

ARAL

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PINAPATNUBAYAN NG
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OPPOSITION EXPOSES
'ELECTION' AS A FARCE

Various political groups have called for wider and continued struggle against the Marcos martial law regime as the "election" campaign for the dictatorship's "interim Batasang Pambansa" went into full swing.

Following the lead of the Communist Party of the Philippines, the broad antifascist front denounced the "election" as a plot by Marcos and U.S. imperialism to fool the Filipino people and world opinion.

Consistent with the Party's stand that "the broad masses of the people are placing their hopes on the growth of the armed revolution", the Central Committee said in a memorandum to all Party members (Ang Bayan, March 3, 1978):

"The IBP is the latest gimmick of the U.S.-Marcos fascist dictatorship to deceive the Filipino people and the world at large into thinking that the fascist puppet chieftain Marcos is finally yielding some of the powers he has usurped. Its real purpose is to entrench further the U.S.-Marcos clique."

A massive boycott on April 7, the Central Committee said, combined with the militant protests of the people during the "election" campaign, is the most effective and strongest means of frustrating the regime's attempt to fake a "return to normalcy".

All members of the Party and of Party-led organizations were directed to "use every means, both legal and illegal, to rouse the active resistance of the people against the Marcos fascist dictatorship" during the "election" campaign.

"The people must not limit themselves to the restricted channels of action 'allowed' by the fascist dictator but must raise demands to widen the areas for political action and win back their democratic rights by continually asserting them in the face of fascist repression," the memorandum said.

"We must encourage all forces truly opposed to the Marcos 'election' to express their opposition openly and to unite with the people in their struggles," it said further.

Dividing the antifascist front into the progressive and the reactionary camps, the Central Committee said:

"We support the efforts of the progressive forces in (the legal opposition party) Laban to use the 'election' campaign to 'bring the real issues to the people', expose the 'election' as a farce and rouse the people to fight against the fascist dictatorship.

"The reactionary forces are mainly interested in riding on the popular discontent against the fascist regime to win seats in the IBP. They are playing right into the hands of the fascist dictator. Participation in the 'election' without exposing it as a farce only serves the dictator's claim that the 'election' is 'genuine'. Even if they win seats in the IBP, they have very little chance of using it as a forum for attacking the dictatorship. . . . Within the IBP, they will only serve as 'specimens' buttressing the 'liberal image' the fascist regime wishes to project."

The Central Committee concluded:

"In the present campaign against the U.S.-Marcos fascist dictatorship, the most important thing for the revolutionary forces is to raise the fighting spirit and capacities of the people, to strengthen their unity and to advance the revolutionary struggle to greater heights,"

The Preparatory Commission of the National Democratic Front called for the overthrow of the dictatorship, and asked all opposition candidates who take up the people's cause to denounce the "election" as a farce.

"In order to overthrow (the dictatorship), we must not and cannot rely on bourgeois elections, especially those stage-managed by the fascist dictatorship itself," the Commission said. "Only by relying on the revolutionary struggles of the masses of the people can we hope to win freedom and democracy for our country and people."

Marcos' policy of "normalization", the Commission said, means that martial law is being reinforced, not lifted. With the IBP, the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship plans to "institutionalize" its illegal laws and decrees.

"The coming 'election', therefore, poses a far more serious danger to our people's freedom and patrimony than all the previous acts of the dictator, since the declaration of martial law and the fake ratification of the 1973 Marcos constitution," the Commission warned.

Political detainees in the Philippines issued a statement on March 7 asking the people to make use of the campaign period to advance the struggle for genuine national freedom and democracy, "by openly raising the critical issues, militantly organizing the oppressed sectors of our society, and collectively laying the foundations for the realization of legitimate and just demands".

They emphasized: "The people's struggle does not end with the election.... Notwithstanding the overwhelming odds, there are opportunities during the elections which the people can decisively make use of to advance their basic interests and rights."

The political detainees also demanded their release from prison if "normalization" is to have any meaning.

"As victims of the gross injustice and maltreatment perpetrated by the repressive martial law regime," they said, "we ask all concerned citizens, parties, organizations and candidates to demand firmly and unequivocally the immediate release of all political detainees as a necessary condition for national unity and normalization."

Former President Diosdado Macapagal, speaking for the Liberal Party and the Interim National Assembly Association, also called for a boycott on April 7 and expressed the belief that the "election" will not mean the return of the country to normalcy.

However, he betrayed his self-interest by insisting on the "interim National Assembly" and not the "interim Batasang Pambansa" as the only "legal" body that can assure the transition to the parliamentary form of government. The "Assembly" was an earlier Marcos creation that Macapagal had hoped to head.

Sen. Jovito R. Salonga, on the other hand, after having been turned down by Marcos on the question of "block voting", called the "election" a "meaningless exercise" and the IBP as "nothing more than a rubber-stamp legislative body".

Battling for a return to pre-martial law "democracy" in which the bourgeois Liberal Party could return to power, Salonga admitted on March 9: "Regardless of whether elections are held or not on April 7, there will be no real change in the system of government under which we live."

From his detention cell, where he has been kept on orders of Marcos for the last five years, Sen. Benigno S. Aquino urged the people to oppose the dictator's one-man rule. In doing so, however, he committed the mistake of echoing the line of U.S. imperialism that the "election" is a "step towards normalization", in a bid to get U.S. support for his candidacy.

At the same time, he denied the regime's charge that he was an agent of the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Marcos hurled the accusation at Aquino in an effort to draw attention away from his collusion with U.S. imperialism. But his move only added fire to the people's anger. The fascist dictator can find no way of hiding the abundant evidence showing that he is the principal agent in the Philippines of international monopoly capital led by U.S. imperialism.

As campaign manager of his own party, the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL), Marcos shamelessly violated all the rules against illegal campaign activities.

He threatened government employees and spent lavishly on public works projects. He made the Supreme Court reject all petitions of opposition candidates for fair and honest elections. He even tried to take initiatives in foreign policy that would fit in with this scheme to counter international condemnation of his antidemocratic regime.

Meanwhile, massive protest meetings were held in Metro Manila and some other urban centers where opposition candidates spoke against foreign control of the country's economy, the hardships endured by the masses under the martial law regime, and the corruption of the ruling Marcos clique.

In a commentary, the news service Balita ng Malayang Pilipinas (February 25, 1978) said that "Laban's presence on the electoral scene is a praiseworthy show of courage, but it can function only temporarily as an 'opposition'".

The true situation, BMP went on, is that "the 21 Laban candidates are not the opposition--the opposition is the Filipino people themselves."

FACE TO FACE WITH THE ENEMY BUSCAYNO MAKES FIRM STAND

"Sufficient strength and force are necessary for any thing to move," was revolutionary leader Bernabe Buscayno's reply to Marcos as the dictator hypocritically insisted on the line of "peaceful" struggle for reforms in society.

In a letter to his lawyer Juan T. David, Buscayno related his interview with Marcos a few hours after he was captured on August 26, 1976.

When Buscayno explained the objectives of the people's democratic revolution, Marcos tried to make it appear that these could be attained through "peaceful" means.

"I replied that this was impossible, since sufficient strength and force are necessary for any thing to move. For example, I said, if you really want to implement genuine land reform, you can't avoid using strength and force against the landlords," Buscayno said.

Foremost among the people's problems, he told Marcos, are the problems of the peasantry. "Not for a moment have I been away from the peasants and I know their complaints and suffering," he answered when the dictator claimed that "the peasants' life has improved and they are now satisfied with the programs of the government".

Buscayno appeared before Marcos' Supreme Court on January 31 to ask for his liberty. Justice demands that he should be set free, he said, since Marcos has ordered the rehearing of the case against him, Sen. Benigno S. Aquino and Victor N. Corpus.

According to law, he said, he may not be tried again for the same offense after Marcos disapproved the death sentence imposed upon them by Military Commission No. 2 last November 25, 1977. He also mentioned numerous violations of his right to a fair trial during the proceedings held by the military court.

The revolutionary leader told the Supreme Court how military authorities tried to threaten and force him not to participate in the trial, which revolves around the killing of one Cecilio Sumat of Motrico, La Paz, Tarlac.

Adding to Buscayno's statement, David explained that Buscayno is being prevented from exercising his right to participate in the trial because the regime wants Aquino to be sentenced at once.

In his interview with Marcos, Buscayno said that Aquino has nothing to do with the revolutionary movement: "He is just like the politicians who make use of the people from time to time."

In his letter to David, Buscayno also narrated how he was tortured by Marcos' fascist military as he was undergoing interrogation about the personnel and activities of the revolutionary movement. The torture began right after he was taken prisoner and it was resumed after his interview with Marcos.

"I asked them if they had no respect for the President's promise that I would be treated well. They only laughed and said it wasn't they who made such a promise," he said.

"They bet among themselves that if they asked me my name I would say I didn't know," Buscayno continued. "So they asked me, but because I was convinced that I was dealing with people incapable of good sense, I asked them to bear with me as I had nothing more to tell them." Unable to get any information from him, the fascists finally gave up and took him back to his cell.

Among those who tortured Buscayno were Lt. Col. Domingo of CANU (Constabulary Anti-Narcotics Unit), Maj. Penilla and Capt. Alvarez of the 5th Constabulary Security Unit (CSU), Capt. Garcia of the Metrocom, Lt. Espino of the First PC Zone, a certain "Nocsi" and many others.

Buscayno is presently detained at 5th CSU headquarters in Camp Crame, Quezon City.

MASS MOVEMENT BUILDS UP AGAINST NEW TUITION FEE HIKE

Militant mass actions were the students' reply in protest against decisions made recently by the Department of Education and Culture and the National Economic and Development Authority approving increased tuition fees in 630 schools all over the country, including 30 in Metro Manila.

Students at the University of the East walked out of their classes on February 13 to protest against the unfair increase in tuition fees, according to Balita ng Malayang Pilipinas (February 4, 1978).

They went around the school and visited every classroom to explain why they were fighting against the increase, and to ask their fellow students to join them in protesting against the school administration and the DEC.

They visited other schools where they distributed manifestos, gathered signatures for a petition, held meetings and displayed streamers with the slogans "Reject the tuition fee hike!" and "Restore the old tuition fees!"

At the meetings held in UE and the UE-Ramon, Magsaysay Medical Center, the students exposed the secret agreement between the DEC, NEDA and the capitalists who own the schools. They denounced the DEC and NEDA for refusing to listen to the side of the students and their parents.

The 30 percent increase for UE is not justified, they said, and it is not true that the schools is losing money.

"How can UE be losing money when it earned P2.4 million in 1976?" asked one student. "Not only that, UE is included in the list of 250 biggest corporations in the country. With the new tuition fee increases, it is sure to earn P6 million."

The students said that whenever it asks for an increase in tuition fees, the school administration makes a big show of fixing up school facilities. But the moment the increase is approved, the carpenters are told to stop working.

When the students return, the rooms are just as small as ever and just as badly ventilated, the toilets are still dirty and smelly, and books and laboratory equipment are still lacking.

The protesters also explained that working students, earning P10 a day, will be overburdened by the new tuition fees and they will find it hard to continue their studies.

At the same time, the Consumers Union of the Philippines (CUP) asked Marcos to set aside Presidential Decree No. 451 because the tuition fee increase is unjustified and unfair.

Through P.D. 451, Marcos authorized school owners to increase tuition fees up to 15 percent every year.

According to Ernie Angeles, CUP president, the DEC does not even try to find out how the schools spend the increased income. He demanded evidence that teachers have been paid better salaries and that school facilities have really improved in those schools that imposed higher fees.

The CUP complained that the bureau of higher education refuses to show the records concerning the schools whose petitions for increase were approved. The DEC bases its decision according to these records.

The current mass actions against the tuition fee increases are a continuation of the 1977 wave of protests.

It will be recalled that the Alyansa ng mga Mag-aaral Laban sa Pag-taas ng Tuition Fee was established last year to organize and coordinate the students' struggle against profit-hungry school owners and the DEC.

Beginning with just a few thousand students, the Alyansa was able to mobilize more than 180,000 students in the protest movement. Its membership expanded to 26 schools in Metro Manila including the University

of the Philippines, University of Sto. Tomas, Araneta University Foundation, Philippine College of Commerce, Philippine Women's University, Far Eastern University, University of the East, Lyceum of the Philippines, Trinity College, Adamson University and Manuel L. Quezon University.

Among the Alyansa's demands were the restoration of the old tuition fees, reimbursement of the additional fees paid by the students, student representation in the DEC investigation of the tuition fee increase, restoration of the student councils and the freedom to publish student newspapers, and a fair review of the cases of students who were arrested in connection with the protest movement.

This year, as in 1977, repression was the school owners' reply to the protesting students. At the UE, for example, three students were arrested on February 9 and four others on February 13. Many students were blacklisted and refused admission.

According to the National League of Filipino Students, about 1,500 students have been blacklisted by their schools. Among them are 300 from UE, 37 from Araneta University Foundation and 23 from UST, FEATI, MLQU and FEU.

The reactionaries were well prepared in striking back at the students. University campuses were full of spies, many of them military agents.

But the students, together with their parents and teachers, were also well prepared. They were not deceived by Marcos' promise to "freeze" the tuition fee increases. They knew that the dictator was just trying to get their votes in the coming "election".

Once the "election" is over, they said, Marcos will give in to the demands of school owners. The answer to repression and injustice, as they proved last year, will come from greater unity among the student masses, their parents and professors.

THERE'S PLENTY OF FOOD, BUT NOT FOR THE MASSES

Fruits abound in the Philippines, but one banana sells for 15 centavos in the local markets.

Costa Rica's beef is delicious, but the people of that Central American country hardly get to taste the meat.

Fresh vegetables are grown all year round in Senegal, in western Africa, but many Senegalese, especially the children, are malnourished.

The fresh fruits and vegetables, the nutritious meat produced in the countries of the Third World are not intended for the people of those countries. While the masses who work in the fields and ranches are slowly dying of hunger, the abundant food they produce is being shipped out for sale in the wealthier countries.

These bitter truths were exposed by Joseph Collins and Frances Moore Lappe, co-directors of the Institute for Food and Development Policy of the United States, in an article published in Asian Alternative (December 1977).

Common experience binds those Third World countries where imperialist corporations have set up vast ranches and plantations, the report said. Instead of attaining prosperity, the masses in these countries have only become poorer and they have less food to eat.

Capitalist agriculture, or agribusiness, is a very profitable venture, and this is why imperialist corporations are scrambling to set up farms and ranches in the Third World. But why the Third World?

* In the first place, the semi-feudal and semi-colonial countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America are rich in natural resources. The soil is fertile, there is plenty of fish, the climate is favorable.

Secondly, the cost of labor is cheapest in the countries of the Third World. Because of widespread unemployment, laborers are forced to sell their labor-power for very low wages.

A third reason is that Third World governments themselves (like the Marcos regime) are going all out to attract foreign investments in agriculture. Among the incentives offered is the guarantee that there will be no land reform where imperialist interests are concerned.

Fourthly, the reactionary armed forces of puppet regimes in the Third World are at the service of the imperialists. They drive peasants off the land, break up workers' strikes, and terrorize the people who protest against oppression and exploitation by the imperialists and their local agents.

The U.S. imperialist Del Monte Corporation is one of the biggest capitalist farmers in the world. Aside from its immense landholdings in the United States, Del Monte has taken over lands in the Philippines, Mexico, Costa Rica and other Latin American countries.

In Mindanao, thousands of peasants and their families were thrown out of their farms to make way for Del Monte's banana, pineapple and tomato plantations. Workers at Del Monte fields and canneries or plants are badly paid. A field hand whose job is to fertilize banana trees gets only P3 for every hectare. Those who pack the bananas are paid 16 to 20 centavos for every carton--which is sold by Del Monte in Japan for P57. Of this amount, labor gets a share of only 84 centavos.

(Ang Bayan has reported on landgrabbing and exploitation of workers under the corporate farming scheme of the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship. The biggest corporate farms in the Philippines are imperialist-controlled corporations. See Ang Bayan, January 15 and January 31, 1978.)

In Africa, meanwhile, another imperialist corporation, Bud Antle, Inc., is raking in big profits. Bud Antle set up a vast plantation of vegetables in Senegal. It raises tomatoes, melons, eggplants, lettuce, beans, pimientos, ginger, pepper and other vegetables for the big cities of Europe like Paris, London, Amsterdam and Stockholm.

The report also mentioned the Latin American Agribusiness Corporations, which is engaged in cattle ranching in Costa Rica and even large-scale flower gardening in Columbia.

But the exploitation of workers and landgrabbing are not the only effects produced by the massive entry of imperialist corporations into capitalist agriculture in the Third World. It has also given rise to the following serious problems:

1. Hunger and malnutrition.

Because profits are higher when they export the food produced to markets in the United States, Japan and Western Europe, the imperialist corporations sell their products where consumers can afford to pay higher prices.

At the time of the terrible drought that hit Africa in 1972, people were starving in Senegal. But everyday, a jet plane was flying fruits and vegetables out of the country for sale in the world market.

Vast tracts of fertile agricultural land are planted to crops for export, subtracting from the land available for planting the basic food crops eaten by the masses of the people.

In the Philippines, imperialism and the local ruling classes have decided to devote a great portion of the agricultural land area to sugarcane, bananas, pineapples and coconut, the export of which is very profitable.

This is one of the reasons why Filipinos now lack rice and corn, their staple food. Recently, the Marcos government bragged that according to its statistics, Filipinos are now eating less rice and are therefore behaving like rich people. It only means that there is less rice for the Filipinos to eat.

The same thing is happening in Mexico, the United States' neighbor to the south. Less land is now available for the planting of beans, a staple food of the Mexican masses, because of the huge fields planted to vegetables and strawberries for supermarkets in the U.S.

2. Denudation of forests and pollution of the soil.

In order to increase the land area under cultivation, the imperialist corporations are chopping down the forests that serve to control the wind and prevent floods and erosion.

On the South American continent, in Brazil, big corporations like Goodyear, Volkswagen, Nestle and Mitsubishi are stripping the forests along the Amazon River, for their cattle raising ventures.

Because of the search for higher profits, large amounts of fertilizer, chemicals and pesticides are used on the plantations in order to increase the yields. This leads to a gradual deterioration of the soil. But the imperialists are not concerned. They will simply look for other sites when the land shall have lost its fertility.

3. Unemployment

Imperialism claims that capitalist agriculture will open up more jobs for the peoples of the Third World. The truth is that work has become harder to find.

Peasants and farm workers lose the little livelihood they used to have. In Latin America alone, 2.5 million workers were displaced by tractors and harvesters. In the Philippines, 400,000 workers were laid off when the price of sugar dropped in the world market.

Collins and Lappe pointed out that the problem of food and hunger is not a technical one. They said: "People freed from exploitation by landlords, elitist governments and corporate power--people who know that together they are working for themselves--have shown that not only will they make the land produce, but they can make it ever more productive."

People should use their own land to feed themselves first, the authors said, instead of being forced to produce crops for export to the world market.

As long as imperialist and feudal rule are not overthrown by the national democratic revolution in the semi-colonial and semi-feudal countries of the Third World, the peoples of these countries will never have enough to eat. However, the problem can fully be solved only under socialism, where the state shall control and organize the production and distribution of food according to the labor and the needs of every one.

MILITARY RESEARCH GROUP REPORTS
ON FRUITFUL COUNTRYSIDE WORK

A research group sent by the Communist Party of the Philippines' Military Research Department to the countryside has reported on its very rewarding experience in an article published in Pulang Dalubhasa (Red Expert, January 1978), the department's internal bulletin.

In 1977, the department sent a group of researchers to the countryside for one and a half months. The group joined units of the people's army, making investigations and carrying out experiments while engaging in Party, army and mass work.

Through their experience, the group gained a better understanding of the urgent need to develop the war technology of the revolutionary forces, communications systems, and the health of comrades and the masses.

The group observed that the technical skills of comrades and masses in the guerrilla zone they visited are still of a low level and their study and understanding of revolutionary theory are deficient due to the relative backwardness in economy and culture of the whole area.

However, they expressed deep admiration for the practice, concrete experience and skills of peasants and workers.

The report took note of the great skill and practical knowledge of comrades and masses in the guerrilla zone in making weapons from ordinary and simple materials and ingredients, as well as in the treatment of ailments through acupuncture, commercial and herbal medicines.

The group affirmed: "Indeed, in many things--not to mention farming--they know more than those who have had the benefit of advanced schooling."

To further improve the war technology of the revolution, the group said, there is a need to unite the rich experience and practice of comrades and the peasant masses and the theoretical knowledge in science and technology of comrades and the masses of workers and petty bourgeois intellectuals in the cities. In this way, the shortcomings or weaknesses of one group or the other can be easily remedied.

Through this process of complementation, the report pointed out, "science and technology may be said to be liberated. They are thus placed in the hands of the masses for their own interest, serving as a weapon in advancing the authentic development of society".

Aside from giving them a clearer picture of the conditions and needs of the guerrilla zones and strengthening their determination to improve their work for the revolution, the experience showed the members of the research group "a distinct spirit animating the masses in a guerrilla zone" which they said, is still difficult to find in white areas at present. The masses, the people's army and the Party share close bonds of unity and fighting spirit.

The report concluded: "In the countryside are concrete proofs why people's war will triumph, strengthening the spirit of hope and trust in the masses. Here, the bright future of our country can already be glimpsed, a thing difficult to imagine in white areas in the cities."

In a document approved last December 1977, meanwhile, the Military Research Department issued the call: "Involve the masses in the Party's work of military research!"

The MRD document discussed the scientific and technological requirements of people's war, the fulfillment of these requirements through self-reliance, and the bases and methods of furthering the revolutionary mass movement for military research, especially among the ranks of workers and peasants, including professional scientists and students.

The statement recalled the readiness of the Filipino masses to participate in scientific research starting from the Revolution of 1896 to the present.

It cited the availability in the mountains and plains of the raw materials necessary to make war materials, the technical skills and experience of MRD members in carrying out the scientific researches and projects, and the establishment itself of MRD as the core group.

The statement also enumerated the concrete steps to advance the revolutionary mass movement.

The statement said: "The masses and only the masses are the creators of history. This Marxist principle is continually being proved in all countries throughout the world. The masses participate in the revolutionary movement in their own countries in order to change objective historical forces that will inevitably give birth to a new society from the womb of the old exploitative society. And in semi-colonial and semi-feudal societies, this revolution advances through armed struggle. The masses are enslaved through the use of arms; only through the use of arms can they be liberated."

JULIET SISON IS DENIED HER RIGHT TO HAVE A LAWYER

The Marcos regime's policy of denying their rights to political prisoners was once more made evident when Juliet de Lima Sison was brought to trial last February 24, March 7 and 8.

On February 24, four months after her arrest together with her husband Jose Ma. Sison, Juliet Sison was brought before Military Commission No. 6 and tried without a lawyer to defend her. She is accused of engaging in "subversive" activities.

Because she never had the chance to consult a lawyer, she refused to answer the state's accusation.

However, she declared her request for the services of Sen. Jose W. Diokno. But when she tried to write him, the intelligence agents who were guarding her snatched the letter.

Due to the excessive security measures, the trial could not proceed and it was reset for March 7 and 8.

During the following hearings, Juliet Sison appeared still without a defense counsel. With the help of lawyers who were in the courtroom to assist her co-accused, she was able to reply to the charges against her. She said she was not guilty.

At the hearings, Juliet Sison continued to insist on her right to have a lawyer of her choice and with whom she could confer whenever it is necessary. She also demanded to be given her right to be visited by relatives and to be transferred to a regular detention center. Despite her appeals, the reactionary military have not acted to stop the maltreatment she is undergoing.

She revealed the conditions she has had to endure at the Military Security Unit in Fort Bonifacio. Day and night, she is kept in a narrow dark cell fit only for animals. The only window remains closed, so she has no fresh air. She is denied the right to sunshine even for a few minutes.

Those who attended the hearings saw for themselves how Juliet Sison was being maltreated. About 20 ISAFP agents surrounded her and prevented anyone from talking with her. Even her co-accused were prevented from speaking to her, as well as the lawyers who wanted to help. When one of her sisters approached, the prisoner was roughly pulled away by her guards.

Meanwhile, Jose Ma. Sison continues to be kept in isolation and similarly denied the right to counsel, even if charges have been prepared against him.

Still missing up to the present is Sylvia Sales, who was arrested together with them in San Fernando, La Union last November 10, 1977. It was reported last February that Sales was taken from her isolation cell and brought to a military "safehouse".

U.S. COAL MINERS' STRIKE INSPIRES ALL WORKERS

A source of inspiration to the international proletariat is the struggle being waged by coal miners in the United States, as they continue to strike blows against the monopoly capitalists who oppress the American masses and other peoples all over the world.

The United Mine Workers (UMW), with 160,000 members in U.S. coal mines, are now on their third month of strike, the longest in American history.

Coal production in the United States has dropped by one-half, and industrial production over a wide area has been seriously affected. Industry in the United States is dependent for energy supplies on oil, natural gas and coal, of which the country has abundant reserves.

The coal miners struck last December over the unacceptable terms of a labor contract being forced on them by the monopoly capitalists who own the major coal mines. The workers refuse to go down into the pits as long as no agreement has been reached on a contract setting down fair working conditions.

The miners are fighting for their right to strike and the right of every one to equal, bigger and guaranteed pensions. They are also defending medical benefits that the monopoly capitalists are trying to take away from them.

They refuse to accept the contract which gives mine owners the right to suspend or fire striking workers. The workers know that they cannot surrender their right to strike, which is their chief weapon in the struggle against the mine owners. Most of their strikes are concerned with the miners' very lives, as safety measures underground are often insufficient.

The miners are insisting that old workers who retired before 1976 should receive the same pensions as those who retired after them. One young miner said: "My dad worked in the mines for 40 years and just because he retired before 1976 he gets half the money. That's enough to vote against the contract."

On the other hand, the new contract would cancel medical benefits that the miners had already won. This wipes out the 30 percent wage increase that the capitalists are offering so they will go back to work.

Working in conditions dangerous for their lives and health, the miners have forged strong bonds of unity. Two of their sacred traditions, as the bourgeois newsmagazine Newsweek pointed out, are the principle of "no contract, no work", and respect for the picket line.

The miners and their families were well prepared for a long struggle. Even before they decided to strike, they had already planted their own vegetables and stocked up on food and other goods. Solidarity prevailed in their communities, and even the small merchants helped by selling on credit.

The coal miners were strongly united not only among themselves, but with other workers as well. Today, as in the past, they are receiving solid support from their fellow workers particularly those in the steel and automobile industries. (Owners of the big coal mines are also those who monopolize these industries.)

The Carter government--"puppet of the coal bosses", say the workers --is proving to be powerless in solving the crisis that stemmed from the greed for profit of the ruling monopoly capitalist class in the United States. Carter made a show of standing up to them, but it was clear for all to see that the president of the U.S., as the worker say, is nothing but an errand boy for the imperialists.

On March 10, Carter issued an order for the miners to return to work while negotiations went on for a new contract. No one paid attention.

More and more, U.S. imperialism is tying itself up in its internal crisis, and within the United States, the American people are undergoing increased hardships. There is widespread unemployment and the prices of goods are shooting up fast. Step by step, the American people are raising the level of their struggle against exploitation by monopoly capital, not only of the American masses but also of peoples all over the world.

All oppressed peoples, including the American masses, are advancing together in the revolutionary struggle that will overthrow imperialism and all reaction and build a new order in the world.

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THEORETICAL JOURNAL PUBLISHED IN MINDANAO

Talamdan (Guide), theoretical journal of the Communist Party of the Philippines' regional organization in Mindanao, resumed publication last January.

The journal is being published "in line with the program of the Party in the Mindanao region to raise the theoretical and ideological level of Party members", the introduction said.

Thus, Talamdan will publish new manuscripts and reprint articles concerning important and timely questions, in answer to the Party's requirements in ideological, political and organizational work.

The current issue, contains the English edition of "Strengthen the Party Committee System", which was first published in Filipino in December 1975.

The document said: "Due to our inexperience as members and candidate-members of the Party, there remain some concepts of Party life that we have yet to practise and promote fully. The Party committee system is one of these. However, being communists and having seen our basic weaknesses from our summing-up of experiences, we accept these weaknesses and will do everything in our capacity to correct the present situation."

It was stressed that the study material, used as a guide, will remain theoretical and cannot be fully grasped unless the Party committee system is carried out in persistent and consistent practice.

In a clear way, the document discussed the principle of democratic centralism and its implementation, and the correct methods of carrying out the Party committee system.

Summing up, the document said: "The Party committee system refers to two aspects in the organizational life of the Party. The first aspect is the flow of policies and decisions in the whole structure: How these policies come from concrete experiences in the lower levels (from the masses), are synthesized by the leadership and brought back to the lower levels in summed-up form (to the masses) and changed again by the leadership based on the concrete experiences of the whole organization, in a never-ending spiral.

"The second aspect is the system of collective leadership within each committee, branch or group at every level of the organization. As has been shown, collective leadership is strengthened through constant meetings...and through the tightening of the bond of unity among the members of the collective...."

The document concluded: "As soon as comrades have grasped and practised the correct style and methods of leadership and their rights and duties as full members or candidate-members of the Party, they can also grasp and strengthen the Party committee system."

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