

Two Recent Documents from the

Statement on President Aquino's Call for a Ceasefire

March 1986

We rejoice with the Filipino people in the victorious overthrow of the Marcos fascist puppet regime. We also sincerely acknowledge the popular support gained by President Corazon C. Aquino and the corresponding positive efforts by her and the democratic forces in the new government in unconditionally ordering the release of political detainees of the fascist regime, restoring civil liberties, and carrying out measures to dismantle the fascist structures. In all sincerity, we hope that these progressive moves will gather momentum towards the solution of the more fundamental problems confronting our people.

We assure the President and our people that her call for a ceasefire has not fallen on deaf ears in the ranks of the revolutionary forces and the New People's Army. With just, sincere and prudent moves of the concerned parties, a negotiated ceasefire is possible on a nationwide scale. Moreover, we believe that more than just a ceasefire can be pursued afterwards as more substantial changes are made in the economic, political and military spheres favourable to the broad masses of the Filipino people.

Having said this, however, we must point out that much of the fascist structures remain. And the reactionaries in and out of the government are even now scheming not only to block the President's initiative at democratic reform but to reverse these. We are aware that U.S. imperialism and the reactionaries in the MND-Armed Forces of the Philippines are prodding her to revert to the rabid "counterinsurgency" campaigns of the discredited and overthrown regime. Regular and paramilitary forces of the AFP, including the fanatic and criminal elements in the Civilian Home Defense Forces, continue to sow fascist violence in various parts of the country. And the heavily armed private armies of warlords loyal to the Marcos regime continue to terrorise the masses in countryside and urban areas alike.

These and similar conditions stand in the way of a meaningful ceasefire and

of peace. Nevertheless, we are listening to the President's call.

We look forward to a situation where all the patriotic forces who fought against the Marcos fascist regime can peacefully work together in leading the country towards the attainment of nationalist industrialisation and genuine land reform, and eventually towards genuine national independence and democracy.

The New People's Army has persevered in the last 17 years of armed struggle against the U.S.-Marcos regime because of the latter's intense exploitation and oppression of our people, especially the worker and peasant masses. The landless peasants, who comprise the majority of our people, are impoverished and hungry because they continue to be subjected to the most ruthless feudal and semifeudal exploitation. The people's army, which is largely a peasant army, would not have grown without extensive and deep mass support, without serving the interests of the broad masses of the Filipino people.

The so-called "problem" of insurgency that is raging in the countryside and urban areas cannot be solved by military measures, much less through military "counterinsurgency" schemes sponsored and backed by U.S. imperialism. On the contrary, such schemes are the very fuel that fire up the spirit of the oppressed masses to engage in armed struggle as a just means of defending their interests, of fighting for national liberation and democracy. The history of the Filipino people bears this out. The so-called problem can be solved only by undertaking fundamental economic and political changes.

Compatriots, the historic moment of the Filipino people is unfolding before our eyes, offering us the opportunity to unite in changing our semicolonial and semifeudal society to a just, humane and prosperous society. Let us endeavour towards this goal.

Military Commission
Communist Party of the Philippines
General Staff
New People's Army

Party Conducts

For more than 17 of the 20 years that the Marcos fascist puppet regime was in power, the Communist Party of the Philippines (reestablished in December 1968) had played a leading role in our people's antifascist, antiimperialist and antifeudal struggles.

In all those 17 years, the Party and the revolutionary forces that it leads have contributed tremendously to exposing, isolating and weakening the regime, leading to its eventual downfall.

Yet, where the people saw in the February 7 snap presidential election a chance to deliver a crippling blow on the Marcos regime, a memorandum by the Executive Committee of the Party Central Committee (EC-CC) saw it merely as "a noisy and empty political battle" among factions in the ruling classes.

And when the aroused and militant moved spontaneously but resolutely to oust the hated regime last February 22-25, the Party and its forces were not there to lead them. In large measure the Party and its forces were on the sidelines, unable to lead or influence the hundreds of thousands of people who moved with amazing speed and decisiveness to overthrow the regime.

This was because of the Party's official policy enunciated by the EC-CC to launch an active and vigorous boycott campaign vis-a-vis the election, a policy that was based — as the events showed — on an incorrect reading of the political situation.

A recent assessment conducted by the Political Bureau (Politburo) of the Central Committee characterised the boycott policy as a major political blunder.

Roots of the Error

As evaluated by the Politburo, the boycott policy erred in its overall assessment of the political situation at the time of the snap election, in its understanding and application of the Party's tactics against the U.S.-Marcos fascist dictatorship, and in its understanding and application of the Marxist-Leninist organisational principle of democratic centralism.

In the main, the political assessment on which the boycott policy was based mechanically analysed the various political forces with regard to their basic

Communist Party of the Philippines

Assessment, Says Boycott Policy Was Wrong

class standpoint and subjective intentions. It paid little or no attention to the objective positioning of each of the political forces in motion and in interaction with the others.

Thus it failed to grasp the essence of the whole situation that was in flux at that time.

The assessment had earlier described this period as the setting for an important political battle with a tremendous impact on the people and on the major political forces. But when this came initially in the form of the snap election, the assessment underpinning the boycott policy belittled it as nothing but a noisy and meaningless inter-factional contest among the ruling classes.

Specifically, the assessment:

1. Did not correctly understand the character and operation of U.S. policy toward the Marcos regime. It overestimated U.S. capacity to impose its subjective will on local politics and misread the U.S. dilemma over the conflicting needs it had to simultaneously attend to. It failed to appreciate the possible effects on U.S. policy of local developments over which the U.S. did not have full control.

2. Underestimated the bourgeois reformists' capabilities and determination to engage the Marcos regime in a decisive contest for state power.

3. Ignored the fact that the Marcos clique had become extremely isolated and its capacity to rule was fast eroding. It failed to look more deeply into the contradictions developing within the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

4. Above all these, misread the people's deep anti-fascist sentiments and readiness to go beyond the confines of the electoral process in their determination to end the fascist dictatorship.

As practice subsequently showed, the snap election was not just "a noisy and empty political battle." The election and the major events it unleashed constituted the climax of the people's long-drawn struggle against the Marcos regime. During and after the snap election, the historically determined central political struggle was the showdown over the very existence and continuance of fascist rule. The snap election became the main channel of largescale mobilisation and deployment of the masses for

the decisive battle to overthrow the dictatorship.

This being the case, it was tactically necessary for the revolutionary forces to participate critically in the snap election in order to effectively combine and make use of all forms of struggle, march at the head of the politically active masses, and maintain flexibility and an active position in the face of the fast-changing situation. Only by doing so could the revolutionary forces have maximised their political and military capability and reaped the optimum gains for the revolution under the prevailing circumstances.

The boycott policy forfeited all these.

As regards understanding and applying the Party's tactics against the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship, the boycott policy failed to give commensurate political value to the antifascist struggle that assumed primacy during and after the snap election. The antifascist struggle united the various levels of revolutionary, democratic and anti-Marcos sentiments during and after the election, and created a mass force capable of toppling the regime.

The boycott policy not only failed to give enough value to the question of reaching and mobilising the majority of the people. It directly and openly went against the desire of the broad masses to pursue the antifascist struggle by means of critically participating in the snap election.

More specifically, the boycott policy concentrated on addressing and consolidating the advanced section of the people, or the revolutionary forces, at a time when the people were already gearing for the decisive battle with the fascist regime.

This showed an insufficient understanding of the tasks of political leadership during such a time, as well as a lack of appreciation of the current level of mass participation in revolutionary struggles, and confusion regarding the actual needs of the revolutionary armed struggle.

The Party leadership is now encouraging leading Party organs which have not yet done so to sum up their experiences regarding the boycott policy. The results of the different studies and summing-ups will be circulated within

the Party, to develop a common understanding of the lessons from the boycott campaign.

Likewise, a general summing-up will be conducted of the Party's experiences in the struggle against the U.S.-Marcos fascist dictatorship. At the same time, steps will be undertaken to strengthen the Party's ideological foundation and raise the theoretical knowledge of the entire Party.

Steps are being taken to encourage and develop the democratic spirit and democratic way of doing things in the Party. To this end, forums and channels will be created for the full expression within the Party of the various ideas and views on significant questions so as to arrive at a unified understanding and stand.

The Future is Bright

While we missed out on important political as well as military opportunities and suffered other negative effects as a result of our erroneous boycott policy, the fact remains that the events of last February represented a great victory for our people and for their struggles towards genuine national freedom and democracy.

The Party and its forces are intact, and these are now in the process of strengthening their ranks for new tasks in the post-Marcos period which is highly conducive to the heightened and more extensive politicisation of our people.

While the Party perseveres in strengthening itself ideologically, politically and organisationally, while it looks inward from time to time and learns both from its negative as well as positive experiences, it will continue reaping the people's wholehearted support.

The future is bright for the Party, for the entire national-democratic movement, for the revolution, and for the entire Filipino people.

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