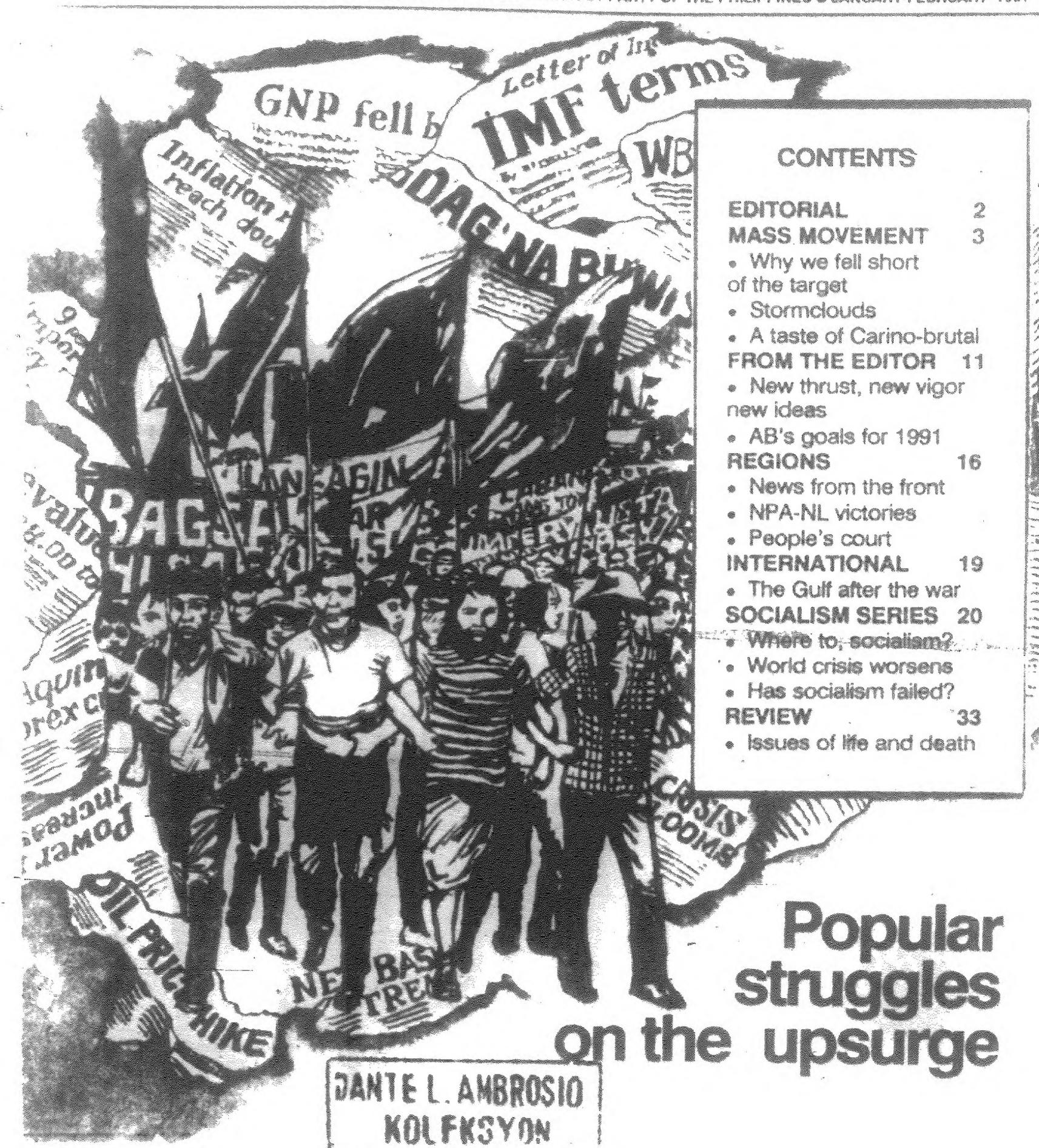
Ang Bayan

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February 27 and beyond

ast February 27, more than 80,000 people from various classes and sectors and representing a broad spectrum of political forces gathered at Mendiola Bridge and marched through the streets of Metro Manila. They called for an end to the US-Aquino regime and for a new EDSA.

The huge demonstration and march was a forceful assertion of the true message of the nation on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the EDSA revolt. It ex-

pressed the people's shattered dreams and declared that only through a popular uprising can their hopes for change be fulfilled. The powerful message and the mammoth crowd of February 27 eclipsed the earlier Aquinosponsored EDSA celebration attended by the smallest number of participants since 1986.

The biggest political demonstration in the country since 1986, February 27 is not only a sign of the coming political upsurge. It is the first outpouring of the mass strength accumulated from the struggles of 1990 and the preceding years.

The February 27 demonstration sketches the line, direction and shape of the approaching political upsurge of the people. It has drawn a clear line in the sand anti-imperialist and democratic, its rallying slogan; overthrow the US-Aquino regime, establish a genuine people's government, launch a new EDSA.

All communists and revolutionaries are challenged to clarify and sharpen the direction, shape and line of march of the emerging political battle. It is very important to make a thorough and deep study of the present national crisis, from a far-reaching perspective. Only in this way can we understand the whole revolutionary potential of this crisis-and how that potential can be turned into reality.

The national crisis today is undoubtedly more serious, more profound and more complex than the crisis which engendered the EDSA uprising. It is a crisis of



governance, not simply of the Aquino regime but of the entire landlord-comprador rule. And this crisis is occurring under conditions of deep internal divisions within the reactionary camp and widespread popular discontent. On the other hand, the revolutionary movement has maintained itself as a major politico-military force.

Nevertheless, despite the crisis, the regime and the whole of reaction are unleashing strong counter-currents. We must

seriously take this into consideration, especially since the reactionary classes are still dominant in the overall politico-military balance in the country.

It is from this viewpoint that we approach and define the question of leadership in the political upsurge. The slogans of the February 27 demonstration are premised on the expectation that the upsurge will gather momentum and reach its peak (particularly if Aquino resorts to intense repression) before the electoral campaign for the 1992 presidential elections heats up or before Aquino is removed from power through a coup d'etat or some other extra-constitutional ploy.

But should this everauality not come to pass-and we will know it only a few months from now-we may have to change the slogans, direction and conduct of the political struggle.

One scenario is the upsurge being confronted by an electoral maneuver in which Aquino is not one of the contenders for power. Another is the heating up of the election fever before the people's struggles are transformed into an upsurge. Still another is the overthrow of the Aquino regime through a coup d'état.

With all these possible scenarios, short-term plans are clearly inadequate: It is necessary to lay down a medium-term plan-and its corresponding factics-in order, to raise-our capacity to take the initiative and achieve maximum gains from every turn of the situation and every twist of the struggle.



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Why we fell short of the taliget

The political requisites of a people's strike were not fulfilled

Sof a broad political upsurge has loomed on the horizon.

A crisis of governance afflicted the Aquino regime; its political legitimacy hung in the balance. The crisis was slicing deep into the compradorlandlord ruling system. To keep a lid on the situation, the reactionaries thought up all sorts of schemes: for mulas for peace and national reconciliation, snap election, a shift to the parliamentary system, early drumbeating for the 1992 elections.

The economic crisis that fuels the political crisis was growing worse, both were feeding on each other. The people seethed with anger because of the increasing burden of suffering imposed by the foreign banks and governments. The upper classes of society grambled against the government's incompetence, blunders and grave corruption.

The different classes and social forces were moving towards a new realignment and polarization. As rival factions intensified their contention with each other, there was a broadening of the popular forces arrayed against the regime and comprador landford elite rule.

Among the issues at the fore, two had the potential to spark major politi-

cal battles: oil and US bases. Though not likely to ignite a social explosion, the peace issue was deeply political and had a strong impact on other struggles.

tioned themselves to seize the unfolding opportunities. Linking arms with other progressive forces, they showed boldness and skill in leading the broad masses of the people under anti- imperialist and democratic slogans. But the political upsurge that seemed so near and within reach did not materialize. What went wrong? Why did they fall short of the target?

Two major battles occurred the lirst, from September to October, and the second, in December (or three bat tles, if the October people's strike were to be treated separately from the September protesty and the issue of oil price increases.

When petroleum prices were raised last September 21, protests broke out but failed to reach the scale of a people's strike. To weaken the people's protest, the Aquino regime "hyped" the Gulf crisis, laying on it all the blame for the oil price increases. The revolutionary forces were not able to counter effectively this propaganda line. The government's divisive tactics, such as increasing transport fares im-

mediately after the oil price hikes, also succeeded in undercutting the basis for a people's strike. It was evident that the organized forces were not fully geared up to take advantage of the situation.

strike in October were more organized and covered a longer period. The organized forces showed improved capability in combining and coordinating sectoral and regional struggles. Another plus factor was the timely formation of a progressive alliance, the broadest since the EDSA uprising, which took up the cause of popular struggle against the Aquino regime.

But the strike failed because of two factors. First, the political requisites for a people's strike were not fully met. Complete paralyzation was set down as a primary objective, despite the fact that, except for the wage issue, the common demands had not yet penetrated deeply into the popular consciousness.

- In reality, agitation for a rollback in gasoline prices and for the revocation of the government's Letter of Intent to the IMF-WB-the issues expected to rouse popular support-was still in the process of gaining momentum. This was the reason why the regime's grant of a P17 daily wage increase (half of

what the labor alliance demanded) succeeded in undermining the workers' determination to wage a sustained general strike.

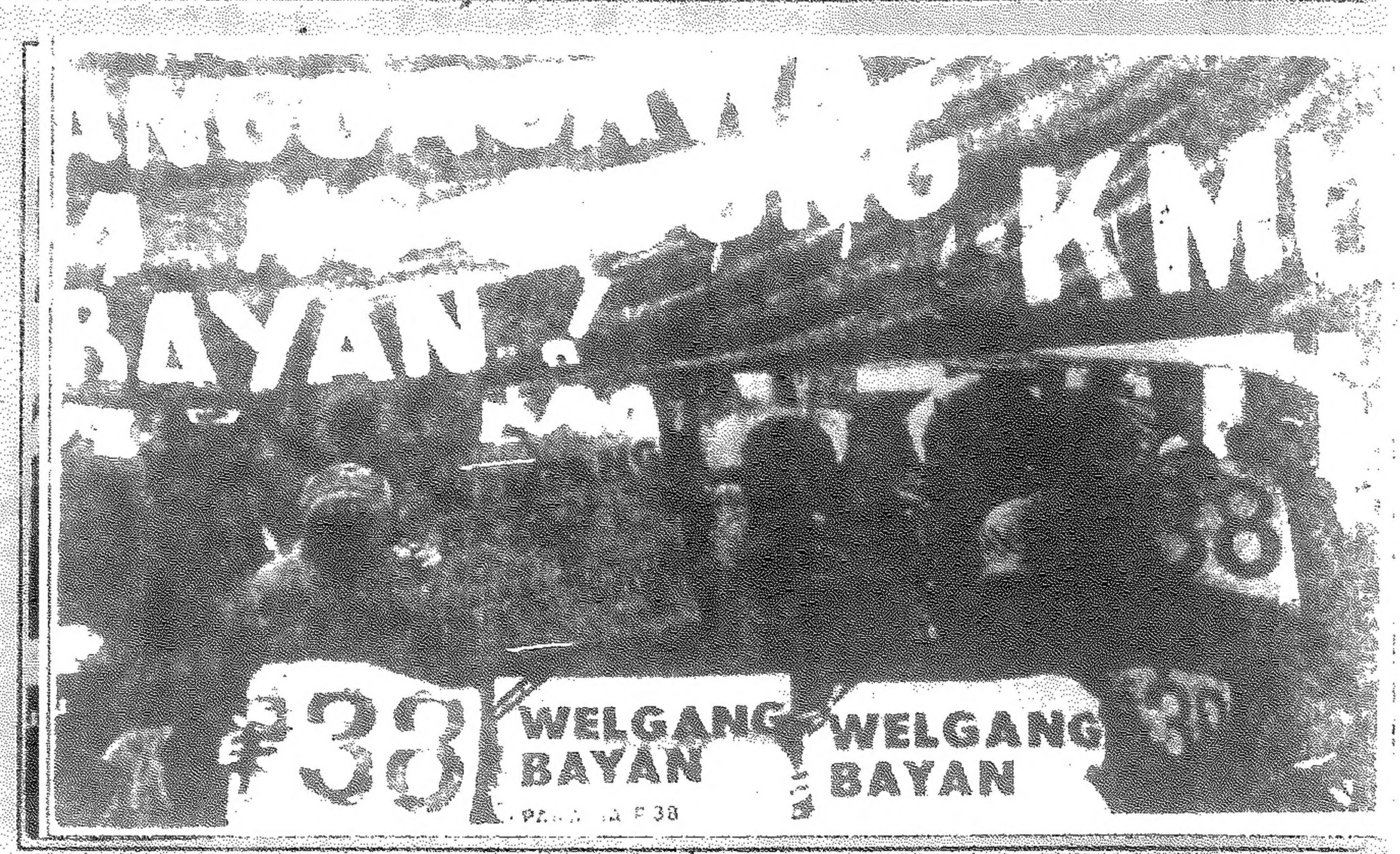
The second factor had to do with the bus-burning incidents. These were introduced at the start of the people's strike and on a wide scale. The direct and open participation of armed partisan forces in such actions escalated the battle to a level which could not be matched by the mass struggle. The olitical strength accumulated by the strike on the first day were inadequate in countering and overcoming the attacks of the government and the military.

The resolve of the middle and backward sections of the people to participate in the mass struggle waned. The unity of the broad progressive alliance was so severely shaken that instead of continuing to move forward into action, it decided to hold back

Things could have turned out difterently if the intensification of the forms of struggle, such as the use of violence against scabs and fascist repression, were calibrated to the broadening of mass participation. This way, illegal and legal forms, peaceful and violent methods, and political actions and military support would complement each other as the people's strike gained in strength and effective ness.

In politico-military terms, the people's strike is part of the people's arsenal of political weapons, it is essentially a political action that rests on the strength of mass participation. To achieve full paralyzation, mass violence, not military action, is the appropriate form. This way, the government is deprived of a rationale for militarizing the situation and using its superior military strength to crush the strike.

Military action launched during a people's strike, should serve to in aggrate mass participation and aughten political ams. It should never become prominent during the whole cause of the struggle, neither should in the strike cal requisites are lacking in the strike.



In December 1990, the situation was the reverse of what happened in September and October. There was a big difference in the overall mood of the people. The Gulf crisis 'hype' of the regime lost its punch, in the face of the outrageous oil price increases imposed by the regime especially on premium and regular gasoline.

The broadest array of classes and sectors, including the mass media, boiled with anger and outrage, Power-ful people's strikes crupted in the cities of Davao, ligan, Bacolod, iloilo, Naga and Legazpi and in the urban centers and big towns of Central Luzon. Southern Tagalog and other regions.

In Metro Manila, the protests were marked by the active participation of the middle forces. However, these did not reach the magnitude and intensity of the protests in the provinces. The revolutionary forces failed to grasp the extraordinary agitation of the masses and did not take the lead in mobilizing the broad participation of the people, especially the masses of workers and urban poor.

They tailed behind the overwhelming and general desire for higher and more intense forms of resistance in addition, the organized forces were still friursing their wounds' and consolidating their ranks as a result of the setbacks and attacks they had suffered last-Detailer.

price increases but also at Aquino and her regime. Calls for her resignation filled the air. This was fertile ground for a huge political upsurge of the people.

If one were to pinpoint one this greatly lacking since January and especially since September, it was: bethis-apolitical slogar and histor that would serve as the line of man of the fevolutionary forces and whole people in facing the commit political crisis. Such a slogan and man form is needed to provide a unit direction and political shape to the mass situages and revolutionar Hatives in the battles on economic is sues, the US millary bases and issue of peace and civil war Authorit revolutionary minatives will retire stational and unsystemate, so foilici sierin culocienta SITURES CANDA DO LUMBAR SIN TIOSISISIAMSIAMOIOCIPE Way--

The call for mass struggle to over throw the Aquino regime is ripe. But what kind of coalition government should be established, which successions should take precedence, to what extent should concessions and compromises be made with other political forces, and how the ways program can be realized have yet be set down.

The revolutionary forces model with the situation as a whole with a long-range view, and in the state to the ever increasing do the dimensional complexity of the country today.

August 1990: storm clouds swiftly gathered in the dark skies hovering over the political landscape since the failed coup d'etat of December 1989. Great anxiety and acute despair gripped the whole of society. In the heart of the oppressed and impovershed nation, hope disappeared and cynicism, rage and indignation took its place.

The powerful earthquake last July

main piliars of the rotten system: US military bases, the failure of agrarian reform, foreign debt, government corruption, human rights violations, collapse of "civilian supremacy" (the domination of the military within the civilian government), environmental destruction and the civil war.

The people see no hope in any leader or faction of the ruling classes. And among the elite themselves, no

Stormclouds of September to December 1990

All the ugly realities of life under the Aquino regime have come out into the open

exposed not only the sheer incompetence of the regime in responding to the immediate needs of the people but also its utter indifference to their long-standing suffering and misery. Mrs. Acquino stubbornly rejected the popular clamor for a moratorium on foreign debt payments to provide relief from the desperate economic situation. Neither did she relent from pushing through with the 'new economic package' approved by the IMF-WB last June 22.

As early as then, a crisis of legitimacy threatened the regime. From all
sides, it was being held to account for
its repeated failure to realize promised
social reforms and democratic changes, its out-and-out subservience to
the interest of foreign banks and
governments, and its inability to unite
the nation and achieve real peace.
That nothing more could be expected
from "Cory" was heard on everyone's
lips. The upper classes cynically
described her regime as a "nongovernment."

This was the beginning of a series of events that, each in its turn, brought the Aquino regime to its lowest point ever.

This crisis has deeply pendirated into the whole ruling system. Although the attacks have been directed at Aquino and her government, it is the entire social order which is at stake. The problems or issues occupying the national logands have to do with the

one leader or faction has the ability to unite all or a majority of them. They search for comprehensive change and a new direction. Increasing numbers desire radical change. How this can be accomplished and who will lead them is not yet clear to them. But the crisis eats away at the foundations of landlord-comprador rule.

Of course, so long as the revolutionary forces are not able to respond effectively to the situation, so long as the prevailing order-no matter how bankrupt-is not challenged by a popular revolutionary consciousness, the reactionaries can still confuse and deceive the people, especially since the electoral system and democratic facade remain in place.

What is most important, however, is for all revolutionaries to focus on the excellent opportunities continually engendered by a political crisis of extraordinary depth and magnitude. The basic contradictions in society are sharpening, the reactionary state is weakening, the reactionaries are fighting each other, and the people's desire for fundamental change is intensifying.

This does not in any way mean that the opportunities will unfold that smoothly and rapidly. The broad sportaneous masses, including the middle classes, have detached themselves from the regime but have embraced no alternative vision or leadership.

ing conflicts among the reactionaries, there is a counter-current controlling their rivalry for power to peaceful means and the electoral process. The crisis constantly fuels their political maneuvers and plans for coup and counter-coup. But all of them are also extremely atarmed that the ensuing turmoit will favor the advance of the revolution. Thus, the early electoral campaign and the various proposals for national reconciliation and peace."

Concern over the intensity and scale of the crisis and fear of revolution have impelled the Catholic Church hierarchy to launch their 'peace' project. With the help of the mass media, they have called on all the armed parties, especially the revolutionary movement, to sit down for peace talks and attempt a political settlement. But though loud in their call for a ceasefire, even a temporary one, they are silent on how to deal with the social issues underlying the armed conflict.

September struggles

In September streaks of lightning and rolls of thunder came from the overcast skies.

Yielding to IMF-WB pressure, the Aquino regime prepared to implement fully their agreement of June 1990-raise the prices of petroleum products, devalue the peso, and cut costs or raise taxes substantially to bring down the massive budget deficit. Crude oil prices were also rising due to the Guit crisis. Aquino's problem was how to keep the lid on the popular outrage that would surely follow the new impositions, while preventing the coupplotters from taking advantage of the situation.

The ongoing negotiations on a new US bases treaty added another combustible element. Aquino's 'open options' line had been fully exhausted. On one side, the US was pressing for a firm commitment on the bases retention. At the other was a strong nationalist ferment that threatened to explode should Aquino surrender to US demands on the bases.

Under these conditions, the economic protests of the people acquired

a political dimension and content. The time was ripe to immediately raise economic struggles to the level of political struggles. A clear signal of this was the harsh repression of the public school teachers' strike in Metro Manila. The government had committed itself to an IMF-WB policy to freeze public sector wages as part of the program to reduce the budget deficit.

The regime resorted to "slicing," "delaying," and "squid" tactics to divide and undermine the protests. The oil price hikes were immediately followed by increases in transport fares to head off a strike by bus and jeepney drivers. A raise in the minimum wage was promised to workers and employees to neutralize the general industrial strike being planned by the militant labor alliance.

The regime used the Gulf crisis as a smokescreen for the implementation of harsh economic measures it had long agreed to with the IMF- V/B and for intensified repression against those challenging these measures.

These were the same tactics used in the bases issue. The government surfaced its proposal for a "phase-out" to make it appear that it was negotiating for the gradual dismantling of US military bases in the country. The conclusion of the bases talks was also delayed to give the regime temporary relief white it faced other bigger problems. At the same time, riot police and military troops bashed the heads of anti-bases demonstrators daring to come near such "sacred grounds" as the US Embassy, Clark Air Base and the negotiations site.

As a diversionary tactic, the Aquino regime rode on the peace issue being projected by the Church and mass media and taken up by progressive leaders and cause-oriented organizations under a coalition called the Multisectoral Peace Advocates. A Cabinet cluster was ordered to look into the possibility of renewing peace talks and a ceaseline with the National Democratic Front. While playing the "peace" game with the Left, the regime intensified its pursuit of leaders and members of the RAM-SFP-YOU, which it considered a

more immediate threat than that of the revolutionary movement.

Immediately after the oil price hikes, progressive mass organizations and coalitions called for a people's strike in Metro Manila. On the first three days, one-third of all jeepney drivers stopped plying their routes, hundreds of workers walked out of the factories, and hundreds took part in rallies. Various forms of protest also broke out in cities and towns in the provinces. But all of these did not reach the intensity and scale of a people's strike.

October outburst

The mass struggle for wage increases spun off from the initial protests against the oil price hikes. The working class took the lead; the government employees, including medical workers and professionals, followed. Public school teachers, who had been on strike since September 17, demanded the release of economic benefits and a P5,000 monthly pay. The wage struggles gained momentum and with it, the protests against IMF impositions.

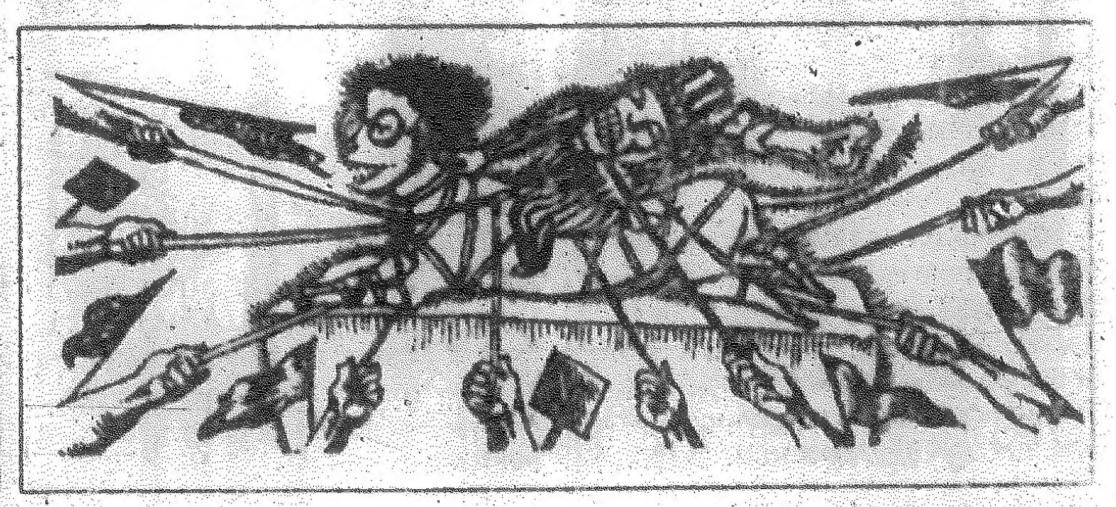
The broad progressive ranks were astir. Bigger and bigger numbers denounced the Aquino regime and its anti-national and anti-people policies. Independent Marxist formations, progressive organizations of the middle forces and social-democratic forces called for a decisive break with Aquino and a shift to popular struggle.

Meanwhile, the NDF took the offensive on the issue of peace. It declared itself ready to engage in peace talks with the Aquino government, so long as the agenda took up the solution of the fundamental problems of the nation, it also expressed its openness to a ceasefire within the framework of political negotiations. Based on its recently approved 12-Point Program, the NDF presented a program to provide immediate relief and lasting solutions to the crisis.

On October 13-14, the Conference for National Unity, Survival and Reconstruction was held under the sponsorship of the People's Caugus, a broad progressive alliance. This was the biggest gathering of anti-imperialist and democratic organizations, groups and individuals since EDSA. They united behind a set of popular demands for immediate relief and solutions to the national crisis Well-received at the conference was the agenda of the NDF.

The broad progressive forces called once more for a people's strike. They demanded a rollback in petroleum prices, wage and salary in creases for workers and government employees, justice for public school teachers, reductions in the prices of prime commodities, subsidies for farm products, the revocation of the Letter of ligient to the IMF, and the implementation of a debt moratorium, debt cap and selective debt repudiation.

The whole of Metro Manila was paralyzed on the first day of the strike to more than 700 factories, production was stopped. Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog and other urban centers and towns in other parts of the country joined in. Armed revolutionary forces such as the Alex Boncayao Brigade in Metro Manila, sought to add their strength to the strike through direct



and indirect meansthe most prominent being the burning of several buses owned by companies which had taken a die-hard anti-strike line.

The landlord-comprador regime has stretched the people's patience to the limit, and their anger and protest will burst out as never before.

On the second day, however, the strike waned in Metro Manila although it remained strong in Central Luzon. The weaknesses in political preparation of the organized forces and the broad masses began to show, as the government and the AFP fully explaited the bus-burning incidents to undercut sympathy for the strike and its legitimate and just causes. Strike organizers were unable to counteract the negative effects of the mass media "hype" (sensationalized and sometimes unfounded reports on the strike violence). The regime was able to neutralize the middle sections of society from supporting the strike. The unity of the broad progressive alliance was dented.

The regime took advantage of the the strong reaction of some sections of the people against the bus-burning incidents to attack the progressive organizations and leaders. The regime threatened to ban the Kilusang Mayo Uno, the biggest labor center in the country. But the progressive forces resisted and effectively thwarted the ettacks of the resctionaries.

Still, the regime managed to foist the first in a series of policy measures dictated by the IMF. But it created a deep wound in society. Although the people's strike was not successful, the regime exposed itself as callous and bassis to the people's interests. Subservient to foreign dictates and inept in solving the national crisis.

The sense of indirection, anxiety and desperation that pervaded society did not dissipate. The elite was only too aware of the seething rage that lay beneath and resorted to all sorts of schemes to divert the attention of the people from the crisis and its roots. There were the "crisis forum" of Laurel and the "peace conferences" held by traditional politicians and so-cial-democrats. In the face of all this, the NDF reaffirmed its position that there can be no real peace without

thoroughgoing social change. It tightly linked the issue of peace to the people's demands upheld by the mass struggle.

Mass protests continued: rallies and marches calling for wage increases, a rollback in prices and the dismantling of US bases. A three-day people's strike flared up in Mindanao in November, raising high the demands of the previous strike.

Dreinry December

During the last quarter of the year, the economic situation rapidly deteriorated, as the adverse effects of the worsening crisis in the Middle East combined with the deleterious effects of the regime's anti-national economic policies. The rising prices of crude oil in the world market drained the country's dollar reserves already severely depleted by unrestrained imports. As the sense of things going out of control spread, hoarding and panic-buying became the order of the day. An inflationary spiral set in.

Emboldened by the failure of the people's strike last October, Aquino prepared to inflict a new and even more cruel burden on the people. Just a few weeks before Christmas, the regime imposed astronomical increases in the prices of oil and oil products. The prices of regular and premium gasoline rose by more than 100 percent; diesel and LPG, by nearly fifty percent—with the bulk of the increases going to the Oil Price Stabilization Fund.

Almost all sectors of society cried out in shock and anger, particularly the middle classes who were made to bear the burden of the highest price increases. Even the mass media agrated or a new people's strike.

Powerful people's strikes erupted in major cities and towns in Mindanao, the Visayas, Bicol, Southern Tagalog and Central Luzon. Business and transport were at a standstill for

several days.

People poured out into the streets to express their extreme disgust for a regime pushing them into ever

greater suffering, misery and oppression.

In Metro Manila, the popular outrage was not transformed into a people's strike. The middle classes took the lead and moved into action—hundreds marched in the streets and held noise barrages in Makati, Quezon City and other areas where the petty bourgeoisie were concentrated. But the organized forces forces failed to muster the broad participation of the masses of workers and urban poor for a people's strike.

Calls for the resignation of Aquino resounded, even from former Cory supporters. It was an unmistakable sign of the grave isolation of Aquino and her regime from broad sections of society.

After the dreariest Christmas since World War II, the nation faced the New Year filled not with new hopes but with great uncertainties and anxieties. True enough, the Aquino regime and the IMF-WB were planning to impose more burdens on the people through a new LOI. Among its components were a further devaluation of the peso; a nine percent levy on imports; and the removal of subsidies to all government corporations—all of which mean even more price increases.

The regime took advantage of the Gulf war to ram through these measures and justify its suppression of any protest. Such was the terms of thousands of miles away that Philippines could have been mistaken for a country in the Middle East.

But like any gimmick, the "hype" is bound to have a temporary effect and all the ugly realities of life under the rule of Aquino and the compradorlandord elite will once again come to the surface. This time, the regime may succeed in stretching the Filipino people's patience to the limit, and their rage and protest will burst out as never before.

A lasterof 'Garino-brutal'

Teachers' movement suffers a temporary setback but is toughened up for big political battles

The unprecedented repression of the public school teachers' struggle of September-November last year is bringing the entire teachers' mass movement into the mainstream of political struggles that will erupt in the 1990s. The whole sector has not only become deeply and sharply aware of the impact of political issues on their own struggle for economic rights and welfare. They are also fast learning how imperative it is to move on to higher forms of action and combine with broad political forces as they confront a crisis- ridden regime that increasingly wields the iron fist.

The year that passed was "historic" for the public school teachers in a new sense. If 1989 saw the teachers' mass movement reach a historic peak by mobilizing the biggest and broadest force possible to wrest a significant economic concession from the regime, 1990 will be remembered for the most savage state repression unleashed on them.

Their struggle began on Sept. 17, 1990 and lasted till mid-November. During its course, a total of 884 public school teachers were dismissed from their Jobs and another 1,500 suspended upon direct order of Education Secretary Isidro Carino and with the approval of Mrs. Aquino. The inhuman assault on the teachers' sole means of livelihood was meant to the state of the s the rapidly growing militarity of the ranks, its scale and harshness were unequalled in the whole history of the public school teachers' mass movement - including the most repressive years of the Marcos fascist dictatorship.

Court in such repression showed now different instrumentalities of the state cooperated to assert the interests of the reactionary ruling system. Upholding the fauthority of Secretary Carino and the government's right to

defend itself against "sabotage and coercion," the court refused to stop the continuing dismissals and suspensions of teachers. It rejected their petition for a temporary restraining order and is now dragging out resolution of the basic issue of the public school teachers' right to strike.

Despite the heavy repression, the striking teachers launched persistent and determined street actions for three months. Some 1,000 to 4,000 took part in daily mass-ups, marches and rallies, and a sizeable force turned up at the November 19 camp-out/vigil in front of the Senate.

About 12,000 or 70 percent of Metro Manila teachers representing 75 schools in various districts went on a mass leave of absence at one time or another during the period. However, by the second week, the strike had reached its limits in Metro Manila, even as its spread in the provinces was confined to some parts of Central luzon and a few cities in Bicol, Visayas and Mindanao.

Compared to August 1989, when some 200,000 teachers from 10 regions throughout the country participated in mass leaves and other forms of action, the 1990 struggle did not become nationwide in scale. Although teachers from six regions joined the walkout, majority came from the National Capital Region.

The context and demands of the teachers' struggle

The public school teachers mass struggle in 1990 broke out at a time when the reactionary regime was plunging into a deep crisis. The economy had been leady Lettered by the destructive July 16 earthquake and the eruptor of the Mirrore East crisis on August?

At about that time, too, the International Monetary Fund was holding up further releases of foreign loans and aid to the regime because it had tailed

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to fully meet IMF conditionalities. The value of the peso in relation to the dollar was sinking fast and a new round of oil price increases was in the offing.

inilitant sector with an impressive record of successful economic struggles with increasing political sharpness-had been getting ready to wage another round of mass struggles as early as the start of the schoolyear.

The most immediate issue was the government's failure to release salary differentials due them under the Special Education Fund (SEF) and General Appropriations Act. For almost three months, the public school teachers' organizations had engaged in numerous dialogues and petitions with education and budget officials to locate the P680 million fund supposed to have been allocated for SEF and other benefits from July 1989 to December 1990.

At the same time, the teachers wanted to raise once more the issue of adequate pay for the teaching profession, which had been partly addressed but not fully realized in the previous year's struggle. (In 1989, the monthly basic pay of public school teachers was increased to P3,102, but it fell short of the P4,500 demanded by them.) The anticipated oil price increase added fuel to this basic demand.

Eut the earthquake of July 16 intervened and, for a time, the teachers shitted their attention to helping out in relief and renabilitation work, perticularly for colleagues in the quake stricken areas.

By the time September rolled around, the severe economic crunch was being strongly felt in all sectors. The teachers' organizations realized that their struggle should be launched not only in behalf of purely economic sees but should also present a rollegal solution to address the roots of the deepening crisis.

Thus, in addition to economic benefits and the salary hike, they united on carrying the demand for a debt moratorium. In their view, the first two demands could not adequately be net by government unless the bulk of

Teachers: movement suffers a temporary setback but is toughened up for big political battles

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The concurrence of the Supreme Court in such repression showed how different instrumentalities of the state cooperated to assert the interests of the reactionary ruling system. Upholding the 'authority' of Secretary Carino and the government's right to

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At about that time, too, the international Monetary Fund was holding up further releases of foreign loans and aid to the regime because it had tailed to fully meet IMF conditionalities. The value of the peso in relation to the dollar was sinking fast and a new round of oil price increases was in the offing.

The public school teachers—a militant sector with an impressive record of successful economic struggles with increasing political sharpness—had been getting ready to wage another round of mass struggles as early as the start of the schoolyear.

The most immediate issue was the government's failure to release salary differentials due them under the Special Education Fund (SEF) and General Appropriations Act. For almost three months, the public school teachers' organizations had engaged in numerous dialogues and petitions with education and budget officials to locate the P680 million fund supposed to have been allocated for SEF and other benefits from July 1989 to December 1990.

At the same time, the teachers wanted to raise once more the issue of adequate pay for the teaching profession, which had been partly addressed but not fully realized in the previous year's struggle. (In 1989, the monthly basic pay of public school teachers was increased to P3, 102, but it fell short of the P4,500 demanded by them.) The anticipated oil price increase added fuel to this basic demand.

But the earthquake of July 16 storened and, for a time, the leachers shifted their attention to helping out in relief and rehabilitation work, particularly for colleagues in the quake-stricken areas.

By the time September rolled around, the severe economic crunctions being prough tell in all sectors the teachers' organizations feeling that their struggle should be latanched not only in behalf of purely economic issues. But should also present political solution to address the roots of the descenting chais.

Thus, in addition to accommodeneits and the salary hake, they united on carrying the demand for a debt monatorium. In their view, the hist two demands could not adequately be not by government unless the bulk of

state resources were rechanneled from heavy debt payments to social services such as education.

The combination of the three banther demands - release of differentials,
the P5,000 salary increase and the
debt moratorium - was intended to
provide depth as well as breadth to
their struggle. While the public school
teachers, especially in Metro Manila,
were most 'heated up' over the first
issue, it was the second issue which
was important in giving the struggle a
thational character. (The issue of differentials did not affect most teachers
in the provinces.)

On the other hand, the demand for a debt moratorium constituted the political component of the struggle and linked it to the brewing popular struggle against the "new economic package" being imposed by the IME. By taking up this issue, the teachers' movement could easily flow into the stream of a general political movement that would serve to reinforce and amplify their own sectoral struggle.

Systematic and planned repression

One thing, however, was seriously underestimated by the teachers' mass movement as it prepared to wage a new round of struggle. While the intensifying economic crisis was creating a favorable political climate for launching it, a regime hardpressed from all sides was hardly in a position to grant even small concessions to placate popular demands. In fact, it was determined to apply the iron-fist against those challenging its policies and its rule.

The IMF was then applying pressure on the Aquino government to fully applement the "new economic package," a major component of which was the freeze in public sector wages, or wise face a cutoff in foreign loans and aid. The teachers mass movement had to be crushed - for the sake of the IMF and other foreign donors.

The first sign that the wind had changed was the installation as education secretary of Isidro Carino, a notorious union-buster at the University of the East.

Carno and the reactionary require repared to deal a heavy blow to the

heachers mass movement, with the main target being the Manila Public School Teachers Movement, one of its strong bases. Long before the start of the current schoolyear, Carino had initiated a series of systematic moves to weaken the militant public school teachers' associations from within.

Soon after the February 25 elections for the MPSTA, Carino began mobilizing those who lost to engage in black propaganda and disqualification moves against the progressive leaders who won. The opportunist leaders were showered with scholarships, housing units, trips abroad, promotions and millions of cooperative funds. They were used to gather data on the scope and influence of the progressives within the associations. Later on, they played a part in sowing intrigues and divisions among the teachers' ranks at the height of the struggle in September.

On the other hand, identified progressive leaders were given heavy class schedules so they would no longer have enough time to devote to association meetings and other activities. During the period when the various teacher organizations were in the process of achieving unification on the mass struggle, school admin-

istrators actively went out to harass and obstruct those who wanted to participate.

However, at that time, the entire repressive scheme of the Aquino regime against the teachers' mass movement was not yet that evident. It only came into full view when on the very first day of the strike, Carino outrightly refused to discuss any of the teachers' demands and instead threatened them with sanctions.

dismissal of 292 teachers. By the second week, he had suspended 1,000.

in the mass struggle were caught completely—by surprise. They had expected that they would be able to gather enough momentum and accumulate enough strength during the first week of the strike. But Carino's brutal repression headed it off.

Shortcomings and lessons

The effects of these harsh measures could have been overcome by solid preparations before the launching of the struggle, the effective combination of the banner issues to harness the broadest and strongest participation of the whole sector, and



appropriate tactics (such as knowing the right time to strike).

Teacher-leaders and activists admit that there were inadequacies in their preparations. Although the advanced forces within the sector achieved strong unity on the three banner demands, the propagation and discussion of these demands at the local levels were not sufficient. In addition, they should have been more alert to forewarnings of the regime's repressive scheme.

The package of issues was not projected and combined in the most effective way. The issue of salary differentials - clearly inadequate for a sustained and intense struggle - became the focus, while the demand for a P5,000 basic pay - essential to broadening the struggle nationwide - did not gain prominence.

The waging of the struggle also could have waited for a more opportune time-for example, after the oil price increases last September 21. Although this issue was not the main basis for the teachers' demands, the demands for a salary hike and a debt moratorium would have been more forceful within such a context.

There is a view, however, that in light of the intensity of the present crisis of the Aquino-regime, the separate struggle of the sector may no longer be enough to achieve further gains. According to this view, sectoral struggles soon reach their limits and must become integrated into multi-sectoral struggles in order to win.

There can be no debating the fact that the present crisis demands higher forms of popular action by the various

popular forces. Or that sectoral struggles operating within the framework of a popular struggle or in conjunction with multisectoral struggles have added advantages and strengths.

teachers' struggle itself had shortcomings which affected its chances of success. Had all the strength, resources and reserves within the sector been properly harnessed, the outcome might have been different.

Gains and perspective

The setback in the teachers' mass struggle can only be temporary. There are many factors that augur for a better-armed and more powerful struggle in the future.

regime has engendered conditions for a big political upsurge. The teachers' mass movement stands on a firm base built by painstaking work and past victories. And it has achieved a high level of political consciousness through the practice of struggle and consolidation.

breed of teacher-leaders and activists has emerged. Their fighting spirit remains strong. Substantial numbers played an active role in the major actions, during the people's strike last October. Hundreds of teachers tempered by the sectoral struggle can now be counted on as a reliable force in multisectoral mobilizations.

Moved not only by the justness of the teachers' struggle but also outraged by the intransigent state response to it, a broad support front for their cause has developed, both from within the educational sector and

among the middle forces. The active participation of parents, students and even a number of DECS employees in the teachers' mass actions lays the basis for deeper and stronger cooperation and unity. Public sympathy for the teachers' plight remains strong, reflected in the growing support by lawyers, church people, members of Congress, local government officials and other sectors of society for the thousands of dismissed public school teachers who continue to seek justice

During the September-November struggle, the teachers' organizations also honed their capability to integrate consolidation work with an ongoing mass campaign. During weekends, when street protests were at a lull, the leaders and forces conducted assessment and planning meetings both at the national and district levels; held forums tackling both comprehensive and specific issues (foreign debt and teachers' rights) and timely subjects and joined multisectoral undertakings such as the People's Caucus.

The teachers' organized forces see a higher, more difficult and more complex stage ahead and are shifting gears for a whole new level and scale of struggle in 1991 and the years to come. More than at any time in the past, the sectoral struggle will have a marked political content and will be tightly linked to the general political struggle of the people. With their record of militance, massive organ ized strength; prestige in society and political keenness, the teachers' sec tor has the potential to be an important player in the economic and political battles of the 1990s.



he entire revolutionary movement and the Communist Party of the Philippines are into a new decade that promises to be full of swift and far reaching changes. There will be major challenges and battles which will decide a strategic turn in the revolutionary process within Philippine society. On the agenda of the 1990s is a decisive victory for the people's democratic revolution.

Ang Bayan takes this opportunity to reinvigorate itself—digging out valuable lessons from the the rich mine of the past, drawing fresh impetus from the immense possibilities of the future. Not only must it reaffirm and deepen the basic principles which have guided its progress for the past two decades. More importantly, it must respond to the spirit, tempo and fast-evolving realities of the times and define the new thrust that will enable it to meet the revolutionary demands of the '90s.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Ang Bayan is guided by a set of basic principles which form its orientation. It has followed an unbroken thread of tradition from its first issue on warch 29, 1969 until today.

At different periods in its history, however, AB defined a specific role for uself in line with the changing objective conditions and the advances in the revolutionary movement from one stage to another. Its orientation, though fundamentally the same, has undergone changes in emphasis, interpretation and application as succeeding editorial staffs have enriched and elaborated on it.

For the benefit of its readers, AB clarifies the following principles which have remained constant throughout its practice for the past two decades.

Bayan is-and has always been-the central political paper of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Political exposures and analyses have been its trademark and have made up the bulk of its contents from the very beginning.

Using the Marxist-Leninist viewpoint, ideas and methods of analysis, it provides an all-sided understanding

New Inrust, new vigor, new ideas

of current national and world developments. It articulates the Party's analysis and position on major national and international issues, and its continuing investigations and critiques on the state of the Philippine economy, politics, culture and other aspects of society.

Apart from this, AB serves as a permanent and reliable record of major events during this period of Philippine history, it seeks not only to draw a thorough and accurate picture of the growth of the revolutionary movement but also to reveal the processes behind it--its motive-forces and laws of development. Thus, it concerns itself not merely with reportage, but with definitions of line and tactics, assessments and summations, directions and perspectives of revolutionary struggles in all fields-the mass movement; armed struggle; agrarian revolution and base building; alliance and united front building; cultural, health and socio-economic work; propaganda and education, finance; and international solidarity and diplomatic work.

has been most effective, useful and relevant to the needs of the Party and revolutionary forces.

In recent years, Party members have expressed the need for AB to address important theoretical. ideological and organizational issues. These include contributions to theoretical studies on socialism, strategy and tactics, political economy and US imperialism, among others; critiques of various bourgeois and petty bourgeois trends and tendencies in the Philippine progressive and revolutionary movement, and articles on ideological-building and remolding and organizational principles of the Party such as democratic centralism, collective leadership and collective 10.

Though these should not be its main content, the paper can play a specific and clearly defined role in the discussion of the above issues. For example, it can provide background materials, hard data and reviews/summaries of opposing views in relation to some theoretical questions. But it need not render final judgments or resolutions, except when the central organ has taken a definite policy or decision on the matter.

ship. AB is a political instrument of the Party in establishing its leadership within the revolutionary movement and, consequently, among the broad masses of the Filipino people. It has faithfully aided and will continue to aid the Party leadership in wielding the whole Party organization and revolutionary movement under one purpose, one direction and one vision.

AB's authority and responsibility at the national level derives from the fact that it is tightly linked with the highest leadership of the Party-the Central Committee and its Political Bureau and Executive Committee. The articles which it publishes accord with the decisions, policies, programs and analysis of the Party's central policy-making body. On significant occasions and issues, it publishes official statements of the CC, PB or EC.

However, Ang Bayan is not limited to being a spokesman of the CC, PB or EC. The regional committees, national departments and bureaus, and other Party organs can also make use of the publication to articulate their collective positions and assessments on those issues that are within the scope of their authority and have Party-wide relevance.

regional committees and national departments and bureaus have the responsibility of providing AB with

timely reports and documents on the objective situation and the revolutionary movement in their respective spheres of influence. They function as its correspondent network.

AB also serves as a channel for the expression of views by individual members of the Party. It must reserve a place for individual opinions, studies or researches on issues that are of interest to the whole Party.

Addressed to all revolutionary forces. The main audience of AB is the general membership of the Party and the rest of the revolutionary forces, including non-Party mass activists and close allies.

AS is to be distinguished from the theoretical journal of the Party, which is meant solely for Party cadres and members, and from the revolutionary mass newspapers at the regional and national levels, whose primary audience consists of both the organized mass base and unorganized masses outside the Party.

This general principle has been accepted since the start of AB's publication, but at certain periods there have been shifts in which part of its audience receives the focus.

characteristics of a mass newspaper and strove to reach out to a broader audience outside the Party.

Under conditions of intense repression of the mass media, it became part of a phalanx of underground and semi-claricestine publications that broke the Marcos dictatorship's media monopoly. The 48 of that period came out twice a month and contained a lot of news eports and brief commentaries on the national and international situation and on the anti-dictatorship-struggle and armed revolutionary movement. which could not be published in the captive media: A substantial portion of the publication appealed to and could be read by a mass audience. However, AB continued to provide sharp political exposures and deep political analyses of developments both here and abroad.

In the '80s, the political and propaganda situation within which AB

FEEDBACK

Lacking in color?

There are more English and Filipino readers among comrades in our region than perhaps any other region in the Visayas and Mindaneo. Many comrades have a petty bourgeois background-students and professionals, of Moro or non-Moro descent-although majority balong to the peasant and worker classes. Whether in English or Filipino, AB is greatly appreciated at the front-level and in a few districts.

The articles on Mindanao were very interesting because these concerned our own efforts in advancing the revolutionary struggle in our country. The stories on Atlas mine workers, Bed fighters in Isabela, sapper operations, and how comrades in Negros and Northern Luzon are dealing deadly blows to the enemy's gradual constriction strategy have been useful in our revolutionary work.

We want more articles on tactics in dealing with SOTs in the urban areas, advancing the agrarian revolution in the midst of intense military operations, politico-military operations and the conduct of partisan warfare, and ideological consolidation during massive counter-insurgency operations. Also, more research on women, the environment, autonomy for the minority peoples, and developments in Eastern Europe.

The Party committee here has always emphasized the importance of propaganda work. To widen our readership base, we have come out with our own "Sulong Masa," which is written in the local language. It is now printed and in a newspaper format. We hope that AB can have a facelift too so that it can be more appealing to its readers. AB's lay-out looks very dull — doesn't it reflect "stagnation" within the organization?

-- From the Central Mindanao regional committee

was operating began to change radically. The alternative media developed and performed the function of reportage more efficiently. Moreover. towards the end of the fascist era and under the pseudo-liberal rule of the Aquino regime, there was a proliferation of legal progressive publications which gave space to exposures of the basic problems of Philippine society. At times, even revolutionary propaganda and agristion could be done openly, though of course under limited and temporary conditions (for example, during the ceaselire and peace talks in the last quarter of 1986).

This new situation led the AS editorial committee then to redefine its role in the total propaganda effort of the Party. They decided that it should concentrate on the area where it had the most advantages and expertise comprehensive exposures and analyses of economic and political developments.

Another major factor which underlay this redefinition was the rapid growth of the Party into a much bigger
organization. There was a strong
demand fore-sections of the Party that
the cubication attains assist to the increasingly complex organizations
and ideological needs of the Party.

As this covered, the publication to the character reads and objection of work of the Fasty Capanizations. For some time, it was geared primarily to the character and the char

At this point, AD wishes to realism the principle that its main accience the whole operation of revolutionary forces. Within this audience, however, its stress at this particular period is the general members of the Park Control of the Park Contr

This is determined by actual conditions, in the past and until now, AS has been able to effectively reach only

those within the Party network, and even here, the coverage is probably not more than 50 percent. The underground nature of the publication sets objective difficulties to its widespread circulation.

Party organization, from the highest organ to the lowest, have not shown the political will to solve recurrent problems in the distribution of AB. Until and unless these problems are decisively solved, it is both inevitable and practical for the present AB to direct its attention mainly to the Party members and their expressed needs.

Main language: Filipino. The main language of AB is Filipino; its English edition is for a limited audience. This is because its main audience comes mostly from the ranks of workers and peasants. Members of the petty bourgeoisie, particularly students and other sections of the intelligentsia, also account for a big portion.

This editorial policy is also dictated by the reality that majority of Filipinos, from North to South, are now able to read and understand better in Filipino. On the other hand, fluency in English has been fast declining through the years, even among students and teachers.

AB strives to use a Filipino that is as popular as possible. It is determined to contribute its share to the vigorous spread of the national language by producing most of its copies in Filipino.

English edition but for a limited audience. These are readers who find special difficulty understanding and reading Filipino, such as some sections of the middle forces and readers abroad. The previous policy setting thigh school English as the standard with an attempt to make AB English readable to the widest audience—has lost its rationale. In line with this, the level of the English edition has been upgraded to suit college students.

The publication of regional editions of AB may be undertaken by regional committees or territorial commissions, based on need and

FEEDBACK

Informative

Comrades want to read AB because it is "our paper." But many of us, especially those in front-level committees have difficulty reading English or Filipino. The English in AB is scholarly and heavy reading. The kind of Filipino used could be made simpler. Reading articles that are very long is time-consuming for us. Worse, the type used is so small that reading requires even more effort.

Nevertheless, AB is informative—it tells us about developments in other regions and about different lines of revolutionary work. We found last year's article on Central Luzon very enlightening. The summing-up of mass work in Mindanao was also interesting because we could easily identify with the experiences there. The reports on NPA tactical offensives always remind us that the fighting spirit of our people's army has not waned a bit. Sorely lacking, however, are articles dealing with the events in Eastern Europe. Does AB publish only articles that are marked "official" and never other views and commentaries?

All comrades welcome the idea of a "new look" for AB. Some suggest that the new AB sport a smaller hammer-and-sickle logo somewhere in the inside pages or drop it altogether. AB must open up its pages to more ideas than what is "official."

We have a special three-man group that translates texts and reading materials in English or Pilipino to Hiligaynon. One of these materials is AB. May we suggest that AB Filipino use more descriptive language to suit the level of experience of the mass readers? Why must AB cater to district-level cadres only? Is AB a cadres' paper?

The summing-up of mass work in Mindanao was so interesting that we translated it into llonggo and featured it in the first issue of our local Party paper, Ubay. We have made AB part of our NPA's curriculum for collective study, especially now that assessments and summing-ups have become a regular feature in the paper.

We also congratulate AB for being now in the forefront of much-needed changes in the Party organization. We have begun to receive AB issues regularly again after a long, long time. We look forward to a more efficient delivery and distribution system for AB.

-- From the Negros regional committee

capability. Compilations of selected AB articles, translated into regional languages, are especially encouraged.

NEW THRUST

The '80s was a decade of dramatic developments within the country and throughout the world. How to transform or harness these developments to create revolutionary change and renewal in the societies involved is a central issue for all proletarian revolutionaries everywhere in the 1990s.

The EDSA uprising which overthrew the Marcos puppet fascist dictatorship represented a strategic weakening of reactionary rule in the country. However, despite the continuing advance of the revolutionary movement since then, and the excellent conditions which have appeared to accelerate its advance, how to bring about that decisive turn in the revolutionary struggle—and from there, how to win a decisive victory for the people's democratic revolution—is a question that has yet to be definitively resolved.

The collapse of Communist-led governments one after another in Eastern Europe, the winds of perestroika and glasnost unleasted by Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union, the economic reforms and political turnoil in China have deeply shaken old notions and answers,

producing new and unsettling questions. Are all these leading to a more advanced stage of socialism in those countries or to a total reversal of socialist gains and retrogression into capitalism? And what are the leasons for those fighting to achieve socialism in their own countries?

da. A host of major issues related to the objective situation and the revolutionary process have come to the fore since 1983 and will become even more the focus of contention and debate within the Philippine revolutionary movement in the 1990s.

The Party is at the center of such contention and debate. Wide sections of the Party leadership at various levels and substantial parts of the rank-and-file are reexamining, discussing and debating a whole range of issues related to the critique of Philippine society; strategy and tactics of the revolutionary struggle as a whole and in specific areas; international line and situation; and reform and renewal of the Party.

The debates are signs of a Party capable of appreciating fully and responding vigorously to the changing realities of the times. The expression of different views by all Party members who wish to engage themselves should be given the widest latitude.

Organizing the debates. At the same time, it must be insured that the debates do not lead to continuing dissensin, fruitiess struggle and worse, factional conflicts. There should be adequate and multiple channels within the Party wherein the discussions can be properly organized and where the broadest participation can be encouraged. This is necessary not only to serve as a learning process for the entire Party on the issues but also to lead to their satisfactory and firm resolution.

Ang Bayen makes itself available as one of these channels. This is within the framework of its general orientation. Starting this issue, it will open much more space within the paper for

FEEDBACK

Keep it simple

Many comrades here do not have a reading habit...yet. They like a lot of visuals. But, of course, since they come from a "listening class," they much prefer the radio. But the Party still does not have the resources to tap this medium as the principal means of communicating with our broad base.

We want AB to be responsive to the consolidation needs of the regions. The paper should play a big role in the present ideological thrust of the Party. For example, how do you explain the so-called collapse of socialism in many Eastern European countries? AB must be in the forefront of the ongoing debate regarding this, if only to help unity the different reactions and direct discussions towards an objective appraisal of the whole phenomenon.

Please simplify the English that you use - it is too intellectual and structured in the Filipino edition, can you put a glossary at the end of the article where difficult terms can be explained?

- From the Northern Mindanao regional committee

exchanges of views on the burning issues that the Party confronts today.

Apart from its task of reflecting the official positions, policies and decisions of the central body, AB must also capture the array of sentiments, ideas and positions held by Party organs, units and members. So long as these are put forward in a responsible and competent way, they will be given space in the publication.

This new thrust will not only be seen in such sections as "Letters to the Editor" or "Readers" Very "white" Party members may ventilate in dividual coinions, but also in stail-written articles—especially those which deal with issues that have not yet been thoroughly resolved.

Specifically, the role of A8 will be to identify the major issues which require further study, investigation or discussion; present, clarify and summarize the main points of difference on each issue; encourage those actively trivolved in the debates to articulate their views and positions in an orderly mariner (to avoid judgments based on hearsay or statement. Taken out of context), and inside that a clear path towards timity is taken.

Towards a widely based consersus. Corollary to this, AS commits it self to helping build a more widely based and democratically formed consensus within the Party on these issues.

Party cadres have gained rich experiences and achieved a high level of maturity and expertise in their lines of work through more than two decades of revolutionary struggle. This must be recognized - their contributions to the resolution of issues and the shaping of Party policy should not only be encouraged but given importance and integrated.

More than ever, Party decisionmaking at every level must be the result of a process of gathering together and concentrating the enormous accumulation of knowledge, experience and expertise of the revolutionary forces, from the lowest to the highest levels. It cannot be the work of a few minds, no matter how brilliant. The process itself must be a collective one, imbued with greater democracy and freed from bureaucratic procedures.

Only thus can a strong and the breakable unity, a responsive and dynamic loadership emerge to enable the whole Farty and revolutionary movement to meet the tremendous challenges of the 1990s.

Our goals in 1991

To prepare itself for its new thrust in the 1990s, Ang Bayan examines its present condition and problems in order to determine what must be done to make the paper more useful,

relevant, sharp and timely.

A number of deep-rooted protilems have beset AB, especially since 1986. There have been many times when it lagged behind in meeting the needs of Party members. At one time or another, it has been criticized for its stereotyped language and stereotyped thinking, "irrelevance" to the day-to-day work of Party cadres, inability to respond to the burning issues that they confront, frequent delays in publication, and "old and boring" format, among other things.

Design content. In 1989, the newly-constituted AB editorial committee decided to focus its efforts on upgrading the content of the publication. We sought to produce articles that were relevant, sharp, well-researched, bold in offering new approaches and insights, and reflective of the richness of Party experience in the regions and at the national level.

The initial feedback from readers shows that AB has made some gains in realizing the above objective. The reports on the revolutionary government in Samar and the lessons gathered from a mass work conterence in Mindanao, the continuing and in-depth analysis of the US bases issue, the constant updates on the political situation, the summations of major mass struggles such as outbreaks of protest among sections of the intelligentsia in 1989 and the epic struggle of Atlas workers for a genuine trade union, the clarifications on the peace question, and the exposures of new economic trends were among those well received.

The AB editorial committee will continue to give stress in the coming months and years to further enriching the content of the publication. Political exposures and analyses as well as reportage and summations of revolutionary struggles will form the bulk of its content.

meet the demand of Party cadres and members for articles on ideological-building and remolding and on

democratic centralism, collective leadership. Party life and other organizational principles of the Party. We will also begin to contribute to the ongoing discussions on theoretical and practical issues.

year, AB will build the infrastructure needed to achieve timeliness, consistency and regularity in its publication. Though we have striven to keep up with a once-a-month issue, AB has too often come out late.

various factors, both internal and external to AB, have given rise to and compounded this problem. Among them are staff shortages and tumovers, the lack of a steady supply of data and materials from the central organ and the correspondent network, security problems, irregular communication lines with important Party organs and technical difficulties.

Solving all these not only requires greater will on our part, more systematic methods of work, deeper links with the regions, and a good education and skills training program.

cooberation and support from every part of the Party organization, especially the regional committees and national commissions, which must insure the functioning of the correpondent network and do their part in the efficient and quick distribution of the publication. Deploying skilled and

highly-motivated cadres to the AB editorial committee and technical staff, and providing timely and effective political guidance and education must be given high priority by the CC/PB.

devote more time and effort to solving the roots of this problem. During this period of adjustment, the frequency of AB's regular issue will be reduced to once every two months. This is a painful short-term decision that we have had to make, so that a long-term solution can be put into place.

However, special releases of AB will come out in between regular issues whenever there is a need for timely and up-to-date analyses of urgent issues and developments. Even if the frequency of publication has been somewhat sacrificed, AB will not be hampered in its desire to be responsive and relevant to the needs of the Party membership.

A new look. We also want to address the long-left need to improve the technical aspects of the pape, such as format, visuals and production technology. Hopefully, technical improvements will not only result in a much better-looking AB but also help speed up the process of publication.

nittee-and we hope it becomes the goal of the entire Party organization—to put AB not only into the mainstream but also into the frontline of the revolutionary struggle, helping the vanguard party and the revolutionary movement to achieve one will, one purpose and one vision for the 1990s.

AB's contents in the decade of the 90s

- comprehensive analysis of national and international developments;
- exposures and critiques of the state of the Philippine economy, politics, culture and other aspects of society;
- assessments and summations of revolutionary experiences in all fields of work;
- timely and accurate reportage on the revolutionary movement and revolutionary struggles.
- articles on ideological-building and remolding, and on democratic centralism, collective leadership, the committee system, Party life and other organizational principles of the Party;
- contributions to theoretical studies on socialism, strategy and tactics, political economy and US imperialism, and others, and
- critiques of various bourgeois and petty bourgeois trends and tendencies in the Philippine progressive and revolutionary movement

News from the front

ATTACKS IN CEBU

Units of the New People's Army launched simultaneous. attacks on the PC-INP headquarters and Hacienda Durano in Sogod, Cebu last Dec. 14.

The Red fighters seized seven high-powered rifles, six short arms, ammunition and other kinds of military equipment. They also destroyed and confiscated more than P3 million worth of property belonging to the Duranos, a clan of vicious bureaucrat- capitalists and landlords in the Visayas.

The first attack started when an NPA unit set up a checkpoint along the highway at Bgy. Pansol, seven kilometers from Sogod. They captured and disarmed three policemen and an informer, including Sogod police chief

Sgt. Camaingking.

Boarding a passenger jeep, the guerillas took their captives with them to the municipal hall. At the PC-INP post, they found three policemen and one CAFGU member playing cards. The Red fighters quickly took control of the enemy forces and the municipal hall without having to fire a single shot...

The people's army then entered the armory and took three M16s, one M14, one Garand, two revolvers and

hundreds of bullets.

At the same time as this attack, an NPA unit rushed into Hacienda Durano in Bgy. Calabawan. The NPA tried to deceive the two guards but the latter saw through the ruse and fought back. The Red fighters were forced to shoot them.

One M16, one M2, rounds of ammunition and 90 fighting cocks were confiscated. The vacation house, warehouse and tractor of the Duranos were also burned. The hacienda "covered 600 hectares of sugar land. The Duranos harshly exploited the farm workers. They used their private army and a company of the PC Regional Action Force to suppress the people.

During the military operation, a special NPA team explained to the people the aims of the operation and current ssues. One member of the audience commented, "Please go to our town because there are many abusive soldiers here."

(From a correspondent)

BULACAN CAFGUS AMBUSHED

Six notorious members of the CAFGU were ambushed and killed by the people's army in Bgy. Samago, Malolos. Bulacan last Dec. 20 at nine in the morning. The ambush took place some 50 meters away from the Malolos town hall

The CAFGU members under Carlos Capili, a.k.a. "Ka Vicky," were on a jeep going to the capital. The NPA had received information that Bulacan Gov. Pagdanganan would give them a Christmas present. They also knew the

route the enemy usually took whenever they met with the governor.

Based on this information, an NPA platoon, riding on a jeep and a sand-and-gravel truck, took up ambush positions along the route. At 9 a.m., the CAFGU jeep stopped over at a house near the place where the guerillas were waiting. The people's army lost no time in attacking the enemy. Five of them fell on the spot. One was seriously wounded and died upon reaching the hospital. The NPA got two M16 rifles.

Though the municipal half and PC camp were just nearby, the military did not send any help to their fellow fascists. Those killed were former members of the revolutionary movement who had surrendered to the enemy and betrayed comrades. They became henchmen of the governor and actively participated in counter- revolutionary operations. Each of them headed a CAFGU unit.

Their treachery had resulted in the murder of mamy revolutionaries and progressive forces by the AFP in the province. The masses loathed them, especially the small. businessmen victimized by their extortion activities. Many rejoiced when they heard that these bad elements had been punished.

(From a correspondent)

RAID AT NUEVA ECIJA

An NPA company raided the municipal hall of General Natividad at 6:15 p.m. on Nov. 12.

The guerillas rode on two trucks in going to the town. When they reached their target, they swiftly surrounded the town hall and subjected it to a barrage of fire. Three fascists were killed, including two policemen. The NPA seized five M16s, four 38-caliber pistols, one radio and seven typewriters.

(Himagsik)

ASSAULT ON QUEZON OUTPOSTS

The NPA simultaneously raided the police outpost and the PC detachment in Real, Quezon last Sept. 5.

At four in the morning, two NPA teams attacked their targets almost at the same time. Within 35 minutes, the operation against the PC detachment was completed. Two enemy soldiers were slain and five surrendered, including those wounded.

At the police station, the fighting took longer. Red fighters from the attack on the PC detachment came to reinforce their comrades. ,

After two hours, the enemy sent in their own reinforce. ments, including one V150 tank.

The enemy lorces tried to surround the guerillas. Unknown to them, the NPA had planted mines along their route. When the fascists reached the landmine, the guerillas blew it up, at the same time unleashing a volley of fire. Then, the Red lighters retreated.

NPA in Northern Luzon scores major victories in 1990

The New People's Army in Northern Luzon under the Lu. Crispin Tagamolita Command made big strides in 1990 despite a series of brigade- and division-size operations faunched against them by the AFP, the latest being Oplan Salidummay in Marag Valley.

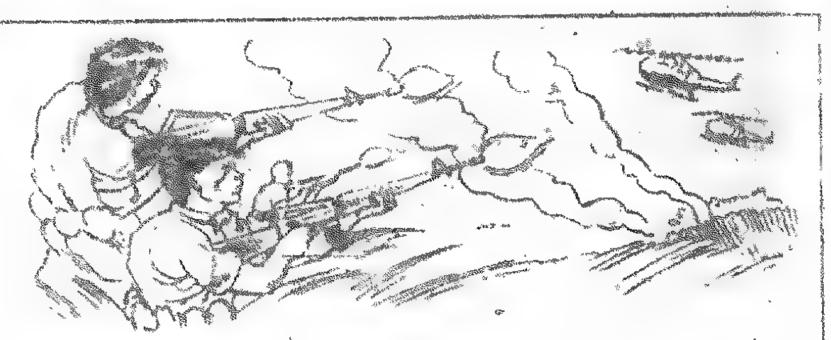
The NPA's major victories are the following:

A total of 330 AFP troops were killed, 230 wounded and 60 captured in NPA offensives from January-December last year. Among those slain were five captains and several lieutenants of the AFP. In 13 guerilla fronts throughout northern Luzon, the Red fighters captured 185 high-powered rifles and demolished military aircraft and vehicles (eight jeeps, including a newly arrived HUMMER, six 5X6 trucks, nine helicopters, four Tora-Tora T23s, two F5s and one F16). They also damaged two military relay stations.

equipment owned by the reactionary classes in the region. Among the targets of these punitive actions were the Beriguet Mines and PATECO in Minapiugi, Isabela, last July; Taggat PARVI in Sanchez Mira last May; and LBC and PTDC in Jones and Tuao respectively in November. Last Nov. 25, a telecommunications project in Roma,

Enrile, which is funded by Japan, was also hit.

army foiled five large-scale AFP operations under Opian Kalasag. These were Oplan Paglansag-Pegasus of the 501st Brigade in Sinandungan Valley (January to March). Oplan Kamat-Alpha and Saranay-Bravo in Sinandungan, Ifugao and East Cagayan; Oplan Lingkis in Kalinga-Apayao; and Oplan Salidummay of the 5th



Infantry Division in Marag Valley, Northwest Cagayan

and Apayao (Sept. 27 to Dec. 9).

In Marag Valley, where a massive AFP campaign is ongoing, the NFA has wiped out 60 enemy soldiers and wrecked four helicopters, four T28s, two F5s and one F16 of the US Air Force. In the course of the counter-insurgency operations, three guerillas and three civilians have been killed, while 60 children have died due to various diseases.

The progress of the agrarian revolution in Northern Luzon has benefitted 500,000 people-of which 32,000 now own their own land. All in all, some 35,000 hectares have been distributed throughout northern Luzon from

1989-1990.

This is the main reason why the mass base of the revolutionary armed struggle has remained firm in the face of fierce enemy attacks which have resulted in the killing of 200 barriofolk and the forcible evacuation of 250,000 people from 243 barrios last year. These human rights violations are the consequence of the US-Aquino regime's policy of genocide against the Isneg minority people. In many areas in the region, including Marag Valley, the AFP has set up food blockades and declared "free fire zones."

NOLI LIBERTAD (Spokesman) LT_CRISPIN TAGAMOLILA COMMAND NPA-NORTHERN LUZON

one 38-caliber patch, 1,000 bullets and AFR documents...

in a separate incident, the NPA assaulted the camp of the 42nd IS-PA and CAFGU in Bgy. San Vicente, Gumaca it 1115 p.m. last Dec. 14.

The queries threw molotov bombs and incendiary remades into the camp. Three quardhouses caught fire events science scampared into their toxincles.

First fighters of the Apolonio Mendoza Agapay Comand rained bullets on the camp. After lifteen minutes, nine ascess were dead and many by wounded. The NPA seized

(Kalatas)

TARLAC PARTISAN ACTIONS

The NPA in Tarlac launched times successful partision uperations and one sniping operation from September to November 1990. In one of these actions, the NPA punished

Soft Bartolome Soluta and a certain C2C Cacho at Sho Suba Boy Matalanib, Tarled, Tarled last Nov. 10. Select from them were two pistols, one 45-caliber and the other a 357

Solute, was responsible for the kidnapping of Jun Mesina and Felix Dimitui, leaders of the Alyansa no Mag-bubukid sa Gitnang Luson (AMGL), in January 1930. Until now the two have not been found and are believed to have been salvaged by the military.

The NFA also purished St. Francisco Sarrior (FC) in Talaga, Capas, His M16 was taken. A notorious CAFGU member, Francisco Marcha, ves also shortest Skin, St.

Meanwhile, an NPA unit harassed a platoon of the 68th 18 PA camped at Sitio Kotoc Kotog, Sala, Tartec. Three guerillas creeped towards the detachment and when they were fifty meters away, opened fire on it. The enemy was thrown into confusion. The comtades made a quick and safe retreat.

Himagsk

People's court in Quezon

A breakthrough in setting up a system of revolutionary justice at the grassroots

Reves of the Constabulary High-way Patrol Group by a people's court of the NDF-NPA in Southern Quezon has inspired the people of Bgy. San Antonio to set up a system of revolutionary justice in their own barrio.

The first people's court in this barrio of Southern Quezon was organized when three rich peasants belonging to the revolutionary movement brought charges against one Pedro Subido (not his real name).

"Revolutionary justice is an inherent power of any revolutionary
movement," according to the Melito
Glor Command of the NPA. Southern
Tagalog (in connection with its policy
on prisoners of war in 1988). It identifies who are the friends and enemies
of the revolution."

The NDF-NPA has been guided by several written documents in waging its campaign against incorrigible bad elements, drug pushers, illegal recruiters, rapists, syndicate leaders and other anti-social elements. The documents set down policies on who deserve to be punished, procedures for arrest and detention, the issuance and implementation of standing orders and the eight rules of discipline of the NPA. Punitive actions against AFP combatants and paramilitary groups are treated separately.

reno Subido, 32, of Egy, San Antonio, was accused of non-payment of debts amounting to a total of 17,000. In handling the case, the people's court adhered to such principles as the right of the accused to defend himself, to choose his counsel, to be tried by an impartial jury, and to appeal his case, among others.

Interested barriofolk filled to overflowing the small but where the trail was held. On the left side sat Subido, three members of the defense panel and two witnesses for the accused To

* **2**

the right were the prosecutors and three witnesses for the complainants. The three members of the panel of judges, together with the clerk of court, were at the center. Scattered throughout the audience were Red fighters of the New People's Army who were in charge of the court's security.

The issue of revolutionary justice was first discussed. Then, the trial proper began with the reading of the case against Subido. Witnesses for and against the accused came forward to give their testimonies.

The prosecution claimed that Subido was a businessman whose only asset was his glib tongue. He had deliberately violated the terms of payment agreed on with the complainants.

On the other hand, the defense panel asserted that Subido was merely, the victim of deception by a big businessman.

According to a witness for Subido, "it is true that Pedro took the pigs from the complainants and agreed to pay P11,000 and P6,000 to two of them. Together, we delivered these pigs to a businessman in Manila, but Pedro only received P100 from the latter."

repeatedly called on the businessman to demand full payment but they were ignored. One time, they were even chased by the businessman's dog.



regarding this problem. The next time we went to collect, they even accompanied us but still, nothing happened one witness related. They learned that the businessman had paid the police not to interfere.

The witnesses for the defendant also stressed that:

- 1. Pedro was poor and because of this, was not able to finish elementary school:
- 2. The big businessman took advantage of his poverty and lack of education:
- 3. Greed was not the reason for Pedro's failure to pay the debts.

The defense panel appealed to the court to lorgive Subido, acknowledged that he should pay his debts but that he should be given consideration, and asked that the revolutionary movement help in providing him with an alternative livelihood.

On the other hand, the prosecution argued that Subido's non-payment of the debts was deliberate and intentional. He acted as an agent of a corrupt culture and therefore should be treated as an enemy of the revolution and subjected to punishment.

The panel of judges decided that Subido should be arrested and confined for a definite period as punishment for his individual responsibility in the case. But the revolutionary movement will help him collect the full payment from the businessman and find work that will enable him to pay his debts.

The trial of Pedro Subido was the first time the barriotok witnessed the deliberation of a case by a people court. The revolutionary movement considered it a breakthrough in revolutionary experience in the words of Kallando, spokesman of the NA Southern Cueron. This experience shows that the revolutionary justice has reached and is accepted at the barrio level.

positive, "this ironic that I had to face a people's court before I could fully understand that the revolutionary movement is just and good.

-Kalatas, July-December 1990 (NDF paper in Southern Tagalog)

The Gulf after the war

The political hegemony of US imperialism in the Middle East is now supreme after the defeat of Stiddam Hussein at the hands of the combined military forces of the US and other

Western powers.

On Jan. 16, 1990, the US and its allies started the massive and relentless air bombing of Iraq, ostensibly aimed at crippling its military capability. The intense bombing campaign also blew up industrial plants and infrastructure, levelled large residential areas in the office, killed and maimed tens of thousands of civilians, many of them women and children, and sowed terror among the Iraqi people. After one and half months of this savagery from the skies, the US began the ground war.

In just 100 hours, the advancing US-led Western armies, using hightech warfare capable of causing widespread destruction from long distances, routed the Iraqi army, one of the biggest and most well-equipped

armies in the Third World.

The US waged the war-and a coalition of 38 nations joined it-in the name of the "liberation of Kuwait." In reality, the US unleashed its overwhelming military might to destroy Iraq as a military and political power in the Middle East. The US victory paves the way for a "new post-war order" in the region in which US domination is unchallenged, US control over oil resources is tightened, the military superiority of Israel over the Arab countries is maintained, and the Arab people are divided and subjurgated.

This constitutes a marked difference from the pre-war period, when there were counterweights to US power. The USSR held US ambitions in check by its-firm support for and great influence over Arab front line states. Independent regional powers such as Iran and Iraq were emerging. The Paiestinian national inversation movement was backed by many Arab nations, with even conservative states philiped to lend it official supports

That the real argenda of the US and other Western allies went far beyond the 12 UN resolutions is graphically revealed by the immunice damage they deliberately inflicted on the Iraqi land and people and their repeated rejection of pulicular pulical

solutions being brokered by the Soviet Union and other nations such as Iran. On the eve of the ground war, Saddam Hussein had declared his willingness to withdraw his army from Kuwait according to a Soviet-sponsored peace. plan-the first significant step towards

fulfilling the UN resolutions.

George Bush replied that the plan Talls well short of what would be required for peace," Indeed, it was only through war-and not through peacethat the US could achieve its objectives. Accepting an Iraqi withdrawai from Kuwait would have meant leaving Iraq with an intact army which could once again be used to threaten US and Zionist interests in the region. Furthermore, it would have made the Soviet Union the peacemaker in the Middle East, with considerable political weight in determining the post-war order. And had Saddam Hussein voluntarily ended his occupation of -Kuwait, there would have been tremendous pressure for Israel to leave occupied Arab lands.

Now, US imperialism has become the dominant power in the shaping of the post-war Middle East. As of this writing, its army and those of the other Western powers are still inside Iraqi territory, poised to renew their attacks. The US is dictating onerous terms for a permanent coasofire on an aireadydefeated Iraq to further humiliate it and to exact further concessions beyond the UN mandate. Iraq's late is meant to serve as an object lesson to all

other Arab, states,

The US victory has greatly diminished the cause of Arab unity, US imperialism cleverly exploited the rivalries among elite Arab rulers and their narrow and selfish interests. Thus, they allowed the US to take over the solution of a problem which should have been mainly placed in Airba hands Worse, they approved the use of US military power to right Saddam Hussein's wrongful occupation of Kilwalt instead of determinedly seek. ing a peaceful political solution.

The Palestinian national liberation movement has also suffered a setback. The linkage of the Palestinian is the with the kirwaiti issue brought the Palestinians own demands and struggle against Zionist Israel into sharper focus. But while dealing with

the Palestinian question has been placed on the order of the day, the manner in which it will be dealt with will be decisively influenced by the US The US can be expected to use the PLO's support of Iraq as an excuse to exclude them out of the process of setting up a Palestinian state.

On the other hand, Zionist Israel has reaped some political gain, earning praise for exercising restraint in the face of the series of Soud attacks from Iraq. It is conveniently forgotten that the US war machine has so efficiently accomplished the enormous devastation of Iraq that the Israeli military was prevented from doing. And with the US firmly in charge of the post-war "peace" process, Zionist interests will surely be well protected. The US is even now pushing Arab states to follow Egypt's example and make "bilateral peace" with Israel.

A permanent US or "multinational" military presence (under US sponsorship) in the Middle East has also been justified. Even were Saddam Hussein and his Baath party ousted from power such a presence would be rationalized by the US as necessary to deter another regional power from taking his place or to make beiligerent Arab states toe the line.

· Despite all this, it would be a mistake to think that the basic contradiction that lies at the heart of the continuing turmoil in the Middle East has been pushed permanently into the background, and that an era of Pax Americana is at hand. The contradic tion between US imperialism and the Arab people and nations-the main issue in the Gulf war--runs deep and will continue to make the region domibustible.

But only the democratic and progressive forces in the Arab work can pose a strong political and moral challenge to US impenalism. The out come of the war in the Gulf has shown only too clearly that the interests of the Areb Decisia and flations cannot be served by the autocratic elites who hold sway in many Arab countries today. And mather can it be served by dictators who, because of the very nature of their rule, fall to muster the full moral and political strength of their own people and all positive forces in the world in the end, the Sinki will Hursbin, they will not be able to office tively stand up to US military myst and erode imperialism's political ground for unleashing that might.

Where to, socialism?

surjes of articles—both oxiginal withouts and reprints—which expound on and debate over the fundamental and process underlying the earthshaking, historical developments that have swept the socialist world since the latter half of the elofities.

We start by laying down what we think are the basic Markist anxudes and theories that can guide us in-drawing the correct conclusions from one of the most convulsive chapters in socialist history and humankind's long march towards full social and political liberty. These premises serve as our guidelines in organizing AB's series on socialism, as will as the responses coming from our readers which we certainly most welcome and encourage.

Where to, socialism? In raising this question, we are imposed as much by the scientific, critical and creative spirit of the Marxist materialist outlock and dialectical method as by that unshaktable lath and determination which possess humanity's quest for a world where there is liberty, wealth, knowledge and priogress for all

The socialist world is unquestionably in deep crises and turmoll. The socialist governments of Poland, Czechoskwakia and Hungary have collapsed under the pressure of popular aprillings. The German Democratic Republic is now just a mamory, tapsing into history. The Ceaucescu regime of Romania was overthrown by a violent upheaval, Bulgaria has been rocked by popular discontent. Albania is in the throse of a popular explosion. Disimtegration looms over the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. China is haunted by the nightmane that was the Thankmenn mussiagre. All over the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, economic sugnation and even decay are the common plight of the working people and the entire populace.

But out of this crisis have enterpold strong-and gowerful counter-currents of reformand renewal, even of a full-blown resolution in the political, economic, cultural and ideological spheres, all seeking to respon the buttered haupe of the socialist idea to its original plany and put it back in the center of humanilind's dream and strugglic for a just world.

The international bourgeoiste are glosting over what they call the death knied of spoialism, the incontroverable proof of Mandem Lenhism's bankruptcy, the superiority of capealarn over socialism. Let them visitures delute themsolves true whose sections of the working proofer, even whose rusons. Lained by they socialist improvements, may have chosen to take the road back to dapitulism, not knowing fully that what se bettend the gillium of prosperity and history that what se bettend the gillium of prosperity and history and antivancement are deloated human exploration, degradation and drudgery But now blocks, this trail indicate ments are pounding into the arriver of socialisms, preclaiming to the world that the answer to socialisms a protection of human by human but in manching forward to free acciding to the purpose of the abovents to make and refresh with new localisms.



a more liberating socialism, a truly humans and democratic socialism can be achieved.

To proclaim that socialism remains to be the vision of a liberating future is not only an act of faith, it is grounded in history, in practice, in the great and unparallelud aphieve ments of socialism despite its many imperfections and tor tuous past. To quote Mikhail Gorbachev: "...the Soviet Union is a young state without analogues in history or in the modern world. Over the past seven decades—a short span in the history of human divitization—our country has traveled a path equal to contunes. One of the mightlest powers in the world rose up to replace the backward semi-colonial and semi-feudal Russian empire. Huge productive forces, a powerful intellectual potential, a highly advanced culture, a unique community of over one hundred nations and nationalities, and firm social protection for 280 million people on a territory forming one-sixth of the Earth-such are our great and indistrutable achievements and Soviet people are justly proud of them."

The socialist experiment may have falled at certain junctures and in certain lands or even have gotten mired in a general combinas the present one. But this is the argument agricust his prototionally humanist and liberation dailise or its great waterivements and contributions to humanity or the validity of its critique of the injustice and the influentility of capitalism. Our maker and outlook and maketidal militroid has taught us that social am would not be built in a viscoulim this to the womb of the old order. We are aware that between vision and reality lies a long period of struggin all spiritures of the -politics, economics, culture, strengmust admintage. The lagging of somulast-is interested to the par-Will confirm to put obstacles and lighter one may part. And knowledge, including Manism, that is necessary in charung encludism's dollars, will perfocue by lag behind problem thus relaing the possibility of mistakes

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Sut out of this crisis have emerged strong and gowerful counter-currents of reform and reflewal, even of a full-blown spheres, all seeking to restore the battered frame of the socialist idea to its original glory and put it back in the center of humankind's dream and struggle for a just world.

The international bourgeoisie are gloating over what they call the death knell of socialism, the incontrovertible proof of Marxism-Leninism's bankruptcy, the superiority of capitalism over socialism. Let these vultures delude themselves. True, whole sections of the working people, even whole nations, failed by their socialist experiments, may have chosen to take the road back to capitalism, not knowing fully that what lie behind the glitter of prosperity and hi-tech advancement are colossal human exploitation, degradation and drudgery. But new blood, fresh reinforcements are pouring into the armies of socialism, proclaiming to the world that the answer to socialism's profound crises lies not in retreating to the abysmal world of exploitation of human by human but in marching forward to free socialism from the barnacles of past mistakes and refresh with new



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To proclaim that socialism remains to be the vision of a liberating future is not only an act of faith. It is grounded in history, in practice, in the great and unparalleled achievements of socialism despite its many imperfections and tortuous past. To quote Mikhali Gorbachev: "...the Soviet Union is a young state without analogues in history or in the modern world. Over the past seven decades-a short span in the history of human civilization-our country has traveled a path equal to centuries. One of the mightiest powers in the world rose up to replace the backward semi-colonial and semi-feudal Russian empire. Huge productive forces, a powerful intellectual potential, a highly advanced culture, a unique community of over one hundred nations and nationalities, and firm social protection for 280 million people on a territory forming one-sixth of the Earth-such are our great and indisputable achievements and Soviet people are justly proud of them."

he socialist experiment may have falled at certain junctures and in certain lands or even have gotten mired in a general crisis as the present one. But this is no argument against its profoundly humanist and liberative cause or its great achievements and contributions to humanity or the validity of its critique of the injustice and the inhumanity of capitalism. Our materialist outlook and dialoctical method has taught us that socialism would not be built in a vacuum but in the womb of the old order. We are aware that between vision and reality lies a long period of struggle in all spheres of life-politics, economics, culture, science and ideology. The legacy of socialist distortions in the past will continue to put obstacles and limitations in its path. Any knowledge, including Marxism, that is necessary in charing socialism's course, will periodically lag behind practice. thus raising the possibility of mistakes.

We view the present crisis of socialism from a broad historical plane as the growing pains of immature socialism, a transition period fraught with many and complex contradictions, difficulties and setbacks. As Markist writings sum it up, socialism started in backward, makely agreeian

economies just emerging from feudalism and with a low technological and industrial base. Autocracy rather than bourgeois democracy constituted the political traditions of their superstructure. Illiteracy and a low cultural level were widespread over a large segment of the population. And proletarian parties undertook socialist construction amid intense imperialist encirclement and sabotage.

Under such conditions, socialist regimes invariably and inevitably committed serious mistakes, even crimes against the people, in consolidating early socialism. The threats of counterrevolution and imperialist encirclement often induced the proletarian dictatorship to commit state violence against not only class enemies but against sections of the people as well. The patriarchal ideology, so strong in feudal societies, permeated the proletarian parties and made it easy for certain individuals to foist the personality cult on the Party and society. It also facilitated the imposition of authoritarianism in the guise of upholding Party discipline and spirit.

Our task as Marxists is not only to understand socialism's current dilemma. The point, as Marx would say, is to change, to solve it. And in solving it, there are no ready-made answers, no textbook solutions, no panacea. Let us remind ourselves of Lenin's powerful dictum; concrete analysis of concrete conditions. We must study with an open mind, dig out the facts, study the internal contradictions and the historical roots of socialist construction, and make conclusions based not on book or rote, but on life, on the actual practice of socialism.

Such a formidable task requires the collective wisdom of all Marxists, whether inside or outside communist and socialist parties and movements. Thus the need for open, wide-ranging and continued exchanges and debates among comrades—an exciting and vigorous ideological and theoretical exercise that should be marked by the spirit of comradeship, scientific rigor and intellectual honesty. Emotionalism, philistinism, slapdash study and the proclivity for ex cathedra pronouncements should have no place in the debate.

his Socialism Series will present the current problems of socialism, their history, and the theoretical and ideological disputes surrounding socialist construction as a whole and in each of the major socialist countries. The Series will present the opposing arguments as well as guide readers towards further study of the issues involved.

The Series does not pretend or intend to be the last word on the debates. Ang Bayan welcomes readers' contributions on the controversies, whether these conform or disagree with the theses, analyses and positions presented in the various papers. A Party- wide debate on the current problems of socialism is urgently necessary and will be a most welcome development.

the various contradictions that underlie the socialist dilemma. Where lies the root of socialism's present crisis? One contention is that it is brought about by the gradual though steady and ultimately successful restoration of capitalism in

the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe. According to this school of thought, the difficulties of early socialism, the prevalence of small commodity production, forces of old habits and values, the relentless encirclement and sabotage by the international bourgeoisie, the rise of bureaucratism, and the abandonment of the line of the centrality of class struggle in the transitional period that is socialism provided great opportunities to the reemergent bourgeoisie to capture state and communist party leadership. From then on, the state and the party became instruments for the exploitation and oppression of the people, who ultimately rose up in revolt to overthrow the so-called socialist governments.

The other contention is that socialism's crisis is primarily caused by what its proponents call the Stalinist distortions of the socialist system or the institutionalization of the command- administrative set-up in the economy, politics, culture and ideology of socialist society. This line of critique assumes that such colossal deformations took place in response to the difficulties and problems posed by early socialism, the civil wars and imperialist encirclement and wars of reconquest launched against the Soviet Union.

What emerged was a thoroughly bureaucratized state and party machinery governed by a privileged stratum. This stratum became more and more divorced from the people, assuming inordinate power over production, appropriation and distribution of the social wealth, dominating politics and culture, and monopolizing ideological formation of society. It was an elite, yes, but never a bourgeoisie for they did not rule for profit and had to function within the strictures of public ownership of the means of production and socialist superstructure. The whole thing was a huge aberration, but not a regression to capitalism.

The widespread copying of this model in Eastern Europe, compounded by the fact that socialist regimes in these countries, with the exception of Yuguslavia and Alabania, have been largely imposed on their respective peoples by the World War II victories of the Soviet Army, have made the alienation of Eastern European states and parties from the people complete.

The theme of alienation--or conversely, socialism's objective to fully realize social control over the production, appropriation and distribution of society's wealth--is central to socialist theory and is expected to run throughout the gamut of debates over socialism's crisis. The proponents of the two contending critiques may converge on certain points but they hold basically divergent views on the sources of alienation that reappeared in socialist society.

This theme extends to the issue of one-party state versus socialist pluralism as well as to the question of whether socialism is inherently authoritarian and totalitarian or not, touching on what place individual freedoms occupy in socialism's constellation of freedoms.

It is interesting to note that both divergent schools of thought can be critiqued not only on the basis of their ideological and theoretical soundness and integrity but also on practical terms. Gorbachev's perestroika revolution is an application of the critique of the command-administrative

Proletarian Cultural Revolution is guided by the class struggle line. Caution should be taken, however, in distinguishing which practice is germane to the theory, considering the complex factors that enter into a real historical process.

here are other issues of contention in today's socialism debate, issues that date back to the post-October revolution days. A sig-

nificant and hotly debated one concerns the development of the socialist economy. This spawned two basically different approaches in the 1920s in the Soviet Union with modern variants manifesting themselves up to this very day. The first was geneticism. Opposing it was teleologicism. The debate centered on the role of economic laws and revolved on the conflict between market and planning (Harry Magdoff, Are there economic laws of socialism?).

The geneticists emphasize the prevalence of economiclaws or "regularities." For them, effective planning rests primarily on predicting the economy's future course based on its objective tendencies. These set the limits on what the plan could accomplish. The geneticists stress the role of market forces, profitability, scarce resources and the need for balanced growth. They were especially conscious of the backward state of agriculture.

Contrary to the geneticists, the teleologists favor the establishment of ambitious goals, envisioning planning as a deliberate program to change the economic structure and maximize growth. They reject the geneticists' reliance on the economic taws of capitalism such as the law of value. For them, planning itself is the "law." Their advocates attach less impegation to agriculture and the peasantry, stressing instead the goal of rapid industrialization. They recognize the existence of constraints, but these, they insist, are physical rather than market limitations.

The teleologists under their new convert Stalin won the debate, taking the line of forced-craft industrialization (industrialization carried out at high speed). In their view, history had given the first socialist state no time for "getting into gear." How much was the socialist deformation it created, particularly through the forced collectivization of agriculture; is now being subjected to scrutiny. With some variations, the dispute was replicated in China between the proponents of the Great Leap Forward and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, on the one hand, and those of the Reform and Four Modernizations which chart the course of present-day China, on the other hand.

Another major issue is the national question and proletarian internationalism. Covered here are the nationality problem as viewed according to the Leninist interpretation of the right of nations to self-determination; the relationahip of proletarian parties of different countries:



socialist countries.

Necessarily, we have to scrutinize Brezhnev's theory of limited sovereignty and international division of labor within the socialist commonwealth of nations, the Chinese Communist Party's theory of the three

worlds, as well as the causes of

armed conflicts between

the theory and practice of

peaceful coexistence between

nations with different social sys-

tems; and the theory and prac-

tice of socialist support for

national liberation movements.

Gorbachev's principle of 'freedom of choice' stands in sharp contrast to Brezhnev's theory and both must be treated within the framework of a dialectical discourse grounded in a concrete international historical setting.

The last item belongs to the Party. This has been the subject of much debate lately as Marxists all over the world reexplore the meaning and dimensions of the theory of a vanguard party of the proletariat, its linkage to its class base, and the relationship between this party and the state bodies and mass organizations, in fact, the whole of civil society under a socialist order.

If these issues will be tackled by our Socialism Series one by one. There are two available articles dealing with the central question at hand-the roots of socialism's present crisis.

The first one is an analytical paper drafted by the Executive Committee of the Central Committee of our Party. This has come out in the first issue of the republished Rebolusyon, the CPP's internal theoretical journal; it is the final section of the document, "Lead the Masses, Launch the Offensives." Although the paper already expresses an official position, the Party leadership is open to subjecting it to further debate within our Party. This must be so in the face of widely divergent responses to the paper and the absence until now of a wide-open and organized inner-Party debate on this matter. The paper is a systematic presentation of the line that the crisis in socialism is the crisis of capitalism restored.

The second article is a discussion paper submitted to the South African Communist Party by its general secretary. Comrade Joe Slovo, it is distinguished by its attempt at Marxist framework setting, its dissection of the various ideological and theoretical responses so far to socialism's crisis and turmoil, and its effort to arrive at a well-informed deliberate and dispassionate approach, it is an endorsement of Gorbachev's perestrolika revolution. Apart from ventilating one side of the historical debate, Slovo's discourse has been useful to us in coming up with an attitude setting framework for our socialist series. Since it is not widely available and we consider it must reading for all comrades, AB is reprinting excerpts from the article.

The crisis of the world worsens

O Executive Committee-Central Committee Communist Party of the Philippines

worsen. It is the crisis of overproduction afflicting the old industrial capitalist countries, the newly-industrializing economies, the general run of underdeveloped third world countries, the former socialist countries and the socialist countries.

The glut in both industrial products and raw materials is problematic to every country in a world still dominated by capitalism, especially now that there is a trend of capitulation among countries previously strong on anti-imperialism and socialism. Certainly, there is want and misery among the people in most countries but the profit-making law of capitalism does not permit the equitable distribution of what can be produced by the available means of production.

To push the buildup of productive capacity and sale of surplus products, the financial credit system has been extremely abused. Every attempt to control the inflation and the loans that cannot be paid leads to a recessive trend and exposes the limits of the capitalist world market.

Under the Reagan administration, the United States engaged in high speed military spending and heavy importations for its overconsumption and lagged behind in the production of tradeable goods. The U.S. has thereby accumulated large amounts of budgetary and trade deficits. It has become the largest single-country debtor. It cannot solve its grave financial problems and stop its industrial decline if it does not revive its capacity to produce tradeable goods, promote its own exports and restrict imports. Its accumulated financial problems restrict its drive to expand production.

If the United States rises from its industrial decline, the subsequent problem is where to accommodate the exports of Japan, Western Europe and newly-industrializing countries. The general run of underdeveloped third world countries have overloaded and exhausted themselves with foreign loans for the overconsumption of the few, infrastructure and building an evercapacity for raw-material production.

Secause of the world glut in raw materials, the countries of the South suffer from depressed prices of their kind of exports, cannot pay back the loans and cannot be a widening market for the surplus manufactures of the capitalist countries. The raw-material glut makes the South the worst victim of the capitalist crisis of overproduction.

The oil glut is one factor among others involved in the consideration of frag for taking action on Kuwaii. The latter refused the advice of the former to reduce oil production and to agree to raising the price of oil to a Cortain level.

The price of oil is increased because production is now out in both Iraq and Kuwait. And the U.S.-led Western alliance and some other countries threaten to go to war with Iraq.

China has contributed to the glut in some raw materials and in Hongkong-style manufactures (textiles, garments, toys and semiconductors) in the capitalist world and is already being hit back by the glut. Japanese and Western creditors are trying to ply China with foreign loans mainly for infrastructure projects and consumption. But if China is determined to further build its industrial capacity and succeeds, then the advanced capitalist countries and newly-industrializing economies can find the world market for their manufactured exports even tighter.

Even socialist Albania gets into economic trouble when it cannot sell its copper at a good price; and socialist Cuba when it cannot sell its sugar at a good price. And, of course, the Philippines has been adversely affected by the glut in copper and sugar relative to effective demand in the capitalist world.

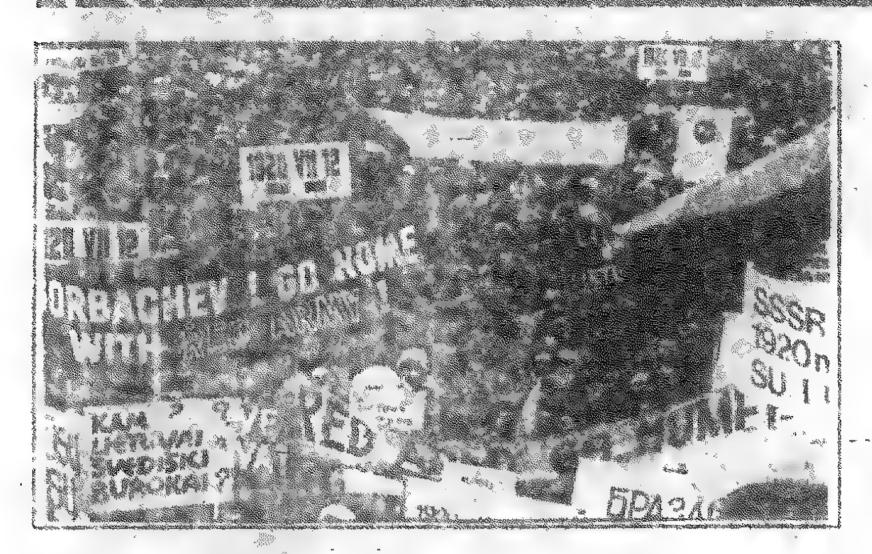
Even as they are fully converted to capitalism, all the East European countries have no competitive exports to make in the West and are now faced with the problem of paying hard currency for fuel at world market prices. Most of them have been overloaded with foreign loans for consumption and for building enterprises that are now in a state of dilapidation and bankruptcy. Even if they have become outrightly capitalist, they are in no position to absorb the surplus manufactures of the more developed capitalist countries.

The Soviet Union ought to be the most recent big catch of the world capitalist system and the most promising buyer of surplus manufactures and loan-client if only its oil production were doing well. Oil is one commodity that is still in more demand than other raw materials. And the Soviet Union is not yet suffering from a huge debt burden simply because in the course of the Cold War the U.S. blocked any Soviet borrowing beyond its current debt, mostly from West Germany.

Unfortunately, Soviet oil production is going down.
There is no assurance that it can pay to the legislach consumer and production is a value, unless that it presents of a payable and a production. Chevron is already in the baryased Soviet called a production.

Among the best known active versus of perceional (economic restrictions) are the promotion and enlargement of the private cooperatives which buy and steal cheep products from the state enterprises and collective farms, hoard and corner them and seal clear to the people in the free market; and the general breakdown of the economy which is now reduced to begging for food aid abroad.

Among the best known achievements of glasnost (openness) are the unbridged ideological and political actions on the basic principles of societies and the rise of capitalism, nationalism, the other conflicts, railinion, and re-



chy, organized crime and, last but not least, the autocratic presidential powers which Gorbachev has gotten formally in l'eu of the constitutionalized leading role of the communist party. The Soviet Union now is threatened by disintegration and is fighting to, its survival.

In foreign policy, among the best known achievements of 'new thinking' are the overthrow of the revisionist regimes in Eastern Europe; the distritegration of the so-called socialist bloc, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and the Warsaw Fact; the withdrawal of support from frater nal countries and parties"; and the emergence of the Soviet Union as some kind of a new junior partner of the United States, especially in the current Gulf crisis.

The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are assuming the characteristics of the underdeveloped third world countries as many of their industrial enterprises are being privatized or going into bankruptcies; and the state and collective farms are being broken up and privatized. East Germany (because of German unity) and Czechoslovakia (because of its good industry) can benefit most from conversion to capitalism after a difficult period of transition only because they can participate in the exploitation of most of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe - But the Soviet Union can still continue to exploit most of Fastern Europe.

It may be astonishing to some people in the Philippines. that certain countries account as sociais? 'suddenly' be come capitalist, Filipino progressives, immaing com' munists, hay be flabbergasted that capitalism is touted as the superior choice by the new rulers of these countries despite the historical and current ravages of capitalism in the Finippines, Latin America and the rest of the uniter de eloped third world .

In Eastern Europe itself, especially in Yugoslavia Polend and hungary, the private and augustaicus unusus ... and police has an exercise of the economy and police has open blacantly exploitative and the state medicencellabora tive with the foreign multinational firms and banks since a. long time ago; even while the regime still carried the signiboard of socialism.

" perc are some general explanations as well as-specific ones per country for the surface colleges of the revisionist regimes in Eastern Europe airthir me chgorid disategration of the one in the Same! Union

The socialism that mankind has so far seen in work! historical terms is early socialism, it can be neither called premature or utopian for the simple reason that such socialism arose from the capitalist world in repeated grave crises and world wars, and took hold of a wide extent of population and territory in countries that had been economically and technologically backward in general. Up to now, the countries that continue to affirm themselves as socialist are still formidable.

Early socialism like any new historical force is still vulnerable to its own weaknesses in terms of objective and subjective factors and to the counterattack of capitalism which is still dominant in the world. The odds against early socialism are tremendous. Not only is the economic and technological level it inherits from the past backward but it has to overcome the damage wrought by world war or civil war. Then, the military encirclement and aggressive acts and economic and technological blockade by imperialism follows.

The achievements of early socialism have been great, especially if we consider the tremendous odds. These have been possible because of working class leadership, the concentration of will and resources through the revolution ary unity of the people, the eradication of big bourgeois and landlord exploitation and centralized planning.

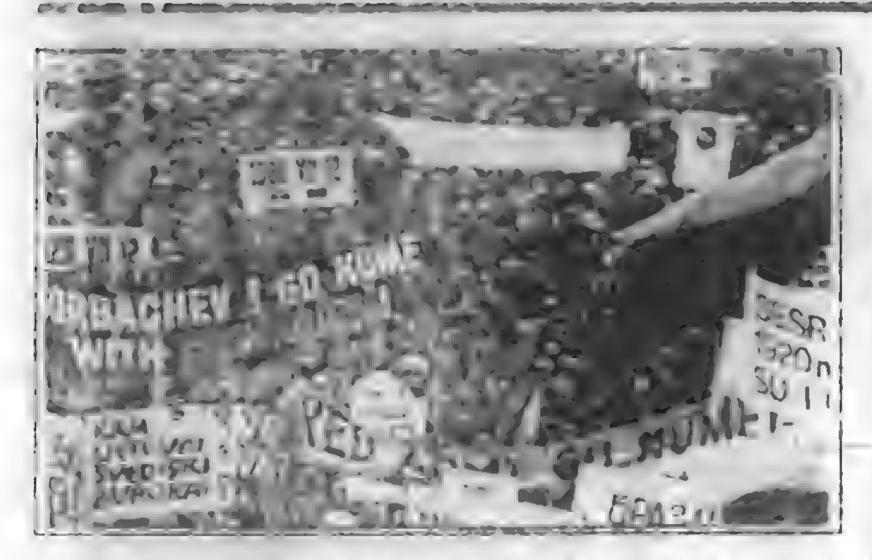
But good things can turn into their opposite where they become either excessive or inadequate under certain conditions, if there is a single-party system, even the antisocialist elements will do everything to join the single pany because it is the only way to climb the social and politicalladder.

If that party includes only a small part of the population, then it is susceptible to becoming isolated and attacked as privileged. Worse, the party and the state it rules actually become afflicted with bureaucratism and become divorced from the people and the mass movement. The bureaucratism in the ruling party and state can also be transmitted to the official mass organizations, the economic organizations, the schools and other institutions:

The bourgeoisie can reemerge through the bureaucrary and gain the upper hand over the revolution. any proletarians it can increase its power and privileges above the heads of the people. When professional and rechnical competence is stressed over and above revoluconary commitment to the proletarial and the people as qualification for party membership, the ruling party in due course - although still calling itself proletarian - becomes colombianted by elements who have contempt for the proletariat and the peasantry

After basic industries are established and agriculture becomes more productive, due to socialist relations of production, it is enoneously declared that there are no more. classes and no more class struggle in society. Thus, this ruing party becomes blind to the growing bourgeon minded elements within its own ranks.

Juder the line of no more classes and no more class struggle, the proletarian class commitment becomes more abstract to the youth. They tend to adopt the attitude of petry



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bourgeois universalism as they aspire to become the privileged bureaucrats. The revolutionary cadres in the ruling party and the state as well as in the mass organizations, industrial enterprises and farms become swamped by nonprolatatian functionaries.

When the call is made to catch up with the West, it actually becomes the occasion for the full-grown bureaucrat bourgeoisie to emulate the West in all respects and to adopt the capitalist-oriented reforms to "renew" or "perfect" socialism.

To rationalize these so-called reforms, the anti-socialist elements hark back to the concessions given to the private sector in the period of transition soon after the seizure of political power.

Knowing such internal developments in early socialist countries, the U.S. and other capitalist powers stimulate these by offering trade and loan concessions on the condition that there is bourgeois liberalization of the economy and politics.

Socialism is undermined and destroyed when the ruling class is no longer the proletariat but a new bourgeoisie and the ruling party and the state have changed class character even if these are still called communist and socialist, respectively; and when corrupt bourgeois bureaucrats and the private sector collude in milking the state or public sector that has its enterprises and farms autonomized and profit-motivated, no matter how large the state or public sector may still appear on the surface.

or the undermining of socialism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and other countries have occurred over several decades. It did not occur overnight. There has been a protracted process of peaceful evolution towards the restoration of capitalism.

In the Soviet Union, the restoration of capitalism was first promoted in a big way by Khruschev. He started to autonomize the industrial enterprises and the managers and workers in profitable enterprises were pleased by big ger pay and bonuses at the expense of other enterprises and the whole economy. And he gave to the managers the power to hire and fire. Those who became disemployed had to employ themselves in the informal economy. In agriculture, he expanded the private plots and started to lease land to so-called groups of peasants. He encouraged the free market where privately produced goods as well as stolen or smuggled goods were sold.

Under Brezhnev, the Khruschevite 'reforms' were pushed further. In fact, the private producers and corrupt bureaucrats became far bigger as they thrived on the free market where the real products of petty producers as well as stolen goods from the public sector were put. The close relatives of Brezhnev became notoriously linked to criminal syndicates in the private sector.

But under Brezhnev, under the cover of revolutionary phrasemongering, there was also a recentralization of financial resources and inclustrial enterprises needed for the arms race. So, the Soviet profetarial and people were vic-

timized by two kinds of suction pumps: that of the enterprise managers and private producers in the free market and that of the central state in the arms race. The economic surplus that should have gone into expanding and retooling the civil economy and the production of more and better consumer goods went into military production.

So far, the unique contribution of Gorbachev to the development of capitalism in the Soviet Union is the legalization and enlargement of the operations of the private producers in the form of "cooperatives." To put the Soviet Union on a complete capitalist footing, there are plans to privatize state industrial enterprises, break up the remaining state and collective farms and legalize private ownership of land.

During the first five years of Gorbachev, the capitalist powers have been pleased about glasnost encouraging unbridled attacks on the fundamental principle of working class leadership and the basic principles of socialism; and about perestroika promising to come out with the laws to promote the privatization of industry and agriculture, open the market to foreign goods of all sorts and provide the foreign multinational firms and banks the guarantees and privileges which they seek.

In most of Eastern Europe, there were more weaknesses of early socialism than in the Soviet Union. It was practically the Soviet Field Army which installed the ruling parties. These parties were overnight mergers of communists and noncommunists. They had ample time to make socialist revolution and construction.

But in most of the East European countries, the rich peasants and other petry commodity producers persisted. Nationalism and religion have always been strong railying points against the presence of Soviet troops and against the communists.

The political contradictions between the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries have long festered. The ruling revisionist cliques were changed or propped up by the Soviet Union, sometimes with the blatant use of force. So, when Gorbachic, declared that the East European countries and people could decide as they pleased, it was time for them to undo the socialist facade.

There have also been long running mutual recriminations in economic relations between the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union multiplied and supplied shoddy and inefficient productive equipment of pre-World War II technology (especially because too much of any Soviet economic surplus went to the arms race) but demanded too much of the industrial or agricultural products as repayment for the equipment and fuel supplied. On the other hand, starting in the seventies, the Soviet Union resented that oil was priced high in the world capitalist market but supplied it cheaply to Eastern Europe.

However, even while the Soviet Union determined the course of political affairs, the East European countries were allowed to promote the private sector in their economies and to develop economic relations with the capitalist powers. Thus, Poland and Hungary freely took the road of Yugoslavia.

On the surface, there is definitely an enlargement of the capitalist world through the economic and political reconquest of some socialist countries. But mindful of the crisis of overproduction in the capitalist world, even before the conversion of some socialist countries to capitalism, the capitalist powers are not in a hurry to make big direct investments and deliver new technology for retooling and reviving the industries in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. There is already a glut in industrial products in the capitalist world.

The capitalist powers are not in a hurry to extend further loans to promote the sale of industrial equipment and con-

"The restoration of

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the world capitalist system

sumer goods. With the exception of Czechoslovakia, the East European countries had already everborrowed before. They have no means of repaying. The international credit system has been abused too long. As a matter of ract, debts in the third world and Eastern Europe have already threatened the financial and economic stability of the capitalist world.

The strategy of the capitalist powers is to let the industrial

Union go bankrupt first so that it will be easier for the foreign monopoly firms to take over the lines of production and businesses and time is gained for extracting the laws most beneficial to foreign investors. Only the most profitable enterprises in Eastern Europe are being taken over by the foreign multinational firms in collusion with both the new bourgeois rulers and the now barefaced bureaucrat capitalists.

With the exception of the highest bureaucrats in the fallen regimes, who are held responsible for the economic crisis and political repression, it is still the bureaucrat revisionists of the former ruling party and the former state who are ahead in taking advantage of the economic and business opportunities for the private sector. They have the education, administrative skills and inside track, it is therefore clear why they themselves wanted the collapse of the shell of socialism in conjunction with the barefaced counter revolutionaries as well as the aggrieved people in the mass actions that toppled the ruling party

But now, the economic lot of the people is characterized by widespread unemployment, hyperinflation, aggravated food shortages, loss of free social services and everything else in the further deterioration of the economy. In the political sphere, all sorts of monsters are thriving, including othnic conflicts, fascist movements, racism, organization and so on.

Another way of describing the conversion of some socialist countries to capitalism is that they have joined the ranks of underdeveloped countries. In time to come, the people in these countries will rise again to condemn and reject the big bourgeoisie and landlord class.

~ **E**

There are at least three lessons to learn from the dising tegration of early socialism in Eastern Europe.

One lesson is that the working class party can take and hold power only on the strength of the revolutionary mass movement and should not allow itself to be divorced from the people through bureaucratism. When the ruling party is alienated from the people, the mass movement arises to overthrow it in due time. The mass actions can be constituted and driven by sheer grievances and can be led or taken advantage of by counterrevolutionaries as happened in Eastern Europe.

Another lesson is that it is not enough to have national

freedom from the exploiting classes. It is necessary to develop the level of individual freedom and public participation within the anti- imperialist and socialist framework. But to develop this level of freedom outside the anti-imperialist and socialist framework is to bring back the domination of capitalism and reaction as the bureaucrat revisionists have done.

Still another lesson is that concessions to the private economic sector in the period of transition should not be retrogressed to after the socialist transformation of the

economy. Capitalist-oriented reforms do not renew or perfect socialism but undermine and destroy it in the end. The promotion of the private business sector breeds a social base for eapitalist-counterrevolution and bareaucratic corruption

But what remains of early socialism and the more widespread factors of socialism elsewhere, including the national democratic revolution with a socialist perspective in the Philippines, have no choice but to fight imperial sin and all reaction, learn lessons from the failed socialis regimes and take advantage of new conditions arising.

The cause of protetarian revolution and socialism had met bigger setbacks before. It took 46 years from the deteat of the Paris Commune in 1871 to the victory of the Bolshevis Revolution in 1917. Then, fastism destroyed working class parties in Europe and Nazi Germany wrought havoc on the Soviet Union and killed 20 million Soviet people. But in the wake of World War it, several socialist countries arose.

The restoration of capitalism in Eastern Europe and the ongoing turmoil in the Soviet Union do not really strengthen the world capitalist system but merely increase the number of its victims who are impelled to resist. In the long run, the proletariat and the people of the world are bound to rise up against the ever worsening crisis and escalating oppression and exploitation and win greater victories at a new and higher level of revolutionary structile.

Early socialist societies and the factors of socialism (including the ineradicable working class) continue to exist on a wide scale. The existence, exploitativeness and crist of capitalism guarantee the resurgence of socialism at a new and higher level, with lessons learned from errors and failures and with new conditions arising to favor socialism.

Fas socialism failed?

O Jos Slovo General Secretary South African Communist Party

Marxist theory under fire

et us touch on some of the concepts which have come

Leunder fire in the post-perestrolka polemics:

Marxism maintains that the class struggle is the motor of human history. Some commentators in the socialist media are showing a temptation to jettison this theory merely because Stelin and the bureacracy around him distorted it to rationalize tyrannical practices. But it remains valid both as an explanation of past social transformations and as a guide to the strategy and tactics of the struggle to win a socialist order; a struggle in which the working class plays the dominant role.

The economic stagnation of socialism and its poor

technological performance as compared to the capitalist world sector cannot be attributed to the ineffectiveness of socialist relations of production but rather to their distortion. Socialist relations of production provide the most effective framework for maximising humanity's productive capacity and using its products in the interests of the whole society.

Marxist ethical doctrine sees no conflict between the contention that all morality is class-related and the assertion that working class-values are concerned, above all, with the supremacy of human values. The separation of these interdependent concepts (in later theory and practice) provided the context in which crimes against the people were rationalised in the name of the class. We continue to assert that it is only in a non-exploitative, communist, classless society that human values will find their ultimate expression and be freed of all class-related morality. In the meanwhile the socialist transition has the potential of progressively asserting the values of the whole people over those of classes.

The great divide which developed between socialism and political democracy should not be treated as flowing naturally from key aspects of socialist doctrine. This-approach is fuelled by the sullied human rights record and the barrack-room collectivism and some of the experiences of existing socialism. We believe that Marxism clearly projects a system anchored in deep-seated political democracy and the rights of the individual which can only be truly attained when society as a whole assumes control and direction of

all its riches and resources

The crucial connection between socialism and internationalism and the importance of world working-class solidarity should not be underplayed as a result of the distortions which were experienced. These include excessive centralisation in the era of the Comintern, subordination of legitimate national aspirations to a distorted concept of 'internationalism', national rivalries between and within socialist states (including examples of armed confrontation). Working class internationalism remains one of the most liberating concepts in Marxism and needs to find effective expression in the new world conditions.

In summary, we believe that Marxism is a social science whose fundamental postulates and basic insights into the historical processes remain a powerful (because accurate) theoretical weapon. But this is not to say that every word of Marx, Engels and Lenin must be taken as gospel; they were not infallible and they were not always correct in their projections.

Lenin, for example, believed that capitalism was about

to collapse worldwide in the post-October period.

It was a belief based on the incorrect premise that, as a system, capitalism had already reached the stage at which the capitalist relations of production constituted an obstacle to the further all-around development of the forces of production.

This was combined with a belief in the imminence of global socialist transformation, which undoubtedly infected much of the earlier thinking about the prespectives of

socialist construction in the Soviet Union.

Also, it could well be argued that the classical description of bourgeois democracy was an over-simplification and tended to underestimate the historic achievements of working class struggle in imposing and defending aspects of a real democratic culture on the capitalist state, a culture which should not disappear but rather needs to be expanded under true socialism.

But we emphasize again that the fundamental distortions which emerged in the practice of existing socialismcannot be traced to the essential tenets of Marxist revolu-

tionary science.

If we are looking for culprits, we must look at ourselves and not at the founders of Marxism.

The fault lies with us, not with secialism

In some cases, the deformations experienced by existing socialist states were the results of bureaucratic distortions which were rationalised at the ideological level by a mechanical and out-of- context invocation of Marxist dogma. In other cases they were the results of a genuinely motivated but tragic mis-application of socialist theory in new realities which were not foreseen by the founders of Marxism.

The fact that socialist power was first won in the most backward outpost of European capitalism, without a democratic political tradition, played no small part in the way it was shaped. To this must be added the years of isolation, economic siege and armed intervention which, in the imme diate post-October period, led to the virtual decimation of the Soviet Union's relatively small working class. In the course of time the party leadership was transformed into a command post with an overbearing centralism and very little democracy, even in relation to its own membership.

Most of the other socialist countries emerged 30 years later in the shadow of the cold war. Some of them owed a great deal to Soviet power for their very creation and sur-



vival, and the majority, for a great part of their history, followed the Stalinist economic and political model. Communists outside the socialist world and revolutionaries engaged in anti-colonial movements were the beneficiaries of generous aid and consistent acts of international solidarity. They correctly saw in Soviet power a bulwark against their enemies and either did not believe, or did not want to believe, the way in which aspects of socialism were being debased.

All this helps to explain, but in no way to justify, the awful grip which Stalinism came to exercise in every sector of the socialist world and over the whole international communist movement. It was a grip which, it loosened by either parties (e.g. Yugoslavia) or individuals within parties, usually led to isolation and excommunication.

We make no attempt here to answer the complex question of why so many millions of genuine socialists and revolutionaries became such blind worshippers in the temple of the cult of the personality. Suffice it to say that the strength of this conformism lay, partly, in an ideological conviction that those whom history had appointed as the custodians of humankind's communist future seemed to be building on foundations prepared by the founding fathers of Maxism. And there was not enough in classical Maxist theory about the nature of the transition period to provide a detailed guide to the future.

This underdeveloped state of classical Marxist theory in relation to the form and structure of future socialist seciety lent itself easily to the elaboration of dogma which could claim general 'legitimacy' from a selection of quotes from the masters. But the founders of Marxism 'never invented specific forms and mechanisms for the development of the new society.' They elaborated its socialist ideals, the, provided the historically transient characters of capitalism and the historical need for transition to a new stage of social development. As for the structure of the future society in replace capitalism, they discussed it in the most general terms and mostly from the point of view of fundamental principles' (my emphasis)

In particular, let us consider two issues:

- · socialism and democracy, and the related question
- social and economic aliennation under socialism.

Socialism and democracy

democracy in which the task of governing would not be the preserve of a state bureaucracy and as an association in which the free development of each is a condition for the free development of all. How did it happen that, in the name of this most humane and liberating ideology, the bureaucracy became so all-powerful and the individual was so suffocated?

To find, at least, the beginnings of an answer we need to look at four related areas:

- the thesis of the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" which
 is the theoretical rationalisation for unbridled
 authoritarianism;
- the steady erosion of people's power both at the lever of government and mass social organisations;
- the perversion of the concept of the party as a vaguard of the working class;
- whether, at the end of the day, socialist democracy can find real expression in a single-party state.

A. Dictatorship of the projetariat

The concept of the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" was dealt with rather thinly by Marx as a "transition to a classics society" without much further definition. For his part Engels, drawing on Marx's analysis of the Paris Commune, claimed that it indeed "was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." The Paris Commune of 1871 was an exceptional social experience which brought into being a kind of workers' classicate (by no means socialist-led) in which, for a basis moment, most functions of the state (both legislative are executive) were directly exercised by a popular democratical assembly.

The concept of the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat' was elaborated by Lanin in State and Revolution in the very hear of the revolutionary transformation in 1917. Lenin quotes Engels approvingly when he said that 'the proletariat need's

the state, not in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom, the state as such ceases to exist (Engels, Letter to Bebel). In the meanwhile, in contrast to capitalist democracy which is "curtailed, wretched, false...for the rich, for the minority...the dictatorship of the proletariat, the period of transition to communism, will, for the first time, create democracy...for the majority...along with the necessary suppression of the exploiters, of the minority."

Lenin envisaged that working-class power would be cased on the kind of democracy of the Commune, but he did not address, in any detail, the nature of established socialist civil society, including fundamental questions such

as the relationsip between the party, state, people's elected representatives, social organisations, etc. Understandably, the dominant preoccupation at the time was with the seizure of power, its protection in the face of the expected counter-revolutionary assault, the creation of "democracy for the majority" and the "suppression of the minority of exploiters."

*Freedom only for the supporters of the government, only for the members of one party-however numerous they may be-is not freedom at all. Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently...its effectiveness vanishes when 'freedom' becomes a special privilege."

These words may not have been appropriate as policy (which is what Luxemburg argued for) in the special conditions of the phase immediately after the seizure of power in October 1917. Without limitation on democracy, there was no way the revolution could have defended itself in the civil war and the direct intervention by the whole of the capitalist world. But Luxemburg's concept of freedom is surely incontrovertible once a society has achieved stability.

Lenin clearly assumed that whatever repression may be necessary in the immediate aftermath of the revolution would be relatively mild and shortlived. The state and its traditional instruments of force would begin to 'wither away' almost as soon as socialist power had been won and the process of widening and deepening democracy would begin. Lenin was referring to the transitional socialist state (and not to the future communist society) when he emphasized that there would be an extension of "democracy to such an overwhelming majority of the population that the need for a special mechine of suppression will begin to disappear...it is no longer a state in the proper sense of the word (because) the suppression of the minority of explonters...is easy, simple, entailing relatively little bloodshed. and hardly needing a machine or a special apparatus other than 'the simple organisation of the armed people (such as the Soviets)..."

We know that all this is a far cry from what happened in the decades which followed. The whole process was put in reverse. The complete 'suppression of the exploiters' was

followed by the strengthening of the instruments of state suppression and the narrowing of democracy for the majority of the population, including the working class.

The anti-Leninist theory advanced (in the name of Lenin) to "justify" this process was that the class struggle becomes more rather than less intense with the entrenchment of socialism. In some respects this became a self-ful-filling prophecy; a retreat from democratic norms intensified social contradictions which, in turn, became the excuse for an intensification of the "class struggle."

One of the key rationalisations for this thesis was the undoubted threat, even after the end of the civil war, posed by imperialism and fascism to the very survival of the Soviet

Union and the continuing Western conspiracies to prevent the spread of socialist power after 1945. But events have demonstrated that if the survival of the Soviet Union was at risk from the fascist onslaught it was, among other reasons, also the result of damage wrought to the whole

Soviet social fabric (including its army) by the authoritarian bureaucracy. And if Western "conspiracies" have succeeded in threatening the very survival of socialism in places like Eastern Europe, it is the narrowing rather than the extension of democracy which has played into their hands.

The term 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat' reflected the historical truth that in class-divided social formations, state power is ultimately exercised by, and in the interests of the class which owns and controls the means of production. It is in this sense that capitalist formations were described as a "dictatorship of the bourgeoisie" whose rule would be replaced by a "dictatorship of the proletariat" during the socialist transition period. In the latter case power would, however, be exercised in the interests of the overwhelming majority of the people and should lead to an ever expanding genuine democracy—both political and economic.

on reflection, the eloice of the word "dictatorship" to described this type of society certainly opens the way to ambiguities and distortions.

The abandonment of the term by most communist parties, including ours, does not, in all cases, imply a rejection of the historical validity of its essential content. But the way the term came to be abused bore little resemblance to Lenin's original concept. It was progressively denuded of the intrinsic democratic content and came to signify, in practice, a dictatorship of a party bureaucracy. For Lenin the repressive aspect of the concept had impending relevance in relation to the need for the revolution to defend itself against counter-revolutionary terror in the immediate post-revolution period. He was defending against the utopianism of the anarchists, the limited retention of repressive apparatus

But, unfortunately, practices justified by the exigencies of the earlier phases became a permanent feature of the new society. As time went on the gap between socialism

"The anti-Leninist theory

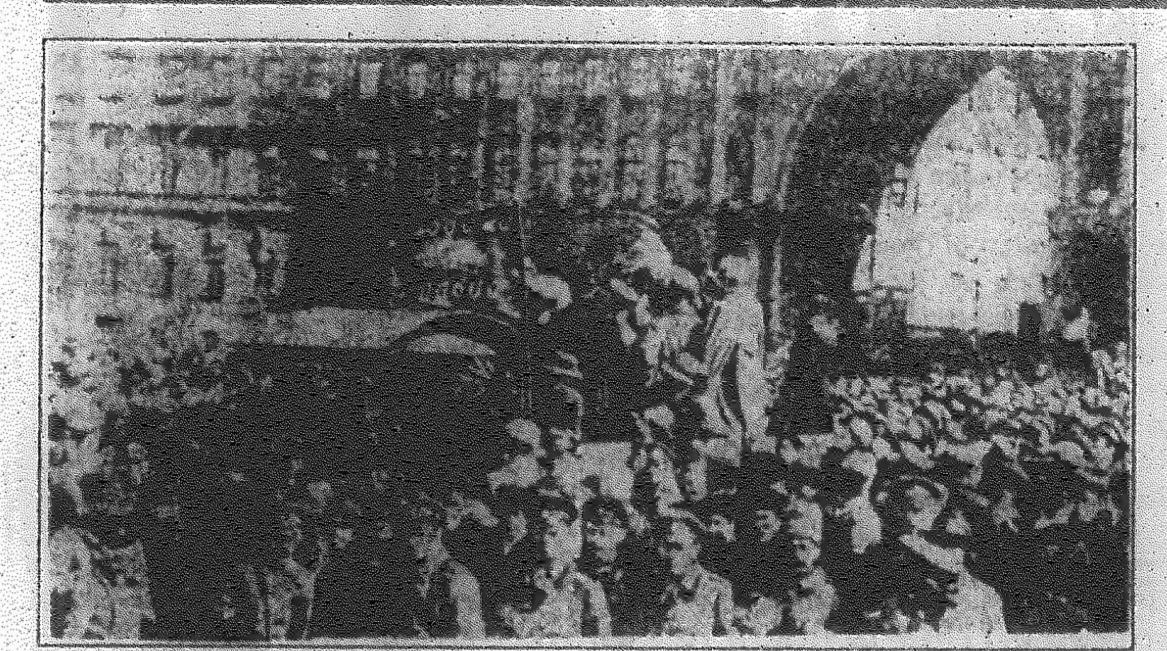
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and democracy widehed, the nature and the role of the social institutions (such as the Soviets, the party and mass organisations) which had previously given substannce to popular power and socialist democracy, were steadily eroded.

B. Elected bodies and mass organisations:

The steady erosion of the powers and representative character of elected institutions led to the alienation of a considerable portion of society from political life. The electorate had no effective right to choose its representatives. Gone were the days when the party had to engage in a political contest to win a majority in the Soviets. The registative organs did not, in any case, have genuine control over legislation; by their nature they could only act as subterstamps for decisions which had already been taken by party structures. The executive and judicial organs were, for all practical purposes, under the direct control of the party bureaucracy, in practice the majority of the people had very few levers with which to determine the course of economic or social life.

Democracy in the mass organisations was also more formal than real. The enormous membership figures told us very little about the extent to which the the individual trade unionist, youth or woman was able to participate to the control or direction of their respective organisations. At the end of day these organisations were turned into transmission, belts for decisiogs taken elsewhere and the individual members were little more than cogs of the vasi bureaucratic machine.

The trade union movement became an adjunct of the state and party. Workers had no meaningful role in determining the composition of the top least above distributions. In substance, answerable to the party apparatus. For all practical purposes, the right to strike did not exist. The extremely thin dividing line between management and the trade union collective on the factory floor detracted from the real autonomy of trade unions. Apart from certain welfare functions, they tended, more and more, to act like Western style production councils, but without the advantage of having to

answer for their role to an independent trade union under the democratic control of its membership.

Much of the above applied to the women's and youth organisations. In stead of being guided by the aspirations and interests of their constituencies, they were turned into support bases for the engoing dictates of the state and party apparatus.

C. The party

In the immediate aftermath of the October revolution, the Bolshevik party shared power with other political parties and social tendencies, including the Mensheviks and a section of

the left Social Revolutionaries. In the elections for the constituent assembly in 1918, the Bolsheviks received less than a third of the popular vote.

There may be moments in the life of a revolution which justify a postponement of full democratic processes. And we do not address the question of whether the Bolsheviks were justified in taking a monopoly of state power during the extraordinary period of both internal and external assault on the gains of the revolution. Suffice it to say that the single-party state and the guiding and leading role of the party subsequently became permanent features of socialist rule and were entrenched in the constitutions of most socialist states. Henceforth the parties were "vanguards" by law and not necessarily by virtue of social endorsement.

This was accompanied by negative transformations within the party itself. Under the guise of 'democratic centralism,' inner-party democracy was almost completely sufficiated by centralism. All effective power was concentrated in the hands of a Political Bureau or, in some cases, a single, all powerful personality. The control of this maderation by the party as a whole was purely formal, in most cases the composition of the highest organ, the congress which finalised policy and elected leadership, was manipulated from the top.

The Central Committee (elected by variations of a list system emanating from the top) had only the most fenuous in substance in the Political Bureau. Within this latter body a charge of leaders resembled a palace coup rather than democratic process, invariably the changes were later unanimously endorsed.

The invigorating impact of the contest of ideas in Management of the way and as despection the basic party unit was there to explain, defend, exhort and support policies in whose formation they rarely participated. The concept of consensus effectively stifled dissent and promoted the completely cheatural appearance of unanimity on everything. Fundamental differences were either suppressed or silenced by the self-imposed discipline of so galled democratic contrassin. In these conditions the democratic development of party policy became a virtual impossibility.

D. The single-party state

Hegel coined the profound aphorism that truth is usually born as a hereby and dies as a superstition. With no real right to dissent by citizens or even by the mass of the party membership, truth became more and more inhibited by deadening dogma; a sort of catechism took the place of creative thought. And, within the confines of a single-party state, the alternative to active conformism was either silence or the risk of punishment as "an enemy of the people."

Is this suppression of the right to dissent inherent in the single-barty state? Gorbachev recently made the point that: 'Developing the independent activities of the masses and prompting democratisation of all spheres of life under a one-

party system is a noble but very difficult mission for the party. And a great deal will depend on how we deal with it."

Corbachev's thought has special relevance to many parts of our own continent where the one-party system abounds it straddles both capitalist and socialist-oriented countries and in most of them it is

used to prevent, among other things, the democratic organisation of the working people either politically or in trade unions.

This is not to say that all one-party states in our continent have in fact turned out to be authoritarian; indeed some of them are headed by the most humane leaders who passionately believe in democratic processes. Nor can we dismiss the role they have played in preventing tribal, ethnic and regional fragmentation, combating externally-inspired banditry, and correcting some of the grave distortions inherited from the colonial period.

In relation to the socialist perspective, it is sometimes forgotten that the concept of the single-party state is nowhere to be found in classical Marxist theory. And we have had sufficient experience of one-party rule in various parts of the world to perhaps conclude that the 'mission' to promote real democracy under a one-party system is not just difficult but, in the long run, impossible.

Sur, in any case, where a single-party state is in place and there is not even democracy and accountability within the party and accountability within the whole of society. And at different points in time this is what happened in most socialist states.

The resulting sense of political alienation of the great majority of the paople was not the only negative feature of existing socialism. Of equal importance vias the failure to overcome the sense of economic elienation inherited from the capitalist past.

Socialist economic alenation

The concept of alemation expressed the objective transformation of the activity of man and of its results into an independent force, dominating him and inimical to him...*
Alemation has its origins in class-dominated society based

on private property. Under capitalism, in the course of the production process, the worker himself "always produces objective wealth, in the form of capital, an alien power that dominates and exploits him."

Thus, the exploited classes objectively create and recreate conditions of their own domination and exploitation. Consciousness of this fuels the class struggle against capitalist relations of production.

The aim of communism is to achieve the complete mastery and control over social forces which humanity itself has generated but which, under capitalism, have become objectified as alien power which is seen to stand above society and exercises mastery over it. Communism, accord-

ing to Marx, involves the creation of a society in which socialised humanity, the associated producers, regulate their interchange with nature rationally, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by some blind power.

The relevance of all this for

our discussion is that only genuine socialist relations of production can begin the process which will lead to the de-alienation of society as a whole and generate the formation of a new "socialist person." The process of de-alienation—whose completion must await the stage of communism—cannot be advanced by education and ideology alone, conditions must be created which lead progressively to real perticipation and control by each individual (as part of "socialist humanity") over social life in all its aspects.

The destruction of the political and economic power of capital are merely first steps in the direction of de-alienation. The transfer of legal ownership of productive property from private capital to the state does not, on its own, create fully socialist relations of production, nor does it always significantly change the work-life of the producer. The power to control the producers' work-life and to dispose of the products of labour is now in the hands of a "committee" rather than a board of directors. And if the "committee" separates itself from the producers by a bureaucratic wall without democratic accountability, its role is perceived no differently from that of the board of directors, it remains a force over which the producer has no real control and which (despite the absence of economic exploitation of the capitalist variety) dominates him as an alien power.

State property has to be transformed into social property. This involves reorganising social life as whole so that the producers, at least as a collective, have a real say not only in the production of social wealth but also in its disposal in the words of Gorbachev, what is required is 'not only formal but also real socialisation and the real turning of the working people into the masters of all socialised production."

De-alienation requires that the separation between social wealth creation and social wealth appropriation and distribution is ended and society as a whole is in control of

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all three processes. A degree of self-management (at the level of Individual enterprises) is only one ingredient in the process of de-alienation; conditions must be created making possible full popular control over "all society's institutions of power, not just as a "constitutional right" but as a reality.

Allenation in existing socialism

The unavoidable inheritance from the past and the most serious distortions of socialist norms in most of the socialist countries combined to perpetuate alienation, albeit in a new form. Private ownership of the main means of production was replaced by state ownership. Private capital as an alien power no longer dominated or exploited the producer. But without real socialisation, the key condition for de-alienation continued to be absent:

The immediate producers were given very little real control or participation in economic life beyond their own personal physical and/or mental exertions. In general, the over-centralised and commandist economies of the socialist world helped to entrench a form of socialist alienation." At the purely economic level this form of alienation often turned out to be the worst of both worlds.

Under capitalism economic compulsion sanctified by the rule of capital (threatened unemployment, etc.) plays an important role in providing the "incentive" for rising productivity despite alienation by workers from the products of their labour. Capitalist economic levers based on the sanctity of private property are, at the end of the day, not over concerned with the problems of alienation and more easily provide the incentive (in relation to the workers) that "he who does not work, neither shall he eat."

Under socialism guaranteed employment and the amount of remuneration did not always depend upon quality, productivity or efficiency, opening the way to parasitism at the point of production. Reward based on the socialist maxim of to each according to his contribution can obviously play a part in increasing productivity. But for socialist society as a whole to really come into own requires an incentive based on the producer's real participation in the mechanisms of social control over the products of his/her labour; a feeling that the means of production and its products are his or hers as part of society. This incentive was too often absent and stood in the way of the process of de-alienation.

Episodes of direct compulsion against producers, such as the forced collectivisation of the early 1930s and the extensive use of convict labour as a direct state and party exercise, made things worse.

Like all forms of primitive accumulation, these episodes created a most profound sense of alienation whose negative consequences are still being feit. Pure exhortation and political 'mobilisation' did not, in the long run, prevent the onset of stagnation. Alienation, albeit in a different form, continued and inhibited the full potential of socialist economic advance.

There were, of course, other negative factors which require more extensive examination than is possible here. These include policies based on what has been called the 'big bang theory of socialism' which ignored the historical fact that many of the ingredients of social systems which succeed one another—and this includes the change from capitalism to socialism—cannot be separated by a Chinese wall.

The economy of a country the day after the workers take over is exactly the same what it was the day before, and it cannot be transformed merely by proclamation. The neglect of this truism resulted, now and then, in a primitive egalitarianism which reached lunatic proportions under the Pol Pot regime, the absence of cost-accounting, a dismissive attitude to commodity production and the law of value during the transition period, the premature abandonment of any role for market forces, a doctrinaire approach to the question of collectivisation, etc.

But rectification of these areas alone would not establish the material and moral superiority of socialism as a way of life for humanity. Only the creation of real socialist relations of production will give birth to the socialist man and woman whose active participation is all this social processes will ensure that socialism reaches its full potential and moves towards a classless communist society. Under existing socialism, alienation has persisted because of a less than full control and participation by the people in these processes.

In short, the way forward is through thorough-going democratic socialism; a way which can only be charted by a party which wins its support through democratic persuasion and ideological contest and not, as has too often happened up to now, by a claim of right.



Issues of the and death

SEBYO by Carlos Humberto Linang, October 1990

In more than 20 years, very few novels depicting the great struggle of the Filipino people for national democracy have been written. Sebyo by Carlos Humberto is one of these novels.

Published by UNANG (Movement for the Development of Revolutionary Literature and Art in the Countryside) in October 1990, the novel's story revolves around the main character, Sebyo, a lumpen proletariat (thief) who became a worker, a peasant, and finally a New People's Army Querilla.

Humberto used the lumper character to depict the oppressed social condition of the common people. Sebyo was still young when his parents died. Because of poverty, he and his brother. Cris, had to separate. Sebyo roamed the streets, sold newspapers and sweepstakes tickets, and later joined a group of thieves led by Mando. His brother became a dishwasher in an eatery, continued his study and, after a few chapters, was never mentioned again.

Ganglight, Sebyo changed his trade and became a Circus worker in a perya. There he seet a clown named Tony, who happened to be a member of a militarit labor federation called KASAMA (Federation of vokens Crosmizations). He started to enlighten Sebyo on political is seen such as capitalism or the excitation of workers by capitalism.

Torrelated Setyo to join the ASAMA congress in Bagulo City Visio they were in Bagulo, the circus structure. The City of the Ci

Luckily, Tony had introduced Sebyo to a farmer from Isabela named Damian Masintal, or Menong, who invited Sebyo to visit their place during the fiesta. When Tony left, Sebyo went to Menong's place and there requested that he be permitted to stay. Sebyo helped tend Menong's farm, which is owned by a despotic landlord named Don Benito Perez. As he worked in the farm, Sebyo realized that the life of a peasant was as oppressed and difficult as that of a lumpen.

Menong was a leader of a peasant group in the area. Sebyo became a member of the group, which later launched a political action in the form of active support to the workers' strike in a tobacco factory owned by Mario Alvarez, a comprador and friend of Don Benito Perez. The strikers battled with the scabs hired by Alvarez. In addition, their picket was dispersed by the soldiers of General Raval, a friend of both Alvarez and Don Benito.

Later, Don Benito evicted the tenants of his land, including the family of Menong. Some farmers migrated to Cagayan, but others decided to go to the mountains and join the NPA. Among them were Menong, his sister Choding, Sebyo and Choding's sweetheart Pedring.

Inside the guerilla army, Sebyoreceived education, and training. A
few more characters came out, such
as the petty-bourgeois teacher
Menti, who helped further shape
Sebyo's mind and emotions. Later,
Sebyo became part of an armed
propaganda squad. In an encounter, Sebyo was captured and
beaten by the enemies, but was later
able to escape. He went back to his
unit and eventually became a squad
leader. The novel ended with a successful NPA raid on a communications facility of the enemy.

The novel's strength lies in depicting the everyday difficulties

suffered by the common people in a semicolonial—arid—semifeudal society. It is not lacking in standard issues: struggle between the rich and the poor (class struggle), feudalism, landlord- compradormilitary collaboration, worker and peasant alliance, and armed struggle as the only hope of the oppressed. The novel is faithful to the doctrines, and this is clearly shown in the details of discussions and arguments of the characters.

However, whether the issues or doctrines were presented deeply is a big question. The novel seemed to lack so many details or elements. For example, who was Tony, the worker who first indoctrinated Sebyo? How did a circus clown become a member of a militant federation of workers? Or, wasn't Menong too trusting and wasn't he taking too much security risk by taking Sabyo along as family member? These are only a few of so many problems in the novel. These should not have been problems. If the novel contained explanations or more details to show the motivations or deeper traits of the characters.

The novel also leaves the impression that the events are so fast and common that they are not very surprising anymore. They do not create the necessary dramatic and emotional impact that can help deepen the readers, understanding or grasp of the social issues being pertrayed. Markettis is due to the USO O SCOVO CO DE LA CARRESTA DEL CARRESTA DE LA CARRESTA DEL CARRESTA DE LA CARE depicting the plicitud Calabart speak elessessiumeen, wordt beisen and Red Ighter, Salyo moved in a very wide oreal and he measurements were so tast that he merely became rescrive to inclound in his life. Itstead of gaming important lassons that will be the source of crucial and ndependent decident.

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