

[From *Ang Bayan*, #1, January-February 1999]

Editorial

Impose revolutionary punishment on Imelda and other cohorts of the Marcos dictatorship



On the occasion of the 13th year anniversary of the overthrow of the fascist US-Marcos dictatorship, the Communist Party of the Philippines expresses the conviction of the revolutionary movement to mete out the appropriate punishment to Imelda Romualdez-Marcos and other principal leaders and cohorts of the late dictator Marcos.

Reversal of the victories of EDSA

Amid a most acute economic crisis and the widespread and intense suffering of the Filipino people, the Estrada government is restoring and providing favors to the biggest and most hated reactionaries who promoted and benefited from the Marcos dictatorship. Under the protection of their former errand boy and now president Estrada, they are now totally free to reclaim their stolen wealth and plunder the economy and national treasury. The interests and aspiration for justice of the Filipino people, especially the tens of thousands of martial law victims, have been outrightly set aside and trampled upon.

The Philippine reactionary political authority continuously refuses to acknowledge the US-Marcos dictatorship's crimes against humanity. Victims of the fascist regime are denied rightful

indemnification which is an essential aspect of their quest for justice. Instead, it is the dictator's co-conspirators who are given rights and complete freedom to reclaim their stolen wealth, grab political power and distort history.

The ruling system is unable and unwilling to satisfy the Filipino people's aspiration for justice. Despite the fact that the Aquino regime was established on the foundations of the antifascist and anti-Marcos movement, it was unable to decisively punish the leaders and cohorts of the fascist dictator. The subsequent Ramos reactionary regime not only failed to seriously prosecute the Marcoses and their co-conspirators, it even laid open the path to enable them to gradually return to power and privilege. Thus, 13 years after the overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship, Imelda Marcos, Eduardo 'Danding' Cojuangco Jr., Lucio Tan and other cronies enjoy ever growing power in Philippine politics and economy.

The election of Joseph Estrada as president of the reactionary government is the biggest victory of the Marcoses since 1986 in their struggle to return to power. Within a few months under the Estrada regime, the influence and power of the Marcoses and their cohorts have progressively expanded. The former officials of the dictator, now strategically positioned in the central machineries of state power, ensure that policies, orders and decisions are favorable to the Marcoses and their cronies.

Twenty-seven cases of graft against the Marcoses and their cronies filed by the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) have been dismissed by Aniano Desierto, Ombudsman of the Sandiganbayan and Marcos loyalist. Fourteen of these cases involve more than P69.5 billion. Desierto is poised to dismiss 34 more cases.

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The Supreme Court upheld these decisions of Desierto in December 1998 through Justices A.R. Melo, Vicente Mendoza, Antonio Martinez and Reynato Puno, all Marcos appointees. Melo, Mendoza and Puno, aside from Supreme Court Justice Santiago Kapunan and Fidel Purisima all served under Estelito Mendoza, Marcos' solicitor general and current general counsel of Imelda.

The graft case against Imelda Marcos concerning the Light Railway Transit project was also dismissed by the Supreme Court in October 1998. Prior to this, the Regional Trial Court of Quezon City dismissed the graft case against Imee Marcos concerning the defunct Kabataang Barangay. The Supreme Court also revoked in December 1998 the travel ban and arrest order against Danding Cojuangco. Filing of the P26.5 billion tax evasion case against Lucio Tan continues to be delayed, as it is being fixed by the BIR (Bureau of Internal Revenue) and DOJ (Department of Justice) to ensure Tan's acquittal.

Because of the favor and protection she has been receiving under the Estrada government, Imelda has had the audacity to openly assert and claim ownership of more than 200 big corporations worth more than P500 billion including San Miguel Corporation, Philippine

Airlines, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company, Fortune Tobacco, United Coconut Planters Bank, Allied Bank and Asia Brewery.

Estrada wishes to serve as coordinator and godfather of the big crooks of the Marcos dictatorship in return for a share of the reclaimed stolen wealth. This is not so easily done, however, because of the seething contradiction between the Marcoses and trusted cronies of the late dictator. On the one hand, Estrada is making sure of the Marcoses' acquittal in their criminal and civil cases in order to pave the way for their recovery of their stolen wealth. Yet, on the other hand, he allows the former Marcos cronies to claim ownership of the big corporations and property entrusted to them by the dictator, all of which are now being claimed by Imelda.

Imelda has already filed cases to recover from the ex-cronies 200 corporations which she claims to legitimately own. The basic question being resolved in these cases is who among the thieves have rightful claim over the loot they stole together.

Whatever form these contradictions take, however intense they may be and whichever side prevails, it is the interests of the Filipino people that will certainly be trampled upon.

The crimes of the Marcos dictatorship against the Filipino people

Corollary to the political and economic rehabilitation of Imelda Marcos and her cohorts is the gross distortion of historical facts. There is an effort to cover up and obliterate, in particular, the bloody criminal record and all-out plunder perpetrated by the Marcoses and their cronies during their rule.

In order to counter these distortions and lay out the concrete basis of the people's aspiration for justice and the form of punishment due the criminals, there is need to record the crimes of the US-Marcos dictatorship against the Filipino people. As preparation for the criminal case and litigation in a special people's court, following is an initial enumeration of the crimes for which Imelda Marcos et. al. must be held responsible:*

Thievery and plunder of the economy. The Marcos family made use of absolute state power to plunder the economy and accumulate wealth. It is estimated that the Marcos family and its cohorts amassed more than P1.1 trillion from the national wealth during the dictatorship. The largest portion of the stolen wealth was cornered by the Marcoses and stashed away in the form of dollar deposits abroad, prime real estate and buildings in the US and Japan, corporations, expensive jewelry and others.

The Philippine foreign debt rose from \$2 billion to \$26 billion, most of which the Marcos dictatorship used to fund large but unproductive infrastructure projects, enlarge and arm the reactionary army, bankroll big crony corporations and the Imeldific lavishness and opulent living of the ruling classes.

On the other hand, the US-Marcos dictatorship pushed the Filipino people deeper into the rut of poverty by imposing policies which strengthened imperialist control of the economy and intensified the exploitation of workers and peasants. It carried out a bogus land reform program

(PD 27) which was used to cover up the widespread land grabbing operations of the Marcoses, their cohorts and of the big foreign corporations. It implemented at the same time the Masagana 99 and "Green Revolution" program which dumped imported fertilizers, pesticides and agrichemicals into the local market and burdened the peasantry with loans even as they were forced to join bogus cooperatives and irrigation projects.

To the elation of the big foreign capitalists, Marcos also implemented the Investment Incentives Law, Export Incentives Law and other laws which reinforced the backward state of the Philippine economy and surrendered the country's national patrimony to imperialism.

Fascist violence and crimes against humanity. When Marcos declared martial law in 1972, he subsumed the entire fascist machinery of the military and police under his sole and absolute control. He appointed his most trusted men to the high command of the AFP to direct it in suppressing the people. He formed the Civilian Home Defense Force (CHDF) and other fanatical paramilitary groups and enlarged the AFP and police from 50,000 to 250,000. These served as the principal instruments in imposing dictatorial power.

Marcos employed his absolute power to impose decrees and laws which suppressed the people's rights. In pursuit of martial law, Marcos issued the Arrest, Search and Seizure Order (ASSO), the Preventive Detention Act (PDA) and the Presidential Commitment Order (PCO) which allowed warrantless searches and arrests; Presidential Decree (PD) 1866 (against the illegal possession of firearms in furtherance of rebellion); the Anti-subversion law; PD 772 (criminalization of squatting); the repressive Labor Code (PD 442) and the related PD 823 (strike ban), Batas Pambansa 130 (New Labor Relations Law) and PD 227 (allowing the ingress and egress of products during strikes).

Under the Marcos dictatorship, six million people were forcibly evacuated from their homes and sources of livelihood. This resulted from the relentless military operations in the countryside that were characterized by massacres, bombings, strafing, forced concentration of the population or hamletting, food and economic blockades, robbery and rape. More than 160,000 were killed, most of them peasants victimized by the state's counterrevolutionary war; hundreds of thousands were illegally arrested and detained; thousands were systematically subjected to torture; and more than 800 became desaparecidos or victims of involuntary disappearance (illegally abducted and presumed to have been summarily executed by the military).

Punish the Marcoses and their cohorts

The revolutionary movement wields the political authority to exact people's justice against the leaders and cohorts of the Marcos dictatorship. There is a standing order from the CPP Central Committee to all units of the New People's Army to arrest Imelda Romualdez Marcos and Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. as principal co-conspirators of the late dictator Marcos and for them to face trial in the people's court. This order also covers the arrest of Danding Cojuangco, Lucio Tan and other principal cohorts of the Marcos dictatorship.

The people's court will hold Imelda Marcos et. al. responsible for all their crimes against the Filipino people. Revolutionary punishment will be unreservedly carried out against them for crimes that they will be found guilty of.

Never will the crimes of the USMarcos dictatorship be erased from the Filipino people's memory. Never will the people's aspiration for justice and the conviction to punish the Marcoses and their principal cohorts ever wane.

Despite the victorious overthrow the fascist Marcos regime in 1986, this aspiration for justice is yet unrealized. The exploiting ruling classes have proven that they are not a wellspring of justice for the Filipino people. In fact, they who have the gall to exculpate and solicitously care for the Marcoses are those who now plunder and inflict violence on the oppressed masses.

History has proven that the EDSA revolution was not enough to achieve justice for the people victimized by the Marcos dictatorship. The neocolonial political system continues to breed corruption, bureaucratic thievery, economic plunder and fascist violence against the people.

This system and all the evil that goes with it can be ended only by waging armed revolutionary struggle. Only the people's war can decisively render justice to the people not only for the crimes of the US-Marcos dictatorship, but for all the crimes of the exploitative ruling classes.

[From: <http://www.philippinerevolution.net/cgi-bin/ab/text.pl?issue=199901-02;lang=eng;article=01>
(archived on Nov. 7, 2007)]