popular participation and support

While gambling on the possibility of total victory through armed urban insurrection, irrespective of the strength of the people’s army, and actually dismantling - on the basis of such a possibility - the whole disposition (latag), direction of the work, priorities, and correlation of forces in the countryside and the cities, there was continued lip service to the theory of people’s war. There are those who do not understand the relation between revolutionary strategy and tactics and consider such actual dismantling as being merely on the level of flexibility in tactics, in the service of “seizing opportunities” and every time such a supposed “opportunity” arise, we can lay aside the strategic line and the principles of our people’s war and wallow in insurrectionism, without necessarily harming

the revolution. There are also those who allow the promoters of urban insurrection to denigrate the theory of people's war because they are also interested in quick military victory, without painstaking and solid mass work. Thus, it was possible for the proponents of urban insurrection and those of "regularization" (i.e., building bigger military units and staff at the expense of mass base building) to agree on the same documents.

The worst form of deviation which has also proven to be the most resistant to rectification has been the propensity to adopt a successful but flaky foreign model taken out of the context of its history and exceptional conditions and then superimposed on the Party's and the Filipino people's own revolutionary practice. It is correct to say that the Party should learn from all revolutionary experiences abroad. But we should know how to evaluate and rate them according to their significance and relevance to the Philippine revolution.

The clear insurrectionist frame of the "Red area-White area" schema was presented by the Mindanao Commission to the 9th CC Plenum in 1985. Although it was rejected, one of its principal ingredients were (was) endorsed, adopted and incorporated into the program for the "strategic counteroffensive or, else, the latter already had similar ingredients. A general insurrection or uprising was set as a target within the first year of the strategic counteroffensive, aside from "rehearsal" uprisings before it. After the experience of the EDSA uprising, "seizing opportunities" also became a byword, meaning to say, preparing to rush into an uprising every time there is a developing violent confrontation among the reactionaries while pursuing "regularization" for the "strategic counteroffensive". Thus, during the second half of the 1980s the program for the "strategic counteroffensive" took the form of combining the wrong and the correct lines and became the vehicle for the nationwide propagation of the combination of insurrection and "regularization".

From 1985 the program for the "strategic counteroffensive" played a big and direct role in propagating and pushing the "regularization" of the people's army. Instead of "regularization" serving urban insurrection of the "Red area-White area" Mindanao schema, "regularization" itself leading to regular mobile warfare was made the focus to be served also by the uprisings. Additional impulses for "regularization" were the views and analyses that the people's war since 1983 had reached the stage of "intensification through raising the level", "having a sufficient mass base for continuous intensification of the war" and that the company formation had become the principal or typical formation of the people's army and had become

the principal vehicle/factor of the entire war since 1985. Thus was the overall stress of the armed struggle and army building firmed up as consisting of the building of larger formations, “regularization” of the command and staff structures at different levels and fighting as the main/principal task of the entire army.

In 1987-88, there was another push for “regularization” towards the building of even *bigger* formations (battalions), coordinated campaigns and “regularization” of commands at various levels, on the basis of the analysis that the “strategic reserves of the enemy had been deployed”, conditions for local “strategic counteroffensives” were obtaining and the key to the sustained advance of the war and the army was to “further raise quality”.

But it did not take long before the impact of the AFP “general offensive” exposed the gaping vulnerabilities of the guerrilla fronts, especially the mass base, as well as the destructive effect of “regularization” and the program for the “strategic counteroffensive”. Despite the initial objections to the criticisms and rectification of “regularization” begun by the Executive Committee of the Central Committee towards the end of 1988, the adjustments to overcome shortcomings in mass work, the stress on guerrilla units in the localities and the gradual correction of imbalances in the disposition of cadres began to gain momentum in the countryside. The program for the “strategic counteroffensive” was withdrawn by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee in 1990 and was replaced by the program of stressing extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare.

The purveyors of armed urban insurrections in the main were satisfied with the space given to insurrectionism in the program for the “strategic counteroffensive” since 1985. However, in 1990, due to the views regarding the insurrectionary “rare opportunity” after the 1989 coup attempt and in face of the crisis in the Gulf and the intensification of the socioeconomic crisis, they became more aggressive in pushing their own line and peddling various insurrectionist notions and the “strategy of war and uprising with the object of having the best possible combination of politico-military struggles” (none other than the “Red area - White area” schema in new disguise).

Grandiose politico-military plans in the national capital region with the objective of igniting an armed urban insurrection were kept from the knowledge of the central leadership through the maneuvers of one leading cadre. In all-out abandon under the theory of the spontaneous masses and in a spate of military adventurism, “politico-military” actions were undertaken using agent-provocateur tactics for

effecting general paralyzations and confrontational mass actions combined with ambitious projects for projecting the NDF in the bourgeois mass media and the building of a broad coalition to serve as a political center for insurrection. The result, aside from a serious and immediate political and security problem, was the grave disorientation and deviation from the strategic line of people's war as well as from the class line of the people's democratic revolution.

The gross neglect of observing and clarifying the issues regarding theory and line and the longrunning absence of any comprehensive summing up of our experience at the national level gave way to the continuous spread and repeated complications and disasters caused by grave errors and deviations. There has been a pileup and interweaving of so many problems that have long remain unsolved, of large phenomena and experiences with widely differing interpretations and assessments and of correct and wrong concepts. It has thus become so easy for such wrong lines as the "Red area - White area" schema that had wrought so much devastation in Mindanao in 1984 and 1985 to continue to be presented as something superior even as it directly contravened the general and strategic line of the Party.

Our line Against Revisionism

SINCE THE EARLY 1980s, the deviation from the antirevisionist line of the Party has been prompted by a desire for rapid military advances, be these the lose Lava-type of quick military victory or the "strategic counteroffensive" within the strategic defensive. The National Democratic Front, like the Palestinian Liberation Organization and other liberation movements, could try to establish friendly relations with the revisionist ruling parties and regimes in the early 1980s. However, some elements wished to override the preemptive relations between the Lava group and the revisionist ruling parties and even wanted to repudiate the antirevisionist line of the Party in order to establish "fraternal" relations with these revisionist ruling parties and secure material assistance.

In 1984, there was already the draft of a policy paper on the international situation and line on international relations, which toadied up to the Brezhnev ruling clique and unnecessarily attacked China even if the Soviet Union and its flunkys in the Lava group were collaborating even more closely with the Marcos fascist regime. In 1985, this paper was read to the Central Committee plenum, which decided to subject it to further study.

At any rate, it was circulated and promoted by the International Liaison Department until it was counteracted in 1987 and replaced in 1988 by a new policy paper which upheld the correct principles of party-to-party relations and the basic principles of socialism but accepted at face value the avowals of Gorbachov, with some amount of tactful critical observations.

Thus, even beyond 1989 (collapse of revisionist regimes in Eastern Europe), the 28th CPSU Congress in 1990 and August 1991 (the coup and the banning of the CPSU), there are elements within the Party who continue to adulate Gorbachov on a simplistic notion of anti-Stalinism (which holds Stalin responsible even for the revisionist ruling parties and regimes since 1956) and do not believe that the revisionist ruling parties and regimes have collapsed and their “fallen” leaders (misleaders) and their relatives have characteristically become excommunists and anticommunists, business entrepreneurs, openly milking the state enterprises and privatizing the social wealth of the proletariat and the people in collaboration with the flagrant anticommunist regimes which oppress and exploit the proletariat and people and persecute the genuine communists.

The criticism and repudiation of modern revisionism are a basic component of the theoretical foundation and reestablishment of our Party. No leading organ can do away with the basic documents of the Congress of Reestablishment, short of a new congress. And why should anyone at this point consider doing away with the critique of modern revisionism or capitalist restoration when in fact it has been vindicated and proven by the blatant restoration of the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and capitalism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union? The shame that properly belongs to the Lava revisionist group should not be shifted to or shared by the Party.

Inside and outside the Party, there are a few but articulate elements espousing ideas of insurrectionism, populism, liberalism, social democracy and the like who have been influenced by the swindling and wrecking operations of the Gorbachovite crew in the Soviet Union and who have derided, denigrated and attacked the basic principles of the Party. Just as it is important to take the most responsible among them to account for celebrating Aquino in the past as the champion of democracy and economic recovery, let us take them to account for continuing to celebrate Gorbachov as the ideologist of “socialist renewal and democracy” (in fact the restoration of capitalism, bourgeois class dictatorship and disintegration of the Soviet Union).

The glib advertising job of Gorbachov drummed up the total negation of Marxism-Leninism and the entire course of Bolshevik history; the accelerated capitalist restructuring and the breakdown of production; the rise of the bourgeois class dictatorship; the unleashing of nationalism, ethnic conflicts and civil war, and the emergence of all kinds of monsters, including racism, fascism and rampant criminality.

The imperialists and those who echo them wish the proletarian revolutionaries in the Philippines to become shamed and demoralized by the collapse of the revisionist ruling parties and regimes and to give up Marxism-Leninism and the Philippine revolution. Let it be stated forthrightly that the theory of Marxism-Leninism has proven to be the correct guide in the making of the new democratic revolution and in laying the political and economic foundation of the socialist system.

The New Great Challenge

AT THE SAME time, the Party recognizes that the truly new great challenge for Marxist-Leninist theoretical and practical work is the problem of combating modern revisionism, preventing the restoration of capitalism and continuing the socialist revolution. The greatest contribution of Mao to Marxist-Leninist theory is the recognition of this problem and his attempt to solve it. That attempt met with temporary success for a number of years but eventually failed. The Paris Commune of 1871 succeeded briefly and failed. But the theory of proletarian revolution and proletarian dictatorship was not invalidated by the failure of the Paris Commune. After 46 years, the first proletarian state would arise.

It took thirty to forty years to build socialism (proletarian dictatorship and socialist economic construction) among more than a billion people and it took another thirty to forty years for modern revisionism to peacefully evolve into blatant capitalism and the full restoration of bourgeois class dictatorship in several countries.

It is an advantage for the Philippine revolution that while it is still at the new democratic stage it has seen how socialism was built elsewhere only to be subverted and destroyed. We, as proletarian revolutionaries, have the advantage of availing ourselves of proven Marxist-Leninist theory in the new democratic revolution and the socialist revolution and construction as well as of learning lessons from the peaceful evolution of socialism to capitalism and prospectively from an inevitable resurgence of the anti-imperialist and socialist movement. By learning positive and

negative lessons in revolutionary history, the Philippine revolution will have the opportunity to contribute to the effort of building socialism and preventing the restoration of capitalism in more effective ways.

In the meantime, especially after the bourgeois euphoria over the downfall and disintegration of the revisionist ruling parties and regimes, we witness today the aggravated problems of the world capitalist system. The most developed capitalist countries are increasingly in contradiction with each other over economic, financial, trade and security matters. High technology is accelerating the insoluble capitalist crisis of overproduction. High productivity is in contradiction with the shrinking of the world market. The monopoly capitalist sale of goods and services to the client states can be maintained only by loans that cannot be paid back. The client states are debt-ridden and are squeezing each other out in the export trade, yielding no surplus to save them from further indebtedness but incurring more budgetary and trade deficits.

In fact social turmoil and violent upheavals are occurring with increasing frequency throughout the world, despite the peace rhetoric of the “new world order”. Food riots, coups and countercoups, ethnic strife, civil wars, and various types of violence are bursting out in the third world and in the new client states of imperialism in the East. Even in the capitalist countries, the economic recession is causing unemployment, cutting down social welfare measures, generating social tensions and breeding racism and racist violence against workers from the third world.

In due time, from the new world disorder, the anti-imperialist and socialist movements will resurge. By force of circumstances, the MarxistLeninist parties that retain their proletarian revolutionary integrity and continue to wage revolutionary struggles and some parties that will reemerge in countries where revisionist parties have disintegrated or degenerated will spring up once more to wage revolutionary struggles at a new and higher level under the theoretical guidance of Marxism-Leninism and under the banner of proletarian internationalism.

II. IN THE FIELD OF POLITICS

THE MOST OUTSTANDING achievement of the Party and the Filipino people has been the resumption and advance of the Philippine revolution at a new and higher historical level since 1968. The new democratic revolution surpasses the old democratic revolution of 1896. It is led by the proletariat through the Party and it has a socialist perspective. The Party is at the center of the stage in the struggle between revolution and counterrevolution.

The Marxist-Leninist analysis of Philippine history and current circumstances by the Party has raised the level of theoretical and political knowledge as well as revolutionary activity far above that established during the 1930-38 period of the old Communist Party of the Philippines and the subsequent period of the old merger party of the Communist and Socialist parties, including the series of Lava opportunists and their pseudocommunist successors.

By virtue of its clear definition of the character and current stage of the Philippine revolution, its motive forces and its enemies, its tasks and socialist perspective, the Party has been able to build itself and wield effectively the revolutionary armed struggle and the united front against U.S. imperialism and the local exploiting classes and push forward the national democratic revolution of the Filipino people.

Due to the leadership provided by the Party, the level of revolutionary consciousness and struggle of the Filipino people has risen as never before. The organizations of the basic toiling masses of workers and peasants and the urban petty bourgeoisie have risen as never before along the national democratic line. Red political power has emerged in extensive areas of the countryside, defended by the New People's Army and the masses even while the cities are still under the control of the reactionary forces.

As a result of the adoption and implementation of the correct political line by the Party, the masses under organs of political power and in mass organizations number in millions in both urban and rural areas. The Party, the New People's Army, the National Democratic Front and other revolutionary forces are in substantial portions of 65 out of 73 provinces in hundreds of towns and thousands of villages, and exercise influence throughout the archipelago.

The revolutionary political nature of the armed struggle (taking the form of a people's war) is determined by the general line of national democratic revolution.

Our armed struggle is pointless if it is off this line. The people's army is itself a mass organization and a mass movement. Its armed struggle in the countryside is integral with genuine land reform and the building of the mass base (organs of political power and mass organizations).

But there have been deviations from our analysis of Philippine society, the general line of new democratic revolution and the strategic line of people's war under the guise of questioning "antiquated" ideas, "innovating on", "refining" and "adjusting" them.

In the long period of the Marcos regime and subsequently during the Aquino regime, the semicolonial and semifeudal status of Philippine society has remained unchanged. In fact, it has been deepened and aggravated. The Philippine social economy has become even more backward, agrarian, preindustrial and semifeudal and more wracked by an insoluble crisis than at the time of the Party's reestablishment. The Philippines remains without basic industries. Even import-dependent manufacturing has deteriorated. The bureaucratic big comprador operations of the Marcos regime sank the economy into indebtedness and deeper underdevelopment.

The political system has been increasingly characterized by violence among political and military formations of the exploiting classes. The economic ground for mutual accommodation among the various political factions of the exploiting classes has shrunk. Thus, the reactionary military establishment itself as well as factions of it are moving into the forefront of political affairs.

But there are elements who are wittingly or unwittingly influenced by the imperialist propaganda that the Philippines has been industrializing, developing and urbanizing, especially during the Marcos period of expanded big comprador operations financed by huge amounts of foreign loans. Among the reasons given by the Lavaite group for collaborating with the Marcos regime was that the latter was industrializing the country and that it only needed to be swayed from the neocolonialist to a nationalist path of industrialization.

Somehow, a few elements in the Party seem to have been contaminated by this kind of ideas and question the proposition that Philippine society is semicolonial and semifeudal, especially before a thoroughgoing explanation of the Philippine mode of production was made in 1983. In 1981, in combination with the concept of the "three strategic coordinations", a proposal was submitted to the Politburo to characterize

the Philippine economy as semicolonial, semifeudal and “semicapitalist”, with the last adjective intended to suggest that the Philippines was becoming industrial-capitalist. The proposal was rejected by the Politburo but some of its proponents continued to propagate the characterization even after its formal rejection by the central leadership.

The proposal asserted that the “urbanization” of Philippine society had reached a level far higher than what was previously maintained in Party analysis and writings. It echoed the statisticians who arrive at the figure on urban population by adding to the population of Metro Manila (including the great number of transients who are seasonal oddjobbers, students and the like from the rural areas of Luzon) that of the provincial cities and capitals (which have small commercial cores) and the poblaciones (centers) of municipalities.

The statistical manipulation of the term “urban” would be used by some elements to *deviate* from the Party’s class analysis of Philippine society, the general line of new democratic revolution and the strategic line of encircling the cities from the countryside. They claim that the Philippines is 40 per cent urban and is far more urban than China or Vietnam ever was.

They also claim that the Philippine society and economy is no longer predominantly agrarian by adding up the manpower distribution or output share of the industry and service sectors against the agriculture sector of the economy. They fail to take into account the import dependence of the industry and service sectors, their dependence on agriculture and the share of agriculture that does not formally appear in the market.

They further claim that the rural population consists of more than 55 percent farm workers. In this regard, they fail to distinguish the modern machine-operating farm workers from the overwhelming majority of traditional farm workers (more than 95 percent) who are still poor peasants or who are their direct outgrowth.

On the basis of misleading statistics, a straw figure is set up that the Party has overemphasized rural work to the neglect of urban work. The erroneous line of combining armed urban insurrection and the premature building of unsustainable military formations is pushed to replace the theory of people’s war and building the people’s army in stages. This involved “regularization”, drawing Party cadres away from mass work, especially rural mass work, for urban-based as well as military staff assignment. Party cadres were also drawn away from the countryside under

the guise of making a 40-60 urban-rural redeployment.

From 1980 onward, various proposals were made to enlarge the scope of the urban movement and redirect large portions of population concentrations in the countryside to an urban orientation. The changes sought were not an issue involving the temporary advantages or the necessity of having to divide the work but an issue involving strategic orientation, in consonance - directly or indirectly and intended or unintended - with the pushing of various ideas of increasing the strategic weight of urban work and urban insurrections.

There were the proposals to incorporate large portions of Central and Southern Luzon into the Manila-Rizal region; to shift the overall stress in Central Luzon from armed struggle to the open mass movement and insurrection or to the “Red area-mute area” dichotomy of the plains Mindanao assigning to the latter (White area) the small cities and provincial capitals and putting this within the scope of the urban-based movement; to adopt a “mountain-plain” division with an orientation of mass-building for mountainous areas and of insurrection or uprisings for the plains; and - with regard to the peasant movement, if not the entire revolutionary struggle - to put the main stress on the open mass movement in the plains with an orientation towards mass uprisings.

In 1987 a small group of splittists in Negros Philippine society had become “capitalist” and with this as one reason among others, would promote a line of capitulation to the Aquino regime, abandonment of armed struggle and a shift to parliamentary struggle. This group failed to recognize that in sugar plantations workers are a small minority, compared to the operating regular farm wage relations are not the huge mass of traditional farm workers and that wage relations are not determining factor in industrial capitalism and can exist in slave and feudal societies.

Urban Insurrectionist and Military Adventurism

THERE IS A gross lack of understanding of the theory of People’s war and the strategic line of encircling the cities from the countryside. This strategic line is not an arbitrary edict for a permanent condition. It simply means that when the people’s army cannot as yet seize the cities, the revolutionary forces have to accumulate armed strength first in the countryside where reactionary power and control is relatively weaker and where there is a wide area of maneuver for the people’s army

tactical offensives, accumulate armed strength and engage in mass work.

Conditions in the future will arise to allow the people's army and the people in mass uprisings led by the Party to finally seize the centers municipalities, provincial capitals, minor cities and major cities, in that probable order. But it would be foolhardy to believe that Metro Manila could fall in an uprising led by the Party earlier than the time that the backbone of the enemy forces is broken in the countryside or before they go into a proprocess of final disintegration.

The EDSA uprising in 1986 involved both a military mutiny and anti-Marcos or antifascist uprising but the United States, and the Catholic Church were still in a position to determine the outcome of the uprising. They understood the balance of forces in their favor. They were out only to change one reactionary ruling clique with another, notwithstanding the popular uprising.

Building the people's army in stages is ridiculed by certain elements who have not really studied the theory of people's war and who obviously do not believe that it is necessary for the NPA to smash the reactionary armed forces and replace it in the end. We have seen how the NPA started from scratch in 1969 and grew. The people's war will certainly have to go through a middle stage of development before it can totally and finally defeat the enemy forces and replace them.

The initial, middle and final stages of the people's war cannot be dismissed as useless concepts by those who hold the opportunist notion that urban armed insurrection and imported heavy weapons can replace the full development of people's war. When the term probability (closer to realization than the term possibility) instead of certainty is used to refer to the stages of people's war, it is to give allowance for nonrealization or defeat due to deviations and errors like those committed by the Mindanao Commission against the line of people's war or due to a forced retreat in the face of foreign aggression.

The expression Left opportunism is apt when it refers to demagogically taking advantage of the natural desire for quick and easy victory but leading the revolutionary forces to defeat and self-destruction. Urban insurrectionism and military adventurism have so far been the gravest form of Left opportunism in the history of the Party since 1968. These are retrogressions to the line of urban guerrilla warfare (Carlos Marighela) and the foco theory (promoted by Regis Debray), which some elements tried to promote within the Party in the early 1970s but which were effectively combated by the Party.

Before the Party could be reestablished in 1968, there had been almost a full decade of mainly urban work among the workers and the youth undertaken by the new proletarian cadres together with a few veterans in the revolutionary movement. Upon the reestablishment of the Party, there were more proletarian cadres in the cities than in the countryside. They emerged from the resurgent anti-imperialist and antifeudal mass movement that was based in Metro Manila. The claim that the Party neglected revolutionary work in urban areas and overemphasized work in the rural areas is untrue.

Soon after the Party reestablishment, with hardly 200 Party members concentrated in Metro Manila, the Party was able to carry out the First Quarter Storm of 1970 and other mass actions in the 1970-72 period. From these mass actions would emerge a few thousands of mass activists who would become Party members. Among the regions, the highest concentration of Party members would be in Metro Manila for a considerable period of time.

It is to the credit of the Party that it has pushed the general line of new democratic revolution through people's war since its reestablishment. Thus, the proletarian cadres from Metro Manila were aroused and motivated to join up with the good remnants of the old people's army to form the New People's Army in 1969 and to build the armed revolutionary movement in the countryside on a nationwide scale. And when martial rule and the fascist dictatorship were imposed, Party members and activists in the cities had been ideologically prepared, so that in droves they went to the countryside in 1972 onward and there subsequently participated in the painstaking work of laying and building the revolutionary armed strength and the revolutionary mass movement that served as the firm basis and backbone of rapid advance of the revolutionary movement in the 1980s.

The pattern has been for the cadres produced by the urban-based mass movement to go from the cities to the countryside. Without such a pattern inspired and directed by the Party, there would be no or so few cadres to build the people's army, the mass organizations and the organs of political power in the countryside. This pattern has promoted the people's war. Without the theory and strategic line of people's war, Party members would have preferred to stay in the urban areas. It is so much easier to stick to the relative comfort and convenience of the city than to break new ground in the countryside.

But since the early 1980s, there had been an increasing movement away from such a pattern. This was initiated by the central leadership under the concept of

60130 balance between countryside work and urban work and of giving stress on a comprehensive political movement and broad alliance work based in the cities, on the basis of the tactical priority set on making urban work and broad alliance work catch up with the more advanced work in the countryside and on the basic alliance, as well as on some views that such is the appropriate balance at the given level of urbanization in the country. From 1981 onward, there had been a stop to the deployment of significant numbers of cadres and activists from the cities to the countryside. The trend towards city-basing involving the central leadership and national organs and, subsequently, even many regional leading committees and staff organs, also started and worsened.

The concept of the “strategic counteroffensive” within the strategic defensive that was adopted by the central leadership (PB) in 1981, affirmed by the 9th CC Plenum in 1985 and formally withdrawn in 1990 promoted the “three strategic coordination”, the nationally coordinated political and military offensives, regular mobile warfare as the main form of warfare to advance the people’s war from the strategic defensive to the strategic stalemate, and the possibility of such offensives leading directly to the realization of the decisive victory of the revolution. As such, it tended to encourage urban insurrectionism and had an even bigger and more direct role in fostering “regularization” and military adventurism.

Leading Party committees and cadres became drawn increasingly to urban-centered questions and tasks and farther and farther away from urgent questions and tasks in the all-rounded development of the people’s army, mass base and Party organization in the countryside, which to begin with were no longer being adequately taken care of. The cadres were encouraged to stay in leading and staff organs of the urban-based Party organization, legal mass organizations and institutions or join the armed city partisans rather than go to the countryside. They failed to recognize that the peasant masses do not by themselves produce the kind of cadres and other personnel that the urban areas produce and which the rural areas need.

Under the guidance of the so-called “three strategic coordinations” (which had been convened into the “three strategic combination”) and the mechanical 60-40 balance between countryside and urban work, key cadres of the Mindanao Commission, positioned themselves in the small cities of Mindanao (urban centers and adjacent rural areas), pursued a line of intensifying “political-military” struggle in the white areas and developed this into a full-blown line of armed urban insurrection under the influence of the Sandinista victory. They combined this line

with the adventurist line of building many company formations and intensifying company-size operations in the countryside, reminiscent of the adventurist line of the Jose Lava leadership in forming companies and battalions in 1949 and 1950, without giving due attention to Party and mass base building; i.e., the organs of political power and the mass organizations, when the overall task was shifted from expanding the guerrilla warfare to “intensifying” it and later to “raising” its level. The erroneous line would eventually result in the exact opposite of what it sought to accomplish.

Inherent to the line of seeking to seize power through urban uprisings, with the aid of a few prematurely enlarged NPA units that lacked extensive and deepgoing mass base, was the undermining and lessening of the interest of Party members and mass activists in going to the countryside to do revolutionary work. In the long run, especially from

1983 to the fall of Marcos, the deployment of cadres to the countryside did not only stop but was reversed when large numbers of cadres deployed in the countryside were drawn towards the cities.

In conjunction with the line of urban insurrection, the line of intensifying and raising the level of warfare virtually became a line of quick military victory. Layers of army commands and staff were increased and companies built without minding the necessary balance and interaction of military formation and the mass base and vice versa. The larger military formations and increased layers of staff were formed and took cadres and material resources away from the already thinly-spread, undermanned, ill-trained and ill-armed units in charge of the various forms of mass work, military work and Party work in the localities.

In 1984 and 1985, when the full-scale building of company formations and the intensification of company-size operations were being undertaken, only then were there efforts to catch up in building the Party section committees from among the fresh recruits of Party cadres and members who were extremely lacking in political and military knowledge and capability. On top of this was the insistence of some leading cadres in the Mindanao Commission to reduce attention on antifeudal education, propaganda and struggles in favor of the expansion of the mass movement in the countryside along an almost purely antifascist line. The quality of the mass base, Party work and military work in many localities either stagnated at a very low level or even deteriorated.

For a very short period, from 1983 to 1984, the military offensives of companies, oversized companies and coordinated companies were effective in Mindanao. Fighters were recruited rapidly and hundreds of high-powered rifles were confiscated from the enemy. But when the enemy military forces increased and paramilitary forces and anticommunist fanatic sects were formed in ever widening areas, the mass work units and local guerrilla units could no longer sustain mass work and military work in increasing numbers of barrios. The mass base dwindled and deteriorated. Also in that period, the mass bases, which were either still new, had stopped to develop or had started to decline as a result of the shortcomings, were further forced into a more intense military situation and thus declined and deteriorated at an even faster rate. From 1985 to 1987 large chunks of the mass base and the guerrilla fronts were entirely lost in the face of the repeated onslaughts of the large-scale enemy military offensives, the damage and demoralization as a result of Aho Campaign, the disorientation in the immediate post-Marcos situation, and the lack of guidance and support from higher Party committees.

The enemy objective was clear: to destroy the revolutionary mass base, force the companies and oversized companies of the people's army into a purely military situation where the enemy forces could use to their advantage their militarily superior forces. A r,ople's army can use most effectively the principle of concentration in offensives if it has extensive and deepgoing mass base. But in a purely military situation, it is, of course, the truly larger military force that gains the upper hand and wins.

Because of the extensive loss of mass base resulting from the wrong line and the destruction wrought by Aho Campaign, as well as from the impact of the enemy offensives, many of the small and weak units deployed to do mass work and guerrilla units in the localities became extremely vulnerable and were destroyed by the enemy. Eventually, the companies in Mindanao were pushed into passive and vulnerable positions and could no longer launch nor win tactical offensives. There was a build up of problems in recruitment, morale, maneuver, coordination, intelligence-gathering and supply. As a result of these problems and in response to the glaring need to attend first to the mass base in many areas, the regional Party committees either took the initiative to reduce the companies or simply allowed these to dwindle into platoon or over-sized platoon formations. By 1987, the number of companies in the island stood at five.

In the small and easily surveilled cities of Mindanao (Davao City for one is

not really the biggest city in the world; beyond its commercial core of a square kilometer, it is rural), cadres who were on the manhunt list of the enemy were carried away by their “insurrectionary” mentality and displayed themselves in public places during mass actions and became preoccupied with contact work among allies and coordination of mass actions rather than attending to and guiding solid organizational work. “Broadness”, fast confrontational actions and rapid intensification became the rule and norm above all else.

The welgang bayans were regarded as “a process of building up towards popular uprisings” serving to hasten political polarization, to expose government ineffectuality, to train the masses and to make the entire situation explode. In practice, these were more of transport paralysis rather than mammoth rallies of the people. On such occasions, armed units set up “checkpoints” to block the highway and at assembly points a few hundreds to a few thousands of people converged. At the same time, the armed city partisans heated up these small cities beyond the capacity of the “wanted” cadres to conceal themselves. In 1984, the principal leaders of the Mindanao Commission obviously had extreme difficulties staying in Mindanao and were forced to shift to Cebu City, which was beyond the commission’s jurisdiction. As the enemy saturated

the identified partisan bases and fronts, intensified intelligence operations against the urban underground, tightened the checkpoints, carried out frequent zoning raids and militarized the target communities and cities, the casualties among the white area forces began to mount and work could no longer be pursued in an increasing number of these areas.

Under conditions of gross setbacks in the urban areas and growing difficulties in the guerrilla fronts due to intensifying enemy attacks, and the alert from the central leadership against enemy infiltrators, leading cadres at the regional, front and Mindanao levels were prone to oversuspiciousness and panic about the possibility that there were enemy agents in their midst who were tipping them off. Believing that their line was correct and victorious and not realizing the error and its effects, they were inclined to look for external forces and reasons behind the setbacks and problems.

Based on the report of a former political detainee and some unverified confessions - extracted through torture - of some suspected infiltrators who had been initially arrested in one guerrilla front during the early part of 1985, these leading cadres easily believed that there were enemy deep penetration agents

(DPAs) who had infiltrated the Party, the people's army, the mass organizations and the legal institutions. They began arresting suspected saboteurs and infiltrators and subjected them to torture to extract self-incriminating confessions about their alleged crimes and co-conspirators. They became convinced that large numbers of enemy deep penetration agents had infiltrated the Party over a long period of time through the white area organizations and were already being mobilized to bring down and destroy the revolutionary movement in late 1985 or early 1986. The Party organizations which had overexpanded and neglected ideological, political and organizational consolidation proved to be extremely susceptible to mutual suspicion among its cadres and members. Thus, from mid-1985 onward, the anti-infiltrator hysteria started and raged in Mindanao.

The resultant devastation was unprecedented in the entire history of the Philippine revolution. Never has the enemy inflicted as much damage as this to the revolutionary forces in so short a period of time. The wrong political line resulted in setbacks and problems that started to be felt in 1984. Under such a situation, the anti-infiltration hysteria easily took effect and resulted in self-destruction from 1985 onward. On the basis of mere suspicion, close to a thousand people (including Party cadres and members and mass activists) became victims of civil rights violations and severe punishment. Due process was completely disregarded as panic and hysteria took over. The Party membership fell abruptly from 9000 to 3000. The mass base which was shallow shrank by 50 percent. The 15 companies and 30 platoons were reduced to 2 companies and 17 platoons.

The leading cadres of the Mindanao Commission refer to a "fast draft of Bicol" ("unang borador ng Bicol") as their guide and for some time declared a revolutionary success in eliminating enemy agents at the expense of so many times more innocent comrades and individuals in the Party and the revolutionary movement. In terms of rate and absolute numbers, the destruction wrought had never before been achieved by the enemy frontally in so short a time. Basic civil rights guaranteed by the Bill of Rights of the Guide for Establishing the People's Democratic Government issued in 1972 and by the Party Constitution and the Rules of the New People's Army were grossly violated.

Many of those responsible for the devastation and the victimization of comrades and the people in Mindanao have expressed remorse for the hysteria and tried to account for their part. But at the most the accounting had been merely partial. Some of those who have not accounted for nor been taken to account for their political

and criminal responsibility have even been promoted to national positions in the Party and allowed to spread their wrong line at the further and bigger expense of the Party and the revolutionary movement.

The Propagation of the Erroneous line on a Nationwide Scale

UNCRITICIZED, UNREPUDIATED AND unrectified, the combined lines of armed urban insurrection and quick military victory have spread on a nationwide scale and have resulted in unprecedented nationwide damage and setbacks to the revolutionary movement.

The 9th CC plenum in 1985 rejected the Red area (military struggle) - White area (political struggle) scheme but did not call it insurrectionist, thoroughly criticize it, nor direct the Mindanao Party organization to make a rectification. In fact the plenum got carried away or impressed by the seemingly resounding but, now proven, very temporary victories in Mindanao despite what had been reported regarding the disturbing size of the casualties and the problem of ammunition even as the enemy had not yet undertaken a full-scale counterattack.

The entirety and parts of such impression of success were held and drummed up by many Mindanao cadres or by cadres whom they influenced, as “advanced experience” or as a “superior” way of conducting the struggle. Moreover, key elements of the erroneous line and its practice, like the magnified partisan warfare in the urban areas and “regularization” of the people’s army, were endorsed and integrated into the program for the “strategic counteroffensive” (SCO). The tactical program aiming for the decisive victory against the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship through the SCO also induced further infatuation and toying with the notion of armed urban insurrection.

Since 1986, the proponents of the line of armed urban insurrection have capitalized on the rejection by the Party of the boycott error in 1986 by overstating this error even after rectification while obscuring the incomparably far bigger error and earlier devastation of revolutionary forces in Mindanao and by interpreting the rejection of the boycott error as a vindication of the line of armed urban insurrection. At the beginning of the Aquino regime, various views emerged overestimating the “democratic space”, the patriotic and democratic possibilities of Aquino, the depth of the destruction inflicted by the EDSA uprising on reactionary rule and the state machinery and spurred on the attitude of “seriously considering the possibility of

and preparations for insurrection”.

Various insurrectionist proposals were put forward, like the plan for a “fast track” victory of the revolution and using the race for the Constitutional Commission, the peace talks, etc. in order to hasten a repolarization and a giant confrontation on the basis of national and democratic issues. Considering the intensified violence and factional strife among the reactionaries, “seizing opportunities” has become the favorite posture and catchphrase of those who yearn for urban insurrection. Thus, there was the phenomenon of heightened insurrectionary fever among certain urban-based Party cadres and units after every coup attempt.

By itself, the line of armed urban insurrection is isolated and impotent. However, it can be damaging to the Party and the revolutionary movement because it encourages Party cadres and members who are needed in the countryside to stick to the cities, it promotes overreaching in the urban revolutionary movement and the duplication of the Davao City “political-military” debacle in Manila-Rizal no less. It is most damaging when it combines with the line of military “regularization” because it gives rise to bureaucratization, isolation from the masses, setbacks and eventually self-destruction.

The line of rapidly organizing armed city partisan units, building companies and battalions, topheavy military staffing and drawing cadres away from expansion and consolidation work among the people was first pushed by the National Military Conference in late 1984 and, afterwards, by the central leadership’s program of fulfilling the requisites for the SCO, and eventually by the military conferences of the national military staff (later made the general command in 1987) of the NPA. These put forward such puerile premises as the following: we have covered all the strategic points in the country, we have a sufficient number of guerrilla fronts, we have a sufficiently wide mass base, etc. Ergo, the time has come to build the NPA vertically, regularize it, build the army organization separately from the Party, specialize in military work and in fighting. Since the military conference in 1984, the view had arisen and spread that the strategic reserves of the enemy were already deployed; he could no longer increase the number of troops and his growth in strength would have to be achieved more in terms of quality than of quantity.

In the latter half of 1986 and in 1987, the conscious effort in Mindanao to control and overcome the disastrous results of Aho Campaign, to rectify the errors and rebuild the revolutionary forces was underway. But it was also in 1987 that the NPA general command was able to push most vigorously the line of “regularization”

on a nationwide scale.

The NPA general command vigorously pushed the building of larger formations and the formation of military staffs. They continued to carry the view that “the enemy’s strategic reserves were already deployed” and conditions obtained for “local strategic counteroffensives”. The general command ordered a “nationally coordinated offensive”, which was heavily subsidized from above, overstrained the units and the logistics, wasted the ammunition stocks, created contradictions and frictions between the army command and the territorial Party organs, launched politically counterproductive military actions and exposed to the enemy the GC staff personnel and radio equipment based in Metro Manila in exchange for a sizeable number of casualty inflicted on the enemy and a number of arms confiscated from the enemy.

In the regions of Luzon and the Visayas, the building of companies and the intensification of company-size operations were accelerated, the concept of igniting peasant uprisings - presented as if of the same category as ordinary forms of mass struggles - was pushed, and there were those who prepared the “flash points” for uprisings should the “opportunity” arise. One guerrilla front in Luzon was almost totally demolished after undertaking a series of “insurrectionary mass actions”, a campaign to confiscate landlord property and a declaration of the implementation of the maximum program of land reform and such other actions supposedly similar to the Autumn Harvest Uprising in Hunan based on the mistaken notion that conditions were ripe for “local strategic stalemate”. At the same time, armed city partisan warfare was escalated in Metro Manila and other cities at a rate that tended to prejudice the legal and defensive character of the struggle in these urban areas.

The central leadership of the Party shares the responsibility for the imbalances and the program of “regularization” that primarily caused them. Apart from responsibility for the entire program of the SCO, the central leadership affirmed and approved many of the initiatives and views from lower units pushing for “regularization”. However, from year to year, it stressed the need to rely on an expanding and deepening mass base. And since the Party anniversary statement in 1988, there has been the call for waging extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare founded on a wide and deepgoing mass base without prejudice to building sustainable guerrilla companies that are dispersed for mass work when not fighting or not on training exercise.

In addition, many regional Party committees raised questions, expressed doubts and asked for reconsideration in connection with the extremely strong pressure and unrealistic targets for “regularization”. Thus, at certain points, downward adjustments have been made in the number of companies to be formed or else existing companies were redeployed in accordance with the strategy and tactics of guerrilla warfare. And in early 1989, a new emphasis and new priorities on mass work and local guerrilla forces and a clear shift away from the program of increasing the number of companies was decided upon. And in 1990 the program for the SCO was dropped. However, the NPA general command, despite lip service to the absolute leadership of the Party, continued to argue for and push its own line of “regularization” in contravention of the Party leadership’s criticism of it.

The consequences have been destructive to the revolutionary movement. From 1987 to 1990, the membership of mass base was reduced by almost 60 per cent from the base year of 1986, the number of barrios covered by guerrilla fronts, by 16 percent, and the Party membership, by 15 per cent. While the number of rifles of the people’s army continued to grow every year, the rate of increase fell to the level of 1976-78. Furthermore, the number of officers and fighters of the people’s army fell by 28 percent or below the level of 1985. Large numbers of cadres at the provincial, front and district levels have been lost and many of them have not yet been replaced.

For twenty years since its reestablishment, it had been a matter of pride for the reestablished Party to declare annually that there was an allround increase of strength of the revolutionary movement. The enemy could concentrate against certain areas or regions and inflict damage but the movement would increase in strength elsewhere and on a nationwide scale.

In 1971, the revolutionary forces were in the main suppressed in the second district of Tarlac, with the enemy using from 1969 to 1971 a full division (Task Force Lawin), paramilitary forces (BSDUs) and “civic action” to try to run down an NPA force of merely 200 fighters. But revolutionary work in Isabela, started in early 1969, had already created a mass base several times larger than the one in Tarlac.

Then came the time that the forces in Isabela were contained in the forest region by the enemy from 1972 to 1976 due to the stubborn and wrong maintenance of three companies and one platoon within the enemy encirclement. But the guerrilla forces and the mass base in the other regions of the country were significantly growing from 1974 onward. Eventually, not only was the territory temporarily lost

in Tarlac recovered but several more provinces were gained in Central Luzon from 1972 onward

Only in 1988 would the Party start to register a nationwide reduction of the rural mass base. We comforted ourselves by saying that that was not much in view of the escalation of enemy onslaughts and that in fact we grew in strength because we became even more tempered in the struggle. Although some internal weaknesses and shortcomings were pointed out, we failed to take into full account the errors within our own ranks and instead tended to adduce the reduction entirely to the assaults of the enemy.

Many among us express mystification over the enemy's "war of quick decision" and "gradual constriction" and are dumbfounded because of the telling effect these seem to have had on our mass base and armed struggle. But these are in fact old terms and old enemy strategy and tactics as anyone who has studied Mao's teachings on people's war should know. Indeed, the "war of quick decision" and "gradual constriction" we have been confronting since 1987 have certain peculiarities like the simultaneous deployment of enemy divisions and brigades in the main guerrilla fronts all over the country, the heightened determination of the enemy to pursue the level of concentration of enemy troops and offensives on areas targeted for relatively long periods, the widespread and systematic building of vigilantes and CAFGUs, and the advantage of Aquino's popularity during the early years. But we have overcome the same enemy strategy and tactics in so many places in the past. And even now, we have learned to cope with, adjusted to and gradually overcome it generally and in many places.

It suits the enemy forces to go on a war of quick decision or strategic offensive in view of their military superiority - in the number of troops, weapons, logistics and training. But at the tactical level, where they wish to win battles, they fail because they lack popular support. So, they resort to what they call "gradual constriction" or "blockhouse" warfare (lines of camps and fortifications to encircle and control an area) combined with "special operations teams", organizing paramilitary forces and undertaking a sham kind of mass work.

On the side of the NPA, the correct response is the strategic defensive to the strategic offensive of the enemy forces. Concretely, we render them deaf and blind on a wide scale by gaining the people's participation and support. At the tactical level, we launch guerrilla warfare by assembling a superior force to carry out tactical offensives on enemy units that we are capable of wiping out by surprise. The enemy

forces can also concentrate on any point and take away particular areas from us but they would be giving up far more space elsewhere. We can and must always cover territory much wider than the ring of large enemy forces and offensives while we combine annihilative and tactical guerrilla actions and mass mobilizations to resist and punish him in the areas of his concentration.

What the proponents of quick military victory have done is to build prematurely large and unsustainable units that siphon off cadres from mass work and that leave large portions of the guerrilla fronts without effective people's army units and cadres for extended periods of time. The result is that in less than two years of the enemy's "general offensive" he was able to chop off large portions of our guerrilla fronts and extensively build paramilitary units, in many places, with only the minimum of resistance from the unconsolidated mass base and weak local guerrilla and mass work units. We made ourselves vulnerable to enemy attacks in 1988 because for some years already we had weakened our local forces and neglected mass and consolidation work in many places - when the enemy also intensified the sweep on our areas and the pressure on the barrios and localities; not to mention the delay in understanding and giving guidance on a national scale. If we do not rectify this error, the enemy can force us to fight in a purely military situation in more and more areas and graver damage would befall the revolutionary forces.

From 1990, in answer to the call of the central leadership, the Party committees and army commands in the regions have been putting the stress on mass work, putting a stop to the reduction of the mass base and strengthening the forces in the localities. Many of the companies have been deployed to mass work, expansion, recovery and consolidation of the mass base and positive results have been rapidly felt in the gradual reversal of the trend towards reduction in earlier years. However, we have just started and a great deal has yet to be done to overcome the adverse effects of the wrong line and recovery towards a steady, continuous and comprehensive advance. First of all, we must thoroughly criticize, repudiate and rectify the erroneous line and persevere in extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare while expanding and consolidating the mass base through the proper deployment of our cadres and guerrilla forces.

Among many cadres, especially those in the regions and organs familiar with the day-to-day work among the masses and the activities of the army units, there is a strong recognition of the fact that the premature formation of unsustainable companies and battalions does not result in quick military victory but in preoccupation

with logistical needs, isolation from the masses and passivity, defeats and other forms of disaster.

The premature formation of unsustainable companies and battalions has also spawned other military adventurist tendencies and acts such as the inclination to hit enemy hard points; ill-planned tactical offensives that last long, consume too much ammunition and result in many casualties; and military actions that do not take into full account the probable and possible negative effects on mass base building, the welfare of the masses and other political implications.

Various departments and layers of staff take away cadres and resources from mass work. Although some, such as those for training, ordnance, medical at various levels, are necessary and contribute a great deal to the development of the army and military technique, some unnecessary staff layers and units have been formed prematurely or are assigned to tasks that are already being attended to or can be more conveniently attended to by other units of the Party or the mass organizations. Prior to this, in most of the regions, there had been a dwindling and drop in the quality of cadres and armed units deployed in the localities. First came the redeployment of cadres and personnel for expansion and for assisting relatively backward guerrilla fronts and regions. Then, came the promotion of cadres for building and strengthening of the Party committees at the district level and upward. And then, came the building of the full-time guerrilla units devoted to military work, thus reducing their participation in mass work and local work. And at the same time there is gross neglect of theoretical education and training of cadres.

As a case in point, the enemy poured nine battalions into Samar in the early 1980s. The NPA had no battalion to speak of but the NPA and the revolutionary forces grew in the course of guerrilla warfare. Now, with the enemy having only three or four battalions on the island and with the NPA having its own battalion unit, there have been certain unprecedented losses in all of the Party, the people's army and the mass base. The "battalion" is bogged down by sheer logistical problems and its troops and staff have been reduced in 1990 by 50 percent from its peak strength of 500 fighters. The battalion staff constitute a large percentage of the total number of Red fighters. The mass base in the entire island has been weakened and sharply reduced.

The overall result is reduction of the mass base. Consequently, the tendency emerged to look upward and outward for logistical support when the food

supplies and the contributions from the masses and the tax collections from the local businessmen and landlords could no longer suffice to meet the needs of the companies and battalions. There also developed a strong tendency to use the weapons in getting finances through gangster activities, which are politically counterproductive and give rise to serious ideological and political disorientation among the officers and fighters.

As they should, some companies and battalions do mass work and production work when possible. However, the Red fighters complain why they should be in large concentrated formations even when they are not fighting the enemy. Their constant bigness is precisely the obstacle to taking more offensives as they are bogged down by logistical problems. If they were to fight more often without the mass base and the source of material support, they would fare worse in warfare. There are also those in company formations who use their very size as an argument for not dispersing and engaging in mass work and production or helping the people. They say that they have to act like a standing army ever alert and specialized in fighting because the enemy might catch them **unawares** in a dispersed mode.

Because of the problems in recruitment resulting from the dwindling mass base, many companies have resorted to recruiting lumpen and other elements who have not gone through revolutionary education and tempering in mass organizations. In many areas there has even been a deliberate lowering of criteria for recruitment into the companies to compensate for the high rate of turnover among fighters. This, plus the neglect of internal political education and isolation from mass work and production have led to the deterioration of the overall political quality and discipline of the people's army. Among the ranks of the officers and men, the skill and knowledge in conducting mass work, the desirable attitudes developed and necessitated by integrating with the masses have weakened. Problems of coarseness, lack of discipline, lumpen tendencies, arrogance and commandism have developed and spread. Oftentimes, the people speak of the first generation NPAs in squads and platoons as real NPAs and those in companies as fake because they do not engage in mass work, production and helping the people. "Regularization" has meant alienation from the masses.

At one time, we boasted of dozens of companies and some battalions. But the ratio of the number of company-size offensives to the number of these units is very low. We must squarely face the question why bigger but fewer military units have resulted in fewer tactical offensives, increased number of failed tactical offensives,

and a drop in our armed strength, particularly in the number of fighters.

Reasserting the Absolute Leadership of the Party over the Army

THE PARTY MUST exercise its absolute leadership over the people's army by deploying Party cadres properly. The Party leadership in the army command must not be allowed to pay lip service to the comprehensive Party leadership and yet proceed to take all initiative in building a "separate" structure by grabbing all Party cadres within its reach for staffing. The Party should not thus be "left behind" only to be told to catch up in building and consolidating the mass base when its limbs have been cut off precisely because the army has preempted the personnel and resources. The Party has to take the initiative in deploying cadres and resources properly and take full command of the people's army.

The premature concentration of army command and coordination at higher levels (national and interregional) must be corrected and relative to this, the direct leadership of the Party territorial committee over the organization and units of the army within their respective scopes must be strengthened. The premature centralization of army command, which is one of the factors of "regularization" and verticalization deprived the guerrilla units of flexibility, encouraged disregard for political considerations and local conditions and resulted more often in incorrect judgments not only politically but also militarily. The practice of some higher army commands to bypass the regional Party committee and directly order the deployment and mission of the main "regular" formations must be stopped. The policy of declaring as war zones all the areas within the guerrilla fronts, thus giving the army command and the main army units the license to bypass the local Party committees and disregard political conditions, considerations and plans in launching military actions must also be stopped.

Within army units, the role and leadership of both the military commander and the political officer should be strengthened; their cooperation must be continuously strengthened for the all-round development of the army unit. What is appropriately the authority of the military commander, especially in military situations, must be ensured while the collective leadership of the Party over the army unit must be developed and strengthened. The tendency to overstress the authority of the commander at the expense of the role of the Party committee, branch or group over the army unit must be avoided.

There have been cases of overstressing the army's line of authority and command almost to the point of liquidating collective life and depriving the Party members in the army of their right to participate in collective discussions about policies and ideological, political, organizational and military matters. There have also been cases at upper command levels of important decisions taken and implemented and operations launched without being referred to or, worse, hidden from the knowledge of the concerned Party committee and reported only after the fact.

Such violations of the absolute leadership of the Party over the army should be corrected. We must ensure that at all times the army operates according to the line of the Party and to the comprehensive policies, plans and priorities and the correct balance between military and political work set by the leading Party committees at different levels. Ideological, political and organizational work to ensure and strengthen Party leadership over the army must be constantly attended to.

It is wrong to maintain big formations in absolute concentration when these are not on tactical offensives or training exercises. The people's army should be like a net which is drawn in when it is to engage an enemy force that it is capable of defeating; and is cast out widely to attend to mass work and other noncombat tasks when not on a fighting mode.

Considering the amount of weapons that the NPA has, it is wiser to have the regional command lead a company as rallying point for the entire region. When not fighting, such a company should be in relative concentration with the headquarters platoon within the radius of a few barrios and the squads in the other platoons can be deployed within a wider radius of more barrios per squad. Such a company can do fighting and other tasks, move from one guerrilla front to another to launch an offensive or to perform other tasks, with the augmentation or coordination of the more numerous and widespread front and local guerrilla units.

It is wiser to multiply the number of guerrilla fronts, with platoons as the rallying point and squads and half-squads spread out within a wider radius for mass work. The objective should be to attain extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare throughout the country. We should be able to make the monster bleed from thousands upon thousands of wounds.

It is wrong to say that the number of guerrilla fronts is already enough and that the point is to verticalize the armed strength into a few big formations. This is the self-constriction which falls into line with the kind of war that the enemy wants us

to fight because it allows him to beat us in his war of quick decision and gradual constriction, which is based on his superior military forces. Painstaking mass work and guerrilla warfare are still our winning line at this stage of our people's war. These lay the horizontal foundation for the vertical growth of the people's army in due course.

Confronted by the brigades and battalions deployed by the enemy, let us apply the law of contradiction in our warfare. The enemy is not always in solid large formation. The rough countryside and the archipelago objectively divide the enemy forces. There is no large enemy formation that does not divide itself according to several functions and that does not make its parts vulnerable to our attack. Instead of going into the path of certain defeat by trying to match the enemy's large formations, we must use guerrilla tactics to induce the enemy force to divide itself and unwittingly provide us with part after part that we can wipe out.

Where we cannot as yet raid a camp successfully, we must find success in ambushing the part of the enemy that we can wipe out on the road. Where we cannot as yet wipe out regular enemy troops, we can find success in repeatedly seizing arms from police and paramilitary units through appropriate operations.

It is wrong to say that luring the enemy in deep, letting him move around blind and deaf, and letting him punch the air when we cannot fight to win are outmoded tactics just because our people's war has grown increasingly more intensive as we advance. These are useful at any stage of the people's war. The winning line is to fight only the battles that we can win. The losing line is to stick out big heads or to overreach. Another losing line is not to fight even the battles that we can win. All the way we assume that we expand and consolidate the mass base.

We cannot induce our advance to the stage of regular mobile warfare because it would mean feeding our army and our mass base to senseless attrition or to self-destruction by prematurely rushing into strategically decisive battles or campaigns. Advancing to regular mobile warfare is a strategic advance that necessitates fulfilling the requirements in stages, building up the strength and capability of the Party, the mass base, the reserves and logistics at a higher level and also a greater degree of the enemy's weakening and disintegration, with due consideration of other important factors inside and outside the country. Even the guerrilla warfare for developing the requisites and laying the conditions for regular mobile warfare in the future will have to go through stages, progressively from simple and lower levels to more complex and higher.

The rectification of the line of “regularization” and premature vertical buildup of the people’s army should result in the reinvigoration and improvement of the quality of mass work and mass base building in the countryside. It is urgent that we attend to the work of expanding the guerrilla fronts and recovering lost areas as well as of solving the problems of consolidation that have been relegated to secondary position since we started to undertake “regularization” and “to raise the level of our warfare”. It is necessary for us to understand and implement the line of solid organizing, correct balancing of expansion and consolidation, antifeudal struggle, consistent education and propaganda, and developing various types of mass campaigns.

We must take advantage of the enemy’s loosening hold over wider parts of the countryside as he concentrates the majority of his forces and resources for offensives on the few priority targets of Lambat-Bitag II. But we must also learn to adjust to and persevere in developing our mass work even under conditions and within areas of more intense contention with the enemy. We cannot just leave and abandon the areas that are more populated, along lines of transportation, communications and supply, and important in linking up with the movement in the cities simply because these areas are more easily accessible to or more closely watched by the enemy. We must therefore be good at combining - according to the changing military conditions and particularities of the areas (remote and mountainous, foothills and plains, adjacent to urban centers and along highways) - forms of organizations and struggles that are open and secret, legal, semilegal and illegal, traditional and nontraditional, as well as forms of struggles that are armed and nonarmed in order to maintain as far as possible our link with, guidance over and development of the movement and the mass base.

One long running problem in our mass work is the smallness of the membership of our mass organizations; in many localities, the only existing people’s organizations are the organs of political power or a semblance of it. We must solve this problem by organizing as fully as possible the workers, peasants, youth, women, children and cultural activists. And we must develop the organs of political power, supported by working committees for mass organization, education, defense, land reform, production, finance, health, arbitration, cultural affairs and so on. These can be drawn from mass organizations.

In organizing the masses, we must also avoid premature verucalizatron and give priority to horizontal spread and consolidation at the barrio and municipal

levels. In the last several years, there has been a tendency to push the building of the structure of the organs of political power and the mass organizations upward to the level of the district and higher even as the scope and strength of the mass organizations at the basic levels have diminished, thus absorbing the already limited number of cadres at the lower levels in order to preoccupy them with the tasks of administration, coordination and formal processes of organization at upper levels.

It is of urgent necessity to organize the masses. But getting organized is not enough. Mass campaigns must be launched. Through these, the masses can develop their own power, effect changes for their social and economic wellbeing and resist and frustrate enemy attacks by unarmed and armed, open and secret means.

The key campaign to benefit the peasant masses is the campaign for the realization of the minimum program of our land reform and increased production. There are some elements who - without having much in carrying out the minimum program of rent reduction - already wish to carry out the maximum program of land *confiscation*. We have had more than enough negative experiences of this kind of overreaching - of trying to achieve what we cannot as yet achieve.

Elements of the maximum program may be carried out only against despotic landlords (those who harm the peasant masses and farm workers and refuse to negotiate with them) and landgrabbers so that we can still take advantage of the split between the despotic and enlightened landlords, prevent the landlords (big, medium and small) from uniting against us and allow us to further develop our strength among the peasant masses not only in the current guerrilla fronts but also in the more extensive areas to which we must expand.

The Boycott Decisions of 1978 and 1986

THE BOYCOTT ERROR of 1986 has been rectified but it deserves some attention in this discussion for the purpose of comparing or relating it to other errors. It has been so overstated and drummed up that it has overshadowed the incomparably far bigger and more destructive line of armed urban insurrectionism and military adventurism. Here is a clear case of subjectivism, a gross failure to see all the major errors and evaluate them properly.

Before and after the reestablishment of the Party, the proletarian revolutionary cadres have had an extensive experience in working within the reactionary institutions, organizations and processes. It is permissible and necessary for cadres

and Party groups to be assigned to work within the reactionary trade unions, churches, the army of the enemy and so on.

And, of course, certain legal mass organizations even if patriotic and progressive can operate viably and conduct legal political struggle by complying with the requirements of legality. For instance, they cannot declare in their documents that they are for the armed revolution. But neither is it correct for them to gratuitously declare themselves against armed revolution. As a matter of fact they can always assert the sovereign right of the people to decide on what it takes to defend their freedom.

It is not unprincipled for a Party member to have a legal occupation and carry legal documents. Neither is it unprincipled for a Party member or a Red fighter under arrest to retain the services of a lawyer and wage a legal struggle in order to defend his rights and prevent the enemy from doing worse to him.

But the question about Party cadres and Party groups operating in legal political parties and alliances and in the reactionary electoral process aroused bitter debates in the past. Such debates were over the 1978 and 1986 elections called by the Marcos fascist regime. Each time one side was for boycott and another side for participation.

The term boycott was used by the broadest spectrum of antifascist opposition, including the Party and the anti-Marcos reactionaries, to isolate the Marcos regime in the 1981 elections. In the 1984 elections, the Party leadership again referred to its position as boycott and this went along well with the boycott position of the broad antifascist popular movement and most of the anti-Marcos reactionaries. In both 1981 and 1984 elections, the 1978 boycott decision of the Party appeared vindicated. But the 1986 boycott position became problematic because this time, the middle and backward sections of the antifascist movement opted for critical participation. Even among the advanced section of the masses, there was great opposition to the boycott line.

We are most concerned about the bitter internal debates over the 1978 and 1986 elections. An understanding of these leads to a general understanding of the reactionary electoral processes and the correct stand and approach of the Party.

Whenever the issue in the debate is formulated as a choice between boycott and participation, those on the boycott side have the advantage of winning the debate on the simple ground that in the first place, the Party is banned and cannot

participate and anyway the electoral process is reactionary on the whole, if not exclusively.

But should the issue always be formulated as a choice between boycott and participation? Cannot the issue be formulated within the Party as one of whether or not the Party deploys Party cadres and groups that are not known as such outside of the Party in order to operate in the reactionary electoral process, promote the national democratic line, attack the enemy and support the progressive side - be it party, alliance or set of candidates? The Party itself is not participating because it cannot as a matter of revolutionary principle and even if it wants to, it cannot due to the enemy ban on the Party. The Party's own line of armed revolution regards the reactionary elections as farcical. But the Party certainly can do something by way of revolutionary dual tactics through Party cadres and groups that are not publicly known as such.

Revolutionary dual tactics are employed by the Party to reach a greater number of the people and to counteract the enemy's counterrevolutionary dual tactics of misrepresenting the electoral exercise as a democratic one, even if it is actually monopolized either by the reactionary ruling clique or by all the exploiting classes through a multiplicity of bourgeois reactionary parties and is intended to deceive the people into believing that they participate in a democratic process.

In the elections of 1969 and 1971, the Party kept to its antirevisionist line of not considering these reactionary elections as the sole or principal way of achieving revolutionary change or basic reforms and described these as farces on the whole and in essence. But the Party could issue statements on what constitutes the substance of democracy and what makes a truly democratic exercise, promote the national democratic line and encourage the legal progressive forces and candidates to take the patriotic and progressive line.

The central leadership took a decision to boycott the 1978 elections. In the process of making the decision, the leadership of the Manila-Rizal party organization argued for participation but was outvoted and was therefore bound to abide by the decision. But it did not carry out instructions for implementing the boycott. And in the ensuing fullblown struggle with the Executive Committee of the Central Committee, it resorted to secret meetings where committee members who did not agree with it were excluded, continuously refused to follow instructions about organizational arrangements, spread irresponsible talk to undermine the central leadership's credibility and which violated the secrecy of the identities of the Central

Committee members, and threatened violence against certain Central Committee members. Hence, disciplinary measures were meted out to the regional leadership.

The central leadership decided to reorganize the Macula-Real Party organization. But only a provisional executive committee was formed to replace the Manila-Rizal Party Committee, many of whose members had either been suspended or reassigned. Increasingly, the Executive Committee of the Central Committee tried to run the Party organization and the mass movement in Metro Manila through central staff organs until the regional leadership was completely abolished in 1982.

In the absence of an effective regional leadership, the district Party committees, local Party branches and the community-based mass organizations became neglected and fell into disarray. The disarray in the Party organization in Metro Manila disabled the Party from bringing about the upsurge in the mass movement, participated in by a broad range of political forces. This upsurge had been well signaled by the “noise barrage”, which was called on the eve of the 1978 farcical elections for the IBP (interim legislature) and which aside from the noisemaking was accompanied by various forms of street mass actions.

The Party had anticipated this upsurge in 1974 on the basis of advances made among the workers and the youth in that year. There were expectations that the workers and the urban communities would rise up in an unprecedented manner in the last years of the 1970s at the latest, notwithstanding the tendency of some leading cadres in Manila-Rizal to overstress the antifascist struggle and to artificially heat up the street actions. These expectations could not be realized as a consequence of the boycott decision of 1978, the disciplinary actions in 1979 and the inability of the central leadership to build an effective regional Party leadership.

The central staff organs, especially the National Commission on Mass Movements, would promote Metro Manila-based national mass organizations which were then weak but they did not pay sufficient attention to the growth of community organizations and basic Party life at the grassroots level. Their attention and efforts were increasingly devoted to sweeping propaganda, building administrative structures related to the urban-based national mass organizations and coordinating these for mass mobilizations. Thus was laid the ground for bureaucratism.

This kind of bureaucratism involved central staff organs dividing among themselves aspects of work over the mass organizations, acquiring excessive political discretion and developing a unilateral topdown command system. These

staff organs became in practice sources of political authority and tended to herd Party cadres and members into the administrative stricture of mass organizations. By 1986, Party members were already critical of the existence of “two or three Party centers” in addition to the Executive Committee of the Central Committee.

Basic Party life in communities, factories and other work places would be neglected for a long time. Party cadres and members are piled up in administrative positions and in Party groups at various levels of mass organizations and are lacking in basic Party life at the grassroots level. So, to this day all-round Party life - ideological, political and organizational remains weak at the basic level.

It was in the 1983-86 period that the Party and progressive urban mass organizations were able to recover significantly due to the powerful antifascist popular current that was let loose by the Aquino assassination. The mass movement in the cities developed in street actions, coordinated campaigns, sweeping propaganda and broad coalition and alliancebuilding. On the other hand, it had weaknesses in solid organizing, solid work at basic levels, sustained and solid efforts at political education, propaganda and agitation among the masses, and in building up strength in factories, schools and communities. Even at the height of the open movement and struggle in the 1983-86 period, Party activists and members reached only a few thousands among the workers and students and these were thinly spread in small secret Party groups and cells and branches within legal political mass organizations.

The boycott decision of 1978 had resulted in as much damage as, if not even more damage than, the 1986 boycott error. But the latter has been played up by honest elements who seek redress from what they perceive as unjust punishment for circumventing the 1978 boycott decision as well as by other elements who have seized upon the 1986 boycott error to obscure the far more devastating errors in Mindanao and who continue to promote the wrong line that caused the far bigger error - the ultimate weakening of the revolutionary forces there as early as 1984 and the anti-informer hysteria in 1985-86.

The 1986 boycott was a major tactical error, as correctly described by the central leadership. During the short electoral campaign period, it separated and isolated the advanced section of the masses from the other sections which took the antifascist and anti-Marcos line. There was a failure to recognize that Marcos' cheating in the elections would incite the people to an unprecedented uprising as well as a grave split in the reactionary armed forces. The Party went into a vigorous effort and

expense in order to impose its sectarian will on organizations and alliances with a mass and united front character for the duration of the snap presidential elections campaign period.

However, the Party leadership regained its composure and initiative when it called for the nationwide popular resistance in alliance with all the antifascist and anti-Marcos forces immediately after the farcical election exercise.

Nevertheless, there are - outside the Party - critics of the boycott error of 1986 who to this day overstate it in order to push their own erroneous lines and agendas but are not being significantly rebuffed by the Party. There are those who claim - against the incontrovertible facts - that because of the 1986 boycott error the Party and the progressive mass organizations and alliances were out of the EDSA mass uprising that caused the downfall of Marcos and go so far as to negate the role of the Party and the revolutionary movement in the 1983-86 mass actions and the longer process of undermining and isolating the fascist regime.

In overemphasizing the role of the spontaneous masses and the supposed lack of participation by the revolutionary and legal progressive forces, there are those who stress the role of their own small pettybourgeois organizations and obscure the role of the U.S. and the Catholic officialdom and the reactionary classes in the making of the mass uprising *cum* relatively bloodless military mutiny. The fact was that there was a convergence of organized contradictory forces and the spontaneous masses on the widely detested fascist regime.

However, the most fantastic claim is that made by some proponents of urban insurrectionism. They claim that were it not for the boycott error, the revolutionary forces could have brought down the ruling system together with Marcos by leading the spontaneous masses to victory as in Nicaragua in 1979 or at the least there could have been a sharing of power with the Aquino clique, the Reform the AFP Movement (RAM) and the like. They therefore consider the boycott error of 1986 as the biggest error of the Party.

In fact the bigger ideological, political and organizational error had been the erroneous line and the anti-infiltrator hysteria that caused the devastation on the Party and the mass movement in Mindanao in 1985 and afterwards. How could the Party be expected to seize power when the year before the EDSA uprising the revolutionary forces and people in Mindanao were already being ravaged by the logical and real consequences of the erroneous line of urban insurrectionism cwn

military adventurism? Whether intentional or not, some who have been responsible for the disaster in Mindanao have promoted the wrong line and themselves within the Party by overstating the boycott error of 1986 and obscuring their own far bigger errors.

Building the United Front

THE PARTY HAS a revolutionary class line in building the united front for the national democratic revolution and for armed struggle. This revolutionary class line is the building of the basic alliance of workers and peasants, winning over such middle forces as the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie, taking advantage of splits among the reactionaries and isolating and defeating the reactionary diehards. There is a structure of requirements for the revolutionary united front to exist and develop along the revolutionary class line of the Party.

First, there must be the leadership of the working class through the Party, which initially recruited its members from the trade union, youth and urban-based mass movements and from the remnants of the previous revolutionary movement.

Second, there must be the basic alliance of the working class and the peasantry through the Party arousing, organizing and mobilizing the peasant masses and building the New People's Army and the peasant associations led by the Party.

Third, there must be a broader alliance of the toiling masses of workers and peasants with the third basic force of the revolution, the urban petty bourgeoisie, through the underground National Democratic Front and other alliances aboveground.

Fourth, there must be a still broader alliance of the positive forces of the revolution, linking the basic forces of the revolution with the national bourgeoisie. There is yet no significant organizational expression of the united front of the positive forces, although members and groups of the national bourgeoisie cooperate with the revolutionary movement in areas where the armed revolutionary movement and the trade union movement are strong.

Fifth, there can be an alliance with certain sections of the reactionary classes against the most reactionary clique. This was well manifested on a nationwide scale in the antifascist struggle. Enlightened landlords and businessmen have shown cooperation by paying their taxes to the people's government and have cooperated

with the Party, the NPA, NDF and mass organizations on such matters as land reform, wage relations, elections, etc.

Sixth, the broadest alliance can be ranged against the narrowest target, the reactionary clique that is ruling or the one most favored by U.S. imperialism. We fight and defeat one most reactionary clique after another and in the process we accumulate revolutionary strength.

The Party must play the vanguard role in representation of the immediate and long-term rights and interests of the working class and must be able to distinguish in class terms the stable and reliable allies from the unstable and unreliable ones.

But as early as in 1975, there was a motion to do away with the Marxist-Leninist language in *Ang Bayan* and specifically the politically precise term, anti-Marcos reactionaries, to refer to such allies as Benigno Aquino, Diosdado Macapagal and Joaquin Roces. There was the misunderstanding that such allies as Lorenzo Tariada and Jose W. Diokno, who in fact took a clearcut patriotic and progressive line (of the national bourgeois kind) on major issues, would feel referred to and be turned off by the term.

Thus, the term faded towards the end of the 1970s. What replaced it was the ideologically strict term “bourgeois reformists”, used in the debates between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. This term was applied so widely by the central leadership up to 1986 as to lump together with reactionary elements and forces some of the basic as well as positive elements and forces of the revolution. The result was a certain amount of confusion within the Party.

One side used the term to support a sectarian position. This position adhered to the tactics of aiming for decisive victory in the revolution in the struggle against the U.S.-Marcos fascist dictatorship and the policy of neutralizing, dismantling and removing the influence of the “bourgeois reformist” bloc. Thus, it had a tendency to impose the advanced position and will of the Party on the legal organizations of a mass and alliance character to the point of creating splits within these organizations and separating the advanced elements from the broad antifascist front.

Another side also used the term in a reverse way from a liberal position. One extreme begot another. Thus, certain elements of the Party in the National Urban Commission (NUC), the United Front Commission, the National Military Staff (later called the General Command) and *Ang Bayan* would go so far as to describe the Aquino’s political stand as national bourgeois and her regime as liberal

democratic rather than as a U.S.-supported big comprador-landlord regime. Echoing the American bourgeois mass media, they propagandized the line that the new reactionary regime was liberal democratic and thus they created confusion even among the Party members and the revolutionary mass organizations.

Errors keep on arising in united front work. There are those who, in their wish to hasten the ripening of the insurrectionary situation in the urban areas, advocate the development of direct and open alliance between the NDF and legal organizations and alliances - progressive and otherwise - within the framework of a common minimum program (the so-called people's agenda). The supposed objective is to position the NDF at the center of the people's struggles that will be developed towards armed mass uprisings. But what they are actually proposing is confusing the demarcation line between legal and illegal organizations and struggles and pulling the NDF down to the level of legal allied organizations and personalities, many of whom are still confined within the bounds of reformism although they maintain a progressive stand on certain questions.

There are also those who equate the united front with the entire people and then accuse the Party of instrumentalizing the people when the Party speaks of the armed struggle and the united front as weapons of the Party. They do not understand that the working class leadership through the Party, the armed struggle through the NPA and the united front through the NDF and other formations or informal cooperative relations are all functional aspects of the revolutionary movement and are all weapons or instruments of the Filipino people in the national democratic revolution.

There are also those who wish to equate the NDF with the entire united front and make the NDF a catchall federation which assumes the leadership over the Philippine revolution and in which the Party is politically and organizationally subordinated not only to a "federal center" but to one with a preponderance of petty bourgeois formations.

There are those who erase from the history of the NDF the role and initiative of the Party in the formation of the NDF and who eliminate the leading role of the working class in the united front. Upon the elimination of the proletarian leadership, the democratic revolution then envisioned is nothing but a recycling of the old liberal revolution and the passing hegemony of petty bourgeois formations and ideas on behalf of today's exploiting classes. In fact, the program of the NDF has been overwritten and diluted several times under the wrong notion that even

after the seizure of political power (the basic completion of the new democratic revolution) the goal is still to build the “national democratic society” and not the socialist society as well as under the influence of the (now failed) Sandinista program of “multiparty democracy” (no socialist revolution) and “mixed economy” (no socialist construction) and the policies of revisionist regimes, whose cornerstone is the elimination of the leading role of the working class.

Despite all the efforts aimed at expansion, the NDF remains an underground united front of the organizations of basic forces of the revolution (working class, peasantry and urban petty bourgeoisie). Should there be a retreat from or should there be a reaffirmation of what the NDF is - as a formal united front of the organizations of the basic revolutionary forces which accept the leadership of the working class, the new democratic line and the armed struggle?

Even as the NDF remains as it was originally envisioned in 1973, of course, with appropriate scaling down of the unrealized expectation in 1973 that it is the entire united front of all patriotic and progressive classes, it is possible to strengthen it internally and then proceed to seek out allies who do not wish to be within the NDF fold but within varied frames of bilateral and multilateral relations.

Strengthening it internally means reaffirming the NDF as the most advanced united front organization of the basic revolutionary forces along the new-democratic line; developing those underground allied organizations (even if led or influenced by the Party) other than the Party and the NPA; and creating the councils and commissions to assist and pave the way for the people’s government at various levels.

Rather than have the concept of federation, it is more flexible to adopt the principle of confederal, consensual and consultative relations of allied organizations within the NDF. This is the way to uphold the independence and initiative of the Party and override such questions as to whether the NDF is under the democratic centralism of the Party or the other way around, and also keep the door indefinitely open to entities that wish to join, depending on the circumstances and strength of the revolutionary movement.

Seeking out groups as allies does not mean only dealing with those willing to join the NDF. It also means establishing bilateral or multilateral relations with them on a consultative and consensual basis. Such allies might prefer to deal with the NDF from the outside and possibly on an equal footing within a wider frame.

Since 1986, the much expanded legal alliances have shown the way how to build them on the consultative and consensual basis, without having to choose between federal and unitary forms of organization or without getting mixed up about these forms of organization.

On the Issue of Peace Negotiations

PROPOSALS FOR PEACE talks and national unity between the revolutionary forces and a new government to replace the Marcos regime were publicly aired by the prominent leaders and forces in alliance against the fascist regime in the 1983-86 period. These proposals served to expand and firm up the united front, both formal and informal.

Upon coming to power, Aquino released the political prisoners as she had pledged to do in an attempt to court the support of the national democratic movement; and called for a ceasefire as she had expressed interest in it before becoming president.

It was correct for the Party to declare its willingness to engage in peace talks or, as the Aquino regime preferred to call them, ceasefire talks. To have done otherwise would have been to appear as being opposed to peace in the face of Aquino's offer of ceasefire talks. In the first place, the Party's national democratic line is the line for a just and lasting peace. Thus, it was decided that a negotiating panel of the National Democratic Front would represent all the revolutionary forces.

But before agreeing to engage in formal bilateral negotiations or sign a ceasefire agreement, the NPA should have taken all the time to engage in talks about peace talks until such time that a substantive agenda and other terms could be agreed upon to the mutual satisfaction of the two sides. Even before the 60-day ceasefire agreement, the NDF could take initiatives in launching propaganda. It could also expose the other side as the intransigent one, especially on the substantive issues. The NDF could rebuff the other side every time this threatened to end the preceasefire talks.

It was erroneous though to allow the preceasefire talks to be held exclusively in the Metro Manila area. The sickness (terminal cancer) of one of the negotiators of the reactionary government, Senator Jose W. Diokno who was deeply respected by the NDF, dictated the constant Metro Manila venue of the preceasefire talks. It was also erroneous to agree to a 60-day ceasefire agreement without any agreement

on a substantive agenda for serious peace negotiations. The declared purpose of the ceasefire agreement was merely for creating the atmosphere for an undefined substantive dialogue during the ceasefire period.

One reason given for the ceasefire agreement was that it would pave the way for a substantive agenda and for the formal peace talks. Another reason given by some elements in the Party for the ceasefire agreement was that it would allow the revolutionary forces to show their “human face” and to make propaganda on a nationwide scale through the dominant bourgeois mass media.

Still another reason given by other elements in the Party was that the people’s army in Mindanao needed the ceasefire as a relief from the pressures by overwhelming enemy military forces and as a device for allowing supplies to isolated and besieged NPA units. Actually, the enemy forces in Mindanao were then in disarray due to the big split between the Marcos-Ver and the Enrile-Ramos camps. At any rate, some Mindanao cadres had gone into localized ceasefire independent of the central leadership of the Party. They were in a difficult situation not simply because of enemy pressures but more essentially because of the ravages of a wrong line and the anti-informer hysteria.

Some elements in Mindanao Commission had the localist notion that they could run far ahead of the rest of the country in liberating Mindanao through a combination of offensives by enlarged “regularized” NPA formations and armed urban uprisings. Under conditions of selfdestruction as a result of the anti-informer hysteria and the effectiveness of the enemy in a purely military situation, they wished to find a way out through localized ceasefires, without realizing that these could induce a fragmentation of the national revolutionary movement and that these would not really solve the problems wrought by the erroneous line that they had pushed in Mindanao. At any rate, there was a case of swinging from an ultra-Left to a Rightist position.

Certain leading cadres of the Party held the view that our armed struggle was put in a politically defensive position after the EDSA uprising. They asserted that we needed the ceasefire to “reposition” our armed struggle in the new situation. For them, the ceasefire was the main thing and it was a good thing that served our purpose despite the serious flaws in the ceasefire agreement and the aggravation of our security problems in the cities and the countryside.

There were even a few who held the view that the ceasefire and peace talks

would possibly lead to another polarization of forces where Aquino and other “middle forces” (including pro-Aquino comprador big bourgeois and landlords) could be won over to the side of the also issued comprehensive guidelines and detailed instructions on security since 1989.

As a result of some efforts to push a new round of peace talks between the NDF and the reactionary government from 1989 onward, the Party and the NDF have further worked out a comprehensive framework of peace negotiations in order to frustrate the attempt of the enemy to misrepresent itself as the champion of peace and the revolutionary forces as the source of violence and to split the revolutionary forces and the people. The main points in the framework are the following.

1. The strategic line is one of pursuing the national democratic line to attain a just and lasting peace.
2. The NDF is a belligerent force in the civil war and not a mere insurgent force. It cannot negotiate with the reactionary government if not on an equal footing under international law.
3. The legal and political frame is the set of mutually acceptable principles, the international norms and the agreements that may be made.
4. The substantive agenda includes the following: respect for human rights and international humanitarian law; social and economic reforms; constitutional, political and electoral reforms; and the armed forces.
5. There must be a reasonable timetable.
6. The venue must be abroad for the mutual convenience and safety of the two sides.
7. There must be a foreign state or interstate third party acting in a certain capacity (intermediary, good offices or witness) agreed upon by the two sides.
8. The domestic and foreign third party of nongovernmental peace advocates can be consulted and be of help to the peace process.

The framework of the reactionary government is diametrically opposed to that of the NDF and is not at all a framework for peace negotiations but for killing the peace process *ab initio*. It includes the following points:

1. NDF must submit to the GRP constitution.

2. The NPA must surrender its arms and be liquidated.
3. In exchange for the foregoing two points, the GRP will offer amnesty and rehabilitation measures to the amnesty grantees.
4. Negotiations must be held in the Philippines.
5. If the NDF leadership refuses to agree to the foregoing points, then the GRP and AFP will not enter into any formal bilateral talks with the NDF but will seek localized dialogues and ceasefire for the surrender of local leaders and forces of the CPP, NPA and NDF.

The opposing frameworks are absolutely clear. Those who blame the Party and other revolutionary forces for the absence of formal bilateral talks between the NDF and GRP cause harm to the interests of the revolutionary movement. Those who take the posture of being above the NDF and the GRP, avowing to be simply interested in doing away with the human costs of the civil war, and who simplistically consider both sides of the civil war as equally violent, actually obscure the just and reasonable cause of the armed revolution and in effect rationalize the retention of the violent system of oppression and exploitation.

We must rebuff those elements who, without understanding the costs of prolonged ceasefire to the revolutionary will and forces of the people, exaggerate the importance of ceasefire and peacetalks as means to broaden the united front and strengthen the mass movement for the purpose of an armed urban insurrection.

We must frustrate the reactionary effort to put the NDF at par with mutinous factions of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and with a multiplicity of nongovernmental organizations of all political sorts (including the most reactionary ones) in a supposed peace process to attain a broad anti-imperialist front for an “armed insurrection in the medium term”. This is a puerile ploy.

We must also frustrate the attempt of some reactionary clerical elements to make the revolutionary movement accept the strategic hamlet by a simple change of name, like “zone of peace” or “zone of life”. Our revolutionary mass base is peaceful and full of productive life, unless the reactionary forces intrude and unleash death and destruction on it.

We must put a stop to the practice of NDF cadres on the enemy manhunt list going to Manila to meet with personalities under probable or certain surveillance and to talk about peace prospects with them there. The repeatedly proven cost

of such meetings should convince everyone that talks about peace talks are best delegated to those who are most secure or least vulnerable.

On the question of peace negotiations, we must reject any ultra-Left and yet Rightist notion that if armed urban insurrection is not possible, then we must seek peaceful settlement with the enemy and depart from the armed revolution and put our hopes on parliamentarism. We must also reject as a major premise of peace negotiations the notion that the NDF must seek peaceful settlement because it is supposed to be the trend in the world. A just peace in the Philippines is essentially something that the Filipino people have to fight for.

If there can be no peace negotiations yet, it is because the reactionary government is intransigent. The lack of peace negotiations only means that the revolutionary forces and the people under the leadership of the Party must work and fight more resolutely than ever to change the balance of forces in the Philippines.

III. IN THE FIELD OF ORGANIZATION

IT IS THE outstanding achievement of the Communist Party of the Philippines that it has become a nationwide organization with deep roots among the broad masses of the people, especially among the toiling masses of workers and peasants. The Party and the masses it leads are in the urban areas and in the wide expanses of the countryside, in the plains, hills, mountain valleys and seacoasts.

In the entire history of the Philippines, never has there been a revolutionary organization of such national scope and depth among the broad masses of people as the Party. The Party membership is in the tens of thousands, consisting of cadres and members. Augmented by the revolutionary mass activists, the Party has surpassed the Katipunan of 1898 and far more the old Communist Party of the Philippines in national spread and in other significant respects.

The Party is present wherever exist the people's army, the underground and legal mass organizations and the organs of political power it has created. It is at the head and at the core of the revolutionary mass movement. It exists in new areas of growth as well as in traditional institutions and organizations.

The Party owes its strength to the cadres and members and to all martyrs who

have adhered to and implemented the correct line of the Party; and to the broad masses of the people who follow the leadership of the Party along the general line of the new democratic revolution against the imperialists and the local exploiting classes.

The Party is the advanced detachment of the working class and the Philippine revolution. Without this vanguard, the revolutionary mass movement along the new democratic line cannot arise and develop. Even the byproducts of this movement, such as petty bourgeois groups and trends of thought which are patriotic and progressive in varying degrees, cannot thrive without the growth and advance of the Party and the revolutionary mass movement. To attack the vanguard role and development of the Party is to try to defeat the revolution and bring back the worst forms of reaction.

The main organizational principle of the Party is democratic centralism. This is centralism based on democracy and democracy under centralized leadership. For further explanation, let us quote extensively from the Party Constitution.

The basic conditions of democratic centralism are the following:

1. Leading organs of the Party at all levels shall be elected and shall be responsible to the Party organization or conference that elected them.
2. After free and thorough discussion, decisions taken by the Party are implemented
 - a) The individual is subordinate to the organization;
 - b) The minority is subordinate to the majority;
 - c) The lower level is subordinate to the higher level;
 - d) The entire membership is subordinate to the Central Committee and the National Congress.
3. Leading organs always pay attention to the reports and views of lower Party organizations and of the masses of Party members and constantly study concrete experiences and render prompt assistance in solving problems.
4. Lower Party organizations give regular and special reports about their work to the organization above them and request instructions promptly concerning problems which require the decision of a higher Party organization.

5. Party organizations follow the principle of collective leadership and all important questions are decided collectively.

However, democratic centralism is not just the democratic and collective process of decision-making. The decisions must adhere to the basic principles for which the Party exists. These points are declared in the Party Constitution and Program; and these are the guide to the definition of achievements, problems and tasks; to inner Party democracy and discipline and to the conduct of criticism and self-criticism.

Democratic centralism does not allow the violation of the Party constitution, diminution and destruction of basic Party life, the practice of bureaucratism as well as ultrademocracy or liberalism and disregard of one's own security and the security of others and the entire Party.

There must be a good account of the reasons for the failure of the Party to increase its membership and to further develop a comprehensive Party life, especially at the basic level. There are certain elements and certain trends of thought and action that prevent these.

The Central Leading and Staff Organs

For a long time, there has been no Party Congress. However, this has been made up for by the holding of plenary conferences of the Central Committee. In the history of other parties engaged in bitter armed struggle, wide time gaps between Party congresses occur due to extreme difficulties posed by the enemy. The ongoing time gap in our case is, at any rate, extraordinary and must be dealt with. Even the plenary meetings of the Central Committee could have been held more frequently under particular circumstances when the Party was confronted by serious problems regarding the conduct of the struggle or important shifts in the situation of general and long-term significance.

But far more disturbing than this time gap is the tendency of certain elements since the early 1980s to disregard and deviate from the basic principles and organizational rules set down by the Party Constitution and Program. The delay in the holding of a Congress may be regarded as a blessing in disguise insofar as the basic principles remain intact and can be reaffirmed by proletarian revolutionary cadres.

It would be utterly disastrous now if, in a Party Congress at any time in the

1980s, certain elements had succeeded in withdrawing the analysis of Philippine society, the antirevisionist critique and the theory of people's war from the Party Constitution and Program. As a matter of fact, these basic documents were invoked by the central leadership in 1985 to defend the Party's line against the attempts to push the line of hastening military victory through the combination of prematurely enlarged armed formations and armed urban uprisings. Ironically at that time, this erroneous line was already resulting in disaster but the reputation of those who pushed this line was high on the basis of the temporary success in their military offensives in a major island in 1981-83.

At any rate, there is another obvious departure from the Party Constitution that has run for so long. The office of the General Secretary, required by the Constitution, has been practically abolished. No leading organ can abolish this office, which is meant by the Constitution to take charge of daily administrative and routine matters on behalf of the central leadership.

Instead, structures revolving around commissions focused on principal lines of work have been created. One result has been the increasingly loosened supervision over and weakening of the basic tasks of organization and education in the Party, something that has become even more widespread in the entire Party when the decision to replicate these structures in the regions was implemented.

Another result has been a proliferation of central staff organs directly under the Central Committee through the Executive Committee. These are meant to assist the central leadership (the Central Committee, Political Bureau and the Executive Committee) and not to hamper, exhaust or ignore it.

But insofar as these central staff organs have increasingly acquired discretion and power, they have become so autonomous that they can either decide on policies on their own without the prior approval of the central leadership; circulate so-called orientation, strategy, program and policy papers under the guise of drafts; and generate long meetings, long papers and issues of controversy with other staff organs (e.g., NOC versus NUFC over slogans and procedural issues) and lower leading organs (NOC versus MR on the issue of national democratic or socialist "orientation" of the workers' movement). The controversial issues and papers are dumped from time to time on the central leadership, or the latter must run after them.

The central leadership assumes responsibility for this bureaucratic state of affairs

which victimizes itself. As the daily core of the central leadership, the Executive Committee must issue the timely statements on major public issues, national and international; solve the problems promptly and decisively; run the central staff organs with concise notes of instruction or directives; restore the General Secretariat to take care of daily administrative and routine matters; and streamline the other central staff organs, define the limits of the functions of the staff organs, correct their style of work, transfer to the countryside those staff organs that properly belong there and send to the regions and countryside the excess of urban-based staffers, especially those on the enemy manhunt list.

Whenever a major difference of view or controversy arises between staff organs or between a staff organ and a lower leading organ, the issue should be immediately reported to the Executive Committee and should not be prolonged nor generate long meetings, long papers and disruption of work. Just as the Executive Committee and its executive officers are expected to issue timely guidelines, statements and directives, the central staff organs and lower leading organs must make timely reports and recommendations.

The territorial (interregional) commissions were originally conceived as CC administrative organs, each covering several regions. The 9th plenum of the Central Committee in 1985 converted them into the highest policymaking body within their scope but also pointed out that the commissions must facilitate the flow of reports from the regional committees to the Executive Committee of the Central Committee. In practice, reports from the regions became fewer and farther between and in many ways, the Executive Committee was sealed off from the regions.

The territorial commissions are appointive and should function as staff organs. They must effect the timely exchange of communications between the Executive Committee and the regional committees. They can give the appropriate cover letter, including recommendations, to the EC but they cannot priorly assume that they can make decisions on behalf of any higher leading organ on major issues that involve the question of compliance with the Party's line or not.

The central leading organs, the Military Commission and the Party organization within the New People's Army must see to it that no army command disregards the strategic line of people's war and the comprehensive requirements of people's war. Not even the general command of the New People's Army can generate strategy papers and conferences and make decisions that run counter to or deviate from the strategic line of people's war. The absolute leadership of the Party means that the

Party decides the line and well-balanced deployment of Party cadres and resources and ensures the growing participation and support of the people.

At no time should the Party and the masses be “left behind” chasing after the supposedly “independent and separate” initiative of any army command at any level. It is not the case that the Party leadership is the deliberate sluggard, when initiatives that deviate from the strategic line gobble up the cadres and resources for premature and unsustainable bigger military formations and staff. At no time can the Party and the masses catch up with a line that gobbles up cadres and resources in a narrow way and eventually leads to the drastic reduction of mass base and all-round disaster. It is the constant duty of Party cadres and members to assert the basic principles and implement the correct line rather than tail after an erroneous line. The concept of a separate military structure should not also be allowed to lead to the abolition of Party collectives and Party life at any level of the people’s army.

Certain elements in staff organs as well as leading organs based in Metro Manila and other cities exaggerate the importance of their urban work by touting the insurrectionist line as the principal way to seize political power irrespective of the development of the people’s war and the people’s army. The practical consequence has been the dwindling of Party cadres with a good level of education, professional and technical competence who are willing to serve the people in the countryside and join the people’s army.

The peasant masses and the countryside do not by themselves produce these cadres. If these cadres are not provided by the urban areas, then the people’s war and the people’s army will decline and collapse; and the legal progressive mass organizations and the armed city partisans become easy prey for the enemy. Violations of the specific line that the principal character of the urban struggle is legal and defensive can provoke a crackdown by the enemy on the highly vulnerable legal democratic mass organizations and even on the underground staff organs. Without the guerrilla fronts and the rural mass base, where will our city-bred comrades go to pursue revolutionary work if they can no longer work effectively in the urban areas?

The concept of armed urban insurrection should cease to be the rationale for withholding cadres from the countryside in favor of armed city partisan units and urban-based staff organs or the lopsided attention given to recruiting “brave” or “exposed” elements of dubious political commitment into the armed city partisan units.

While central staff organs enjoy a high degree of autonomy, some to the point of independent kingdoms, and lower leading organs have unquestioned political authority over their jurisdiction, there is the wrong notion held by certain elements to deprive the Executive Committee of political authority and to reduce it to being a mere convenor of PB meetings.

The view spread by a certain element that there is no more EC or that the EC lacks political authority can only result in the weakening of the Party and in whipping up centrifugal tendencies like the independent actions by individual leading cadres and certain central staff organs beyond their authority and against central policies and decisions.

The daily core of the central leadership of the Party is the Executive Committee. It can make decisions in accordance with the basic principles in the Constitution and Program and the policies and standing decisions of the higher leading organs. It assumes responsibilities and risks within this frame. If there is no daily core of the central leadership, if the Executive Committee and its officers have no political authority and discretion between meetings of any higher leading organ, then the Party becomes headless and brainless on a daily basis.

Without the daily political authority of the Executive Committee, then it becomes possible for certain elements (including the enemy) to take advantage of the time gaps between meetings of the Political Bureau and the Central Committee. Any disrupter can claim to represent the PB or the CC, to relay PB or CC decisions according to his own peculiar view and to do any mischief against the Party's line because the PB, the CC or the Congress is not yet in session.

It must be understood that there is a series of delegations of powers from the general Party membership to the Congress to the Central Committee, to the Political Bureau and to the Executive Committee; and a series of collective responsibilities from the lower to the higher organ/ s and organization/s. The Party Constitution even describes the Executive Committee as a direct organ of the Central Committee. It is superior to any individual member of whatever rank, although it is subordinate to the PB, CC and the Congress.

On Urban-basing and Bureaucratism

THE PARTY ORGANIZATION and mass organizations in Metro Manila and other urban areas have been the initial and continuing source of proletarian revolutionary

cadres, well educated and with some professional and technical competence, for the countryside since the beginning of the armed revolution.

When martial law was declared in 1972, a large number of Party members and mass activists wanted to go to the few guerrilla zones. However, only a few could be absorbed by these zones. Thus, there was a big number of Party cadres and mass activists who had to be completely in the urban underground under several central staff organs and regional leading organs, especially in Metro Manila.

When guerrilla fronts and zones increased significantly in 1974, the Party members and mass activists who had bided their time in Metro Manila were dispatched in hundreds to the various regions. This line of deployment helped to strengthen the armed revolutionary movement and laid the basis for the resurgence of the legal democratic movement on a nationwide scale.

As a result of the veritable dissolution of the Manila-Rizal leading organs and Party organization in 1979, the central leadership assumed responsibility for the party and the mass movement in the national capital region; and started to build and base central staff organs there, using Party cadres on the enemy manhunt list and former political detainees. Basing in urban areas had for its rationale the concept of the three strategic coordination that overemphasized urban work.

In a short while, these vulnerable personnel would come under effective enemy surveillance and arrest operations in the early 1980s. But still the lesson has not been subsequently learned that such types of cadres should not be based in Metro Manila to run urban-based central staff organs; and that certain organs are not to be based in Metro Manila but in the countryside.

The organizational line pursued is a reversal of the line of the 1970s that cadres who are produced by the urban areas are dispatched to the countryside systematically in order to strengthen the armed revolution as well as to secure those Party cadres already exposed to and hunted by the enemy.

Leading organs of the Party have allowed staff organs or administrative structures based in urban areas to absorb the bulk of Party cadres. Even the NPA general command (earlier called national military staff) based itself since the 1980s in Metro Manila. And since 1986, there has been the yearning to accelerate the explosion of an urban insurrection and to issue commands from the big city by modern communications equipment to the people's army in the countryside. There was no end to special projects rationalizing the stay of the NPA general command

in Metro Manila. These projects were not delegated to offices or personnel that could stay in cities more safely and more effectively.

Despite all the lip service paid to people's war, the line opposed to it gained influence to the detriment of the Party and the revolutionary movement. And such erroneous line has never been thoroughly criticized, especially with reference to the fact that the principal leaders of the urban-based commission and other organs in charge of Mindanao where that line was first implemented were either pushed out of the island or disabled by the enemy as early as 1984.

The NPA general command, together with the central staff organs of the Party, entrenched itself in Metro Manila along the erroneous line of "positioning" itself for an overanticipated "sudden turn" in the situation that could give rise to an urban insurrection. Lured by the urban convenience of high-tech electronic means that enabled it to issue commands for one "nationally coordinated offensive" to the people's army in the countryside, the NPA general command tended in practice to disregard the principle of centralized leadership and decentralized operations. Related to this line of the NPA general command is the preoccupation with special projects, which are considered essential for acquiring the logistics - from above and from outside the country - for prematurely enlarged military formations that cannot be supported by a declining mass base.

Some regional commands have also based themselves in urban areas. At the same time, the staffing at various levels of command - regional, guerrilla front, battalion and company - has absorbed much of an already stagnant and decreasing number of Party cadres.

When certain elements speak of "regularization", they actually mean generating more staff levels and bureaucratization. Their designs of regularization on paper have gone too far ahead of the available personnel. At any rate, the predilection for building administrative structures and making topheavy staff has resulted in the phenomenon of gross bureaucratization within the Party.

Running the top-heavy military staff and administrative structures has eaten up the time and energy of leading cadres and committees which should have paid more attention to policy questions, ideological-building and in-depth study of our revolutionary practice for guiding the comprehensive development of Party life and Party work. It has taken such a long time and such unprecedented losses for the central leadership to fully identify and take firm and decisive steps to correct

the erroneous lines afflicting the Party and the repeated grave errors in the anti-infiltration campaign (which threatened the very life of the Party in 1988).

There is no crescendo of Party cadres doing mass work and developing basic party life at grassroots level in both urban and rural areas. The more Party cadres are promoted to leading and staff organs, the more are they taken away and alienated from basic Party life and the less party members there are at the basic level. This has resulted in the neglect of Party recruitment.

From the mid-1980s, the overall growth of the Party membership stopped and even gradually started to decrease from 1988. The number of Party recruits decreased year by year in consonance with the overall lag in the expansion if not contraction of the mass organizations in the countryside and cities. On the other hand, there was increased loss of Party members as a result of death, captivity, demoralization or loss of connection due to enemy operations. Particular note should also be made of the big drop in the recruitment of Party members from the ranks of students and young intellectuals, an important source Party cadres.

For a long period, limited recruitment of Party members was done more by Party staff Party organs and by Party groups in mass organizations who were compelled to do so because of staff requirements. Out of desperation, they often gave priority to reviving long-time drop outs from the Party or recruiting raw elements from the youth movement or wherever possible without promptly checking and raising their ideological consciousness and political level. Or they recruit non-Party staffers and give them tasks and responsibilities (including those reserved for Party members) but without even bothering to give them Party education and recruit them into the Party.

There has been a proliferation of legal offices and institutions in conjunction with the increase in staff organs and a continuous build up in them of dropouts or near dropouts from the Party and the mass movement. An increasing number of political prisoners have also been lured into these offices instead of returning to direct work among the masses and the countryside where they are badly needed. Party work and Party life in them are often buried in office routine and office work away from the masses and the mass movement and where petty bourgeois views, habits, loose discipline and craving for comfort are strong and often go unchallenged.

Such a tendency within the Party has extended also to international work, where cadres are concentrated in legal offices and institutions, practically without

giving consistent attention to conducting direct propaganda and organizing among our overseas compatriots, and where there is gross neglect of comprehensive Party work and Party life. In the last several years, many cadres based in the cities prefer deployment abroad (particularly in Western capitalist countries) rather than to underground work, especially if this is in the countryside.

Staff organs have been a good training ground for Party cadres. However, there are elements without sufficient experience and competence in Party and mass work and with low ideological, political and organizational level who get promoted to higher staff organs and even get appointed to leading organs simply because they come from the staff organs. They learn to rule by being appointed first as “political officers” or “secretaries”.

There is a reproduction of staffers rather than the development of basic Party life and the systematic recruitment of Party members from the advanced elements of the revolutionary mass movement within the period of candidature set by the Constitution. There is a big delay in taking in candidate members and then there is another big delay in providing the basic education and trial work for someone to become a full Party member.

What is often passed off as organizational work is the frequent reorganizing and multiple organizing of the same limited number of Party members into committees, commissions, task forces, secretariats and so on. Issues and functions, although already well-covered or can be covered by an existing body, become excuses for new bodies to be created. There are constant reshuffling of cadres and reorganizations of Party cores and Party organs, thus further drawing attention away from more important tasks. There are those who are satisfied or preoccupied with mere administrative, contact and coordinative work. They think or act as if these are all there is to organizational work and Party life.

In ideological, political and technical terms, personnel of staff organs are not always necessarily superior to the cadres leading the lower Party organizations and the mass organizations. But using the authority of the Party and the leading organ to which they are attached, they impose themselves on the Party cadres leading the lower Party organizations, mass organizations and legal institutions.

The staff organs have been the sources of “political officers” and “appointive” secretaries who have comprised one-person layers of authority between higher and lower organs or units on the basis of the arrogant proposition that no one in the

lower organ or unit qualifies to be a member of the higher organ or unit.

The system of “political officers”, which is a bad copy of a good system in the people’s army (good because the political officer is integrated into the army unit) was abolished in 1986. But the promoters of bureaucratism have merely shifted to another name, the “secretary”, who is appointed by a higher organ and is not integrated into the organ or unit of which he is the “secretary”.

The “PO” system, especially in a situation where important policies and decisions were often transmitted orally, fostered overreliance on the “political officer” by the lower leading committees, weakened the Party committee system and impaired the interaction between lower and higher Party collectives.

Integral to the buildup of urban-based central staff organs and the stifling of basic Party life and mass organizations at the grassroots level in the course of growing bureaucratism, was the generation of the fear of taking initiative and expressing views at lower levels within the Party.

Insofar as there are still Party cadres and members who are attending to basic Party and mass work; and insofar as there are mass organizations which continue to grow or which can grow, there is a basis for combating bureaucratism and fostering comprehensive ideological, political and organizational life at the basic level rather than the compartmentalized kind of life in the administrative structure or bureaucracy.

The Party branches and groups in the trade unions, peasant associations, student and youth organizations, the people’s army, women’s associations, cultural activists and so on should see to it that there is comprehensive Party life and growth and should urge their current Party and mass members to create more local mass organizations on the basis of which more local Party branches can be built.

The Problem of Ultrademocracy

BUREAUCRATISM BEGETS ULTRADEMOCRACY. When there are no venues for free discussion within the Party outside of administrative bounds, then Party members tend to speak out outside of those bounds and also outside the Party. Without comprehensive ideological, political and organizational life, Party members at one level of the organization can easily get the sense that their lives are compartmentalized and are run by command from above. And thus, they tend to

resist by becoming ultrademocratic or liberal.

When the boycott error of 1986 was under fire and was not resolved for several months, the floodgates of ultrademocracy were opened at various levels of the Party and among Party members in general. The Executive Committee, as it was then composed, was beleaguered. Liberalism and indiscipline grew strong, taking the form of irresponsible dissemination (extending beyond the Party) of internal information and questions, irresponsible criticism and talk beyond proper Party forums and meetings, looseness in the implementation of Party policies, “barkada”-style (unprincipled camaraderie) in the relations between cadres, and so on.

Certain central staff organs were acting like centers of comprehensive political authority. Some elements issued publications and promoted their own lines, like “critical support for the ‘liberal-democratic’ Aquino regime” and the line of armed urban insurrection cum premature buildup of unsustainable higher military formations. There was ideological and political osmosis between ultrademocratic elements in the Party and populists, liberals, “social democrats” and other petty bourgeois elements outside the party who collaborated in denouncing the boycott error of 1986.

Under conditions of ultrademocracy, some elements responsible for the incomparably far bigger error and disaster in Mindanao were able to ride on the campaign against the boycott error of 1986. They kept their silence on or obscured and minimized the problems and disaster whose impact was already fully being felt in Mindanao. Some of them even had the gumption to claim that had it not been for the boycott error of 1986 the people would have been able to seize political power or share it with other forces. What the Politburo saw and took to account was only the boycott error of the Executive Committee.

There are certainly plenty of free discussions and debates prior to consensus or voting in leading as well as staff organs in the Party. In the leading organs, the range of subject matter is naturally wider than in staff organs. In the staff organs, there is an element of specialization but it is always related to the general framework of the revolutionary struggle.

There has been the prevalent notion that the Party leader presiding over the meeting is no more than a mere moderator whose main role is nothing more than to let everyone have a more or less equal share of the discussion. In fact, participants in meetings repeat the same point several times and sometimes talk

their heads off. Even patently wrong ideas get more time than correct ones. Thus, the phenomenon of overly long meetings has arisen, costing those attending and the Party much time, energy and resources.

Another reason for the overly long meetings is the failure to distinguish between work and study meetings, to evaluate the items put into the agenda and set the direction of the meeting. A discussion on the national situation or certain national issues is often the best kind of discussion available in these meetings. Too much time is spent on the discussion of administrative and procedural matters. And when personal relations like marital problems and allegations of sexual offense are taken up, there are not only a few overly long meetings but a protracted series of such. There should be a more efficient way of handling these and avoiding disruption of the normal flow of work.

Another factor for overly long meetings is the deterioration of the Party's system of reports which to a large extent is also due to neglect on the part of leading Party organs. In the absence of a system of regular and special reports, plenary meetings at different levels are used to deliver, gather and synthesize the reports by lower units. The result, besides the excessive length of meetings, is widespread haphazardness in the study and verification of reports, susceptibility to one-sidedness in assessing and programming the work of the Party and a tendency to gloss over or conceal problems before they pile up and worsen.

So much time is taken away from political and organizational work. Party cadres are aware of this kind of loss and complain about it. But even far worse is lack of time for attending to theoretical and political education. The most active Party members are absorbed by political and administrative meetings and paper work and the level of theoretical and political knowledge has gone down.

In the relationship between higher leading organs or organizations and lower organs or organizations, there is a one-way vertical from-top-to-bottom kind of bureaucratism. In major instances, as in the promulgation and implementation of the EC decision for a boycott of the 1986 elections, there is such a type of bureaucratism. For a long period already, the representatives of central staff organs appear like big bosses and moneybags when they show up in meetings of the representatives of mass organizations to push mass actions.

But there are more cases of ultrademocracy in which mere staff organs and lower leading organs take major decisions even against the Party's line, without bothering

to consult the higher leading organ. The Mindanao Commission drew up and implemented the “Red area - White area” scheme and some lower Party committees and cadres under it went into local ceasefires without seeking consultations and getting the approval from the central leadership. The UFC could proceed with a “peace process framework” that degrades the NDF and is detrimental to the interests of the revolutionary movement. It also proceeded with the NDF Congress without the EC or the PB being able to go over the draft documents and plans. Upon the initiative of a single individual leading cadre, grandiose plans anchored on the line of armed urban insurrection could be drawn up and implemented for the mass movement, for military actions and for the united front in 1990 without the knowledge of the central leadership. *Ang Bayan* could publish articles against the decisions of the central leadership and against the antirevisionist line of the Party.

There are certain elements who keep on writing “strategy”, “orientation” and “policy” papers which deviate from and attack the Party’s line. They even manage to use some central staff organs to promote the wrong line on a national and international scale. Notwithstanding the disastrous results of their line, they continue to tout it.

For refusing to implement the boycott decision of the central leadership with regard to the 1978 elections and for distributing their position paper to other regions, the members of the Manila-Rizal Party committee were meted out disciplinary measures. For failing to convene the Political Bureau on the subject of the 1986 elections boycott, the Party chairman then found it necessary to resign from his position in 1986.

But there are privileged elements who consider themselves as Party members and yet write and publish articles preponderantly against the Party’s line in certain publications (from *Praktika* to *Debate*). They use the personnel, the relations and facilities of the Party to attack the Party’s line and they have not yet been called to account for their anti-Party actions.

Under the guise of reacting to bureaucratism, there are certain elements who whip up ultra-democracy in order to question and oppose the basic principles, line and policies of the Party; to disinform the Party membership; to misrepresent, provoke and turn the Party inside out. Ultra-democracy or liberalism is as bad as bureaucratism. It can confuse, degrade, endanger and even disintegrate a revolutionary party that allows it.

There is a seepage of the influences of liberalism, populism, social democracy and other petty bourgeois trends and even of imperialist and modern revisionist (especially Gorbachovite) propaganda into the Party. There are ultrademocratic elements who attack the leading role of the working class, the socialist perspective of the Philippine revolution, democratic centralism and other basic principles of the Party. Some of them go to the extreme of demanding that the Party adopt an “alternative framework and program”, abandon the framework of Marxism-Leninism or discard its basic Marxist-Leninist principles (because these are supposed to constitute fundamentalism) and that the leading organs of the Party give up their responsibilities.

Just as they simplistically hold Stalin responsible for everything that has gone wrong under the anti-Stalinist revisionist regimes long after the death of Stalin, they wish to put the stigma of their specious definition of Stalinism on the Party. The Party will not allow itself to be wrecked from within by those stereotyping it by any epithet and by those trying to damn it by some false analogies. We know exactly how Gorbachov pushed the line of negating the entire course of Soviet history, Leninism and socialism by totally negating Stalin.

Among those who are whipping up ultrademocracy are elements who are responsible for the gross violation of the civil rights and brutal victimization of a large number of Party members and non-Party people. The Party is determined to hold such elements to account for their deeds no matter how many issues they drum up to sidetrack their responsibility and no matter how much anti-Party “conjuncture” they find with other promoters of ultrademocracy.

Among the worst of those who misuse the slogan of democracy are those who reject the very principle of democratic centralism and denounce it as “authoritarian” and who call for and undertake actions violative of this principle.

Security Problems in Urban Areas

LEARNING LESSONS FROM long experience in the urban underground work since the beginning of the ongoing armed revolution and giving due attention to precision raids and arrests by the enemy in 1988 onwards, the central leadership has issued a comprehensive set of guidelines and instructions on security for all Party cadres and members since 1989.

Among the problems recognized by the guidelines and instructions are the

following:

1. Party cadres and members are far more vulnerable in the cities than in the countryside.
2. There have been several years of laxity in security, rising in the 1983 to 1986 period, further rising in the 1986-87 ceasefire period and onward and still further rising.
3. Party cadres on the manhunt list of the enemy have accumulated in urban areas and are endangering themselves and others by being in contact with former political detainees, as well as personalities, organizations and institutions under probable and certain enemy surveillance.
4. Party cadres on the manhunt list themselves and persons they have been in contact with, places and facilities which they have used are already under surveillance and are practically in boxes of the enemy's intelligence agencies.
5. The precise capture of important Party cadres, documents, equipment and other things prejudices the safety and security of the people and resources and Paves the way to further enemy surveillance and action.
6. Modern equipment and facilities (telephones, computers, radio and so on) facilitate our work but if improperly used help the enemy more as they surveil or capture these.
7. The enemy accumulation of information from captured documents in computer discs and on paper as well as from tactical surveillance of fixed points (persons, houses, buildings and public places) used by Party and related personnel give the enemy the basis for its confidence in longterm surveillance.
8. That the enemy has not yet captured all cadres and things already within his knowledge means that he captures some and leaves others as tracers to more cadres and things.

Amidst the practical instructions given to secure the safety of Party and related personnel, the most important instruction is for Party cadres and members on the manhunt list to leave Metro Manila and other urban areas for the countryside in order to cut off the enemy. Other Party cadres and non-Party persons who can work legally in the urban areas can meet them in the countryside whenever necessary.

The biggest number of losses of upper level cadres has been the result of their being captured in urban areas, especially in Metro Manila. Since 1988, more than 100 regional and national level cadres have been captured by the enemy in raids and arrests in urban areas. In spite of this, many Party cadres in the enemy manhunt list have insisted on staying in Metro Manila, except for brief periods of seeming or token compliance with the security guidelines and instructions.

The comprehensive guidelines and instructions have been ignored and violated. The best proof is the continuing capture of such Party cadres and volumes of computer diskettes and documents under their care.

What is needed is a more fundamental criticism of this phenomenon of central staff organs and Party cadres on the enemy manhunt list who stick to Metro Manila and other urban areas. The ideological and political roots of the concentration of central staff organs (including the NPA general command) and Party personnel on the enemy manhunt list must be pulled out. For their own good and for the good of the revolutionary movement and the people, all those unsuitable for Party work in urban areas must be ordered to go to the countryside to help expand and consolidate the mass base. The urban-based staff organs which are more appropriately based in the countryside must be based there.

It is true that since the start of the armed revolution it has been recognized that there must be Party cadres posted in urban areas in order to facilitate communications of the regions with the central leadership and within regions because of the specific archipelagic character of the Philippines. But why is it that, even after the rebuilding of the legal mass organizations and the further development of the united front since the 1980s, Party cadres on the enemy manhunt list are still in charge of work and communications in the urban areas instead of cadres who can work there legally and viably? Why is it that leading and staff organs that should be best positioned in the countryside are based in and elaborated on in the urban areas?

Why should the NPA general command and its central staff organs, which should properly and correctly be in the countryside, be based in Metro Manila? Why is it that exactly at the time that the general command was claiming that all the strategic points of the country had been covered by the people's army, that the number of guerrilla fronts were already enough and that the main point was to build companies and battalions, the NPA general command chose to base itself in Metro Manila?

There is now a dangerous situation which arises from the fact that Party cadres and members are concentrated in urban-based administrative structures, such as the central staff organs and the Party groups in the multilayered national mass organizations. These administrative structures in the urban areas are extremely vulnerable to one fatal blow by the enemy in a general crackdown or to ceaseless piecemeal arrests.

For the long term positive development of the armed revolution, the Party must now withdraw immediately all Party cadres on the enemy manhunt list from the urban areas, streamline the central staff organs in favor of work at the grassroots level, and transfer to the countryside those cadres and organs that properly belong there.

However, it is not enough to transfer cadres on the enemy manhunt list to the countryside. A rectification and reeducation campaign must be carried out among them. They must reaffirm the basic revolutionary principles, line and the strategy and tactics of the Party. They must be disabused of whatever conveniences, habits, thoughts and illusions that have kept them in the urban areas. They must accept that they have to stay in the countryside on a long-term basis in order to contribute to the recovery of lost ground and to expand and consolidate the revolutionary movement.

If they go to the countryside without sufficient rectification and reeducation, they will be dissatisfied with being assigned there, they will contaminate others with the, wrong ideas and dissatisfactions that they have and they will soon be back in the urban areas after one more short stint of token compliance with the order to go to the countryside. What the countryside now needs are more cadres who are determined to serve the people and advance the revolutionary cause.

The Rectification Movement

IT IS A matter of life and death for the entire Party now to reaffirm its basic principles, assert its correct line and criticize, repudiate and rectify those major deviations and errors which have run for so long (overlapping with half of the existence of the Party and the armed revolution) and have brought about unprecedented setbacks to the Party, the New People's Army and the entire revolutionary mass movement.

These major deviations and errors could have been more destructive were it not for the perseverance of the overwhelming majority of Party cadres and members

who uphold the basic principles of the Party and are determined to carry the revolutionary cause forward. Thus, we think that the Party has the principles, the revolutionary personnel, the mass support and the all-rounded strength to check and overcome the dangerous trend brought about by the major deviations and errors.

In the light of our basic principles, we have identified and evaluated the major deviations and errors and the serious damage to the Party and the revolutionary movement. We must criticize, repudiate and rectify these. The rectification movement should raise the Party's level of theoretical knowledge, political consciousness and practical activity. The Party membership should be mobilized to join and support this movement. Only those who oppose this movement and who are incorrigible should come under disciplinary action. up to removal from the Party. There is a big and essential difference between the incorrigible and those who are willing to rectify their errors.

It is important for the appropriate organ to formulate the most pointed questions on facts and issues to be posed to those responsible for the most serious deviations, errors and adverse consequences and to be answered by them individually (if collectively, there will be difficulties that can delay the process either because it is objectively difficult to convene the pertinent collective responsible for some error or there is no desire on the part of certain individuals to make any collective assessment). Only after the inquiry from individuals concerned may their collectives be convened, if necessary and possible.

We anticipate that there will be elements who will oppose or deflect the rectification movement by using the following tactics:

1. Continuing to question and attack the Party's basic principles no less in order to dogmatically insist on the erroneous line;
2. Detaching the erroneous line from the serious adverse consequences;
3. Confusing the evaluation of the deviations and errors by playing down bigger errors and playing up lesser ones;
4. Confusing the evaluation of collective and individual responsibilities;
5. Generating new and old issues of lesser importance and relevance to the major problems and unprecedented setbacks that we now face;

6. Retaliating against well-founded criticism by making unfounded attacks;
and
7. Attacking the many in order to conceal a few in error.

At every level of the Party, in any organ, the central leadership must not hesitate to remove from the Party any element who is responsible for any major deviation or error but who instead of accepting responsibility continues to systematically attack the Party's line or is incorrigible and resorts to any of the aforesaid tactics to deflect or defeat the purpose of the rectification process. We must also serve serious warning to those elements who resort to ultrademocracy by campaigning outside of the appropriate Party channels or going beyond the bounds of the Party.

It is a fair estimate to make that only a few will be removed from the Party due to the gravity of the error for which they are responsible or due to a loss of conviction in the revolutionary cause and in the basic principles of the Party. In this regard, the slogan of the Party is "A bit fewer but a lot better", to paraphrase Lenin and Mao.

There may be those who are no longer fit to remain in the Party for ideological reasons, such as the loss of conviction in all or any of the basic principles of the Party. They can be considered allies if they can still cooperate with us on political issues, provided they do not become special agents of the enemy by attacking the Party and capitalizing on their previous association with or inside knowledge of the Party.

The rectification movement is mainly and essentially an educational effort to recognize, criticize and repudiate the deviations, errors and weaknesses and thereby further strengthen the Party and the revolutionary movement. The objective is to bring about a higher level of revolutionary consciousness and militance and therefore a higher level of unity within the party.

The overwhelming majority of Party members are definitely good and desire to do their best in advancing the revolutionary cause. There can only be a handful of elements who oppose the rectification movement and who refuse to rectify their errors. If these elements persist in the Party, they can continue to inflict damage on the Party and the revolutionary movement. It is the duty of all Party members to reaffirm the basic principles of the Party and rectify the errors.