



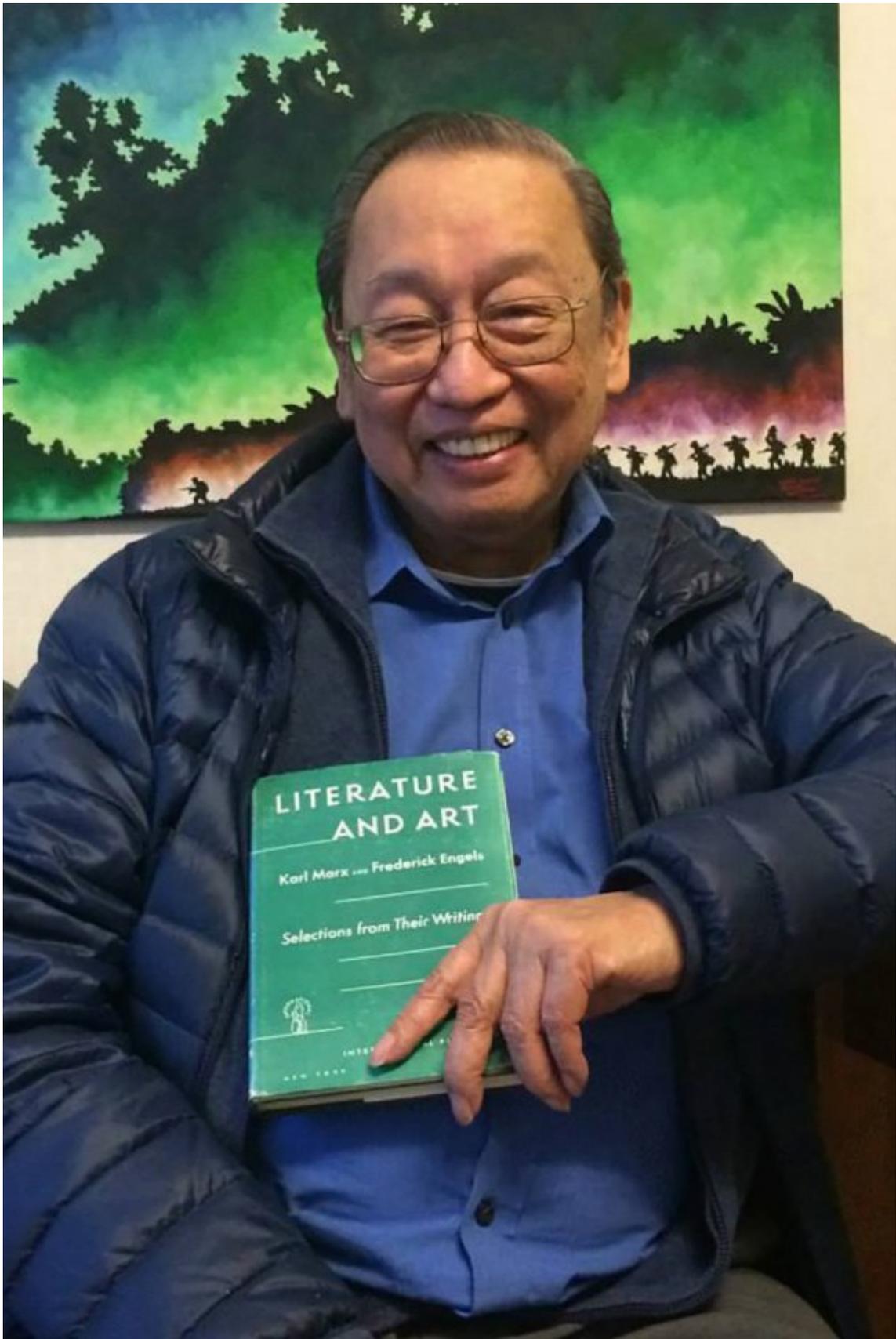
# On Culture, Art and Literature

**jose maria sison**

**sison  
reader  
series**

**1**

**julieta de lima**  
editor



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Jose Maria Sison

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***On Culture,  
Art and Literature  
Sison Reader Series***

**Book 1**

**Julieta de Lima, Editor**

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## Author's Preface

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I am thankful that the International Network for Philippine Studies is publishing a series of books compiled from my writings on various themes. These thematic selections facilitate the study of my works according to the reader's field of interest.

I am glad that the series starts with this book on culture, art and literature. It is in consonance with the fact that ] my early writings in the University of the Philippines were about the struggle for academic freedom of thought against the Anti-Subversion Law and the anticommunist witchhunts and also about my critical view of the preponderant nonrevolutionary creative writing, especially in poetry in contrast to the poems that I began to write.

The contents of this book are chronologically arranged in order to show the development of my thoughts and writings on culture, art and literature. But I have put in my article about my unforgettable years as an English major (written on June 25, 2010) ahead of all other articles in order to describe the circumstances under which I began to write essays on cultural and literary matters in the UP.

It presents the beginnings of my systematic and organized work as a cultural activist. In 1959, I was co-editor of a series of campus literary magazines, such as the *Fugitive Review*, *Cogent*, and *Diliman Observer*. I was also literary editor of the *Philippine Collegian* in the early 1960s.

My fellow students and I formed the Student Cultural Association of the University of the Philippines (SCAUP) to defend academic freedom, uphold the separation of church and state and fight the anti-communist witchhunt being waged by pro-imperialist reactionaries and religious bigots.

In the 1950s and 1960s, US imperialism and the local reactionary classes waged an anticommunist campaign against the patriotic and progressive forces in the Philippines. Such campaigns used religious bigotry to favor the secular interests of the oppressors and exploiters. Thus SCAUP had to fight not only US imperialists and the local exploiting classes but also religious obscurantism and bigotry .

It would only be in the late 1960s that patriotic and progressive groups would arise among the avowed Catholic intelligentsia, influenced by ecumenism and theology of liberation and paving the way for the formation of the Christians for National Liberation (CNL). The CNL promotes the participation of Christians in the people's struggle for national and social liberation.

Since my SCAUP days, I have always advocated that a new type of national democratic revolution be pursued in the economic, political and cultural fields to continue the unfinished revolution started by Andres Bonifacio but interrupted by the US imperialist war of conquest from 1899 onward.

In the University of the Philippines, the struggle in the intellectual and cultural field between the progressive and the reactionary forces became intense. The polarization was between those who opposed pro-imperialist and profeudal thinking and those who adhered to it. The few who studied and learned Marxism allied with the progressive liberals in order to defeat the ultrasectarians who sought to benefit from the Cold War and the reactionary side of the dominant church.

I give due credit to Jose Rizal for his outstanding role in the First Propaganda Movement. He excelled as a social critic by writing his novels and essays, denouncing the colonial and feudal order. He expressed the misery, suffering, needs, demands and aspirations of his people and motherland.

Although he was a reformist, his anticolonial and anticlerical writings and his martyrdom were certainly major contributions to the moral outrage and determination of the Filipino nation to wage revolutionary struggle against the Spanish colonial rule.

We in the SCAUP advocated the new democratic cultural revolution, which we alternatively called the Second Propaganda Movement in agreement with the anti-imperialist Senator Claro Mayo Recto who had earlier called for it in the early 1950s. We grasped the decisive importance of cultural, artistic and literary works in waging the Philippine revolution.

In my own time, we had the advantage of learning much from the historic struggles of the Filipino people even as we were confronted by US imperialism, which combined its monopoly capitalist power

with the ability to beguile the people with the glib language of the liberal democratic ideology .

We understood the need for a comprehensive program of socioeconomic, political and cultural changes to carry out the new democratic revolution in the Philippines. At the same time, we recognized the need for a world outlook and method of cognition and action to guide this program and its implementation.

Learning the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism is a necessary part of the cultural revolution and the entire process of new democratic revolution. It is an excellent idea that *On Culture, Art and Literature* is followed immediately by my book on philosophy in the thematic series of my books being published by the INPS. As a creative writer in poetry and the essay form and as a cultural activist based on the mass movement of the youth and the toiling masses of workers and peasants in the 1960s, I have always been motivated by the desire to help realize the new democratic revolution with the socialist perspective and therefore under the leadership of the working class and on the basis of the worker-peasant alliance.

There is no other way to achieve the national and social liberation of the Filipino people against US imperialism and the local exploiting classes of big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists that rule the semicolonial and semifeudal social system in the Philippines.

The new democratic cultural revolution, spelled out in the most articulate forms of propaganda and literary works, play a decisive role in the all-rounded struggle for revolutionary change in the socioeconomic and political order.

No social revolution can be successful without a cultural revolution to arouse the revolutionary spirit of the people and strengthen their will to fight and win victory in the entire revolutionary process. The need becomes ever more intense when the time comes for building socialism.

This is underscored by the rise of modern revisionism in the Soviet Union in 1956 and by the counteraction of Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China from 1966 onward. The abandonment of the proletarian revolutionary stand, viewpoint and method spells the defeat of socialism.

After my SCAUP days, many of us, university cultural activists proceeded to join the workers' movement and assist in the reemergence of the peasant movement from 1962 onward. We were much needed by the Lapiang Manggagawa (Workers' Party) and the Malayang Samahan ng mga Magsasaka (MASAKA) in the work of research and education, in preparing seminars and study materials.

In the process, I became the Lapiang Manggagawa Vice Chairperson for Education in 1964. Our work in the trade unions and peasant associations as well as with the student organizations allowed us to form the Kabataang Makabayan (KM) as a comprehensive youth organization in 1964.

The KM dedicated itself to being the training school of the youth for the people's democratic revolution and assistant of the working class as the leading class. And it always made it a point to stress its cultural role in enlightening and rallying the people to demand revolutionary change in the socioeconomic, political and cultural aspects of the outmoded unjust ruling system.

In carrying out the Second Propaganda Movement, the KM was able to develop and mobilize its nationwide organization for ensuring the organization and mobilization of the toiling masses of workers and peasants and the middle social strata nationwide and for building the anti-imperialist united front organization, Movement for the Advancement of Nationalism.

Most important of all, the KM was helpful in the reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines in 1968, as a result of the criticism and rectification of the ideological, political and organizational errors that resulted in the debilitation, isolation and nearly total disappearance of the old communist party.

The KM did not only help in the formation of the mass organizations of the proletariat and other working people, national minorities, youth, women and various types of professionals, but made it a point to develop writers, artists and other cultural workers in various patriotic and democratic classes, strata and mass organizations.

The KM strove to ensure that every political mass mobilization is at the same time a cultural event with revolutionary significance and consequences.

The KM Cultural Bureau developed a corps of creative writers, artists and cultural workers centrally and in its chapters. They encouraged other mass organizations to form their own cultural groups. They made sure that all mass actions also featured artistic and literary works in combination with the agitprop speakers.

They gave substance and direction to the making of the First Quarter Storm (FQS) of 1970 and further mass actions as upsurges of cultural revolution. They became a strong support for the formation of the national associations of creative writers, artists in the fine arts and cultural workers.

As the Marcos regime became more cruel and corrupt, and eventually imposed a 14-year fascist dictatorship on the Filipino people, the revolutionary forces of the people grew in strength and advanced. The revolutionary creative writers, artists and cultural workers played increasingly important role in inspiring the revolutionary movement which ultimately toppled the Marcos fascist dictatorship in 1986.

The new democratic revolution has proceeded to develop further even during the post-Marcos pseudodemocratic regimes up to the current tyrannical Duterte regime which is now in the process of reimposing an even more vicious and oppressive fascist dictatorship on the Filipino people.

*On Culture, Art and Literature* includes all my major writings within its general scope up to the present. The most comprehensive of these is my essay on revolutionary literature and art from the 1960s onward. My written addresses to various organizations on cultural work define the forces and adversaries and the tasks of cultural cadres and activists.

I hope that the readers can draw from this book the historical significance of the new democratic cultural revolution, its basic principles, program of action, methods of work, achievements and prospects in the Philippines that still needs to be finished.

Let us study and learn from the new democratic cultural revolution, appreciate its literary and artistic works and honor all the creative writers, artists and other cultural workers who have dedicated themselves to this revolution, especially those who have been martyred, imprisoned and tortured.

**Jose Maria Sison**  
**Utrecht, The Netherlands**

# Unforgettable Years as an English Major

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I had wished to take an undergraduate course in journalism as my preparation for going to the UP College of Law. Thus, I enrolled in the journalism and creative writing program of the English Department in June 1956. The following year the name of the program or the program itself seemed to have disappeared. I simply became an English major. When I first arrived in UP Diliman, I was impressed by the Oblation and by the panorama of green framing the awesomely tall structures of concrete. I thought that the campus was conducive to study and poetic flights as well as physical exercise from building to building. I liked the wide spaces of Diliman even as I had to spend much of the time in enclosures, like the classrooms and the basement cafeteria of the College of Liberal Arts or the little green house between the pavilions of the biological and physical sciences.

## ***The Struggle Between the Liberals and the Religio-Sectarians***

UP Diliman was interesting for being refreshingly different from the universities inserted in downtown Manila amidst the dusty cacophony of the motor traffic. It was even more interesting as a battleground of contending ideas. I came to the UP exactly when there was an intense struggle between the liberals and the religio-sectarians. Just before my enrollment as freshman, the pious UP president Dr. Vidal Tan inflamed the struggle by delivering a commencement address harping on Christian heritage as the core of academic responsibility.

The American Jesuit priest Fr. John Delaney, Catholic chaplain of the UP Diliman community had launched a crusade together with the UP Student Catholic Action and the faculty-based Iota Eta Sigma to abolish the fraternities for being incorrigibly violent, to rid the university of atheists and communists, to install a department of religion and to replace Philosophy 1 (Symbolic Logic) with Mathematics 0 (Deductive Reasoning) as a General Education requirement.

On August 26, 1956, 154 professors and four administrators joined up to form the Society for the Advancement of Academic

Freedom. They decried the recrudescence of religious intolerance and advocated the liberal principle of the separation of church and state. The logical positivist and agnostic Dr. Ricardo Pascual, head of the Philosophy Department, stood his ground against accusations that his department was promoting atheism and argued the need for inductive reasoning provided by symbolic logic.

The struggle between the liberals and the religio-sectarians raged in the campus electoral campaigns, in the student council, in the Philippine Collegian and in faculty meetings. The UPSCA was a powerhouse in campus politics as it sought to stigmatize the fraternities for hazing neophytes. In a counteroffensive to the religio-sectarians, the Philippine Collegian under the editorship of Jose Masakayan published a book on academic freedom.

The 1957 enactment of the Anti-Subversion Law, which had been pushed by the American Jesuit priest Arthur Weiss and the US embassy, tended to favor the religio-sectarians who Red-baited the liberals on the campus and who sniped at the Noli-Fili Law and Prof. Teodoro Agoncillo's Revolt of the Masses. But the Recto nationalist crusade had continued to impact on the most discerning UP faculty members and students since Recto delivered in 1951 his address against the mendicant foreign policy of the Philippine government. For inviting him to speak, Dr. Bienvenido Gonzalez was removed by President Elpidio Quirino and replaced by the Catholic Church recommendee Dr. Vidal Tan.

The liberals in the UP could never forget the interference of Quirino, especially because UP president Dr. Vidal Tan was a church militant ever inspiring to the religio-sectarians on the UP campus. However, he resigned in 1957 after losing support within the Board of Regents. When Dr. Vicente Sinco assumed the presidency in 1958, he suspended the UPSCA-dominated Student Council for acts violative of the separation of church and state and for fomenting religious strife. He appointed progressive professors to become heads of faculty departments. He accorded professorial tenure to progressive lecturers. He launched the Colloquium Series on Nationalism.

When I was a college freshman, I took for granted that the English Department had a large number of faculty members and

occupied a large space in front of the lobby of the College of Liberal Arts and that all students of whatever field of study had to take 12 units of English in four semesters. What impressed me most was the long line of nationally well-known writers, both conservative and progressive, who had belonged to the English Department as teachers or students. The writer alumni of the department included Carlos P. Romulo, Salvador Lopez and Jose Lansang.

The best known creative writers who were then in the department were the novelist N. V. M. Gonzalez, short story writers Francisco Arcellana and Rony V. Diaz, the poets Ricaredo Demetillo, Virginia Moreno and Alfonso Santos and the playwright Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero. The best known essayists who were either scholars or literary critics included Leopoldo Yabes, S. V. Epistola, Elmer Ordonez and students Epifanio San Juan, Petronilo Bn. Daroy and Benito Lim. The best known journalists who were professorial lecturers were the columnist I. P. Soliongco and editors Armando J. Malay and Hernando Abaya.

I had excellent teachers. I would consider as best those who, irrespective of their philosophical or political viewpoints, had effective teaching skills. They had a mastery of their subject. They were systematic in presentation and articulate. They encouraged critical thinking and discussion between mentor and students. They included Maria Santos my teacher in English grammar and composition and my teachers in higher English Dr. Alfredo Morales, Dolores Stephens Feria, Leopoldo Yabes, Concepcion Dadufalza, J. D. Constantino. Armando Malay, Alejandro Casambre, Nilda Joven, Ricaredo Demetillo and Francisco Arcellana.

The English Department was a base of the Iota Eta Sigma, the conservative Catholic faculty group. But there were also the teachers and students who belonged to the progressive liberal current. The department was a hotbed of controversies. I came to know about the contending groups of faculty members in the struggle between the liberals and the religio-sectarians. I also observed how the student Epifanio San Juan, who was well known for his exegesis of Jean Paul Sartre, got into trouble with the moral or prudish majority in the department, represented by J. D. Constantino, when he used a supposedly forbidden word in a poem.

### ***My Share of the Controversies***

I had my share of controversies. The first one arose when, as president of the UP Journalism Club, I invited Fr. Hilario Lim in early 1959 to speak on the issue of Filipinizing the foreign-controlled religious orders and academic institutions. He had just been expelled by the Jesuit order for his advocacy of Filipinization. The club adviser Prof. Amando Malay and I thought that it would be informative, enlightening and beneficial for the UP academic community to listen to Fr. Lim.

We were disappointed that upon the advice of Prof. Ricardo Pascual the Sinco administration refused to allow Fr. Lim to speak in the UP on the ground that he was a priest and that allowing him to speak would infringe on the principle of the separation of the church and state. I criticized and protested the ban in the campus and national media. Fr. Lim himself picketed Quezon Hall for several weeks. After he left the priesthood, Prof. Teodoro A. Agoncillo took him as a faculty member in the Department of History.

It was in 1958 that I matured as a progressive liberal, differentiated myself from the conservative and pro-imperialist kind of liberal and began to study Marxism systematically. I gained access to Marxist books in the cellar of the UP Main library and in the private libraries of some professors. From my readings and observation of social reality, I came eventually to the conclusion that the unfinished Philippine revolution could be resumed under the leadership of the working class and on the basis of the worker-peasant-intelligentsia alliance in order to achieve national liberation and democracy against US imperialism and the local exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords.

I finished in three years the four-year program for Bachelor of Arts in English by taking extra loads during regular terms and two summers. I was in a hurry to proceed to the College of Law until Julie de Lima and I decided to get married in 1959. In order to have a source of income to augment her salary as a librarian, I had to apply to the English Department for the NEC-AID scholarship grant and teaching fellowship, which required me to teach English and take the masteral course in English and Comparative Literature from 1959 to 1961.

Together with other graduate students as well as with undergraduate students in various colleges and departments, I formed the Student Cultural Association of the UP (SCAUP) and became its chairman in 1959. Our purpose was to confront the UP Student Catholic Action at the level of struggle between the liberal and the religio-sectarians, to have an alliance with the progressive liberals and to raise the level of struggle to one between the Left and the Right on a comprehensive range of social, economic, political and cultural issues, going beyond the issue of academic freedom and civil liberties.

We criticized and repudiated the official ideology of the state and the UP, which is the conservative and pro-imperialist type of liberalism that runs counter to the progressive liberalism and anti-colonialism of the old national democratic revolution of 1896. We were critical of the overwhelming influence of US cultural imperialism over Philippine society and the university. We appreciated Teodoro Agoncillo's writing of Philippine history from the viewpoint of the Filipino people and the scholarly works rediscovering and promoting the national democratic revolution. We heeded the call of Recto for a Second Propaganda Movement. We aimed to nurture the embryo of the revolutionary university within the counterrevolutionary university and to get rid of the cultural hegemony of US imperialism and the local reactionary classes.

We intended to raise the level of intellectual and political struggle within the UP by propagating among the students, faculty members and non-academic employees the line of national democratic revolution under the leadership of the working class and by undertaking group discussions in Marxism which had to be clandestine because of the Anti-Subversion Law. We gave priority to the recruitment of three distinct types of students: those who were leading other campus organizations, those who could write for the Philippine Collegian and those who had good marks and were thus qualified to run in campus elections.

The SCAUP went into action, arousing and mobilizing the students for mass protest in March 1961, when the congressional Committee on Anti-Filipino Activities (CAFA) subpoenaed UP professors for investigation regarding articles in UP publications

which the CAFA considered communist and in violation of the Anti-Subversion Law. The articles were the “Peasant War in the Philippines: A study of the causes of social unrest in the Philippines—an analysis of the Philippine political economy” in the *Philippine Social Science and Humanities Review* in 1958, the editorial “The Tower of Babel” in the 1960 *Philippinensian* and my feature article “Requiem for Lumumba” (under the pen name Andres Gregorio) in the March 1, 1961 issue of the *Philippine Collegian*.

The SCAUP cooperated with the Inter-Fraternity and Sorority Conference (IFSC), headed by the SCAUP member and English major Ferdinand Tinio, in convening the meeting of UP student leaders to discuss, decide and plan the protest rally against the CAFA anti-communist witch hunt and the Anti-Subversion Law. The student leaders signed the manifesto proposed by the SCAUP. The main slogan was the defense of academic freedom and civil liberties. The content of the articles at issue was anti-imperialist and anti-feudal. The *Philippine Collegian* supported the protest rally. It was held on March 14, 1961, with the participation of 5000 students. Hundreds of them succeeded in entering the Congress hall and literally scuttled the CAFA hearings.

Outraged by the anti-communist witch hunt and inspired by the success of the anti-CAFA rally, the *Philippine Collegian* published editorials, columns and feature articles that did not only defend academic freedom and civil liberties but also propagated the ideas of the national democratic movement against imperialism and feudalism. The consecutive editorships of Reynato Puno, Leonardo Quisumbing, Luis V. Teodoro, Jr., Ferdinand Tinio and Rene Navarro in the early 1960s promoted the national democratic line. Teodoro and Tinio were from the English Department.

The editors were either members or friends of the SCAUP and welcomed the contributions from progressive writers, including those from SCAUP. The *Philippine Collegian* became a highly important medium for expressing the ideas of the national democratic movement not only in the UP but also beyond. Petronilo Bn. Daroy and I initiated and edited a series of little magazines to spread patriotic and progressive views on major issues. The magazines included *Fugitive Review*, *Cogent* and *Diliman Observer* in 1960 and

1961. Each was short-lived for lack of funds to pay for printing. It would only be in 1963 that the Progressive Review could come out as a relatively stable publication, lasting up to 1968.

In one more controversy, I engaged the the English Department head Dr. Dionisia Rola in a debate on the pages of the Philippine Collegian regarding the content of the English subject called Great Thoughts. I criticized the fact that the study materials were predominantly texts of Catholic thinkers, like Cardinal Newman, G. K. Chesterton, Jacques Maritain, Hilaire Belloc and Etienne Gilson. I demanded that progressive writings, including those of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Mao and other Marxist thinkers and revolutionaries, should also be included in the syllabus for the subject.

As a result of the anti-CAFA rally, the English Department did not renew my teaching fellowship. The loss of my teaching fellowship at the English Department was a blessing in disguise for the national democratic movement. I gained time to do political work among students on the UP campus and on other campuses. Aroused by the anti-CAFA rally, students in other universities in downtown Manila became interested in the student movement in the UP. I initiated study circles among students in the Philippine College of Commerce, the University of the East, the Manuel L. Quezon University and the Lyceum University in 1961 and 1962. The SCAUP members and their fellow progressives in other universities joined the Kabataang Makabayan, which would play a key role in the nationwide spread of the new democratic movement.

### ***Debt of Gratitude to the English Department and the UP***

In my intellectual development, I owe an immeasurable debt of gratitude to my teachers in the English Department. They emphasized to me the importance of scientific outlook, scholarship, critical thinking and creativity. They encouraged me to read and study a wide range of creative works and literary criticism and to appreciate the writing style of various authors. I was comfortable with and inspired by teachers whose views were agreeable to me. But even in the case of teachers with whom I did not agree, I was challenged by their views and learned from the way they communicated these in writing and speech.

I had many teachers who assiduously followed the course outline and prodded the students to read beyond the textbook or even beyond the syllabus. I was always free to choose the topic for the research paper required in a subject. I experienced a wide range of teaching styles: polished and learned, dramatic and persuasive, outline-conscious but anecdotal and funny or simple and humdrum in the classroom but demanding in the assignment of homework or library work. I prefer not to mention the teachers concerned because I might be accused of stereotyping them. They had more complex characters and were not reducible to my impressions. Nevertheless, I was fortunate not to have any authoritarian teacher (the so-called terror type) because I avoided this like the plague.

Whatever I learned in terms of content and style from my teachers in the English Department served me well when I myself became a teacher and when I plunged further into activism for the national democratic movement. In both preoccupations, I found most useful and effective the research, writing and speaking skills that I developed as an English major. From so many term papers and speaking exercises, I learned to compose my thoughts, introducing, building up and letting them march to the conclusion. And, of course, the best that I learned from the poetry reading assignments was to hone my own skill at writing poetry.

As a teaching fellow in the English Department from 1959 to 1961, my first assignment was to teach English grammar and composition and intensive English which involved putting students with deficiencies in English through drills in grammar and pronunciation. I certainly learned to be diligent, patient and adept at using time because teaching intensive English was grueling and time consuming. This involved daily classroom exercises and frequent correction of written tests.

It took a lot of energy from me to the prejudice of my reading obligations in my masteral course, my extracurricular political and literary activities, and family responsibilities. To aggravate my situation, the UP vice president gave me speech writing assignments. Fortunately before I could rebel against my excessive work load, the head of the English department wrote a strongly worded memorandum to the UP vice president to advise him to stop

giving me additional work load. I learned quite early to work my way through the academic bureaucracy.

As regards my political activism, especially its critical and revolutionary content, I had drawn positive and negative lessons from my personal experience, social observations and education since childhood. But of course, it was while I was an undergraduate English major that I matured as a patriotic and progressive liberal and advanced further to being a Marxist revolutionary, due to extracurricular readings and activities and interactions with teachers and students in the English Department and other departments. All these were available to me within the latitude of what the English Department and the entire university proclaimed as liberal education.

I am always proud of having been an English major for the reasons that I have already presented. English has been a medium for my philosophical, political, artistic and emotional development. By force of circumstances, it is still the main official medium of university education and professional and bureaucrat transactions.

I find English as a medium of great service to the people on the domestic and international scale even as the national democratic movement, including me, has long demanded the adoption of the national language as the main medium and I have learned how to use it in writing and speech.

Everyone understands that the English language, even as it was imposed by US imperialism, can be used by the national democratic movement in the same way that Jose Rizal and others in the Second Propaganda Movement as well as the leaders of the old democratic revolution used Spanish against Spanish colonialism and US imperialism.

# Four Major Themes in Filipino Poetry in English: 1945-1960

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***Cogent Monthly*, Volume 1 Number 2, December 1960**

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LITERARY CHRONICLERS in the Philippines have ventured to claim that the golden period in Filipino poetry written in English was between the years 1925 and 1940 – when M. de Gracia Concepcion and Luis Dato initially, Aurelio Alvero and Cornelio Faigao medially, and R. Zulueta de Costa and Jose Garcia Villa finally sprung in azucena bloom, in moon-shadows, in molave night and in many voices. Golden ages usually decline, according to classical expectations. But what came was only the literary vacuum created by war. And now even, as every English Department all over the country complains of poor English students, from the time the war was over, Filipino poetry in English reaches more peaks unreached previously. If statistical and quantitative reference may be made here, it is only to prove that there has been greater poetic activity. Between the years 1945 and 1960, there has been a number of thirty single-author books of poetry. Quite a respectable number of respectable books! Anthologies of poetry number about fifteen. And there are several stimulant magazines publishing poems like *The Literary Apprentice*, *Diliman Review*, *Comment*, *Signature* – including commercial ones occasionally and very ephemeral ones erected by students of literature and wilting at the next count for lack of finance. If there has been greater poetic activity and there is a direct correspondence between number and quantity during these post-war years, it might be true, and very precise, to call them the diamond period so as to signify the solid progression from the auric lilt of the other fifteen-year period preceding the war. And it is interesting, indeed, to see the color of this diamond. Vermilion: deep blood seeped in. Razor-sharp gleams spring from its dark red depths. They are the gleams of truth, the gleams of anguish.

Prof. Leopoldo Y. Yabes used the word “sick” in describing the trend in Philippine literature a decade ago; he came up with this adjective in the course of a reminiscent note of his former student, Homero C. Veloso (who had committed suicide in 1949) and in special attention to the American-Japanese War. I prefer not to think that it was with the spirit of intent of a neoclassic humanist that he made this remark. I do not think that what he meant by “sick” is a weakness of writing, in such a manner as to make necessary the sequence of sick young man, death-seeking poems, suicide and strictly negative influence on society. To regard these poems, though death-seeking, as symptoms of a biographical end is, to deny Homero completely of his poetic strength by means of which he had written. It is best to regard them as moments of strength. It is hoped that Prof. Yabes meant, and has been understood in much the same way that Homero was a witness of war – in which case, there was a reasonable preconditioning on his social person as independent of his poetry – and that reasonably, very surely and absurdly he resigned from his world by self-destruction because he all alone as separate from his poetry, could not stand any longer a mediocre bourgeois surrounding. He might have been disappointed that his swirls of impasto were the slough of stupidity of his vegetative brethren. But he published his poems and they remain and are. It is the height of sanity to record one’s own madness. It was only a pity that he was not politician enough to call specific names on the war or to denounce in a pamphlet the politico-economic forces that produce senseless men or to compromise. But no matter what his social personality was, his poems remain as objective representation of the self-distorted and engulfed by the unessential or by the lack of the essential.

It is more often true that good poetry results from both the extremes of anguish and leisure. Poetry is intellectual and it is its comprehensibility, basically consisting of coherently representing life, that stabilizes into a more permanent worth its irrelevance and physhilo-gism. (It should be a constant that cognition is the generating grain of a superstructure of a feeling.) It is idle to attack certain poems as decadent or as signal of decadence. They are either understandable or not understandable or dull-witted. The

power of poetry lies in its ability to heighten negation or affirmation as such, to give a heightened expression of pain and pleasure; of absurdity and creativity.

Of course, the balance of these is still tension of ideas – a case of one of the other extreme.

The title of this essay seems to indicate a too ideational approach; that is to be admitted. But in order to preclude the notion that the manner of the ideas is going to be neglected in the course of discussion. I have gone as far as to dwell perhaps too much on the very known irrationalist Homero. However, for an introduction it has not been only because of this that his poetry has had to be dealt with, it has also been because some strain underlying present poetry is deepest and most malingering in the consciousness of his poems, simply in his own clearness:

The world: confused, dark, is a den  
Full of fighting and dying men.

The four themes to be discussed in this essay are: first, the war; second, the social and cultural background; third, love and sexuality; and fourth, God, immortality and nature. With these seeming categories, there has been no attempt at all to “pigeonhole” the Filipino poems in English from 1945 to 1960. Variations under each theme are shown although selectively in the pure basis of significance and these, of course, include their cognitive and emotive peculiarities. Passages are even quoted in high fidelity.

The factors of the first couple of this quartet of themes are apparently external; those of the second are internal. While the former tends to issue the overt statement, the latter tends to withhold the hidden one.

Poems on the war ushered in this diamond period. Poems of individual anguish like those of Homero Ch. Veloso accompanied them. They were written predominantly between 1945 and 1950. During the first couple of years following the liberation, they abounded in the commercial and campus magazines. There was only one reputable book published within the first third of this period which include a marked number of poems on the war; it is *Heart of*

*the Island* (1947), edited by Manuel Viray. The occurrence of the Korean War in 1950 could have occasioned another spate of poems with the war theme but instead this year marked Filipino disinclination from such a theme even as Filipinos were again dying for American interests in South Korea. Only Jorge Bacobo wrote patriotic verses on the bloody occasion. However, as late as 1952 and 1956, Ramon Echevarria's *Effigies* and Bienvenido Santos' *The Wonder Stag*, respectively, which contained a sizable number of high quality poems on the war appeared. It must be important to note at the outset that these poems on the war discussed here were predominantly written after the war. Memory oftentimes gives in to sobriety. So, it should not be surprising if in these poems there is not hot-headed patriotism which would have been nothing but a mix-up Filipino and American sentiments as in those wartime verses written by Carlos Bulosan for US information agencies. Above all, what precludes the concept of patriotism in the poems discussed here is the broad intellectuality possessed by the poets. A thick exception may be Poetaster Justo P. Tolentino's *Why I Came and Other Poems* published in 1954 in Kalibo. Among more serious poets, rather than give propagandistic signals, they give symbols of suffering, there are no hero-raising poems: Hufana, Santos, Ramos, Agcaoili, Zuñiga, Angeles, Echevarria, Joaquin and De Castro unanimously observe more the ruins of war rather than assert any victorious glory. All do not become heroes. But they differ in so many ways. They are the best and most capable poets on the war and of course, it should be fruitful to demonstrate the range of their thinking and feeling.

T.D. Agcaoili shows most clearly the cruelty of war with details of mutilation in a segment of "Wreaths or Coronets, Which?":

This is the Unknown Soldier:

Joe's limbs, Marco's toes, Carlos' Arm, Ben's slim figure;

Mike's head, the brains spilled

And unretrieved in the foxhole where he fell;

Steve's guts

Mat's biggest loss;

Fidel's torso:  
And this wet heap.  
Which is Antero's innards.

The rest of the poem expresses unfeeling acceptance and the knowledge of unfulfilment: "We look as one without,/ without gladness:/ as one dead./ The world has been too much for us/ till tiredness became dumbness./ And we stand solid but speechless,/ whole but unfulfilled,/ vaguely wondering,/ where others are rushing onward/ and what for..." Like Veloso, Agcaoili does not name names; he does not bother any more about the particularities that constitute the event as if he has already reached the conclusion or realized a principle accepted all along beforehand. But exceedingly unlike Veloso, he has not killed himself yet. He is now writing pieces more reconciliatory with the atmosphere.

In "Letter from a War Hero, Now Retried," Carlos B. Angles states:

"Your letter came and smelling of the pools  
Where tadpoles used to squirm against our feet.  
We'd chop them off their poles with infant tools  
Of murder, bleeding knives bled white,  
insisting we were gangsters in their flooded town."

He can remember the war only as he does a childhood game. This surgical positivity is worded in this manner. "Now all is quite done, dull, dead or forgiven." Here of course, there is the subsidence of something more terrible.

In the "The Mourners," "Invalid" and "Convalescent: Bed No. 312," there is the bitter note of anxiety, as in these respective groups of line:

They did not see him die—they  
Only felt, or smelled beginning earth.  
He knew that it was morning by the skies.  
But what annoyed him was not it all.  
What hid the night-drenched sun against his eye  
Having no eyes he felt the dark

Cut across his tortured face  
As sweep of endless space (...) the trembling  
mark too soon night.

The feeling of being reached and of not being able to reach out is extremely telling. Angeles points no blaming finger; he is only pained. Perhaps I can coldly tell him to wait for the period of adjustment to lapse.

In the intense fluency of Oscar de Zuñiga, in "The Cure," luminous and full images abound in the spaces of conscience.

The vicious murders of the world  
Are gangrened wounds in this flesh,  
And the grief in a dead man's eyes  
Has rendered this mouth speechless.  
The wonders this heart has felt  
In its quiet moments with God  
Are now ashes: gray floral wreaths  
Upon the breast of crimson sod.

Like those who choose to evade the historical forces that shaped World War II, Zuñiga ironically refers to "quiet moments with God" and he simply contains the horrors of past whose threat is still present,

And the mind, the conscience that sought raiments of peace  
Found nothing but strange shadows hanging from leafless trees.

The same irony of turning to or against one's self through a "scorched policy" present itself in Antonio Descallar's "Now Before the Conqueror." In order to deprive the enemy of its object of satisfaction, one has to destroy oneself,

to burn the images, topple the towers:  
the once bright temples of your mortality.

Maximo Ramos' "The Beach Two Years After" is a speech of silence, the eyes only seeing the scene. The obliterating violence

that strews limbs, toes, arms, brains and so on on Agcaoili's poem previously quoted are moved away. They can either only be the props of a bad poet or the unavoidable picture of horror whose credibility is far from the subtlety of the stage. Agcaoili stares at the bloody moment itself while Ramos

Now sees how land and sea and air  
Lie moveless in unspoken prayer.

Ramos is uncommitted and has no predilections as to the recurrence of another war. Nevertheless, in "Bataan Harvest," Amador T. Daguio tends to disbelieve the continuance of peace.

They are trying to make the peace – but on paper again, you must tell me something that will put virtue into their hearts.

Jorge Bocobo, the supreme versifier in the Archipelago, can make a better show even without referring to "virtue":

This intricate power politics  
Is ever displaying strange antics,  
All these impressive declarations  
By the world-wide United Nations  
Are, alas! purely chimerical,  
Impractical and fantastical.

Also, aside from their rhetorical commonplaces, in both political naivete or rightist denseness, Bocobo outdoes Daguio in the "38th Parallel." Here, Bocobo echoing AP dispatches and the USIS wardrum calls the Korea of Syngman Rhee the "Free Korea" for which Filipino soldiers die side by side again with G.I. soldiers who had more reason to be killed for the sake of their commercial supremacy.

While Daguio says, in "winning the war,"

I acclaim the rights that have been given me  
the torch is with us all,  
and english will express its meaning.

I speak then to you in the language you understand:  
over their bodies we must erect,  
carry through our fairy designs.

Bocobo declaims:

Be swift.  
Oh flaming Philippine sword  
I hear Freedom's ringing trumpet call  
To meet the brutal Communist horde,  
Free Korea is being held in thrall...

The implications contained in Fidel de Castro's "A Song Is A Song" and Maximo Ramos' "Carol – Not for Christmas" cancel out all the naive notions that Daguyo and Bocobo have as cited above, including Bulosan's wartime poetic service to America. Of course, it must be stressed that Daguyo is far being a poet than Bocobo; and it is in the spirit of seriousness that I observe that only the former can outreach the latter in making this statement with regard to the war dead:

their honor is only known to us  
and we honor them to make us feel good

But de Castro and Ramos outreach both of them. The first declares:

No songs are there for the hungry to sing except the perfidious litany:  
A petition for survival grimly set  
To the music of gunfire...

The second cries:

Hark, the herald angels roar!

Bow the latest bomb before!

Peace on earth, men of goodwill

Who collect the bloody bill.

Hail...

Profiteers,...

.....

Kings of carnage—here they are!

Here they have been with smiling faces, keeping camp for another while they put up the smile of a salesman!

Nick Joaquin offers the same economic insight in “Songs Between Wars”:

Bankrupt by the war,  
let us mine the honey  
that’s ored in udders that are this lad, that lass,  
because they are molten money  
and their bones are cash.

For good measure, he makes a fundamental denunciation of war: “War is the Minotaur/ and we are the waters/ bearing for him to devour/ the young and the beautiful,/ our sons and daughters—/ the tax we pay to the Bull.” The choice of word “Bull” is very precise and it implicates “profiteers.”

Alejandro G. Hufana, like Nick Joaquin, speaks sadly but comically of war – this double-blade effect results from the objectivity which they write. Also, both of them disfavor the killing of young boys. In “Guerrilla,” Hufana tells the little story of the bush that crawls to the middle of the road.

But just a bush the birds will decorate again,  
Hymning of their peace unmindful of men’s war,  
Even of men unmindful?—what are they?

All caution left to loneliness at his post  
The sentry walks up to the bush—he as a boy  
Loved birds....But gunsight in the bush traps his approach  
By hairline where the campaign ribbon glows—  
The spits its hate direct.

The image of the bush is clever and the irony it deals out is masterly. The boy is killed by the gun in the bush. He mistakes the camouflage for the real bush rooted in. Is it the nature of man to wage war and kill his kind? Does Hufana let the bush be the symbol of man's murderous nature? Or, does he regard the bush as separate from the killer within? And therefore, he would mean that the unrooted bush is the lame excuse for the violence. As much as it has been the lame excuse for the acquisitive pattern of living.

Ramon Echevarria, who is one of the most eloquent poets on the war, seems to have never been confronted with Hufana's irony and he acts it out down to absurdity, a denial of the human capacity to recreate himself for his own sake while he breathes. He has thirteen poems in a group dealing with the war to attest to this conjecture: "Prologue to Slaughter," "The Warriors," "The Comrades," "Interim," "The Captive," "The Victim," "Sonnet III," "The Enemy," "The Casualty," "Invocation," "The Corpse," "The Survivor," and "The Resurrection." (As evident from this enumeration, he follows a definite pattern and sequence.)

"Resurrection" is his resolute poem. He is very Christian, in fact, too Christian:

These memories that strike upon our breast  
Like thunderbeats of some infernal drum,  
These harsh revelations, shall become  
Vague tokens of a broken past.

These lines issue from a mind that fails or refuses to understand the human situation as self-containing. It fails to see the motives of catastrophe. It fails much more by calling up the powers to passivity as he announces before everything in his "Prologue to Slaughter" that "God.../ Makes death the door to more enduring life." Because

Echevarria looks forward to an immaterial goal and does not understand the large institutional factors that stir a war, the murderous submissiveness of the fighting men cannot even be pitied, although pity is solicited for them; he is only expressing indifference to a possible future withing men's own grasp.

In the "Victim," he states  
He shall be meek.  
He shall be swept away  
And in his last fantastic dole of space  
Shall pause to seek his ground, shall sway  
And shall serenely fall, with an embrace  
For the benign and hospitable clay.

In Echeverria's *Effigies* is contained one of the bulkier bunches of blood recall and martyr complex. However, Echevarria may be the best exponent on one side Homero Ch. Veloso is certainly the best on another side, with his tragic sense of transcendence. Both have the strength of language.

Bienvenido Santos, in *The Wounded Stag*, brings out a mixture of social consciousness and war pains, and he establishes a very sunny source of self-appraisal. He knows what to hold responsible for the wholesale murder and he offers more to the living in a positive way unlike Ramon Echevarria and Homero Ch. Veloso who only look up with their solipsism. Although he is very affirmative and positively warm, as he rouses the spirit to rise from the ruins of war, he can stay cold eyes on the culprit and look with poetic condemnation while it exists even as the war ended. In *Credo*, he laments

Oh, brilliant young men crying as you brood  
Over the wasted years, you are no longer young.  
Remember now when as a child you heard  
Your elders tell a bloody fairy tale  
With once upon a time.  
It was no fairy tale that in some forest dim  
Your father bit the earth with thousand other

You sought from history the answer to the plan  
Why loveless, why lost.  
Meanwhile across the lakes the bells rang in  
The peace, twice ringing, louder each time.  
In the market places men grew hoarse  
Selling other men's grains while hungry eye  
Scanned the price tags on the living,  
They knelt in churches, closing their eyes  
As in a dream garden lovely children picked flow  
Touching thorns and bleeding, growing up hard  
Without tears; even now on their knees,  
Between the Gloria and the sanctus, are scheming  
So in your manhood went to war  
And left your youth in some unhappy isle.

With more subtlety, Santos exposes the “paunchy generals, profiteers, land admirals, lords of alloy, powder czars—prophets all of deadlier wars” of Ramos “Carol—Not for Christmas.” He also exposes the religious pretense that has served to maintain an economic system whose survival is based on militarism and the threat of war. He knows that the economic basis of the slaughter that has transpired. It has been the fight for monopoly market and even the young men of the imperialist combatants themselves leave their youth in some unhappy isle.

Santos asks, in “Name the Terror”:

Name the terror with precision  
... the terror is as live  
As the memories we hide.

In “Pale Atom,” the irony put forward reminds one of the strong sanity of ban-the-bomb movements led by socialist elements all over the world. As apathy-breeding capitalism is so formidable in those parts on ferment, it is so inspiring to watch the enthusiasm of those germinal few. Santos' lines are very basic, however; and they do not support any political party in particular but only humanity.

O tell us now

The atom casts no shade on crowded pavements  
Where hysterical dancers grow desperate  
For time, youth without history forever  
Rehearsing wounds.

Bienvenido Santos has been able to absorb most completely the universal aspirations of man from the flux of history. Cruel as history is, especially in its hell-pit of war, Santos has been able to take an affirmative view of and hope for the permanent community of men. On top of all of these, he is conscious of the daily exactions of profiteers.

As it has been noted before, 1950 marked Filipino disinclination from the war theme. Surprise has also been expressed in the failure of the Korean War to stimulate it. Even as the continuing fear of the Bomb has not been able to do the same. How about the recent revolt of the masses, which reached its peak in 1949 and 1950? It should have aroused some poets to sing their songs. Poets on the campus, in press rooms and in advertising dens only sat smug in rightist convenience and waited for the falsification of social values by a hacker-hirer. They did not have to write signals; they only had to write symbols of the struggle and that should have been all. As artists, their responsibility would have ended in the symbol; but art—being understandable and necessarily related to life—would have been the starting point of inspired action, of action with feeling and motive power.

## Another comparison

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Published in *Cogent Monthly*, Volume II, Number 3, January 1961, devoted to the Poems of Homero Ch. Veloso

....

ONCE WAS HOMERO CH. Veloso compared to a young man who also died, my friend and fellow poet, Ernesto Manalo. Once more I compare him to another young man who also died, young, Christopher Caudwell, the Communist, was like him. He was unlike him, too.

Both knew and felt the keenest of life. They wrote poems and had intense ideas on poetry. But they were different. Homero was a mere witness of war. He was fragile. Christopher fought a war. He was strong. Homero killed himself with a slash on his foot. Christopher died on a hill-crest as he covered the retreat of comrades. They died differently. One died by the mark where Achilles was weak, the other a fighter for the people's freedom and became a martyr without wishing his own death.

It is on a statement made by one of them that I start comparing them. Christopher said,

"... there seems in all ages something simple and direct in poetry... good poetry can be written *by the comparatively immature*,... it has a more personal and emotional core... expresses the genetic instinctive part of the individual (underscoring mine)"

By necessity of his thinking, though, he added, "Feeling must be controlled by the social ego." With this other statement, he came closer to outside reality. But when he talked of poetry, he took very much for granted any effective presence of other men. In poetry, he felt more the community of cells in his body; but as a useful man, he acted and joined the International Brigade – died in Spain.

As much as Caudwell felt (and recognized) keenly the irrational, the excitingly vague, the emotional that springs from the innervation, Veloso did in his own way and he was known as Homero the

irrational who finally cut his vein. He had the poetical unconscious being – even as he was immature (surely he was still) and even as he was yet to develop a consciousness of society which he was never able to. It was through that unconscious being – the peculiarly sensitive strings within his organic frame – that he was able to achieve profound truths. But in arriving at profundity completely, he had to have lines of coherence undeniably. It would be utter nonsense to give up Homero for being incomprehensible or to insist that many would fail to understand him. As much as he had the unconscious, he had the conscious being. He had the social ego; or simply, he was the man in practice: he took three meals a day, ate them cooked, slept on a bed, and aside from so many other activities he wrote poems. He was able to proceed from one particular act to another for twenty-four years.

He had the social ego. Out of the affective flow of these poems, lines could be snatched and be presented as clear and cogent prose *in isolation*. For example:

The world: confused, dark is a den  
Full of fighting and dying men.

These lines are social; but as a *necessary* component of the whole poem, they are not effectual conceptualization. Their cogency is submerged under the affectual sheet of feeling rather than thought-emergent. Nevertheless, they are social. These are thoughtful lines. But still Homero killed himself even as he had shown the capability of writing down the flares of his nerves and their organization by his social ego. The writing of his poems was a strongly sane social practice. But why did he fall into a bridgeless contradiction – into an unsocial act of killing oneself?

The answer is that, unlike the consistent Caudwell, Homero had a false social consciousness. He imagined himself to be *declassé* and he had contempt for the institutions he was born into without thinking how they could be changed; accordingly to Josefa R. Lava in “These Disrupted Worlds” (a short note introductory to *Swirls of Impasto*), he repudiated the masses even as he was one of the latter and acted as a part of them.

As very much expected of him, he became and was a freak. Of course, this has no reference to his poetry itself. He acted out what was expected of him, to the end.

Unlike the Communist Caudwell, who died for freedom, Homero had to kill himself. When he finally felt and came to know, exactly at his breaking-point, the absence beyond his poetry (a social practice), there was no more use reaching for a handful in one's brief mortality. All along, he had the illusion of serving his pure supreme self – vaguely his unconscious being. But sadly he always had to come in contact with other people. That was the tragedy.

As much as I have called Christopher Caudwell a fighter for people's freedom, I may as well call Homero a tragic captive of solipsism. Christopher found the true basis of the irrational, the conscious being and social consciousness of the individual whereas Homero became obsessed with and had to suffer delusions of subjectivist existence. He got lost in the alternation of illusion and reality. To him, illusion was all.

# Revolt of the Students

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**R**eview of Dr. Chow Tse-tung's *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China*  
**A Book Review**  
Published in the *Philippine Collegian*, June 14, 1961

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THE MAY FOURTH MOVEMENT in China is inspiring to Filipino students because it demonstrates that the student youth can play a key role in the cultural revolution of an entire nation. Since the anti-CAFA demonstration of March 15, 1961, the most advanced Filipino students have regarded the revolt of the students in China as an exemplary event.

Dr. Chow Tse-tung's *The May Fourth Movement*, the latest of the Harvard East Asian Studies, is a brilliantly balanced analysis of a highly important event(?) in Chinese history. This objective is attained with meticulous documentation and without the least pussyfooting.

The success of this scholarly study has been achieved only because the author has been intensively aware that the massive literature so far poured on the subject offers more polemic than factual accounts. Determined to clear up the air, he is exceedingly careful in letting such factual accounts bear their own interpretative value. Nevertheless he never hesitates to put it in grain to develop his own pearl only after a fully authenticated accounting.

Although Dr. Chow succeeds in examining the subjects from different angles of concern, there evidently are two main lines that strongly characterized the May Fourth Movement in the final analysis. Or, speaking more plainly, the two major concepts of the movement, which are patriotism and democracy.

In the May 4, 1919 event when the students of Peking struck—what was their ostensible purpose is the expression of Shandong Resolution against nationalism. Freshly angered by the Big Powers like the United States, Great Britain and France at the Paris Peace Conference, these students—previously incensed by the Twenty-one

Demands and the Sino-Japanese Military Mutual Assistance Convention—concentrated their attention on the Japanese against a background of general dislike for the other holders of spheres of influence. Pro-Japanese officials like Ts'sao Ju-Lin, Chang Tsung-hsiang and Lu Tsung-wu bore the brunt of nationalist anger. They were accused of selling their country down the river.

Swept by patriotic passion and also irked by suppressive measures taken by the pro-foreign government against the striking students in Peking, students in several other cities of China spontaneously rose up in protest together with native merchants and workers. Student unions were established in all the major cities and through street speeches they successfully campaigned for the boycott of Japanese products being dumped into the market. They found in the organization their power to fight for their country.

The national consciousness or "Save China" sentiments then could be fostered only alongside liberalism. Traditional ethics and institutions which had made possible the subservience and humiliation of the country had to be questioned. The warlords and the bureaucrats, only wishing to aggrandize themselves, were using the doctrine of Orthodox Confucianism as mask. Desperately, they always tried to keep the people to their feudal conditions of ignorance and superstition. With the return of Chen Duxiu, Cai Yuanpei and Hu-Shih between 1915 and 1917 from their studies abroad, the liberal spirit in the intellectual field acquired new energies. They all held reform views. Ch'en founded the New Youth Magazine in spite of anti-subversion measures imposed by the government. Cai instituted reforms in the National University of Peking and encouraged the co-existence of diversity progressive men like Li Dazhao. Soon there was the New Tide Society of Peking students which spearheaded the May Fourth Movement in its second phase.

The intellectual movement generated by the "new intellectuals" had two main branches. First the use of the vernacular was advocated in place of the inutility of classics. Second, new thought-meaning science and democracy- was advocated. Taken together, these two delivered a punishing blow against feudalism and traditional thinking. The effect of the vernacular would be to easily

reach the people and science would provide them with clear methods of solving their problems.

The May 4th event the keystone or climax of this intellectual movement. The leaflets and other literature of the demonstration were in the vernacular and its leaders were the “new intellectuals”.

Coming back to the relationship patriotism and democracy, one can clearly see their fruitful union in the May 4th demonstration. It was no surprise that it impelled socialism. The impulsion was itself the fervor of the demonstrations that followed that of May 4th. And it was also influenced by the salvoes of the October Revolution in Russia. There was the staying element in Chinese patriotism that only had to be linked finally with another staying element in democracy. Patriotism was an element repellent of imperialism and liberalism had an element repellent of the despotism of the feudal warlords conniving with the imperialists.

It was no surprise at all that in December 1919 the Society for the Study of Socialism was established in Peking and similar study groups were set up in all the big cities of China like Shanghai, Canton and Hong Kong. In March 21, 1920, the Karakhan declaration was made public. By this declaration, the Soviet Union was giving back to China all the concessions that the Tsarist government had extorted from the Chinese people. Chinese social and political organizations enthusiastically welcomed the Soviet declaration and they also came to know that the declaration was issued even the preceding year and was blocked the the warlords and the imperialists holding on tightly to their spheres of influence.

Thus, socialism began to interest the Chinese intellectuals intensely. They soon discovered in it ways of strengthening themselves without putting their foot on the other countries. In May 1920, the Chinese Communist Party was organized in Shanghai by the stream of intellectuals like Che'en Tu-hsiu, Li Ta-chao, Shen ting-i and so on.

The May Fourth Movement is today considered by the Chinese Communists as the beginning of a popular movement that brought them to power. At present, May 4th is celebrated as Youth Day, whereas the Kuomintang – as it became too reactionary – rejected its significance long ago. Without a study of this movement, impelled

mostly by the students, one can never understand fully the Communists triumph in China.

Although the motives of the different participants in the May Fourth Movement demonstrations were generally patriotic and democratic, bourgeois-nationalist, liberal-democratic, nationalist-liberal, anarchist, or what-not, there were objective conditions to which some aspects of the demonstrations corresponded in an effectual manner. As observed before, there were fusing elements in the major intellectual forces that are patriotism and democracy. These fused elements hit the core of the social conditions of the Chinese people then.

## Too Bold a Line of Sectarian Direction

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**A**ugust 16, 1961

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DEAR DR. ROLA:

Thank you for reading my essay "Enemies of Intellectual Freedom," and most of all, for noting chiefly in your letter that it bears an allegation "of immediate concern" to you.

I understand quite well why such a special concern should exist on your part, and, speaking straight forwardly, I suppose that you have felt specifically referred to by the two brief paragraphs in my essay which you have aptly invited me to revisit.

In this connection, you tell me so well with your rhetorical questions some requirements of scholarship and you chide me so well for withholding identity – that of the Department, of the new course, and of the tactics involved in what I have hinted in my essay to be an anomalous venture. Indeed I admire your graciousness for writing me some generalities on scholarship. But certainly I am appalled why you have to use them to dignify your ideal-mindedness, and know your rashness in crying out "ineptness." I am constrained to make it explicit here for your understanding that even as I have reserved the giving of names in my essay, it does not mean that I would withhold them at the expense of further clarification and examination.

To satisfy the demand for the identity of the Department, the new course and the ladies, I give you proper nouns. The Department is that of English; the new course is English IV which is supposed to deal with "Great thoughts"; as to the ladies, I wonder if you do not consider yourself as one. This literal enumeration gives everybody else a better sense of time, place, people and object. This is making more clear and explicit the charitably insinuating character of our two brief paragraphs.

Dr. Rola, I agree with you that true scholarship demands that facts be accurate and verifiable. Now I cite to you two sets of proofs as the principal tests, the best source of information and the most

dependable documents which can indicate that the teachers of the English IV syllabus are ardent admirers of Newman, Gilson, G. K. Chesterton, Maritain, Dawson and the like, (a manner of speaking) and that can also indicate through the extremely bulky representative of several Thomists their “holy leanings.” The first proof is the English IV syllabus itself and the second is the collection of mimeographed readings correspondent to the syllabus. Through these documents, it can be seen that there is a main line and too bold a line of sectarian direction. The preponderance of readings all from one theological viewpoint and framework is preposterous and alarming considering the liberal and secular stand of the university.

Is it very anomalous why there should be one light and dominant interweaving of lengthy selections from Etienne Gilson, G. K. Chesterton, Cardinal Newman, Francois Mauriac and Jacques Maritain – all from one doctrinal frame. Selections from Cardinal Newman, for instance, take more time, affection and pages, than the total combination of diversified and non-medievalistic writers like Whitehead, Darwin, Huxley, Russell and H. G. Wells. In some cases of these latter writers, there is an extremely obvious determination to present less representative and paler selections which jibe up so well with the outpour of Cardinal Newman and company.

This disproportionality is to be bewailed and it certainly shows your “leanings.” In the light of this, one claim that as far as the whole university is concerned an “infiltration” by the medieval menace has occurred especially in connection with outer flagrant circumstances, and as far as the English Department and English IV students are concerned, actual indoctrination has been perpetrated, thanks to the high-handed craft of some syllabus makers.

It is saddening how more competent thinkers certainly more competent than Chesterton, Gilson and Newman himself who requires 116 pages to justify his worth in contrast with say, Russell’s begrudgingly 15 pages or Darwin’s 10 pages). Like Eddington, Einstein, Sigmund Freud, Oppenheimer, Schweitzer, John Dewey, Marx and other better possibles fail to make the mark in a course that is supposed to provide a true diversity of thinking in Science, Culture, the Humanities and the Aims of Education. Indeed, it is

saddening that the medieval mentality should be satisfied at the expense of greater and more consequential writers and thinkers.

Moreover, Dr. Rola may I ask you the following questions?

1. Is it true that only you and your vice-chairmen handpicked instructors that would handle English IV?

2. Is it true that so many of these handpicked instructors are known to have been discussing Whitehead as if he were one of the Apostles, and Camus and Darwin, as if they were the echoes of Cardinal Newman?

3. Is it true that the same instructors are known to have been twisting Santayana and R. Livingston to serve more narrow religious precepts?

4. Is it true that the above instructors in an amazing unity of purpose have not been taking up Russell even as the syllabus formally assigns some selections?

5. Is it true that the so-called “core groups” have an interesting arrangement and way of swallowing two or three liberals? You should be in a position to be aware of all the facts and questions above; at least, your table faced everybody else’s in the English Department – you were the chairman – weren’t you?

Coming to other serious considerations which directly pertain to those above, I wish to point out the viciousness of your attempt to ascribe to me “two grave insinuations... from (my) statement that the two ladies ‘succeeded in fixing the content of a new course according to their holy leanings’ (1) the lack of independent, critical thinking in the Department concerned, and (2) the ineffectuality of the academic bodies that pass judgment on such curricular matters.” My statement that the two ladies succeeded in fixing the content of a new course does not at all bear out such insinuations that you now impose on me. You should know better than to use the terms “Department” and “academic bodes” in this particular case. I am fully aware of facts that belie the distortion that you have made on my statement.

Let me take the first insinuation that you ascribe to me: “the lack of independent, critical thinking in the Department concerned.” I can never insinuate this because I know, as well as you know, the following facts:

(1) On a departmental level, there was NEVER a deliberation on the specific composition of English IV before and during the three terms of last semester that the syllabus was being used as instructional guide. The department, in the true sense of the word, never had a chance to use its independent and critical thinking. Other Department members may confirm this fact to parties other than the two of us. The syllabus was shamelessly railroaded.

(2) This gross act of omission was made more striking when a senior member of the Department was constrained to register protest through a memorandum dated January 23, 1963 over the focus on ideas that are medieval and mediocre while the dynamic and controversial have been avoided. Here was the critical and independent member of the Department, but the memorandum that had to be channeled through the Department head was refused official endorsement. This courageous professor was asking for a reconsideration of the aims, materials, teaching personnel and the methods for English IV.

Aside from the refusal to endorse the memorandum, 34 more pages were defiantly added to the Cardinal Newman deluge and the poor professor who wrote the memorandum was subjected to an exclusive tongue-lashing session before three inquisitors and a knight, and was shut out subsequently from a series of nightly caucuses and meetings on English IV in the Department.

Let me take also the second insinuation which you ascribe to me:

“the ineffectuality of the academic bodies that pass judgment on such curricular matters.” I do not insinuate this and the doctoral distortion is very evident. It is right here where your methodology-mongering and your ideals of scholarship should be self-applied and then where you might realize the breakdown of your position. (1) The Department, in the true sense of the word, never approved or was ever even aware of any representative committee assigned to draft the syllabus. (2) The Department was merely aware informally that there were only two bodies responsible for giving “birth” to the syllabus, the chairman’s and the vice-chairman’s. I desist at this point from explaining how academic or how effectual their bodies are. (3) Only the so-called “core-groups” (formed soon after the syllabus descended upon the Department) have discussed English

IV only as far as how they could teach it and “resolve science and religion.” Some members of the “core groups” may attest to this even as others were handpicked with all too special a confidence that two ladies can bestow.

All the facts presented above support strongly the claims made by the two brief paragraphs in my essay. These facts have all along been behind those two brief paragraphs. Too bad, the *Collegian* does not usually print articles with “scholarly” footnotes this long. It better appears now as a letter in response to your misgivings.

Before I forget, Dr. Rola, I must tell you that the sham reasoning which you have worked out for me with all your doctoral integrity and with all the *non sequiturs* of your own stacking has been immensely amusing and perhaps fairly entertaining to the distinguished officials to whom you sent copies of your logic. However, I am afraid for your sake that many UP students who have passed Philosophy I might read that lengthy part of your letter and enjoy themselves.

In closing, I wish to refer you to the last paragraph of your letter. Here, in this part you make the conclusive statement that I have committed “misuse of the tools of thought and expression” even before I could present to you the basis of subtlety and generalization and even as you are supposed to have the sense to wait for further clarification. This only betrays the self-seeking and defensive intent of your letter of sweet innocence and mock meekness. It only shows that you have so easily confused some specific knowledge and some specific guilt with the generality that was all too integral within my essay.

I must emphasize to you, Dr. Rola, that some cabalistic procedures in the English Department under your regime have only enhanced the sectarian brand on the English IV syllabus.

# A Letter to the “Left’ On the Socioeconomic and Cultural Aspects of Socialism

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**B**y Ramon Flores (pseudonym)  
Answer to the Letter of Francisco Nemenzo, Jr.  
dated September 12, 1960  
September 20, 1961

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DEAR MR. NEMENZO,

It is very gratifying that from far-flung Manchester, you have given an extensive consideration to my letter to the *Collegian* editor (Aug. 9<sup>th</sup>). In your letter addressed to me the other week (see the *Collegian*, September 12), you stress certain points which should stimulate fellow students here into further serious thinking regardless of the repressive atmosphere and the propaganda monopoly of a foreign power—protective of its economic, political and military interests—in our country.

Among the different contentions that you develop so admirably in your letter, I wish to discuss further that one on planning not being the whole difference between socialism and capitalism; being only the “means” and not the “end” of socialism. I agree with you on this point and I wish to “absolve” myself of the implication in your letter that planning would be enough to make for socialism to me. In my letter to the editor, I used the phrase “whole difference” only with regard to socialism and capitalism as economic systems. I used it in a consciously limited sense; and it should not necessarily mean limiting socialism to economic devices.

Permit me to quote from my letter two sentences in sequence with the purpose of showing the phrase in context: “It (distinction between *production for profit* and *planned production (for use)*) involves the whole difference between capitalism and socialism. It involved the prime question of which economic system can better

provide for public welfare and the true kind of democracy.” It can be seen here that I referred essentially to an economic system which is in a better position (minimal condition or objective foundation) to provide us public welfare and real democracy. Indeed, socialist intellectuals must not evade the political aspect of the problem—how to keep the planning machinery continually sensitive to the needs of the people. In the first place, it is the very cause of change.

I have chosen to discuss further your contention that “planning is not the whole difference between socialism and capitalism and it is only the ‘means’ and not the ‘end of socialism” not only because I would like to introduce the above bit of clarification but also because there are major considerations that seem to be somewhat persuasively dismissed by the expressed fear of the mechanistic exaggeration of economic devices or by your tirade against what you call “conventional Marxism.”

You seem to forego the distinction between expectations in a capitalist-dominated, underdeveloped country. Thus, for instance, you give several reasons for the tremendous upsurge of activity on the Left; but you fail to mention the largest fact and reason of all, the world-wide shudder that small nations like Cuba, Laos, south Vietnam, Chinese and the like make in fighting imperialism and the national interests of smaller countries.

The prejudice against emphasis on economic devices is to a very great extent unfair. The prejudice persists even with the understanding that the countries which have successfully turned socialist rose from a state of underdevelopment, from an almost bottom lack of the means of production and trained personnel and from the constant threat of foreign military intervention. This prejudice persists even as the people gain freedoms which they never had before in pro-western regimes. This prejudice had even successfully become an argument for keeping down the progressive hopes of peoples who are precisely the worst victims of capitalism. The pioneering pains of Russia are often abstracted as the example prohibitive of social change even in liberal intellectual circles. There is always the one-way focus on the social revolutionary suspended from the situation of contradiction and from the cause of contradiction.

Of course, higher expectations and less emphasis on economic devices should preoccupy the socialist intellectual on the homeground of capitalism itself. Simply because the only thing to be done, at the back of his mind, is to socialize the ownership of the existing means of production. But strangely no capitalist homeground has yet undergone socialist transformation where social democrats gain leadership. England, in spite of the fact that some of its industries have been nationalized, is still basically capitalist, imperialist and pseudo-socialistic.

The creative and individual energy should be the guardian angel of social change; the supra-economic factor that impels the people to clamor for change should have the carry-over value that can de-bureaucratize political leadership. But there must be the brave and determined leadership.

Despite your attempt to decry “conventional Marxism”, I refer to Marx here by using the very comments of our mutual friend Erich Fromm.

“Marx saw in the economic transformation of society... to socialism the decisive means for the liberation and emancipation of men, for a ‘true democracy’. While in his later writings the discussion of economics plays a greater role than that of man and his human needs, the economic sphere became at no point an end in itself, and never ceased to be a means for satisfying human needs. This particularly becomes clear in his discussion of what he calls ‘vulgar Communism,’ by which he means a Communism in which the exclusive emphasis is on the abolition of private property remains for it (vulgar Communism) the only purpose of life and existence; the quality of the work is not changed, but only extended to all human beings;... (This Communism by negating the personality of man throughout is only the consequent expression of private property which is, exactly, the negation of man. The vulgar communist is only the perfection of envy, and of the leveling process on the basis of an imagined minimum... How little this abolition of private property is a real appropriation (of human powers) is proven by the abstract negation of the whole world of education and civilization; the return to the unnatural simplicity of the poor man is not a step *beyond*

private property, but a stage which has not even arrived at private property.”

Mr. Nemenzo, there is a difference between the “vulgar Communist” and the “true Communist” as Marx himself marks out. At best, a socialist leadership should combine the economico-political and the cultural. And it would be gratifying if scholarship on the Left should continue to develop the counter-relation of the cultural to the economic. In socialist countries, we know how the people have been raised to the level of culture. Despite the cynical distortions made by preponderant books manufactured by America’s “think-factories” of culture being brought down to the level of the uncultured, we somehow get more reliable information from liberal as well as socialist publications. The concert halls, the ballet, lecture halls, theatres, museums, libraries and schools are thrown open to workers; old and new masterpieces are being patronized. Science; literature, music, the fine arts, etc. have developed diversely at so fast a rate. This is the actuality. There has to be a socialist cultural leadership that recognizes the qualitative autonomy of the arts and sciences above the economic fact.

Even as socialist scholarship has already well-established the objective economic foundation of a socialist society and it has been enhancing cultural and democratic development in countries that are already socialist, the break-through in countries under capitalist domination has still to be made with due emphasis on the economic factor—in knowing attention of the nasty economic mechanism of the ruling powers before, during and after their defeat on a national scale. There should be that leadership solidly knowing what economic structure to build; but at the same time, there should be extra-economic considerations that should not at all induce splinters and eventual gullibility to false chances dangled by the forces of reaction through factional pawns.

Nevertheless, the demon of dogmatism can be properly done away with as has been done by effective leaders in Asia. In our country, Mr. Nemenzo, if there should be socialism, it would have to develop and be realized on Philippine soil with Filipino hands and determination. There are different elements of our society that may have to be properly approached in their peculiar way and

consolidated to attain social change. That is a decisive problem which leadership may have to tackle. And the political imagination must play, work out and achieve the objective.

# Social and Cultural Themes in Philippine Poetry

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**N**ovember 15, 1961

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IT IS VERY RELEVANT to take note of the possibility of embodying militancy in a metaphorical presentation. While it may be said that the Filipino poet has always had enough social concern to image, he is still to be held responsible for not being able to go beyond the usual negative statement. It is an extremely sad fact that very often he appears cynical or simply palliative. While he has been very much able to tell the common pain, he has not been able to show how to proceed from it except to look heavenward or to hope for some kind of metamorphosis to the isolated individual. This is damnable pose, if it becomes static, while the masses struggle and need more direction. Metaphors of simple denial reach an optimum point beyond which their influence diminishes and turns into a mere salve making more men passive. It is the poet's responsibility to keep a progressive correspondence between the organic symbol and social reality. In his part of the world, he has to keep an eye on the ninety percent of humanity convulsed with hunger and abomination and he has to provide them with the down-to-earth depth of collective change. It is interesting to leave open the question of whether the Filipino poets have kept a good eye.

But just as there is economic encirclement of the national intellectual, there is a corresponding cultural one, which makes the first all too palatable. There is strong reason to believe now that the call made by critics like Salvador P. Lopez during the pre-war years has been merely an echoing of Stateside radicalism only to be replaced by another echoing after the war. The point being made here is that our intellectual reflexes are tightly but deftly conditioned to the patterns set by both the cultural as well as economic hold that Mother America has on the Philippines. It is indeed, funny and terrible at the same time that whereas the prewar conditions still

obtain among the masses at an extremely worsening rate. A great number of poets have adopted a solipsistic sophistication in which it is crudeness to pronounce one's social concern. Funnily and terribly, the Filipino seems to have identified himself with the Depression as his country completely improved his imperialist position and its business cycle has dipped only in a few breath-taking recessions and the Smith Act has done well its job.

However, whereas the Filipino economists and all other social scientist have been extremely overt with their capitalist and reformist training today, the poet - being more true to humanity - tends to commit the "sin" of omission rather than commit himself to the set-up of sweet thievery and plunder. A perusal of the poetry shows this tendency to avoid the social theme and the need for people's struggle. Does another Depression have to be imported, including foreign radicalism?

More poets are now preoccupied with love themes and sheer sexualization that sell to the Weekly Women's Magazine, or in clever and polished forms a la Baudelaire, a la Dylan Thomas, a la E. E. Cummings, etc. and are contributed to campus magazines like *Sand and Coral*, *The Literary Apprentice* and *The Varsitarian*. The Villa void has also come to town and has taken a good part in the circus. The romantic rage for personal immortality releases itself into the most confounding immortality themes.

While these fundamental themes that have to be taken up by poets with all their insights and technical preparation, they should not serve as escape valves; Filipino poets have to hack their way through the cultural membrane - which defines their bourgeois status and which imprisons them - through whose hazy transparency they have only watched comfortably the act of deception among the masses.

They have watched this act that makes what I call the diamond period strangely red with tubercular blood-vomit of moiling men and to a great extent with the syphilitic rashes of golden girls. They have said much about it in poetic distaste but they should have moved further. Of course, if there is any tone of deploring here, it results merely from a sense of statistics.

There are some Filipino poets whose masterly control of form and content have developed the social theme and have brought it to a sufficiently major position from which progression - the progressive correlation between organic symbol and social reality can be made. At the same time, that whereas the pre-war conditions still obtain among the masses at an extremely worsening rate a great number of poets have assumed a solipsistic sophistication in which it is "crudeness." Superbly, they have also used more individualistic elements as perfect seasoning.

In some instances, social consciousness is woven into more personal contexts. The latest notable examples come from Andres Cristobal Cruz' *Estero Poems*, a collection published last year. In his "Song to My Beloved," obviously a love song, he can be as blatant as to state:

The country must be saved,  
the issue must be fought.  
If we stop within ourselves, that is folly.  
That is SIN.

It must be evident that this particular poet in these lines recalls the idealist lie. "If we stop within ourselves, that is folly," he asserts. To make this statement in a love song and in a very graceful contextual manner is the height of wit. It is revolutionary. The way Cristobal Cruz weaves into a poem his social consciousness is superb, as his "6 Estero Poems."

Of course, in his "6 Clarius Poems," Cristobal Cruz' social consciousness is most cogent. Here, he is very political and he reflects history. His gestures reach out. Clarius is allusive of Don Claro M. Recto, the anti-imperialist. And Adrianious resembles very much a young intellectual in the contemporary scene who is honestly subversive. The "I" is supposed to be the plebeian. The issue involves "Some foreigners,/ They are handsome foreigners." The whole issue is "... the systems. The foreigner brought." Cristobal Cruz observes that they are here "Because the nation is doing them a lot of good./ For one thing,/ business. For another, defense." He declares at the very outset:

I shall go with the noble patrician Clarius.  
Because Clarius has already won.  
It is the proper time now  
To build the New Republic.  
And he adds:  
I choose the ways of the plaza.  
Moving in the crowd, meeting friends, asking how  
They would like their New Republic to be.

In connection with Adrianicus, he strikes up an exciting tension for revolutionaries themselves. It poses the present situation wherein there are Believers in a new social order, who place themselves within the existing political system purportedly for the chief idea of helping the Movement.

My friend Adrianicus, is now in the palace.  
He is an intellectual. This is the first time  
I hear of an intellectual being in a palace.  
But I think the ministers of the emperor  
Shall use Adrianicus, but Adrianicus  
Should also exploit the ministers.  
Otherwise, he has no business serving in the palace.  
I only wish  
Adrianicus could escape the luxuries and intrigues  
In such a marketplace as the palace.

I have already made the claim that Cristobal Cruz' poems' are reflective of current history. On the basis of this, I wish to make a historical sounding. And I adduce to the contemporary scene with his question. How much can be expected from a silent struggle? For his own answer, Cristobal Cruz says with certitude after the dolorous victory of the New Barbarians:

Looking for my friend  
Adrianicus, the intellectual  
I was not surprised that he had been conspired. Against.

So, implicitly he prefers him to be in the field rather than presume silent subversion. Deprecatingly, Cristobal Cruz can never be more clear than in the following lines which outline the defeat of the first socialist-led revolt in the Philippines.

The New Barbarians won with  
the overwhelmingly promise  
Of gold and power and great scheme  
Of future commerce with their abiding allies  
From the decadent west.  
In our tents in the dark  
suburbs, we measured ground Together, yet apart in  
individual faces of despair.  
And our silence was harder than the last of liquor  
We heard the barbarous trumpets long and loudly blaze.  
The noblest acceptance of our first and historic defeat.

In Cristobal Cruz' "6 Clarius Poems," although he is undoubtedly extending social significance and thereby reflective of the national situation, he keeps his artistic integrity by objectifying his emotion in symbols; the Philippine social reality is given a valid set of other names and parallel scenes.

R. Zulueta da Costa, Whitmanish in style, can be sarcastic of Philippine independence in "Fourth of July, 1946, Not for the Books." The author has been a poetry winner of Commonwealth awards; and he, as to be expected, has been equipped with populist sensibilities.

As crumbs to the beggar bones to the dog.  
Friends and in the social situation in a nutshell "the Knockers"  
follows  
countrymen a beautiful  
speeches  
Microphone the lump in  
the (Canddi (...?) angle the tear in the sun)  
"Our Forefathers Dreamed  
"The Altar of Bataan" <sniffle>  
"Our American Bell Friends" <teardrop>

“Bastion of Democracy” <sob>  
“Freedom loudspeakers”  
<cameras flashbulbs band burst>

While there is no hesitancy on the part of da Costa or Andres Cristobal Cruz in reflecting the political condition, Tita Lacamba-Ayala - who represents to a great extent a group of young Filipino poets— betrays an aristocratic flare even as she affirms sense of duty towards a “crowdedness of faces” in “Politique”—one among sunflower poems.

There is a sense of duty and a sense of break  
When facing the crowdedness of faces eager  
to be impressed by firm of chalk markings  
and firm judgments on the choice at hand

She puts that “sense break.” Why? But, anyhow, she admits that there is that sense of duty. There are Filipino poets like Gerson M. Mallillin who reveal

The first one knocked at the house with his heart

No one heeded him the door did not part.

And before he could thin of knocking with stone

The life from his tired heart had flown.The second knocked with pieces of gold,

The door opened promptly

And someone calledCome in, Friend, come in

And join us here-

We welcome all callers Anytime of the year.

The indictment of our cash relations is sweeping with such parabolization, The simplicity of style has its aptness.

Oscar D. Zuñiga, the sexualist virtuoso, can be highly allusive of our cash relations in several of his poems. However, most of the time he seems to lament only the further financial fall of the lady “fallen from grace” in a game which he himself accepts. Most of the time he feels simply sorry for the diminution of her earning capacity. In one poem, though, “The Hour Is Come,” he succeeds in making broader social and economic implications. One woman becomes incapable of competition and becomes bankrupt in the laissez faire of whoring; she is simply left out by everybody’s surge for one’s own self. The manner in which Zuñiga produces a sense of helpless languorous or the manner in which he conjoins the eternal principle of becoming old and the transitory factor of a peculiar kind of economic displacement is a good-mark of his artistic striving. The poem follows:

You should not be here watching  
The shadows of your withered self.  
The sun in your blood is gone.  
The winds in your feet are dead,  
And you must be tired wandering  
Through streets of jagged stones  
Along the tattered houses whose windows  
Reflect the dark face of hunger.  
Your hour of forgetfulness is come, dusk is heavy upon your eyelids,  
The feel of silence is in your flesh  
The night celebrates your death.  
Now a little girl shelters  
The memoir of a woman whose name is among the torn newspapers  
Of putrid garbage can.

In his own simple way, Serafin Lanot—who has recently come out with *Songs of the Brown Man*, a thick collection of poems unified by its dedication to the Filipino - is more projective and threatening. Though he may be communicative, I suppose that his subjects can be dealt more poetically than he has done. However, if he is to be upheld as a true poet, one has only to refer to the notations made on him by Nick Joaquin, Amador T. Daguio and Ed Uhl, among others.

But still, I am quoting from him in relation to the quotation from Mallillin and not at the same time asking whether he is only signalling through mere versification. Thus, I quote but with my sense of style on guard, he states:

We can be slaves,  
But then, we, too,  
have hearts—and also honor—  
and hearts, you know, don't tolerate  
cruel sense of humour.  
If we revolt 'tis not because  
we need some sort of medal;  
we only need the heart's desire  
and instincts for survival.

Here, the bourgeois concept of medal heroism is refuted and what is insisted upon is only that the slaves cannot at all put up with liberalistic hocus-pocus and old-time patriotism.

The amplitude of Lanot's verses covers the state of the masses, how they have been used. His sarcasm bears the maul and sway of the prose. He lays out the whole history of the Filipino *tao*. The most stinging irony and the most pressing one that he sees, of course, is the fact that when heroes are wanted, in a matter of hours, they are mobilized in extortionate mines and workshops and rice-fields and office. They become Christian martyrs through no choice of theirs and all for imperialist interests.

In a two-line sweep, Lanot sardonically writes that "they fought the Spaniards who fleeced us for love and religion, and the Yankees who grabbed us for goodwill and peace on earth." And above all this biting restatement of history, he asserts, "but surely we are people who can also dream of a country redeemed and free..."

Although much is called for in this poem in terms of stylization, the attempt to reflect the Filipino condition is certainly made with assumption that it is surely possible to have social content and form beautifully bound together as poetry has been supposed to belong to pure eccentricity, rather than to prophecy. Whereas Lanot's lines easily suffer because of a historicity that leads into platform rosiness,

Alejandro Hufana's poetry is rich with its cultural aspersions and the continuous piling up of feeling-imaging clauses. Although Hufana usually exasperates critics and readers alike with a disjointed syntax, a careful re-reading—as it has been advised by Leonard Casper to everybody—easily evinces the skill with which he makes his poetic statements. However, there are points where one is to suspect that the anti-grammatical transpositions are merely contrived rather than spontaneous: furthermore, they obstruct an immediate response which is vital to poetry.

# Social and Cultural Themes in Filipino Poetry

**J**anuary 5, 1962

....

ON THE WHOLE, HUFANA distinguishes himself as the ethnic poet of the Philippines. His volume of “a first decade,” *Sickle Season*, published in 1959, issues a native concern even as he displays a wide range of anthropological knowledge. This concern oftentimes becomes barbed with cynicism, but anyhow, there are the beautiful lines burrowing through rough ground. No Filipino poet has yet fully dealt with the Filipino cultural condition, in spite of Viray’s or Dominador Ilio’s expose of the somnambulist which is nothing but a shifted copy of the *Western Wasteland*, but Hufana has gone farthest among Filipino poets to define that condition. He shows definitely an indigenous vision, and this is to be deeply and broadly appreciated.

Out of so many poems that have come from his prolific capability, I shall make quotations from a long poem, “*Blood for Blood*.” This one is relatively unmarked by a syntactical disjointment; but it is not for this reason that special attention is paid on it. It is beautiful, yes, as a poem should be—in fact, I consider it as one of the best-mannered poems but the present interest here is in the statement—the social sense. Through Hufana’s cultural preoccupation, this sense signifies itself. Undoubtedly, he is the master of the incisive statement, submerged under the feeling-sheet when he is most poetical.

He describes the position of the artist in a profit-preoccupied society with its resultant profit-propped culture:

So he who can sweat out a verse more livingly than most,  
who gouge their crystal set of comedies  
And tragedies all like a costly ware  
Out of an inkwell, is fast exiled to  
Communion with himself where others do  
Their commerce and forget there’s anything  
Before their profit takes effect at large

Among the merchants doing patronage  
To perpetuate their public decencies  
The peddled culture, thus, is helped and bought  
More for its patronage than for its sake;  
The hawk-eyed hoarder staved the keen demand  
Until his market introductions sell  
Much over—tinkling on production costs—  
The very stuff so introduced.  
The blood  
Is branching to the meshes of the flesh  
Price-tagged so everybody can afford  
His slice according to his pocketbook.

The principle of symbiosis works out. As much as the artists is used for effective public relations, he gets paid and learns to set the proper price. So, the peddled culture thrives. It even goes to the blood, When the Stonehills, the Palancas, big corporations like Caltex, Shell, Meralco, etc. did not yet make doles and were four centuries far.

It happened once the versing of the sweat  
Of folks, and verse and sweating were at once  
In utter truth and blood for blood they flushed  
And never guilty of exploit.

Now, Hufana commits into a conscious statement, the fact that the Filipino artist has aligned himself with the direct exploiters. He is now guilty of exploitation. But there was a time of primitive innocence which Ricaredo Demetilio in *La via* also claimed and for which he was accused of mendacity unfairly. The simple point is that there have been changes of relations from tribal simplicity to the sooty confusion and obnoxious ritualism of the present when

“The pews are sterilized, the heretic  
Meets his confessor and they strike a fad  
Of walking to a distance, and more fad  
climbing mountains then proclaim all sins  
Expiated.”

Hufana denies again the idealist lie but at the same time he becomes positive in the only way he can be in the following:

There is no higher love that is not based

On earth so flagrant of epiphany

A seed in every cleft of Filipino dust

The Daedalus filament that beckons me.

I quarry round the hill for covering

Or for a rooted landmark as the peasant kneels To resurrection and to life that knit

The mosaic of the fields through which the sun In its compulsion to be rich flares up

And in inspired chrome-scale serrates wide

The utter view of things and their release

The appetite is unbegotten that

Does not cling to the eddy of the brawn

Of men and women happening despite

Vindictive soil that makes their route abrupt

At well-deep pagan graves eddy on

Till they break on the lease of work expiring.

The landlord and the clod are consequence

Of lurid need and lurid largesses seized

Right of the shabby effort of the land.

Hufana sees very clearly the basis of quality. Here is the Filipino sensibility in all its keenness. Here is a good grasp of objective reality, a grasp of soil without a metaphysical one of soul which has nothing at all to do with necessity.

Here is hit the feudal foothold of  
... the people strange who are  
More lovely than land and taller than  
Expected while they dance with stoutest ribs  
Around their genius who is but a boy  
That fancies angel-hood...

What a way "Gaybriel" graced the society pages! And the same symbiotic relationship exists before the grand altar of profit motive.

The social conscious poems of Manuel Viray and Bienvenido Santos show a refinement through an inly dramatic tension. There is the balance between the community of cells and that of men, or more precisely, there is a more personal relation between the environment and the speaker in the poem.

In "Private Speech," Viray asks;

Where's refuge from misery

From the tyrannic vision

Of half-starved children of aping and mimicry,

Of decadent vanity?

At this very juncture,

engagement is inevitable and

it is immediate as it is personal.

So if you light this street

I can't retreat.

There is the garbage can lost like youth; lost like truth. A cluster of dead blood, filaments of hair.

Crumbs of bread pieces; pieces of pencil lead.

The details are well-chosen, and he makes an exhortation through "the angered clay." "Coin a vivid mortal phrase/ Before Death readies her grace!"

Viray is capable of social revulsion, but he also seems to be too much of an idealist. There is the danger that he becomes a somnambulist by thinking too much within and of himself in "Night Balance Upon These Eyelids," he asks:

Night, rest upon these uneasy eyelids a little peace  
For I am tired having written the dangerous dreams  
Of the intelligent and the apostles of truth.

Is this conscious statement as "Coin a vivid, mortal phrase/ Before Death readies her grace"? This is withdrawal and funnily at the point of fruition. He has no strength at all as he concludes in "Night Balance Upon These Eyelid,"

O night, weigh your peaceful kiss upon these eyes. The shadows of discontent appears

I hear the crazy timber of cries

Bienvenido Santos is very much like Viray, they are gifted with artistic polish and both are extremely subject to Christian masochism. There is one distinction between them though; Santos has the wider capability of presenting the very concrete as a universal as in "Opening Night," "Dreams," "Footnote to Wisdom," "Sermons to the Free" and as many others. In this respect he has an edge over Viray. Obviously, he has the capability of transforming the particularity of Lanot's verses, for instance, into quick, flowing lines where socio-historical content fuses perfectly with images saturated

with the genotypical instincts of man. But, Santos stops at a point short of becoming a poet of the tradition of revolt. Most of the time, he is satisfied with being a circular Christian masochist.

In "Brotherhood," he concludes characteristically:

As I lay dying all voices had been stilled  
Within, without, oh, everywhere  
The gaping emptiness deepest in the heart  
The only promise, the promise in despair.  
In "Epilogue to Betrayal," the same epilogue occurs.  
Even now the betrayal goes on and on  
In summer gardens, where young April fill.  
Their graves with yesteryear's passion rehearsals  
For the final act of shame upon another hill.

The "pattern of sacrifice" must be filled accordingly. In "Sulucan," there is the same individual acceptance of what can be made out regardless of the insistent "winds." "Father makes reply: Look at the rosebud by my door." I wish more people can feel and make this articulation, especially those who live in cardboard boxes in places like Sulucan INSPITE... Bienvenido Santos is acceptably an isolated instance. R. Vinzons Asis also has a soulful indeterminateness in "Credenda." But, what is the silence of God if it is not acquiescence to the will of the hungry?

I remember God and I came asking bread,

became tearfully insistent, heard

only ringing hunger: no word, so I left, cursing

but the thunder of my words were as raindrops falling saw God in my hunger heard his voice ringing in my ears, saw the beauty of his silence.

Fidel de Castro may show more sense of human direction in "Rain Must Fall"

Rain must fall into a man's life

While Hunger and Faith grope in the dark  
For a voice, a blueprint  
and an answer.

It has to rain in Nanking sometimes

To spout the virtues back to life again.

Rain is cleansing. He has more direction in at least bringing us to  
the question: What is the rain or the raindrops? Words?

Bernardo Stuart asks the Lord in "Psalm I" to "remember"

... to give me words to endure the centuries  
Know that my enemies have fattened  
And line their pockets against me;

Here, poetry seems to become compensation. Compensation  
through poetry! It is indeed the eternal concession.

If there is any tone of derision here, its Compensation through  
poetry! It is indeed by the succeeding lines:

Deny me not the weapons that I may slay  
My first horde of ten thousands:

By the specification of "first horde of ten thousands" is there any  
degree of progression indicated? If so, words therefore are really  
"weapons" and in that sense they do not fall right back to the  
idealistic notion that it is enough for the poet to keep on feeding  
ambrosia to physiological introversion.

In the Philippines, nevertheless, reactionary forces are not  
wanting poems like "Itches in the Brain" and "Carnage in the North."  
These two poems were written by Greg Ra. Puruganan—  
understandably the son of a landlord and a winner of Roxas  
instituted Republic awards. They appeared in 1951 in the Literary  
Apprentice and they represent very well the quizzical position of the  
intelligentsia which has only prolonged the struggle, contributed to its  
temporary retreat and just about insured its nearing resurgence.

In these poems, the violence of the revolution is blamed relentlessly by the poet on the people rather than on the preconditioning principle and actualized process and forces of oppression and exploitation that sustain the existent social system. Both the cognitive and the affective fields of these poems bear out this statement very clearly. The revolution is denounced in the following terms: “itches in the brain,” “octopus-like,” “venomous,” “offers pieces of heaven,” “squeezes time-honoured concepts out of the punctured brain,” “courteous and thief,” “imaginary lines,” “clay defying the ultimate and final reason,” “the price is paid by souls,” and so on and so forth.

There are three further observations that can easily be made from these coupled poems. The first is that “the speaker is contemptuous of temporal cure” and by defensive references to “time-honoured concepts.” “God’s original handiwork,” “the ultimate and final reason,” “souls,” he contraposes the immaterial with material life. From this point, he thrusts the implication that in the face of a life after this in which rewards are made for pertinence the attempt of the hungry to seek better economic environment is negligible. The poet definitely has a feudal mentality. Instead of the divine right of the rich to rule that is being implicitly held up, including its religious crusades and witch-hunts. Time-honored concepts!

No benefit of a doubt can be given to Puruganan. Grant that what he is only against is violence as such—he is routed by this question: should you prefer more murderous but slow and quiet and passive starvation and ignorance, that multiply on themselves among the people to a revolution which takes the shortest time possible (because revolutionaries will always have no intention of making unnecessary sacrifices)? Of course, with this question, I am presupposing that Puruganan has been fully aware of the internal and world-scale factors that affect and constrict a semicolonial country like the Philippines. And decidedly, if Puruganan must write poems like these, he should know ways of dealing with these supposed factors that have been supposedly underlying the Philippine condition. He does not give any indication. The second observation picks up the political implications of the first. Puruganan

is definitely committed to the offensive of the Right. The following lines, for instance, show clearly their commitment:

The tempting call is clear as it contends for the hearts That it must win and later reduce to their final doom.

What is meant by “final doom” here? Of course, Puruganan is entitled to his view. But, the right kind of revolution is re-birth as it has already been successfully done in other countries.

The third observation has something to do with the terminal line, “If all are vanquished, where is then the victor.” In the last revolutionary movement in the Philippines which Puruganan tried to reflect, the comprador-landlord bourgeoisie and its foreign friends were certainly the “victor.” The troops they used and subjected to direct peril were yanked out from the ranks of the toiling masses. Money and US-made weapons did everything and ninety percent of the people were vanquished as the big compradors and landlords are faced with the illusion of peace and contentment. The third observation is that Puruganan’s confident last line is a boomerang. In the very first place, he has to face the logic of what he denounces.

# The Need for a Cultural Revolution

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**L**ecture to UP students at the UP Baguio College, Baguio City,  
sponsored by the UP Baguio Student Council  
September 30, 1966

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TO HAVE A SCIENTIFIC view of culture as we should, we need to understand first of all that culture is a superstructure that rests upon a material basis.

The ideas, institutions and all cultural patterns are dependent on the material mode of existence of a society. These change as all societies are subject to change. There is no permanent society or culture.

The cultural balance, pattern or synthesis that exists in a society at a given historical stage is nothing but the unity of opposites—the unity of opposite cultural forces. This unity is always a temporary balance subject to the dynamism of opposites.

The progressive force always outgrows and breaks the old framework which the reactionary force always tries to preserve.

Just as revolution is inevitable in politico-economic relations, revolution is inevitable in culture. A cultural revolution, as a matter of fact, is a necessary aspect of the politico-economic revolution.

In the history of mankind, it can easily be seen that even before the full development of the politico-economic power of an ascendant social class, a cultural revolution provides it with the thoughts and motives that serve as the effective guide to action and further action. A rising class achieves what we call its class consciousness before it actually establishes its own state power and replaces the old state power and its vestiges.

Long before the liberal revolution of Europe dealt the most effective political blows against feudal power in the 17th and 18th century, a cultural revolution took shape in the Renaissance which asserted secular thinking and freedom of thought. The men of the Renaissance questioned the clerical hegemony over culture and

learning and they clarified the ideals and values that were still to become truly dominant later when the unity of church and state was to be broken and replaced by the modern bourgeois state. The successful revolution of the bourgeoisie in the West was prepared and guided by a cultural revolution.

In our country, there had to be a propaganda movement—the assertion of new ideas and values—before there developed the actual beginnings of the Philippine revolution that fell under the class leadership of the *ilustrados* or the liberal bourgeoisie that surrounded Aguinaldo. In this Propaganda Movement, Dr. Jose Rizal made patriotic annotations on Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* with the view of demonstrating that before the coming of Spanish colonialism there was an indigenous culture that the *indios* could be proud of. This was clearly an anticolonial attempt not only to show up the racial arrogance of those who belittled our people but also to develop an awareness of a national culture.

Not to be carried away by chauvinism, Dr. Jose Rizal further presented the crisis of colonial culture in the Philippines and the prospects of a national culture in terms of the liberal ideas and values of Europe which he believed could be applied in the concrete experience of his people, in as much as there was already the emergence of the *ilustrados* like Crisostomo Ibarra and businessmen like Capitan Tiago.

The two novels, *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibustirismo*, and his essays, the "Indolence of the Filipinos" and "The Philippines A Century Hence," were written in furtherance of a national democratic cultural revolution. It was a revolution in the sense that it contraposed national culture to the colonial culture of which the friars were the chief defenders.

It was in this same spirit that the participants of the Propaganda Movement wrote as Marcelo H. del Pilar did, orated as Graciano Lopez Jaena did and painted as Juan Luna did.

All of them exposed the exploitation and brutalization of our people, thus paving the way for the clear call for separation from Spain by the Katipunan.

The Katipunan, which was a vigorously separatist movement and which served as the nucleus of a new national political community

carried forward into revolutionary action the aspiration for a national democratic culture, integrating democratic concepts with the indigenous conditions.

From Andres Bonifacio and Emilio Jacinto to Apolinario Mabini and Antonio Luna, the fire of cultural revolution rose higher and higher and shone with the political ideas that guided the Philippine Revolution of 1896. What came to be considered our national culture in the beginning was the integration of modern political ideas and indigenous conditions. The emergence of that national culture was essentially a political phenomenon; a national culture arose in direct and necessary opposition to the colonial and clerical culture which exploited and brutalized our people. An awareness of national culture spread among the Filipino people as fast as national sentiment and consciousness spread among them. The political awareness of a national community reintegrated the cultural patterns in the provinces, surpassing both the barangay culture of pre-Hispanic times and the feudal Christian culture under Spanish domination. The desire for a modern national democratic society opposed the feudal society developed by the conquistadores from the rule of the rajahs and the datus who submitted themselves as local puppets of the foreign dispensation.

Our people's aspiration for national democracy and for a modern culture of the same cast were, unfortunately, frustrated by the coming of US imperialism.

Taking advantage of the naivete and compromising character of our *ilustrado* or liberal bourgeois leaders, the US imperialists easily insinuated themselves into our country by pretending to give aid to our efforts to free our motherland. After all, did not the patriots of the Propaganda Movement praise so much the ideas of Jefferson, the American Declaration of Independence and the American struggle against British colonialism?

Alas, little was it realized that the American revolution, which we still remember today for its national democratic ideals, had taken the path of monopoly capitalist development and had become an imperialist power greedy for colonies in Asia and Latin America. Though it shouted loud its slogans of bringing democracy and Christianity to the Philippines, as required by a supposed divine

mandate received by President McKinley in his dream, it came to suppress the First Philippine Republic and the Malolos Constitution which embodied our people's national democratic aspirations.

As efficiently as the Spaniards were in suppressing the rich cultural achievements of our ancestors, the US imperialists went about their work of brutally suppressing any manifestation of patriotism by the Filipino people. Today, despite the current horror of the US imperialist war of aggression in Vietnam, many still have the illusion that the US imperialists are smart, subtle and smooth operators. But what is more cruel and crude than the mass murder of more than 1,5 million Filipinos to achieve US imperialist conquest of the Philippines, as was done in the Filipino-American War of 1899-1913?

What is more rude and inconsiderate than the all-out imperialist attempt during the first decade of this century to censor and suppress newspapers, drama, poetry, and other cultural efforts which manifested Filipino patriotism and national democratic aspirations? The mere display of the Philippine flag was enough ground for a Filipino to be punished for sedition.

Until today, many of our youth and elders are deprived of the memory of the national democratic struggle of our people. They have been made to forget. How is this possible even if there seems to be no more open coercion to prevent us from reviewing our national history?

The history of mankind shows that state power and any appearance of stability in any class society are sustained by the force of arms and other coercive means. However, in so far as forgetting one's history is concerned, control of the means of cultural development is necessary to get such a result. A state, such as one that is imperialist, does not only have the instruments for coercion but also the instruments for persuasion.

The first decisive step taken by the US government in order to develop its cultural and educational control over the Philippines was to impose the English language as the medium of instruction and as the official language. On the national scale, a foreign language became the first language in government and business. English merely replaced Spanish as the vehicle of the foreign power

dominating us. A foreign language may widen our cultural horizons, opening our eyes to those parts of the world expressed by that language. But if such a foreign language is forced on our people as has been the case with Spanish and English consecutively, it undermines and destroys the sense of national and social purpose that should be inculcated. Within our nation this foreign language divides the educated and wealthy from the masses. It is not only a measure of class discrimination but also one of national subjugation. It means a cultural constriction represented a long time ago by a Doña Victorina.

The two most significant results of the adoption of English as the first language in the practice of the educated are: first, learning and the professions are alienated from the masses and only serve the ruling class in the incessant class struggle; and second, the Filipino people are actually cut off from other peoples of the world and become victimized by imperialist propaganda.

Some persons might argue that the US government had really intended to spread English among the masses by establishing the public school system. They might, with extreme nostalgia, recall the coming of the Thomasites and what had developed from their work; they might recall how American teachers taught their language better than many Filipino English teachers do today. Foolishly, they are liable to find justification in this for the Peace Corps and other cultural devices meant to perpetuate US imperialist cultural influence among the people.

Those favoring the dominance of imperialist culture at the expense of our developing national culture are treading treasonous grounds. It is already well exposed by history that the public school system has served essentially as a brainwashing machine for cleansing the people's minds of their national democratic aspirations.

The colonially-tutored children came to know more about Washington and Lincoln than about Andres Bonifacio and Emilio Jacinto. The national democratic concepts of our national heroes were forgotten and only innocuous anecdotes were told about them. US imperialism became in their eyes the liberator and not the conqueror and oppressor of the people in fact.

US imperialism has found more use in our learning of English than we would have found for ourselves if we developed our own national language. We have about three generations of Filipinos spewed by the imperialist brainwashing machine. The general run of these Filipinos have an intellectual orientation, habits, and consumption attitudes subordinated to the so-called American way of life.

In self-criticism, let us accept how much so many of us have become acculturized to US imperialism. To propose that we embark on a genuine program of national industrialization and agrarian revolution is to become extremely “subversive.” We are eyed with suspicion by some just because we had dared to challenge the colonial character of the economy and, therefore, of the prevailing politics.

We must propose the Filipinization of schools, the press, radio and other media which are decisive in the conditioning of minds. Because in the hands of foreigners, these constitute direct foreign political power and intervention in our national affairs. These media of education and information immediately direct public opinion and, as it has been since the coming of US imperialism, they have served to keep permanent our cultural as well as our political bondage.

The cultural aggression of US imperialism in our country continues unabated. It takes various forms. The US Agency for International Development (USAID) has a decisive say on educational policies at the highest governmental level. Textbook production and procurement are directed by it in the Department of Education. Multifarious projects designed to execute directly US foreign cultural policy are actually supported by the counterpart peso fund which we provide. To a great extent, the Philippine government is actually subsidizing USIS and other forms of “clasped hands” propaganda.

In a strategic place like the University of the Philippines (UP), General Carlos P. Romulo continues to open the door to foreign grants from such foundations as Rockefeller Foundation and Ford Foundation. He has sought loans from foreign financing institutions like the World Bank for the purpose of his so-called five-year development program. The naive teacher, student and administrator

in my Alma Mater might think that Romulo is doing a fine job for us. But actually, he is doing a fine job for the cause of a cultural imperialism which is in the service of US monopoly capitalism.

We have examined closely the present proliferation of institutes and research projects in the UP which are meant only to accommodate the cultural agents of the US government, both American and Filipino. We have examined closely how much US imperialist advice and actual direction has affected and will affect the curricula and materials for study. We have to examine closely what is the whole idea behind the USD 6 million World Bank loan to the UP. How, for instance, is this related to present plans and operations of Esso fertilizer, International Harvester, United Fruit and others? We should inquire more critically into the increasing physical presence of US imperialist personnel in the UP. The US government plans every step it takes in consideration of the monopoly interests it must represent in its foreign policy. Unlike the Philippine government, the US government takes its action in the cultural field on the basis of national interests.

The pensionado mentality among our brighter students, teachers and professors have become so instilled that to promote their career it is a "must" for them to take one American scholarship grant or another. We must be critical of their mentality and we must pursue a new cultural revolution that should put in order the values of those who have fallen prey to this mentality. They go to the United States only to learn concepts and cases that do not apply on the concrete experience of our people. Their thinking is completely alienated from the masses and at most they become self-seeking careerists.

There is a worse kind of Filipino professional than the one who finally returns to his country. He is either a doctor, a nurse or some other professional who prefers to stay in the United States as a permanent resident or who tries to become an American citizen. This type of fellow is a subtle betrayer of his country and, in the most extreme cases, a loud-mouthed vilifier of the Filipino people. He goes to a foreign land for higher pay and that is all he is interested in. He does not realize how much social investment has been put into his public schooling from the elementary level and up, and he refuses to serve the people whose taxes have paid for his education.

We criticize him but we must as well condemn the government that allows him to desert and that fails to inspire him to work for the people.

While there is an apparent exodus of our bright young men and women to the United States and other lands under the direction of the US, the US government ironically sends the Peace Corps and encourages all sorts of projects (many of which are CIA-directed) intending to send young American men and women abroad. Whereas these young Americans are going to our countryside guided by the foreign policy of their government, our bright young men and women are abandoning the countryside to crowd each other out in the city or to take flight entirely from their country.

We refer to the Peace Corps here as a challenge to our youth. These agents of a foreign government are here to perpetuate their government's longstanding policies and cultural influence. They are agents of renewed US imperialist efforts to aggravate their cultural control; thus, they are described as the new Thomasites.

The presence of US imperialist agents of one sort or another in our countryside poses a threat to the development of a national democratic movement among us. Beyond their role of showing pictures of New York and Washington to impressionable children is the counter-insurgency rationale behind their organization.

While these sweet boys and girls in the Peace Corps are now immediately creating goodwill (which is a euphemism for political influence) and performing intelligence functions, these same sweet boys and girls can always come back with new orders from their government. This counterinsurgency aspect and psywar and intelligence value of the Peace Corps are what makes it subversive to the interest of a national democratic movement.

The Filipino youth should go to the countryside to learn from the people and to arouse them for the national democratic revolution.

# The Tasks of the Second Propaganda Movement

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**S**peech before the student body  
of St. Louis University, Baguio City, on October 12,  
1966;  
sponsored by the St. Louis University Student Council

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## ***The second propaganda movement***

IT WAS SENATOR CLARO Mayo Recto who first expressed the need for a second propaganda movement. It was his intention in 1960 to engage in an intensive and extensive anti-imperialist campaign tour after coming from his journey abroad. He was never able to do what he intended, but his anti-imperialists legacy remains with us.

This anti-imperialist legacy consists of the body of ideas and principles which he defined in the course of his nationalist crusade which he launched in the early 1950s. There was really no need for him to make any formal announcement that he and other patriots would embark on the Second Propaganda Movement. He started it the moment he began to relate the struggle of the present to the struggle of those who had successfully fought and isolated the first colonial tyranny, but who did not quite succeed in preventing the coming of a new foreign tyranny, US imperialism.

It is important to speak of the Second Propaganda Movement because we need to recall the unfinished tasks of the Philippine revolution. The Second Propaganda movement is required to arouse our nation anew to the struggle for the fulfillment of the national democratic tasks of the Philippine revolution.

This Second Propaganda Movement occurs as a resumption of the First Propaganda Movement and of the Philippine revolution even as conditions are far different from those obtaining during the time of the first nationalist propagandists. While odd problems have

been carried over to the present, new ones have also arisen to make our national struggle more difficult and more complicated.

The Second Propaganda Movement must therefore be more vigorous and resolute. It should be a propaganda movement of a new type, with a new class leadership and a new alignment of forces and with a new ideological and political orientation more advanced and more progressive, if we are to be on the tide of a higher stage of historical development and if we are to win the struggle against an enemy far stronger and far more clever than the old type of colonialism. In other words, the Second Propaganda Movement, are strategically weak as these are confronted with the anti-imperialist and antifeudal unity of the people under the leadership of the working class. Furthermore, on a world scale, US imperialism and feudalism are fast losing out before the surging forces of national democratic and socialist revolutions. The present tasks of the Second Propaganda Movement are huge but conditions for its success are also good.

The Second Propaganda Movement is first of all a political movement. It is an educational movement with political aims; for after all there is no type of education or culture that is detached from politics. It aims to replace the old type of education and culture while retaining only its progressive elements. It aims to prepare and guide the people for struggle against their foreign and feudal exploiters. It aims to effect results and it proceeds from a particular political standpoint. Class interests, whether of the exploited or of the exploiters, generate political ideas, values and attitudes that inspire and guide men to action.

### ***Learn from the masses***

In order to move the people to obtain certain results by their collective action, one must first determine their motives based on their concrete conditions and class interests. It is necessary for the Second Propaganda Movement to learn from the masses their conditions, problems, interests and aspirations before it dares teach them what to do. The Second Propaganda Movement is a mass movement in the most genuine sense with the mobilization and victory of the masses as the main objective.

The principle of learning from the masses should never be forgotten even if at this point we are able to take advantage of a fund of general knowledge gathered from past experience.

General or secondhand knowledge is important but what is always most important is the firsthand knowledge of the masses or learning from the masses because it assumes being constantly with them and merging with them. Learning from the masses and being with them will make our generalizations for action and formulation of solutions more correct and more dynamic. We become immediately one with the masses in their mobilization.

The Second Propaganda Movement should never be a campaign to command or dictate above the heads of the masses. One should not throw big theories and big slogans without first learning the concrete conditions and problems of the people. A knowledge of these from firsthand observation, from practice with the masses and from listening to the masses, would enable us to test and verify theories, enrich them and explain them to the people in the most concrete terms that they immediately understand.

We must advance from the behavior and performance of the First Propaganda Movement which unfolded as a movement of exiles in a foreign city while it was supposed to be concerned with Philippine conditions and problems. It will not do now for the *ilustrados* or the petty bourgeoisie to assume leadership by simply brandishing their formal or artificial classroom knowledge, or by impressing the people with their bourgeois education.

The agents of US imperialism, the landlords and religious sectarians themselves are trying to mingle with the masses, under the cover of the powerful mass media that they own and control and under the cover of many pretexts with the sole objective of confusing and deceiving the people.

The activists of the Second Propaganda Movement have no alternative but to take the mass line, merge with the masses and learn from the masses. It does not suffice now even to issue manifestos and proclamations from the cities and big towns where the lazy "leaders" are fond of sitting out a revolution. The success of the Second Propaganda Movement will be determined by those who choose to go to the masses and be with them.

In the Second Propaganda Movement, it is necessary to determine whose politics or ideology should lead the people.

There is a presumption on the part of the bourgeoisie and the landlords that only those with high formal schooling are fit to lead the people. They talk of the people disdainfully as illiterate and uneducated. By asserting that only those educated in the bourgeois or conservative fashion are fit to lead, they wish to entrap the masses within the system of exploitation.

The Second Propaganda Movement should reject this dangerous and undemocratic presumption as a lie intended to mislead the masses. We have given to the products of colonial and neocolonial education more than three centuries and many more decades to solve the problems of the masses. But what have they done? We have given the bright boys or the technocrats of the bourgeoisie and the landlord class more than enough time and yet they are either too dull or too dishonest to see the basic problems that are US imperialism and feudalism.

What a pity that educated elite does not see clearly the basic problems that are US imperialism and feudalism which the masses, with lesser formal education, can see and feel most acutely as they are the ones most adversely affected. The masses are in a position to perceive not only their own sufferings but also the benefits that accrue from revolutionary struggle against US imperialism and feudalism.

What the masses experience they can immediately grasp. They can also easily grasp the correct solutions based on the correct analysis of their problems. It is the self-satisfied statesmen, educated men and publicists of the bourgeoisie and the landlords who will consider such terms as imperialism and feudalism too high above their heads, not so much because they are dull but because they are dishonest and are afraid of exposing the negative character of the system that benefits them.

The national and social liberation of the masses will come only from the masses themselves. Only they themselves can understand their problems most profoundly. The activists of the Second Propaganda Movement can only generalize and formulate solutions from the experience of the masses.

### ***The scientific and democratic world outlook***

Reliance on the masses and rejection of bourgeois and egotistic education can be understood only if one has a scientific and democratic world outlook.

This scientific and democratic world outlook should be even more advanced than the liberal-democratic outlook that the First Propaganda Movement had as a matter of political posture. The proletarian world outlook is today the most scientific and democratic outlook. It is superior to the narrow viewpoint of the “enlightened” liberal bourgeoisie. It sees clearly the entire range of the opposing class forces operating in society today with their respective viewpoints. It comprehends their basic relations and contradictions and it so masters the situation as to be able to change it through revolutionary practice.

It recognizes the progressive force in any contradiction and at this stage of world history it recognizes the proletariat as the progressive class in the struggle between the US monopolists and the proletariat going on all over the world and in our country. It does not only recognize every progressive force but it takes sides as a matter of commitment. A man who has a scientific and proletarian outlook knows that no man or no small group of men can be detached or excluded from basic social struggles. Outside of one’s consciousness, this class struggle is objectively occurring; one can only side with the progressive or the reactionary force in the moment of crisis. To assume the posture of neutrality is actually to become an appendage of the stronger force. The class struggle is objectively going on in the Philippines but it has taken the form of a national struggle, with patriotic classes—the working class, peasantry, intelligentsia and the national bourgeoisie—aligned against the US imperialists, compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists. The working class is the leading class, with the peasantry as its most reliable ally, and it conducts its struggle against the US monopoly capitalists and the local comprador bourgeoisie, supported by the landlord class.

The Second Propaganda Movement should advance a modern scientific and democratic world outlook that rejects the religio-sectarian culture of feudal times, the decadent imperialist culture and

the egotistic petty bourgeois mentality. The schools as they are now in the Philippines are the purveyors of these that we must reject.

### ***Alienation in the present culture***

There has to be a complete overhaul of the entire educational system. But the initial necessary step to be taken is to advance a national democratic culture of a new type. This national democratic culture is a part of our political struggle to achieve national democracy.

Education must serve our national struggle to gain independence and self-reliance in every field of endeavor, whether political, economic, social, cultural, military and diplomatic.

As a whole, the present educational system in the Philippines is in the hands of forces inimical to the principles of national democracy. Its control is shared by the agents of an imperialist culture and those of a regressive feudal-sectarian culture.

Its an educational system which actually shields the ruling class and alienates the formally educated from the masses. It does not at all propagate a healthy scientific and democratic viewpoint; even the exceptional children of the poor who manage to acquire a high degree of education inevitably adopt the decadent and corrupt values of the ruling class and abandon the cause of national and social liberation. This kind of education is a device by which the betrayal of the masses by a few of its own children is assured.

In a period where the ruling class has stability of power, the educated middle class serves as the transmission belt of the ideas and values of the ruling class to the lower classes. Before it is won over or neutralized by the organized masses, the middle class functions as the instrument of the exploiting classes.

As clear manifestation of the alienation of our educational system from the cause of national democracy, it does not perform the function of teaching the students to merge with and mobilize the people for, say, national independence, land reform, national industrialization or any such urgent tasks.

The activists of the Second Propaganda Movement should patiently arouse and mobilize the masses, win over the intelligentsia and develop an alliance with the national bourgeoisie, on the basis of its self-interest, under the banner of national democracy.

### ***Filipinization of the educational system***

One immediate step that can be taken with regard to the present educational system is its Filipinization. This should be taken with the view of replacing foreign ownership, control and influence over the schools with that of Filipinos imbued with the spirit of national democracy.

Teachers educated in the old way should themselves be reeducated. The process of their education will accelerate as the political situation consistently develops in favor of the revolutionary masses.

The adoption of textbooks and other study materials that are Filipino-oriented and progressive should be used to counteract the hundreds of years of our colonial, imperialist and neocolonial mental subjugation. Filipino authors should struggle to replace the materials and textbooks now being used which are alienated from the conditions and problems of the masses.

The Filipino students and the people should be alerted to the foreign agencies and devices by which the colonial and feudal mentality is meant to be perpetuated. The imperialist and subversive character of the activities and influence of the AID, USIS, the Peace Corps, US scholarships and grants, the ALEC, IEDR, the research grants extended by US corporations, Asia Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Foundation and the Congress for Cultural Freedom should be thoroughly exposed. These agencies have been exposed before as imperialist agencies or as CIA fronts and conduits.

When your enemy makes you think the way he does, he becomes your friend superficially even if he takes advantage of your interests and exploits you. As Senator Recto said in a message addressed to the youth, a “brainwashed” generation followed the military defeat of the Philippine revolution. The result has been the abandonment of national democratic tasks.

As proof of the abandonment of the historical tasks of the nation and the betrayal of the Philippine revolution, it has been deemed “subversive” for the youth and the people now to recall the Philippine revolution and to strive for national democracy.

The Second Propaganda Movement should likewise be alert to the friar enemies of the First Propaganda Movement. They are now,

in collaboration with the imperialists, fast expanding their ownership and control of the educational establishments. The religious hypocrisy of a Padre Salvi and a Padre Damaso should not deceive the people again.

As we all believe in the freedom of religion, they are free to preach in their churches, but they should not oppose the struggle for national democracy and try to discredit us as heretics and filibusters by abusing the credibility that they have among their faithful. Religion should not be used as a cover for the people's enemies. Both the church and those striving for social change should avoid the conversion of a national and social struggle into a religious one. Otherwise, those who claim to be concerned with the spiritual welfare of their faithful will only be exposed as tools of those who want to perpetuate the political power of the exploiting classes. It is the prevalent imperialist culture and the decadent feudal values of the exploiting classes which create the monsters and demons of this society.

A scientific and democratic type of education should be fostered by all means and should not be run down by the expanding schools of foreign friars. The national democratic movement, that is, the Second Propaganda Movement, should demand that the clerical type of education not be allowed to prevail over a scientific and democratic type of education. Clerical schools have only become bastions of class discrimination, authoritarianism and antisecularism.

### ***National democratic scholarship***

Within and outside the schools, progressive scholars and researchers who consider themselves part of the Second Propaganda Movement should work assiduously for the replacement of those historical writings and social researches which unilaterally misrepresent the colonial and imperialist aggressors as great conscious benefactors of the Filipino people.

There should be an objective presentation of our historical development as a nation. The struggle of social opposites must be objectively presented with a clear appreciation of our national efforts and with the clear understanding that the revolutionary masses make history. Our colonial-minded and bourgeois historians and scientists have even gone to the extent of obscuring the most important

historical documents of the Philippine revolution in their attempt to play up their colonial heroes and their intellectual subservience.

The step taken by an increasing number of scholars in taking the Filipino orientation in the writing of Philippine history is a positive step which does credit to the national democratic efforts of our people.

The most progressive step to be taken by our Filipino scholars now is to present objectively the struggle of the nation and of the various patriotic classes in our society for democracy and progress.

### ***A national language and revolutionary arts and letters***

In language, literature and the arts, vigorous efforts should be exerted for these to serve the interests of the masses.

While we should preserve the culture of localities and minorities as part of our cultural heritage, we should develop a new and truly national culture by propagating and making use of a national language that is a cognate to all our local languages and can therefore, unlike English, be easily grasped by the masses everywhere. Vigorous steps must be taken to make Pilipino a language ascendant over English. The main reason for this is to have a medium for the rapid promotion of national democratic understanding among the people of the entire archipelago. The educated elite has made use of a foreign language as a language of conceit over the heads of the masses. The laws are still in Spanish and English; this is one sign of how alienated are the laws of the ruling class from the masses.

In literature and the arts, the process of raising aesthetic standards and popularization should go hand in hand. For the masses who constitute our biggest audience can appreciate our literature and art only if our writers and artists make use of the life and struggles of our masses as raw material. If we adopt this raw material, it can be given the form that our artistic talents are capable of making.

Our heroes and values must change if we are truly for revolutionary progress. The workers, peasants and revolutionary fighters should prevail in our representation of life. The content and themes of our literary and artistic efforts must shift from a pseudo-aristocratic and petty bourgeois concern over a narrow and limited

portion of our national reality. The task of our writers and artists now is to turn to the great drama of the struggle of the masses for national and social liberation. Those creative writers and artists who fail to use the life of more than 90% of our people for their raw material must be pretty narrow-minded. Or, they are too misled by or absorbed with getting travel grants and other concessions from the Rockefeller Foundation, the USIS and other imperialist institutions which have calculatedly planned to make our writers and artists flighty and escapist.

The petty bourgeois writer or artist should realize once and for all that there is no such thing as being *déclassé*, beyond classes, apolitical or detached from politics. An honest analysis of the work of the people who take this presumption will show their real objective partisanship on the side of the ruling classes which give them the crumbs and the plums. They are actually reactionary through and through, either praising the regressive values of the primitive or feudal life or presenting the helpless or the self-indulgent individual who is trapped by a system which he does not care to understand or which he deliberately mystifies.

Those who write for the proletariat or the masses and for their cause are regarded by the imperialist, feudal or petty bourgeois writer as being gross and utilitarian. But look at the works of our supposedly refined and arty writers or artists; the presentation of their egotistic obscure concerns actually represent a narrow-minded grossness and incapability to grasp the basic tensions of life. They are capable only of presenting a narrow part of reality, the alienation and psychology of the individual alienated from the more dynamic forces of society.

The Second Propaganda Movement should be pushed forward by cultural workers who can surpass even the critical realist tradition of Dr. Jose Rizal in his novels, the *Noli* and the *Fili*, and Juan Luna in his painting, *La Spolarium*.

Literature and the arts are a concentrated expression of reality. In the present era, one must unswervingly take the proletarian standpoint in order to achieve the greatest progress in art and literature. Literature and the arts would reflect the revolutionary struggle and point towards its triumph.

### ***Science and technology for national industrialization***

Let us consider science and technology. It is not true that science and technology are free from political or class dictation. The feudalists and imperialists have a particular way of using them or restricting them and for definite reasons.

The feudalists wanted to restrict science and technology because they did not want their religious dogmas to be challenged, and exposed. Today, imperialists use science and technology to make weapons of destruction for their wars of aggression and they also restrict production for the sake of maximizing their rate of profit.

In the Philippines, we wish to make use of science and technology for our industrial progress and for producing more for our people. In intellectual perspective, we have advanced far from that period when the friars opposed scientific knowledge as “heretical” and mishandled “A Class in Physics” in order to subvert our intellectual development. When US imperialism took over the Philippines, it first showed, in comparison with the friars, some desire to share science and technology to pursue national industrialization and effect economic emancipation, we find the American capitalist society, with its own scientific and technological progress, inimical to our progress.

US imperialist politics do not permit us to make full use of the science and technology within the grasp of our scientists, technologists, and our people because the economic development we would create will set us free and cut down the market and profits of US industries. It is wishful thinking, therefore, to consider that science and technology have no necessary connection with politics and with class dictation.

Science and technology and production in socialist countries are within the realm of politics, that is to say, of satisfying the needs of the people. But, in capitalist countries, despite the high level of development in science, technology and the forces of production, altogether these are made to serve the profit-making and political power of the monopolies against the interests of the masses and nations abroad.

In the Philippines, we should pursue a thoroughgoing program of increasing our scientific and technological knowledge for political and

economic purposes; that is, for our political emancipation and economic welfare. We want to have the skills for national industrialization and agricultural development.

In order to ensure the participation of the masses of our people in production and in accelerated social development, we should popularize the most advanced skills; but, before we can put these to use, the masses must first arm themselves politically, liberate the nation and themselves from the political forces that restrict our economic growth and our scientific and technological progress.

### ***Filipinization of the mass media***

Let us consider the newspapers, radio, TV, movies and other like media of information, opinion and entertainment which are now powerful instruments of either progress or reaction in this era of the Second Propaganda Movement.

We know that these are not controlled by the masses. The masses on the other hand, are reduced to passivity in relation to the emissions of these mass media. Because of the fact that most of the corporations owning these media or sponsoring the programs are imperialist and imperialist-oriented, our mass media at present cannot be used for propagating national democracy, on the other hand, it is through the mass media that the glorification of sex and violence, characteristic of imperialist culture, is propagated to the detriment of our youth and people. Just take note of the James Bond cult and the cowboy fare and the rat-race mercenary kind of justice dished up by the imperialist-controlled mass media. They are the vehicle for imperialist propaganda and likewise for anti-Filipino and antidemocratic prejudices. Because of commercial advertising the tastes, attitudes and consumption habits of the Filipino people are anchored on the products of US imperialism.

As a whole, foreign control of the mass media or their content (ranging from local sensationalism and slanted reports of US press agencies like AP and UPI) constitutes intervention in our political life; and in the most subtle way, it actually conditions the minds of the people to accept not only the commercial products in the form of political agreements and fair-haired boys of US imperialism.

In the field of mass media, let us recall the glorious tradition of *Kalayaan* and *La Independencia*, which were the genuine journalistic

instruments of the national democratic movement. In the spirit of these publications, let us convince our journalists that the truth does not lie only within the framework of imperialist and landlord political power. Many of them have realized this; and they are bound to widen their freedom of expression more and more.

There is no such thing as freedom of the press in the abstract. Only a liar or a dull person would make that claim. The reporters are bound by editorial policy; the editorial policy is in turn bound by the publisher's policy or that of the company board of directors; the publisher or the board is in turn bound by the advertisers' policy. It is foolish to make the liberal argument that by having different or several advertisers, none of them would be able to control the paper. The advertisers are well-organized in their chambers of commerce and national advertisers' association and in many more business groupings. If the press depends on them for survival, it is bound never to violate the basic class "truths" of their interests.

It is common knowledge how US companies have tried to quell the expression of national democratic views in the press. The patriotic and progressive members of the press should struggle for greater press freedom by siding in so many ways with the forces of national democracy.

Professionalism in the service of the exploiters means political subservience to them; inasmuch as it serves to shape and foster opinions in the service of the exploiters.

One concrete step that can be taken by the Second Propaganda Movement is to fight for the Filipinization of the press so that direct ownership by foreigners of such antinational and antidemocratic media like *Philippines Herald*, *Manila Daily Bulletin*, DZBB, DZHP, DZBU and others can be removed. If we succeed in Filipinizing the press, the popular support we shall have generated will automatically serve to back up national democratic publications. At present, we should consistently expose and isolate all those antinational and antidemocratic media directly owned, supported or controlled by foreign monopolies and compradors.

If our newsmen should wish to play a role in the national democratic tradition of Jose Rizal, Lopez Jaena, Del Pilar, Jacinto and Luna they should organize themselves as militantly progressive

journalists and workingmen who wish to broaden their freedom of expression. Their unity should serve to counter the power of decision of the publisher who is tightly bound by financial compromises with the antinational and antidemocratic advertisers and stockholders.

Within and outside the field of journalism, the Second Propaganda Movement can vigorously call for the nationalization of the economy and for national industrialization so that ultimately the foreign advertisers can no longer have the press at their mercy.

What the Second Propaganda Movement can do now by itself in widening press freedom is to establish a publication where there is the untrammled freedom to express and advocate national democratic views.

This publication, as was envisioned by Sen. Claro Mayo Recto, should articulate and organize the resurgent forces of the Philippine revolution. It should therefore be guided by the patriotic style of our revolutionary forefathers and the true revolutionaries of the present. The Second Propaganda Movement should use this publication to help break down old ideas, old customs, old habits and old attitudes and help the Philippine revolution advance.

The Second Propaganda Movement should be a thoroughgoing cultural revolution. It should shatter the present semicolonial and semifeudal superstructure. A new national and democratic culture is crying out to be born. Mass organizations, especially of the youth, play a great role in promoting this new culture under the leadership of the proletariat.

# Rizal the Social Critic

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**S**peech delivered at the 22nd annual conference  
of CONDA (Conference Delegates Association)  
at West Negros College, Bacolod City on December 29, 1966

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DR. JOSE RIZAL WAS the outstanding representative of a numerically small middle class that developed during the 19th century. A complex of historical circumstances, such as the marked acceleration of commerce and intellectual contact between the Philippines and Europe and a certain amount of concessions made by the colonial regime to the principalia, made it possible for that small middle class to develop under the shadow of the white colonial elite composed of friars and lay officials, which simultaneously exploited the masses more. In other words, while the colonial regime gave more concessions to some *Indios* through such objective processes as limited participation in trade, leasehold grants on friar estates, a limited amount of university education available locally, and travel and study in Europe, which procolonial historians readily admit as signs of good intentions on the part of Madrid for its colony, the vast majority of the colonized people were increasingly exploited and politically repressed. These were the futile attempts of Spain to accelerate its capital accumulation in a fast modernizing and competitive Europe, to contain the rapid advances and expansionism of modern imperialist powers which had succeeded in developing capitalist societies, and to frustrate the raging revolutionary aspirations of peoples in all the colonies, especially Latin America where these aspirations had become a revolutionary movement of continental scope. Spain found its basic foundations irrevocably weakened by overextension, its antidemocratic authoritarianism unable to contain the rise of modern imperialism in Europe and the national independence movements in the colonies. The situation of Spanish colonialism then parallels that of US imperialism today, over-extended and unable to cope with the advance of the world

socialist revolution and the more vigorous national independence movements of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

As a leading representative of the enlightened stratum or “Left wing” of the middle class, Rizal easily adopted the liberal point of view and developed his own national sentiment and consciousness. What actually made him a progressive and a radical of his own time was his ultimate recognition that the liberties of the individual could be realized only if the nation as a whole, particularly the masses whom he spontaneously observed, would be uplifted and enjoy more freedom from an overwhelming system of clerical authoritarians and antiliberals who represented what had long been considered backward in the northern parts of Europe.

He saw in the European development that the nation-states arose with the concept of popular sovereignty and republicanism. He pointed out that if no better colonial policies were to serve the Philippines there would be the increased likelihood of a movement for separation from Spain. For this suggestion of Filipino nationhood, he was called a filibuster or a subversive in the same manner that the advocates of national democracy today are being witch-hunted for asserting the sovereignty of their people.

Rizal belonged to a middle class family that could provide him with a university education here and abroad. But he had seen that where colonial authoritarian rule existed even the native middle class was insecure and subject to arbitrariness and racial discrimination.

The fate suffered by Fathers Burgos, Gomez and Zamora profoundly influenced his thinking. The humiliation of his mother at the hands of the colonizers came to signify the colonial injustices done to the motherland.

The Calamba affair in which both the middle class and peasantry suffered as a result of their just petition against the increased land rent and other arbitrary impositions of the friars had the most profound effect on him as a Filipino. In retaliation for the petition penned by the youth Rizal himself seeking justice for the tenants of Calamba, General Weyler burnt their homes and effected their imprisonment and deportation. Here was a concrete yet symbolic instance of colonial oppression of the masses ultimately resulting in oppression of the middle class.

As Spanish colonialism could no longer hold back the advancing forces of liberalism and nationalism and it became wracked with the internal struggle between the friars and the liberal quarters, it became more and more despicable to the Filipino people; and religion could no longer be used as an ideological weapon of the ruling elite of friar and lay absolutists. The argument that the Filipino people should be perpetually indebted to colonialism for Christianity was answered effectively by the more powerful argument of social reality and its revolutionary forces.

Dr. Jose Rizal had so well exposed the fact that during the previous more than three centuries the friars failed to uplift the people spiritually but only succeeded in causing the brutalization of the people. In scientific terms, we say that Christianity through the unity of church and state had its day in the feudal regime.

When we consider the anticolonial and anticlerical writings of Rizal, we immediately perceive that national democracy of the old type, that is to say, of the now outmoded liberal cast, developed in the process of struggle. The struggle was in the direct personal experience of Rizal as well as in the collective life of his people.

The Propaganda Movement was reflective of the struggle of the Filipino nation; and the Philippine Revolution of 1896 that followed. It was the irrepressible continuation of social reality and the people's struggle even if Rizal's life had already been extirpated.

When as a small boy Rizal wrote a poem advocating a national language, he was spontaneously struggling against the Spanish language as a tool of foreign domination. When he felt compelled to annotate Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, he wanted to fight racial discrimination by asserting that a national culture could develop without colonial culture. In writing his satirical essays against the friars and their absolutist cohorts, he was expressing the collective will of his people against authoritarianism, arbitrariness and brutality. He was thereby asserting the democratic capacity of his people and the capability of man to solve his problems without the intervention or mediation of the clerics and other alien powers.

When he wrote "The Indolence of the Filipinos," he debunked the colonial argument that Filipinos were inherently lazy and exposed the fact that the colonizers lived gloriously on the labor and blood of

his people. When he wrote "The Philippines A Century Hence," he demonstrated in full the vicious process used by the colonizers to subjugate the people by corrupting them and taking advantage of their virtues. Furthermore, he indicated the direction that events would take in favor of the Filipinos if they were to achieve national consciousness and national unity.

For writing these two major essays, Rizal was called a "subversive" and, in the phrase of today's defenders of US imperialism, a "negative" thinker. Yes, he negated colonialism. He contributed a certain share to anticolonial propaganda and incited the people to mobilize themselves for their own welfare.

When Rizal wrote his master works, *Noli Me Tangere (Noli)* and *El Filibusterismo (Fili)*, he explored the possibility of reform first and, upon exhausting that possibility within the colonial framework, he also explored the possibility of revolution.

In the *Noli*, he presented Crisostomo Ibarra as an extremely well-intentioned reformer who thinks that the solution to the suffering of the motherland, signified by Sisa, would be a new type of education for her children along the lines worked out by the School teacher, the antithesis to the brutalizing system of thought control maintained by the friars. But what is done to him, the well-intentioned reformer who does not even hold a grudge for the persecution of his own father? He is attacked from all sides and by various means by the hypocritical Padre Salvi and the crude Padre Damaso, who represent the basic institutional aspects of the most numerous church. In the end he is framed up by the clerical conspirator, Padre Salvi, as the "mastermind" of a foolish attack on the barracks. And who are the tools of this foreigner, this source of violence and corruption? Indios, like the sacristan who is chief executor, and petty mercenaries like Lucas and Bruno. What social system are the enemies of Crisostomo Ibarra in defense of? A friar-dominated society signified by the weakling and hybrid Maria Clara, the colonial product of a questionable relationship which makes of Capitan Tiago, the symbol of the newly-risen corrupt Filipino bourgeoisie, a cuckold of colonial power. The bastard culture is further signified by Sister Rufa and Sister Pute, whose thinking consists of a systematization of superstition which includes airy stocks of plenary

indulgences, bundles of candles and sacks of girdles and scapularies.

In clearer secular terms, the social system being defended is one dominated by the curate and the alferez, assisted by a docile and stupid gobernadorcillo and principalia, whose main activities are holding fiestas, and by the corrupt trader, contract-maker, influence-peddler and cuckold Capitan Tiago and by Doña Consolacion, the vicious symbol of the Civil Guards' mentality, and by Doña Victorina, the paragon of a colonial mentality which always manages to adopt what limps in the alien culture. What alternative is left after the vicious frustration of Don Crisostomo's hopes for reform? Pablo tells Elias in the forests that the oppressed are ready to fight the oppressors. Pilosopong Tasio, the idealist cynic, has told Crisostomo Ibarra that change will ultimately come with the coming in of fresh ideas from abroad.

In *El Filibusterismo*, Crisostomo Ibarra reappears in the guise of Simoun the jeweler. His character is a clear study of the liberal reformer who swings to being an anarchist. The author frustrates him at every decisive step of his plot but succeeds in presenting him as the symbol of desperation and personal vengeance. Simoun is the archetype of putschism and contravenes the Marxist-Leninist concept of a revolutionary; he thinks of the masses as a mere manipulator and conspirator would, commanding them from the city. He holds the illusion that by one blow at the palace the whole structure would crumble.

Nevertheless, Rizal presents Cablesang Tales as the peasant victim of feudal oppression and he transforms him into a peasant rebel with a mass following, waging guerrilla warfare, after finding out that the redress of grievances and justice is not possible in the system. The development of Cablesang Tales as a character indicates Rizal's own recognition that the question of land was of basic importance in the colonial question. The Calamba incident was unquestionably a big matter to Rizal. What is most engaging about the story of Cablesang Tales or Matanglawin is that it was left unfinished by Rizal. It is an unfinished story in the sense that Simoun's story is finished or, equivalently, in the sense that the class leadership of the ilustrado in the Philippine Revolution is incapable

and frustrated. Did Rizal leave the story unfinished because he, as a liberal thinker, was incapable of following it through? Nevertheless, by keeping the story unfinished he merely left it to be continued like the Philippine revolution.

The story of Crisostomo Ibarra as a reformer is actually continued in the attempt of Isagani, together with many other students, to establish the Castillian Academy. The hypocritical friars frustrated their reform project after giving them false hopes. What is worse, they suffer persecution and brutal reaction afterwards. They hold a pancit party at a restaurant in mock honor of Don Custodio who has been entrusted by the authorities with the duty of making a sham investigation and study of the project of the students and of disapproving it.

As it is being done today by our intelligence agencies and by the agents of American imperialism, the government authorities misconstrue the pancit party of the students as a conspiratorial meeting where subversive matters have been taken up. The authorities are agog over the pasquinades posted on the university walls against the friars' system of education and these are linked with the pancit party. The students are arrested and imprisoned and the university is closed in reprisal.

Even Basilio, the son of Sisa, who has always refused to join student groups, is implicated by the authorities. His arrest leads to a series of misfortunes for him and his sweetheart Juli whom Padre Camorra tries to rape when she seeks his help for Basilio's release. Basilio's misfortunes serve as a lesson that opportunism does not always pay in critical times. It was foolish of Basilio to think that the business of a student is only to earn a diploma and become a prosperous man afterwards. He had been thinking only of personal advancement without thinking of the oppression of the masses from which he comes. And, thinking that he would inherit Capitan Tiago's property, he feeds him opium even against the code of the medical profession for which he is studying.

The careerism and amoral technocracy, represented by Señor Pasta, are a bane to the masses along the lines of Capitan Tiago's corrupt money-grabbing activities. The evil source of these

weaknesses of the middle class is the colonial ruling class and its exploitative system.

In the *Fili*, Rizal exposes thoroughly and systematically the decadence of the system as the beginning of a revolutionary situation. He exposes the rotting body of the corrupt Capitan Tiago, the sham character of Señor Pasta and the devilish viciousness of Padre Irene and Padre Camorra, Don Custodio and many ugly features of the colonial domination, including Don Tiburcio de Espadaña's misery.

After only writing the *Noli*, Rizal was already a marked man. His novel was immediately denounced as subversive and heretical. The foreign rulers of his native land started to slander him and call him an agent of another alien power. After the more forward novel, *Fili*, he was practically bound for Bagumbayan. But just the same he came back to the Philippines from abroad with the naive hope that he would work for the cause of his nation in the open and in the city. Upon arriving at the port of Manila, his baggage was thoroughly inspected and all written materials were confiscated from him.

Nevertheless, Rizal persisted in his efforts to seek reforms in the open and in the city. He visited some provinces and subsequently organized *La Liga Filipina*. That was the last straw, the colonialists said, and they apprehended him. On December 30, 1896, after his exile in Dapitan and after the Cry of Pugad Lawin had been made, he was led like a lamb to Bagumbayan to be killed.

# Campus Journalism in the Struggle for National Democracy

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**D**elivered at the First National Congress  
of the League of Editors for a Democratic Society  
on March 26-28, 1971, at the ALEC Hall,  
University of the Philippines, Quezon City  
*Campus journalism in the revolution*

In commemorating the heroic struggle of January 26 and 30, 1970, it is important to recognize the role played by campus newspapers in calling on the student masses to rise for national democracy against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

The mass actions of January 26 and 30 were in themselves clear expressions of the national democratic aspirations of the people. The public speeches, teach-ins, protest classes, songs, chants, wall posters, leaflets, placards and even the deeds of physically resisting the fascist brutes were important means of disseminating the principles of the national democratic revolution. But never should we miss the profound and sustained propagation of the struggle for national democracy by campus newspapers before, during and after the events of January 26 and 30.

In what has unfolded as a cultural revolution or the Second Propaganda Movement, campus journalism can play a leading role in clarifying the basic issues of the struggle and in arousing and organizing great masses of students for revolutionary struggle. The students can in turn relay the message of revolution to the broad masses of the people outside the campus walls throughout the country.

Newspapers edited and run by students have always contributed immensely to the advance of the national democratic revolution throughout the world. Examine our national history and discover those newspapers which synthesized the problems and proposed revolutionary solutions of the time. Recall the *Kalayaan*, the

revolutionary organ of the Katipunan. It was edited by the student revolutionary, Emilio Jacinto. In the new type of democratic revolution, the fighting spirit of this editor and student pervades the ranks of campus journalists.

To recognize the important role played by campus journalism in the making of January 26 and 30 and also in the making of other revolutionary events past and contemporary is to recognize the correctness and necessity of sharpening the pen as an important weapon in all forthcoming battles against reaction and in the entire process of revolution.

### ***Tasks of LEADS***

The League of Editors for a Democratic Society (LEADS) can be regarded as a consolidation of contemporary journalistic efforts in Philippine campuses against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. Its formation means the sharpening of a revolutionary weapon in the service of the people, especially the toiling masses of workers and peasants.

The league can help greatly in propagating the struggle for national democracy. It can combat the counterrevolutionary slander and distortions made by the reactionary press which is in fact partisan to the interests of the imperialists, big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists. There is no such thing as a "free and impartial" newspaper in the life-and-death struggle between the forces of revolution and the forces of reaction. Publishers, advertisers and editors have definite policies. It is hypocrisy on the part of reactionaries to claim that they forego their own class interests and present correctly the side of revolutionaries.

Revolutionaries must have their own newspapers to voice out the national and class interests of the oppressed and exploited. Revolutionary students should firmly hold the campus newspapers and use them to uphold and defend the interests of progressive students and teachers and also those of the broad masses of the people.

If all campus editors join up and fight for revolutionary orientation, their newspapers can certainly become a formidable force in the making of public opinion for revolution. These can become even more powerful than the reactionary metropolitan press. The

combined circulation of all student newspapers in high schools and colleges can beat the combined circulation of all metropolitan newspapers.

The circulation of *Dawn* or *Advocate* alone is far bigger than that of any such ultrareactionary big comprador newspapers as the *Philippines Herald*, *Manila Daily Bulletin* and *Evening News* per issue. I perceive that at the moment the combined circulation of campus newspapers under the leadership of the League of Editors for a Democratic Society surpasses the combined circulation per issue of the *Manila Times* and the *Manila Chronicle*.

The practice of the League of Editors for a Democratic Society in publishing pooled editorials and articles in campus newspapers is excellent. This is an effective method of promoting the struggle for national democracy. It can rapidly develop unity of ideology and political purpose. It can help build up the revolutionary role of the student masses and also the teachers in the struggle for national democracy.

We wish the League of Editors for a Democratic Society all success in its militant endeavor to push forward the struggle for national democracy. Together with the student masses and the teachers, the member-editors of the league should steadfastly fight for national freedom and democracy inside and outside of the campuses. The campus newspaper must be used as an important link among all students in the revolutionary movement. Campus journalists, unite for the revolutionary cause!

Pierce the enemies of national democracy with your pens!

Long live the League of Editors for a Democratic Society!

# Visual Arts as a Weapon of Revolution

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**D**elivered at the First National Congress and Workshop of Nagkakaisang Progresibong Artista-Arkitekto [NPAA] at the ALEC Hall, University of the Philippines, Quezon City on August 7-8, 1971

....

ON THE PART OF EVERY activist in the national democratic movement and the entire people, the First National Conference and Workshop of the Nagkakaisang Progresibong Artista-Arkitekto (NPAA-United Progressive Artists-Architects) is an exceedingly happy occasion. It is a significant moment for analyzing and summing up all your previous efforts in wielding and perfecting the visual arts as a weapon of revolution. It is also a significant moment for selecting graphic models to emulate and setting forth new tasks, both political and aesthetic, in your militant participation in the great struggle for national democracy against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

We are well aware of your important role in the revolutionary struggle. What an essay will at great length explain, a single wall poster will. Therefore, you have a very sharp weapon. Moreover, so many people can at the same time look at that wall poster and immediately understand what you mean. Therefore, you have a very powerful weapon capable of moving the masses. Your art does not only please the eye and moves the heart but also enriches the mind and quickens the body for the revolution. You have a great and indispensable role in the national democratic revolution, in both its political and cultural aspects. You are definitely in the vanguard of the national democratic cultural revolution of a new type.

## ***Create and uphold art for the masses***

What do we mean by national democratic cultural revolution of a new type in the field of art? It means overthrowing the art of the exploiting classes which is promoted by US imperialism and its running dogs. It means building up a new kind of art that serves the people, especially the toiling masses of workers and peasants. It

means affirming the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat and its vanguard. It is the depiction of the masses of workers, peasants and Red fighters as the real heroes and makers of history. It is the casting away of the old selfish types of bourgeois and feudal heroes; it is the projection of the revolutionary type of workers, peasants and Red fighters. Among art workers, constant efforts are exerted to remold themselves so as to become better and more effective servants of the people and revolution.

There is no such thing as “pure art,” “art for art’s sake,” “art for the sake of universal humanism,” “art for nothing’s sake” or “art for personal reasons.” To obscure the revolutionary task of art is to fall into the trap of the reactionaries, in the field of art and outside it. There is no escape, in the final analysis. In this regard, any piece of art bears the stamp of a definite class. To raise your ideological and political consciousness and carry forward your aesthetic efforts, you must make a living study and application of Chairman Mao’s Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art and several more of his works on culture. Grasp the truth that proletarian politics is in command of revolutionary aesthetics.

The wall poster is as sharp and as powerful as the slogan that the wordsmith mints. But this is not the only art form available to you, although emphasis has been correctly put on it for obvious reasons. Our guiding revolutionary ideology impels us to seize so many other art forms from the class enemy and even to create new forms suitable to the furtherance of the revolutionary struggle. You are expected today to discuss the multifarious forms of art and how to put them into the service of the people and revolution.

You have achieved a certain level of development in terms of skills and style and also in terms of political content. Keep on advancing daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, indefinitely because there is no end to revolution in society as well as in art.

We extend to you the best wishes and support for your plans. We share your hopes of winning more victories in the battlefield of art and arousing more people for the national democratic revolution. Create and uphold art for the masses!

Hold high the red banner of the revolution! Fan the flames of the national democratic revolution of a new type! Long live the

Nagkakaisang Progresibong Artista-Arkitarkto!

# Tasks of Cadres in the Cultural Field

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**D**elivered at the First National Congress  
of Panulat para sa Kaunlaran ng Sambayanan  
Gonzales Hall, University of the Philippines, Quezon City  
December 18-19, 1971

....

THE CONFERENCE THEME, "Literature and the Mass Line," is well chosen. It manifests the distinctive character of Panulat para sa Kaunlaran ng Sambayanan [PAKSA-Writers for the Advancement of the People] as a progressive and patriotic organization of writers, critics, teachers and students of literature, truly determined to serve the people.

***To serve the people is the single most important task***

The single most important task of cadres in the cultural field is to serve the people. As the great Lu Hsun put it in a couplet:

Fierce-browed, I coolly defy a thousand pointing fingers, Head bowed, like a willing ox I serve the children.

To serve the people now is to perform a definite role in the revolutionary struggle for national democracy against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. The cultural revolution is a distinct yet integral part of the revolutionary mass movement. Without the preparation of public opinion, there can be no revolution. In the course of the national democratic revolution, cultural work is always necessary to heighten the fighting spirit of the revolutionary masses. Chairman Mao teaches us, "Revolutionary culture is a powerful revolutionary weapon for the broad masses of the people. It prepares the ground ideologically before the revolution comes and is an important, indeed essential, fighting front in the general revolutionary front during the revolution."

Chairman Mao points out, "All our literature and art are for the masses of the people, and in the first place for the workers, peasants and soldiers; they are created for the workers, peasants and soldiers and are for their use."

Cadres in the cultural field are like commanders who lead cultural battalions—the masses in their thousands, tens of thousands and millions. The audience for revolutionary literary and art work is incalculable. A stage performance or an exhibit can be repeated so many times that it is extremely difficult to keep count of the audience. The printing capacity of a press may be limited but a good literary work nevertheless gets passed from hand to hand and discussed without end. If our cultural work truly serves the people, our readers and audience are inevitably aroused and become a tremendous force for the revolution.

The theme of this congress thereby becomes a material force in the same manner that a battlecry does in the field of combat. We must always remember that the people will not be aroused and mobilized unless the literary and artistic work is drawn from their lives, particularly from their needs and aspirations. We bring to a higher plane the actions and thinking of the revolutionary masses so as to inspire them further to destroy and triumph over the enemy. The heroes that emerge from our work should be the people themselves and their superlative representatives who are tempered in the crucible of the revolution. The revolutionary struggle should be the essence of the organic unity of a literary or artistic work.

Chairman Mao teaches us, “(Our purpose is) to ensure that literature and art fit well into the whole revolutionary machine as a component part, that they operate as powerful weapons for uniting and educating the people for attacking and destroying the enemy, and that they help the people fight the enemy with one heart and one mind.”

Inasmuch as culture is a reflection of economics and politics, literature and art are the finest and most sensitive ideological forms for summing up social reality. We can create revolutionary literature and art only by carefully and meticulously keeping to the revolutionary stand, viewpoint and method of the class which leads the broad masses of the people in the life-and-death struggle between progress and reaction.

It is a bounden duty for revolutionary men of culture to be partisan to the leading revolutionary class, the proletariat, and to oppose the reactionary classes, the big bourgeoisie and the landlord

class. Chairman Mao teaches us, "In the world today all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines. There is in fact no such thing as art for art's sake, art that stands above classes, art that is detached from or independent of politics. Proletarian art and literature are part of the whole proletarian revolutionary cause; they are, as Lenin said, cogs and wheels in the whole revolutionary machine."

***Remold your class outlook and give full play to criticism***

We live in a society that is semicolonial and semifeudal. It is inevitable that practically all our cadres in the cultural field have at one time or another been deeply influenced by bourgeois and feudal culture and they continue to be so influenced in varying degrees. The dominant frame of mind among those educated in the present cultural system is bourgeois. In the era of imperialism, particularly in this era when imperialism is heading for total collapse and socialism is marching toward world victory, the bourgeois mind becomes so fantastic, regressive and desperate that it resorts to feudal mysticism in order to reinforce the most decadent influence of imperialistic culture and art.

As the revolutionary mass movement becomes stronger and stronger the reactionaries also deliberately allow the spread of social-democratic or revisionist literature in an attempt to infect our cadres with fears of revolutionary wars and nuclear weapons and with the philosophy of survival and capitulation.

It is the task of our cadres in the cultural field to keep on remolding their class outlook. They must firmly combat all erroneous ideas and their own selfish tendencies with the lucid ideology of the proletariat, Marxism-Leninism, and integrate themselves with the masses in the practical revolutionary movement. Chairman Mao teaches us, "Our literature and art workers must accomplish this task and shift their stand; they must gradually move their feet over the side of the workers, peasants and soldiers, to the side of the proletariat, through the process of going into their very midst and into the thick of practical struggles and through the process of studying Marxism and society. Only in this way can we have a literature and art that are truly for the workers, peasants and soldiers, a truly

proletarian literature and art.” It is an important task to undertake study sessions and seminars.

Thoroughly study Chairman Mao’s “Talks at the Yen’an Forum on Literature and Art” as a comprehensive program; his three great works on the rectification movement which precede all other articles in the Philippine selection entitled, *On Party Building*; and, of course, the entire Philippine selection entitled, *On Culture*. Get hold of literary models in the great proletarian revolutionary tradition of Gorky and Lu Hsun and those literary models popularized in the course of China’s Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR). Find out how past and contemporary literary and art works stand in the light of the world achievements of proletarian literature and art.

It is an important task to be in the midst of the revolutionary mass movement. In the course of participating in the revolutionary struggles of the workers and peasants, our cadres in the cultural field will gain knowledge that they can never gain from textbooks alone. To conduct social investigation in the course of practical struggles is to gather the best material for a truly significant literature and art. One cannot write of the workers, peasants and soldiers without knowing them intimately. Among the cultural workers, there is always enough practical and concrete basis for study and for criticism and self-criticism. The literary and artistic work that are created by them are subject to analysis and criticism. These are always subject to improvement. While the most advanced should be good at uniting with the less advanced cultural workers, who are willing to unite with us on the general line of the national democratic revolution, it should always be the task of the former to persuade the latter to further remold their outlook. Persuasion is our principal method of struggle with them.

We have no fear of criticism because our end is always to serve the people and therefore we must always be ready to give them the best that we can. Among our comrades and our friends we must have that ox-like modesty that Lu Hsun found appropriate to picture in his couplet. To the enemy, however, we are fierce and we must not show the least sign of obsequiousness.

Chairman Mao teaches us:

“In literary and art criticism there are two criteria, the political and the artistic...”

“There is the political criterion and there is the artistic criterion; what is the relationship between the two? Politics cannot be equated with art, nor can a general world outlook be equated with a method of artistic creation and criticism. We deny not only that there is an abstract and absolutely unchangeable political criterion, but also that there is an abstract and absolutely unchangeable artistic criterion; each class in every class society has its own political and artistic criteria. But all classes in all class societies invariably put the political criterion first and the artistic criterion second.”

“What we demand is the unity of politics and art, the unity of content and form, the unity of revolutionary political content and the highest possible perfection in artistic form. Works of art which lack artistic quality have no force, however progressive they are politically. Therefore, we oppose both works of art with a wrong political viewpoint and the tendency towards the ‘poster and slogan style’ which is correct in political viewpoint but lacking in artistic power. On questions of literature and art we must carry on a struggle on two fronts.”

It is not enough to undertake criticism and self-criticism only among fellow craftsmen. Though it is necessary for those who have an interest in the same field of work to have a union, cultural workers should avoid restricting themselves to the guild mentality of the petty bourgeoisie in medieval times. We should make it a task to encourage criticism of our works by the masses. After a cultural performance or art exhibit, we should invite the audience to submit their critical remarks and suggestions for improvement. In our publications, we should also regularly call for these. Even before a piece of literary or artistic work is put out, certain efforts can be made to consult the masses or their representatives.

To provide an example of self-criticism, I wish to take this opportunity to criticize and repudiate before this group of writers as well as before the general public (since this article is to be

mimeographed at least) the entire collection, *Brothers*, with the exception of only five or six poems. The bulk of the poems cannot pass the test of proletarian revolutionary criticism. Though the collection was compiled in 1961 as properly indicated, it is bound to create erroneous influence without this repudiation. I hope that with this repudiation I shall be able to write better poems.

***Infuse revolutionary class content into various forms of literature***

It is appropriate to refer to the various forms of literature inasmuch as this article is presented before a group of writers, critics, teachers and students of literature. In this regard, we must be conscious of the task of infusing revolutionary class content into the various forms of literature: the essay, fiction, drama and poetry. The need for having something to say, a clear ideological and political line, is most obvious in the essay form. There is daily a big pile of articles that may be subsumed under this form. The sheer weight of these in terms of newsprint is truly oppressive, mostly testaments as they are to the false virtues of the enemy. It is in the essay form, however, that the revolutionary mass movement has most expressed itself. It is inevitable that this form will always serve as the most explicit weapon for assaulting the enemy and defending the people.

In fiction, the short story has for quite a long time been the most popular form among Filipino creative writers. The novel form is quite neglected obviously because it requires sustained writing, something that our writers seem not to be able to cope with because they have to copywrite for an advertising firm, clerk in a government office or commercial house, work in a metropolitan newspaper or magazine or teach in a university. Short or long, fiction should be employed by revolutionary writers to serve the people.

Of the various literary forms, drama is the most in demand in the revolutionary mass movement today. The demand is stressed by the scarce quantity and low quality of the plays written for so long a period of time, and, more importantly, by the effectiveness of the drama in arousing and mobilizing the masses. This is a literary form that can be perceived and comprehended by the literate and nonliterate masses when it is already staged. It is also a form by which local cultural groups can be most easily organized and by

which local acting talents can be coordinated in great numbers. It is an exceedingly important task to write and produce revolutionary drama, one-act or full-length plays.

The *zarzuela* and *comedia* or *moro-moro* are traditional forms of drama that may be adopted by our revolutionary writers. Replace the mawkishness and class reconciliation in the zarzuela with the revolutionary spirit and proletarian standpoint; and foolish love songs with revolutionary songs. Replace the Christian chauvinism and the anti-Muslim line in the *comedia* or *moro-moro* with the tenets and values of a people's war waged by a people's army led by the proletarian party; and the thunder and lightning of the medieval crusade with the thunder and lightning of people's war. Of course, it is necessary to give these traditional forms of drama the compactness of modern drama. There are other indigenous forms which can be as effective as the drama in promoting revolution. These are the *balagtasan*, the *duplo* and that indigenous and yet so universal form, poetry, that lends itself to singing. These can be performed to precede or serve as intermission numbers when a dramatic presentation is done. These can also be presented exclusively on their own account.

It is worthwhile to go into scriptwriting for the movies, radio or TV drama and the comics. It is difficult to get a revolutionary movie script filmed at the moment because of the technical and financial requirements. But it is relatively easier to turn out comics and to produce drama over the radio. The movies, radio drama and the comics can be turned into our weapons.

It is the overriding task of revolutionary writers to infuse revolutionary class content into the various forms of literature and to make the workers, peasants and revolutionary soldiers the heroes under the red flag of the proletariat.

There should be no more debate concerning what national language to use. We are all committed to using the language of the masses, that language that can be understood throughout the country. It is Pilipino. Enrich this developing language with proletarian revolutionary literature. We must recognize at the same time that the local languages are also the language of the masses and these must also be enriched with proletarian revolutionary

literature rather than put aside in our thinking. Instead of ignoring or scorning regional writers for their inability to write in Pilipino, we should encourage them to write proletarian revolutionary literature in the language they are used to writing in and also persuade them to learn Pilipino so that they can learn not only the language but also the proletarian revolutionary literature already achieved in it.

***Popularize literary models and thereby promote  
the upsurge of revolutionary literature***

The national democratic cultural revolution, under the leadership of the proletariat, has advanced brilliantly. So many writers have come to the forefront in the revolutionary struggle in the cultural field. They have come forward with works into which they have infused revolutionary class content as best as they could.

It is of basic importance to analyze and sum up the concrete situation in the field of literature from one stage to another. The purpose is to improve current literary stock, choose the exemplary works for popularization and set the tasks for raising the quantity and quality of further literary output.

At this stage, it is important for revolutionary writers to band together and make a conscious effort to create and promote literary models. These models should prove that revolutionary class content can be heightened and at the same time aesthetic standards can be raised. We must debunk all arguments of the bourgeoisie that only its ideas and notions can satisfy the demands of the various forms of literature. The best way to do the debunking is to create and promote brilliant proletarian revolutionary literature.

It is our task to make these literary models reach the factories, farms, schools and everywhere else in the country. By doing this, we promote the upsurge of revolutionary literature in our country.

# On the Afro-Asian Writer's Symposium

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**C**omments on the Symposium on January 31 - February 3, 1975

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IN THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED Afro-African Writer's Symposium (January 31-February 3, 1975), the final declaration that ensued from the closed-door conference expressed recognition of the fact that a "literary work organically related to the unending struggle for freedom, justice and dignified living," as well as support for the "fight of the Afro-Asian peoples against the forces of imperialism and colonialism in every form, against racial discrimination, communal prejudice and chauvinism.

It is evident that the Marcos government and the hand-picked delegation of the Filipino writers had failed to affect despite a lingerie show at the Hilton and a visit to Taal Volcano, the course and outcome of the proceedings. Right clear that it was not the "beauty, truth and goodness" of Imelda nor the "end-of-the-world" pseudo-scientism of Ferdinand that would set the tone of the conference, but the belligerent politics of the Egyptian delegation who, in highly combative language, delivered their opening salvos against US imperialism, colonialism and Zionism and their support to the Palestinian people's struggle for national liberation.

A week before the opening of the Symposium, Marcos had already defined the position of the dictatorship regarding literature and art. During the Focus Literary Awards ceremony at the Maharlika Hall, he said: "The greatest literature, if not the greatest art, wields a force that is often antipolitical. It veers away from the passions of activism as though knowing instinctively that the ardor of activism is the kiss of death."

This dictum on the de-politisation of art and literature indeed its supposed antipolitical nature, assumed two seemingly contradictory attitudes in the papers read by two members of the Philippine delegation but which, in fact, complemented each other and the politics and "aesthetics of unity" which the dictatorship takes pain to

devise in order to preserve its fascist powers and pacify the people's wrath. Cirilo Bautista of La Salle College proposed the need "for a world view by Afro-Asian writers in their writing to achieve lasting universal literature." Rolando Tinio of Ateneo, on the other hand, presented the virtues of native's return, "to celebrate the authentic sensibility of the people... to unify all our people..." In the name of "universalism" and "navitism," the world of merging forces in order to fit perfectly into Imelda's idea of "oneness." "And so to you, the writers of Asia and Africa, and to all the writers who may hear us, we dare ask: restore to a shattered humanity the shining image of its oneness, the totality of man."

This is the voice of the dictatorship that cries, alas, in the wilderness of its own making and its own grave, for it is a voice that has ceased to speak for its people and those of the other Asian and African nations. This voice will finally be stilled by the voices, and the armed might of the Filipino masses as they resolutely wage their struggle for national and social liberation.

The fact that the negligible literature in the Philippines produced through the instrumentalities of the dictatorship is nothing but peril, typified by a Focus short title, "How now, Brown Cow?," should not have escaped anybody when Marcos, in his usual stage-gimmickry, announced during the opening ceremonies the establishment of Creative Writing Center at the University of the Philippines System, "to inaugurate a new era of productiveness in Philippine literature." He adds: "For in the end, the creative writers will not have to seek a role."

Indeed.

The truth is that the mission of the Afro-Asian writer has been correctly set forth in the declaration of the 1962 conference convened by the Afro-Asian Writers' Bureau: "The Afro-Asian writer lives an incomparable historical experiences... which places him in the midst of enormous movements (and) offers him the privilege and the heavy task to be, at the same time, the witness and active factor in those transformations." For "There is only one criterion for the true creator, which is, to be attentive to the anger and wisdom of the people. From the people thus respected and served, will talent be born."

# Literature and Commitment

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## **A** Message to the UP Writers Club July 9, 1983

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I WISH TO EXPRESS THE warmest greetings to my colleagues in the UP Writers' Club. I wish you all the success in your efforts to create new works, improve your literary craft and understand the social relevance of literature.

Even as creative writers, you cannot imagine fully how desirous I am of joining you in discussions. Definitely, we can exchange views more fruitfully in an interface. At any rate, notwithstanding my present confinement in a solitary cell, I can share with you some thoughts in your discussion on literature and commitment.

I think that great literature in different ages in the world and the major works so far written in Philippine literary history assume significance, social and cultural, insofar as they are somehow committed to the cause of freedom and they reflect with profound insights the social conditions and the struggle for greater freedom.

It is on the basis of solid historical proof that I urge all Filipino creative writers to commit their minds, hearts and works to the struggle for freedom. Their works cannot but gain significance by reflecting, enriching and inspiring their people's struggle for national freedom and democracy in the present semicolonial and semifeudal society. Literature must serve the people more effectively than ever before.

The most vital issues and conflicts in society are crying out to be concentrated, represented and resolved in literary works. The people are suffering from fascist tyranny, the bitter fruit of foreign and feudal domination in a rapidly worsening political and economic crisis; and they are valiantly rising up to assert their national and democratic rights and fight for their freedom.

For the Filipino creative writers today, there can be no richer source of themes and raw materials than the sharpening struggle between reaction and revolution. There can be no better way to push

forward the cause of freedom in Philippine literature than to deal with the decline of the present social system and the growth of the people's revolutionary struggle for freedom.

When I refer to the people, I mean the toiling masses of workers and peasants and such other democratic forces as the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie. From among these classes there is one that provides the correct or best possible vantage point for creative writers.

I mean the working class. It is not only the productive vanguard for industrialization and modernization but it is also the basis for the most progressive world outlook and methodology for comprehending all social forces and their development in the current national democratic revolution as well as in the subsequent socialist revolution.

The revolutionary liberalism of the patriotic section of the bourgeoisie runs next to the proletarian ideology in importance and efficacy so long as both ideologies are in alliance. As amply proven since the defeat of the old democratic revolution, revolutionary liberalism can no longer take the lead in the resurgence of the Philippine revolution. Standing alone, revolutionary liberalism cannot defeat pro-imperialist liberalism, which is the official ideology of the big comprador-landlord state.

It is of great and decisive advantage for the Filipino creative writers to adopt the proletarian standpoint. It allows them to comprehend the economic, political and cultural aspects of society and to know incisively the basic facts and trends in a number of contradictions: between the forces and relations of production; between the exploited and exploiting classes; between the state and the people; and between reactionary and revolutionary culture.

The proletarian creative writer understands comprehensively and profoundly the objective social reality and becomes a revolutionary partisan in the great struggle for freedom, justice and progress. Intellectually, he surpasses the individualistic, narrow and fragmented knowledge of the unremolded petty bourgeois intellectual and, of course, the far more outmoded ideas and values of the feudal past.

But it is one thing to adopt the correct and progressive intellectual and political outlook. It is another thing to create excellent literary works. The literary craft requires the literary or artistic imagination. This involves not only thought but the special unity of thought and feeling; content and form; subject and style; and so on. To create significant works, the proletarian creative writer has the advantage of grasping the typical from diffuse social reality through investigation and analysis. But he has the burden, as all creative writers of whatever standpoint have, to give concrete and sensuous life to the typical or conceptual in an imaginative way.

The basic stuff of the creative writer is the word as it is denotative and connotative. The literary forms and devices enhance both thought and feeling, and yet restrain them to make for precision, subtlety and beauty. There is a sense of spontaneity in all literary forms but there is also a sense of discipline required by the theme and its development. The literary essay is the most explicit in the handling of thought through points and counterpoints even as a great deal of feeling is carried by concrete observations. The sensuousness and subtlety of human experience are heightened in prose fiction and in drama by the interplay and conflicts of characters as well as within characters. There is the tension of more feeling and thought put into less words in poetry although the long poem is more explicit in thought than the short poem.

Creative writing is a highly subjective activity, combining thought and feeling. It is among the finest and highest product of human consciousness. It is an important component of the cultural sphere which is above but not detached from the economic and political spheres. And culture both reflects and interacts with both economics and politics.

Proletarian creative writing reflects best at this point in history the social conditions, struggles and aspirations of the people, especially the toiling masses of workers and peasants. At the same time, it inspires and helps clarify the revolutionary course of the people. It puts forward heroes and noble ideas from the common people and revolutionaries who are either underrated, ignored or opposed by nonproletarian creative writers.

In the Philippines today, bourgeois creative writing has two major categories of writers: the revolutionary liberal and pro-imperialist liberal. Proletarian creative writers appreciate the critical realism and the scientific and democratic tendencies of revolutionary liberal works. But, of course, both proletarian and revolutionary liberal creative writers oppose the utterly reactionary content of promperialist liberal works, even if the style is distinguishably excellent.

The propaganda of “art for art’s sake” is nothing but a minor excrescence of bourgeois subjectivism and promperialist liberalism, no matter how hard it claims to be detached from any class, engages in psychological self-titillation, retails anecdotes of political ignorance and cynicism or makes abrupt mystical flights from the level of instinct and ego. The slogan of “art for art’s sake” and the works that come under it are manifestations of the self-indulgence of some unremolded petty bourgeois writers.

The possibility of creative writing from proletarian revolutionary viewpoint started in 1930, when Marxism started to take roots in the Philippines. With varying degrees of success, some proletarian literary works were written in the 1930s and early 1940s. But from the later 1950s onwards, in a crescendo conspicuously seen in the 1970s and now in the 1980s, such works have made a resurgence. These include the works of the late Amado V. Hernandez and many of the young creative writers today.

Proletarian creative writing inherits the people’s collective spirit in folk literature; the critical realism in Balagtas’ allegorical romance, *Florante at Laura*; the criticism of social structure and manners and the anticolonial and democratic thrust of Rizal’s *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* and his essays; the patriotic spirit in anti-American plays during the early years of US colonial rule; and also the critical realism and democratic spirit in short stories, novels and poems in all the decades that have passed in the 20th century.

As the people’s revolutionary movement grows and advances, proletarian creative writers are bound to increase their literary output in all forms and raise its aesthetic quality from one level to another. Their standpoint, themes, heroes, plots and direction evoke the

acute interest of the largest possible readership and audience - the working people.

The use of the national language plays a decisive role in stimulating both proletarian literary activity and the interest of the masses in proletarian literary works; and in isolating the diehard pro-imperialist liberal and other reactionary creative writers who wish to perpetuate their literary theory and tastes derived from reactionary bourgeois books in English as a result of US cultural domination.

The total victory of the national democratic revolution will guarantee the predominance of a national, scientific and mass culture and the most favorable conditions for the further growth of proletarian creative writing.

# The University of the Philippines: An Assessment

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**J**uly 9, 1983

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TO DRAW THE MOST BENEFIT from the University of the Philippines (UP) Diamond Jubilee, we need to know the most essential features of the university so that we can advance in the correct direction. The University of the Philippines has its essential reactionary features; and we base ourselves on and advance or develop the progressive features.

## ***Reactionary features***

The University of the Philippines was established in 1908 by a foreign power which had crushed the Philippine Revolution. The practical purpose of this new colonial power in founding this university was to brainwash and train a new educated elite to serve monopoly capitalist and local reactionary interests.

As the University of Sto. Tomas was to Spanish colonialism, so has been the University of the Philippines to US imperialism. As a medievalist religio-sectarianism has been the orientation of the UST, so has been an abstract liberalism that of the UP. This abstract liberalism camouflages the reality of US imperialism and promotes in particular a coopted pro-imperialist type of liberalism that is diametrically opposed to the revolutionary liberalism of the old democratic revolution of 1896. In the era of modern imperialism, such slogans of liberalism as the freedom of the individual and free enterprise in both goods and ideas easily mask the privilege of the monopoly capitalists and their local lackeys to exploit and oppress the nation and the people, especially the workers and the peasants, the two classes that are the real producers of goods in our society.

In conformity with the character of the state and society, the University of the Philippines has been a semicolonial institution since the grant of sham independence to the Philippines. The ideas and

techniques taught in the University suit most the needs of US imperialism and the local reactionary classes.

There has been a high proportion of UP alumni among the puppet presidents and high bureaucrats of the government of the Philippines. This is one good measure of the success of the UP as a neocolonial institution. In the deterioration of the ruling system and aggravation of foreign and feudal domination, the fascist autocrat and his most prominent technocrats are glaringly UP alumni. They shamelessly trample on the national and democratic rights and interests of the people even as they spout the rhetoric of liberal democracy.

The UP president and members of the board of regents reflect the degeneration of the ruling system. Their main qualification is not scholarly excellence and academic achievement but rabid loyalty to the fascist dictatorship. They are watchdogs and errand boys of the fascist autocrat. They are major and minor cronies in the Marcos bureaucrat capitalist empire. The UP is placed under their control so that they can suppress the progressives at any time and in the interests of US imperialism and the local fascist dictatorship.

The UP president is an agent of that particular Marcos-Cojuangco-Enrile combine in shady business schemes, most notorious of which is the colossal coconut racket. He is also an expert in shallow publicity gimmicks. To him, the UP Diamond Jubilee is no more than a fiesta, an occasion for collecting pledges and delivering safe platitudes and singing paeans to his fascist patrons.

He has no serious idea of his own about the reorientation of the UP from its antinational and antidemocratic character. Before he could solve any administrative problem of large significance, he devises a system by which he can shield himself from contacts with the masses of students and faculty members. Instead of demanding a justly higher appropriation for the university, he plays up the solicitation campaign for private pledges, projecting himself as some kind of hero and overrating his own gimmickry as the solution to the financial woes of the UP.

We are living under a fascist dictatorship whose uppermost concern is pouring colossal amounts of funds to the military and

uneconomic but heavy construction projects. The University of the Philippines or education for that matter is a minor concern of low priority. The UP is starved of funds and it has to go around begging for foreign assistance and pledges from the alumni.

The faculty and non-academic personnel have long been grossly underpaid. Salaries have stagnated even as inflation has rapidly eroded their real value. The tuition and other fees that UP students pay are constantly rising and the real incomes of their parents have gone down abruptly. But the fascist and the UP authorities boast publicly that the UP student is oversubsidized. The fact is that the appropriations and foreign loans since the 1960s have gone mainly to overpriced building constructions and to foreign supplies as well as unnecessary programs and graftings to the university.

There are entire institutes initiated and manipulated by US and other foreign entities as well as by the fascist dictatorship. Since the UP presidency of Carlos P. Romulo, the World Bank and US foundations have provided funding and other forms of "aid" only to misdirect the university intellectually and financially in the long run.

The curricula in almost all colleges and departments are designed to develop intellectual and political subservience to the US and the fascist dictatorship. Subjects and activities for undisguised fascist propaganda have been introduced to rob UP and the students of time and money. Textbooks are mostly alien, made in USA.

The social sciences and the humanities are most scandalously dependent on US-made and US-oriented textbooks. The natural science and engineering courses are the most starved of local funds and are maneuvered to seek foreign funds; and are removed from a program of industrialization, which in the first place does not exist.

The College of Law uses Philippine textbooks unavoidably but its orientation is to learn reactionary laws, including the fascist issuances. Together with the College of Law, the School of Economics, College of Business Administration and the Departments of English and Political Science of the College of Arts and Sciences are the bulwarks of pro- imperialism and reaction although outstanding national democratic elements are to be found here.

Prevalent in the entire university are faculty members who have taken further studies in the United States and who have not been

critical and creative enough to contribute to the development of a national, scientific and mass culture and who are blatantly or subtly opposed to the national democratic revolution.

The composition of UP students does not reflect Philippine society. The overwhelming majority come from the petty and middle bourgeoisie; and the small and medium landlords. The minority comes from the big bourgeoisie and big landlord classes. Children of workers and peasants are a rarity, if there are any. In the first place, they generally do not go beyond grade four. Under the avowed liberal philosophy, various bourgeois subjective trends (empiricism, positivism, behaviorism, existentialism, solipsism, etc.) along with so many kinds of objective idealism circulate in the university. But in the main, the faculty members and students are driven to seek their place in the semicolonial and semifeudal society.

### ***Progressive features***

In relation to the medievalist and religio-sectarian tradition and orientation of the University of Sto. Tomas in feudal society, the official liberal ideology of the University of the Philippines is an advance, not to mention the wider range and larger number of students under the present social system.

However, the coopted pro-imperialist type of liberalism is playing the most effective reactionary role in the preservation of the semicolonial and semifeudal society. Even if at best it stands for academic freedom against encroachment by the dominant Church, it supports US imperialism and the comprador big bourgeoisie while it opposes the national and democratic interests of the people. This neocolonial ideology can be used to sugarcoat the fascist dictatorship.

What is truly progressive now is that categorically anti-imperialist type of liberalism which appreciates the old democratic revolution, strives to continue and carry it forward and knows how to ally itself with proletarian revolutionary thinking that informs the new democratic revolution. This progressive type of liberalism has taken roots in the University of the Philippines among the students and faculty members. It is anti-imperialist and anti-feudal although it has no clear idea of the future beyond the new democratic revolution.

Despite the predominance of that pro-imperialist type of liberalism in the UP, anti-imperialist liberal scholars have succeeded in putting out excellent works that present the revolutionary heritage of the Filipino people. During the 1950s, these works were published even under the official auspices of the UP. From then on, too, Philippine history has been taught from a progressive liberal and nationalist viewpoint. Still further, students and faculty members have advanced to understand basic Philippine problems—US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism—and the people's aspirations not only in the light of patriotic and progressive liberal principles but also in the light of proletarian revolutionary principles.

The new democratic awakening is a necessary prelude to the victory of the national democratic revolution. By itself alone, it does not win total victory for the people; it cannot even prevail over the reactionary character of the UP. But it prepares public opinion for the revolution as well as generates cadres who can fight in more effective ways to change the character of the state and the whole society. Only upon the total victory of the new democratic revolution can the UP be totally transformed.

Proletarian revolutionaries and broad new democratic forces have emerged in the UP mainly through extracurricular studies and practical activities. These include readings, social investigation of workers' and peasants' conditions, debates with reactionary authorities inside and outside the classroom, convocations, teach-ins, group discussions, creative workshops, writings and publications, mass organizations and concerted actions (rallies and demonstrations) in the university as well as in combination with other new democratic forces outside of the university campus.

There has been a revolutionary university within the dominant reactionary university. The few proletarian revolutionary elements in 1959 grew steadily through the 1960s by dint of hard work in the spheres of ideology, politics and organization. In due time, the new democratic and proletarian ideology had a positive impact on a great number of students and faculty members and through them on certain parts of the curricula and on certain subjects.

The great strength of the new democratic forces in the university surfaced most dramatically during the 1970-1972 period. The First

Quarter Storm (FQS) of 1970 swept the university and UP students stood out in the forefront of this cultural and political upsurge. The Diliman Commune of 1971 served to stress the desire of the UP students, together with their progressive teachers to make UP a cultural base for the new democratic revolution.

Since the upsurge of mass actions in the 1970-1972 period, an unprecedentedly great number of UP students and graduates have immersed themselves in the various fields of activity in the national democratic revolution. So many have gone to the extent of joining the revolutionary armed struggle. Their ability to grasp revolutionary theory and apply it on Philippine conditions is a priceless asset of the national democratic revolution. Among the most effective and tenacious cadres of the Philippine revolution today have come from the UP.

The reign of fascist terror has driven so many UP students and graduates to join the underground and the armed struggle in the countryside. But in the UP, the revolutionary struggle continues. UP students and faculty members in increasing numbers are courageously moving along the national democratic line in curricular and extracurricular activities. The influence of an irrepressible cultural revolution is so powerful that even highly placed reactionaries are obliged to pay lip service to it or take pains to misrepresent it. They know that they can no longer brandish their reactionary authority and ideas without being opposed by revolutionary and progressive students and faculty members.

Since the majority of students and faculty members belong to the petty bourgeoisie, there is a social basis for their adoption of national democratic and even of proletarian revolutionary ideas in the UP. The petty bourgeoisie is that stratum of the bourgeoisie that is least loyal to the rule of the big comprador-landlords, especially as it is a rule made extremely oppressive and exploitative by the fascists. As the political and economic crisis worsens, the petty bourgeoisie as a whole links itself more closely with the toiling masses and yields more elements who remold their class outlook and become proletarian revolutionaries. In the UP today, students and faculty members are revolted by the fact that they are obliged to learn and obey fascist orders. Fascism is antagonistic not only to proletarian

revolutionary ideas but also to the most fundamental principles of liberal democracy of whatever specific trend, conservative or progressive.

UP constituents find themselves extremely exploited. The faculty members and non-academic personnel are grossly underpaid. The students are hard pressed by the rapid rise of the cost of education and living.

It is possible for a tyrant to successfully terrorize and reduce the people to a very low socioeconomic level when they are bereft of correct revolutionary ideas. But the fatal problem of the fascist dictatorship is that there is a revolutionary movement guided by a correct theory and rooted among the basic masses of the people in factories, farms, communities, schools and everywhere else. It has a people's army that is growing ever more rapidly as it fights to advance the people's revolutionary cause.

In UP today, it is not only students from the petty bourgeoisie who are receptive to revolutionary ideas and acting militantly but even those coming from wealthier classes. The latter can remold their outlook and join their fellow students and their teachers in just actions for just causes. In fact, some elements from the wealthier or upper classes have become proletarian revolutionaries.

If the small number of liberal reformists in the Propaganda Movement of the 1880s had so much impact as to exhaust reformist possibilities and prepare the Philippine revolution of 1896, the ongoing new democratic cultural revolution with its far greater number of activists who are in their own country and are immediately revolutionary should have a far more powerful and far-reaching impact not only on the University of the Philippines but also on the whole nation.

The seed of the future University of the Philippines is now within the present UP. It is growing and is bound to rend asunder the integuments of the reactionary institution. Upon the total victory of the national democratic revolution, the revolutionary UP will certainly prevail. In the meantime, let us nurture the seed of the future university and coax it to grow.

***Perspective of the university***

The extreme oppressiveness and exploitativeness of the fascist dictatorship of the US-Marcos clique is coaxing the broad masses of the Filipino people to wage armed revolution. The struggle for national independence and democracy appears to be on the way of being completed before the end of this century.

If that happens, then in 2008 when the centenary of the university is held, the achievements of the university, its constituents and alumni in the completed national democratic revolution as well as in the socialist construction in progress shall be celebrated. The honorees would be proletarian revolutionaries and other patriots.

The UP shall play a prominent role in the development of a national, scientific and mass culture; and in the entire socialist revolution and construction. It shall remain at the apex of formal public education and shall provide the competent and creative personnel in every field of national endeavor requiring higher knowledge.

Reflecting the whole of society, the students shall come mainly from the working class and the peasantry. All students shall be admitted to any department on the basis of individual merit, choice by the student and need of the people. With the possible exception of students from well-to-do families, all students shall get their education free and receive allowances provided by the state and/or the productive enterprises. They may also receive a portion of the income of production-related courses.

The faculty members and non-academic personnel shall receive comfortable incomes even as study and living facilities for all constituents of the university are continuously expanded. The UP and public education in general shall receive high priority in government support. Under the firm principle that education serves the nation and the people, above all, the workers and peasants (and not just the dominant minority of the foreign and local exploiting classes as it does today), there shall be academic freedom for the university, its faculty and students. Teaching, research and learning shall be conducted according to the principle of drawing the truth from the facts and in the spirit of scientific inquiry and advance. Partisanship on the side of the proletariat and the people shall be

based on a comprehensive understanding of objective reality or of the contradictory aspects of the thing or the process in question.

The national language shall be the medium of education. The UP organization, curricula, subjects, textbooks and other study materials shall be the product of Filipino critical and creative energies. However, there shall be a strong institute of foreign languages to translate foreign materials bearing the latest advances in scientific knowledge and other cultural achievements abroad.

The UP faculty members and students shall learn seriously one or more foreign languages so that they can in person or through their works participate actively in cultural exchanges. The UP shall have extensive curricular exchanges with academic, scientific and research institutions all over the world.

The national heritage shall be cherished and studied even as the socialist revolution and construction shall be the overriding concern of the whole university and every department of the university. The main thing to consider in the linking of the old and the new is the advancement of the people's interests and aspirations.

The social sciences will be imbued with proletarian revolutionary ideas and will provide an adequate knowledge of contrary and outmoded ideas. Learning in these disciplines is to serve the nation and the people. Arts and letters shall flourish, especially as the works of both faculty and students are immediately interesting to the largest possible audience—the workers and peasants principally. There shall be a spiraling progress both of popularization and aesthetic standards. The natural sciences and engineering courses shall be directly related to the process of national industrialization and modernization of agriculture. There shall be productive enterprises attached to the university. There shall be access to enterprises elsewhere. Students shall be engaged in productive activities to acquire a comprehensive knowledge of basic principles and their application through practice and experiments.

Students in the medical courses shall be encouraged and required to serve the people, especially in the countryside during their curricular training and after graduation. In the first place, enrolment in the colleges of medicine, nursing, public health and the

like shall be allotted according to local area among other considerations.

Students in education shall be increased as the system of public education expands at all levels. The study of law shall continue even as the social revolution shall have done away with oppressive and exploitative laws and the sources of so many litigations. All other courses in the UP shall have been reoriented in the interest of the people.

The transformation of the UP from a reactionary institution to a revolutionary one shall be facilitated as more and more of its constituents shall in the next twenty-five years or so become more and more conscious of the national democratic revolution and the subsequent socialist revolution and construction and actively participate in both processes.

# Author's Note to Prison and Beyond

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**P**ublished by the Free Jose Maria Sison Committee in 1984  
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THERE ARE TIMES WHEN the poet seems to be struck by the afflatus. And he can compose the entire poem in a trice, as if the lines were in cadence with an accelerated heartbeat and came rushing, outracing the mind or the hand.

There are times when a single felt idea, image or metaphor, a mytho-pattern. A singing line or two, or some other element or fragment of the prospective poem ignites the whole creative process and soon results in at least a rough draft that takes so little effort to polish.

Is writing poetry so facile? No. And it is not only because most poems, which are well unified and precise in so many respects, obviously involve the disciplined use of skills in a difficult craft. The surges of “inspiration” are the result of prolonged and intense concentration of the poet in a special field of subjectivity—that of the poetic imagination, the most acute form of combining thought and feeling.

We assume here that to be mature and serious the poet has undergone a long and deepgoing process of arriving at a world outlook, enriching his life through personal experience and collective practice with others, masters and all along developing his own skills in the craft. But to create poems, the poet has to operate in the field of poetic imagination constantly or at the least for extended periods of time.

The muse of poetry is demanding and jealous. She abandons the poet if he is not devoted enough and he takes on some other preoccupying tasks. That is the reason why poets in the Philippines die or fade away when they become full-time journalists, advertising copywriters, teachers, clerks, politicians or what else. The present society does not allow poets to live on poetry.

In my case, I became so preoccupied with theoretical work and prose writing; and with practical tasks—political, educational and

organizational—in the national democratic movement from the late 1960s to the time of my arrest in 1977.

There were times when I would still try to write poems but it was always difficult to complete them. The few poems that I was able to write were twice taken by the military, once when I had to leave behind a portfolio of personal papers and the next time when I was captured.

It would only be while in solitary confinement that I would have so much time for composing poems. The muse has come back to me and has given me company. Can there be a more delightful cellmate in my circumstances?

# Uphold the Great Tradition of Progressive Artists

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## **M**essage to Nagkakaisang Progresibong Artista/Arkitekto March 10, 1984

Warmest revolutionary greetings!

I am exceedingly glad to learn that you are reviving the Nagkakaisang Progresibong Artista/Arkitekto (NPAA), an association that was propelled by the First Quarter Storm (FQS) of 1970 and was an outstanding champion of the national democratic movement before the fascist coup of the US-Marcos clique in 1972.

You are upholding a great tradition of artists in the struggle for national liberation and democracy and against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. I am sure that you are as deeply committed to the revolutionary cause of the people as your predecessors. I am aware that in moving toward the revival of NPAA you have been militantly participating in the great resurgence of the legal democratic mass movement against the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique.

Giant paintings, posters, drawings and other artistic works depicting the people's revolutionary struggle and its heroes have taken a prominent role in mass education and mobilization. These works inspire the people to unite and fight ever more militantly for national democracy against a fascist puppet tyranny.

I am confident that the revival of NPAA will result in a higher level of revolutionary consciousness and militancy among you and more works of art in the service of the people and their revolutionary struggle.

Your decision to revive NPAA among fine arts students is wise. With a secure base of young artists still in school, you can easily proceed to link yourselves with the alumni and other professional artists.

I congratulate you for reviving NPAA. Always keep in mind its fine tradition that has meant in the concrete, artists who have become well-rounded cadres in the revolutionary movement and works of art

that have continuously inspired the people to fight for their national and democratic rights.

I wish you all the success in your ideological, political, organizational and artistic work. Integrate the proletarian revolutionary theory of art, socialist realism and revolutionary romanticism with the concrete conditions of the Filipino people's struggle for national independence and democracy.

Long live Nagkakaisang Progresibong Artista/Arkitekto!

Unite and fight for democracy!

Down with the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique!

Create works in the service of the Filipino people!

Long live all Filipino artists!

Continue the national democratic revolution!

Long live the Filipino people!

# On Cultural Work among the Workers

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**M**ay 1, 1984

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IT IS MY HONOR AND privilege to address the national council and induction of officers of Makabayang Alyansa sa Sining Anakpawis (MASA).

The organization of MASA is highly significant. It is the first of its kind in the entire history of our country; an alliance of organizations of cultural workers based in factories among trade unionists and in communities among the urban poor.

I wish to congratulate all the officers, members and individual organizations of MASA for having come to this point of crowning their achievements with the formation of an alliance; and with the determination to forge ahead in developing the people's culture.

MASA consolidates your organizational efforts and achievements as it enhances the work of organizational expansion and of bringing the cultural and political struggle to a higher level.

It is my hope that with the formation of the alliance you would advance the work of reflecting and inspiring the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat and the entire people for national liberation and democracy against fascist, foreign and feudal domination. You have taken a proletarian stand in building cultural organizations and doing cultural work, particularly in the arts, among the workers. To take this stand is to think, feel and act according to the needs, interests and aspirations of the working class as well as in the light of revolutionary theory.

You must firm up your stand by constantly conducting social investigation among the working class and political and theoretical studies on the historic mission of the working class among your membership.

Only by creating and presenting artistic works based on the lives of the workers and showing their struggle to overcome the forces that oppress and exploit them can you succeed in your cultural work among the workers. Even if all or most of you are workers, each of

you or each organization can only have a limited knowledge of the lives of workers at every given time. You must therefore always strive to learn more through investigation, closer links with more workers and participation in their struggles.

Cultural work is an important and necessary part of the working class movement. To be able to rise as the vanguard in the national democratic revolution, the proletariat must wage struggles and win victories not only in the economic and political spheres but also in the cultural sphere.

The workers must shake off the deadening influence of decadent bourgeois and feudal culture that outrightly denigrates them or subtly distracts them and at the same time glorifies those who oppress and exploit them. The workers and their own cultural workers must create their own proletarian revolutionary culture.

You must bring to the fore the heroic qualities of the working class as the most advanced productive and revolutionary force in this country and in the whole world destined to free the nation and mankind from the scourge of imperialism and all reaction. Proletarian revolutionary ideas, sentiments and values must arise to strengthen the spirit not only of the proletariat but also of the entire people.

There is the need for all of you to devote time to the study of the national democratic program of the proletariat and the people in the semicolonial and semifeudal conditions of our country. In connection with the general program, you can find your own bearings and define the specific program for your own work.

Although the working class is the vanguard class in production and revolution, it is still very much less in number than the peasantry which constitutes the majority in our semicolonial and semifeudal society. The working class cannot free itself if the entire nation were not freed—if it did not combine with the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie in revolutionary struggle.

The artistic works that you create or present must take into account and give expression to the basic worker-peasant alliance; the alliance of the toiling masses and the urban petty bourgeoisie as the basic forces of the revolution; and the alliance of these basic forces with the vacillating national bourgeoisie.

Of course, you must give the utmost importance to the worker-peasant alliance because this covers more than 90 percent of the people. You must present the strong natural and social links between the workers and the peasants.

There must be close coordination between the workers and the peasants as they struggle for their national and democratic rights in their respective areas. The trade union and strike movement up to the nationwide strike and general uprising are certainly related to the peasant movement and armed struggle in the countryside.

Proletarian cadres lead the national democratic revolution in both urban and rural areas. Workers who can no longer earn their living or work for their cause in the urban areas can easily take up revolutionary work in the countryside under the guidance of the revolutionary party of the proletariat.

Those of you who have received basic political education by studying the national democratic program and the specific program of your alliance must strive to learn the revolutionary theory of the proletariat, which includes philosophy, history, political economy (including a critique of imperialism), social science, ethics and aesthetics.

You can have a primer and a selection of articles by which individuals and groups can learn basic principles and firm up their proletarian world outlook and methodology.

Those who wish to lead in the cultural front must always improve their understanding of the revolutionary theory of the proletariat. And, of course, they should take special interest in proletarian aesthetics which they must be able to transmit in down-to-earth terms to all cultural workers.

The class struggle which begins in the economic sphere and rises to the level of revolutionary class struggle in the political sphere must be reflected in the cultural sphere. Whether you use traditional or new art forms, you must infuse these forms with the concrete sensuously human content of the national and social struggle.

Theory hastens your understanding of reality in general and guides your practice. Political education gives you an understanding of the national reality and the national direction. Social investigation gives you the raw materials for artistic creation.

It is the task of the artist to grasp the essential and typical in the social situation and to create the work of art as a beautiful organism pulsating with the sensuousness of human experience yet exuding general significance. An excellent work of art is both entertaining and enlightening.

Works of art for the workers should not be regarded as one-sided reflections of the economic and political conditions and struggles of the workers. These workers should also inspire more workers to join the struggle and raise it to new levels. There is a dialectical relationship between cultural work and other forms of work in the struggle.

It is gratifying to know that workers' cultural organizations have been very active and successful in entertaining, enlightening and inspiring workers in the course of strikes, marches, rallies and in other gatherings in work sites as well as in communities.

I understand that it is in the performing arts, music, drama, pageants, poetry readings and so on, where your work is most developed. Performances are being held on just about any available space—improvised stages, streets and plazas.

Your work has caught on. Spontaneously, while at work, workers individually or in groups sing the songs of the struggle and recite revolutionary poems and passages from dramatic works to fight off boredom in routine work, strengthen their revolutionary spirit and banish the negative influences of imperialist and reactionary culture. You have done creditable work in the visual arts, such as posters, giant streamers, effigies and photography. In due time, you will probably be producing sculptures, paintings as well as producing documentary films and full feature films.

Meaningful images are powerful. A single picture can tell a story much more quickly than written words. And more people are reached. In great numbers, workers and their children can learn to draw caricatures against the enemy just as they can easily compose ditties, rhymes, skits and tableaux.

Creative writing for workers has also made some progress, especially in poetry, music, drama and other forms which can be used by the performing arts. But forms of creative writing such as the short story, novelette and novel lag behind in quantity and attention

given. Creative writing for the performing arts and private reading need to be promoted by your organizations. You can encourage the workers in general to submit story lines and some workers who have the ability to write what they can. But you must have a reliable group of writers who can create works of increasingly high quality for the workers.

The staging and publication of their works are powerful moral incentives for writers. But they must also be compensated. Income from performances and publication sales must be able to support full-time cultural workers, including writers of proven merit. You can also commission writers.

While I have lauded the success of your organizations in cultural work, I propose that MASA and its component organizations continually seek to improve on the content and form of the works that you create and present.

There is indeed a need for ditties, pageants, skits, rhymed statements, effigies, posters and the like. These are very popular forms of art. They are very effective forms for propaganda and agitation. These are easily done and understood.

Especially because you are doing cultural work among the masses of workers, you must uphold the importance of these simple forms of popular art and popularize them further. But in response to critics who demand higher aesthetic standards, you must indeed encourage the creative writers to produce works of higher quality that can be appreciated by the workers and the people, including university audiences. I would like to see the day that under the auspices and stimulus of your alliance proletarian multi-act plays, operas, novels, full-length feature films and the like would flourish. The creation and presentation of these works would constitute the high points of your mass cultural work.

Having formed an alliance, you can make greater achievements in your cultural work. You can set and realize a program of ideological, political, organizational and artistic achievements. You can pool more human and material resources to advance your work. You can have exchanges of artists and art works between the organizations, factories and communities. You can conduct seminars and workshops on a wide scale. You can hold comprehensive

cultural festivals as well as specialized festivals in the various art forms. You can choose the best of the works in every art form and hold these up as models and anthologize them from year to year.

I wish you all the success in your work. I am sure that you will contribute an ever larger share in arousing, organizing and mobilizing the workers and the rest of the people for the victory of the national democratic revolution.

# Lectures on Culture in Philippine Crisis and Revolution

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## **V. Crisis of Philippine Culture (1946 to the Present)**

**Fourth of the Series of Ten Lectures**

**from Philippine Crisis and Revolution**

**April 25, 1986**

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CULTURE IS THE REFLECTION of the economy and politics. The dominant forces and the newly emerging forces in the economy and politics are also those in culture. These contradictory forces and their essential contradictions take ideological forms and involve definite apparatuses in the sphere of culture.

Culture encompasses the modes of existence and trends of thought in philosophy, politics, economics, the natural and social sciences, art and literature, jurisprudence and morality. The apparatuses of culture include institutions, various types of organizations and personnel that concentrate or specialize in cultural work.

However, culture is not simply the ideological reflection of current forces and contradictions in the economy and politics. It is also the accumulation of notions, customs, habits and the like which date as far back as prehistory, and which persist in current circumstances for so long as there are carriers and they are part of the social psychology of the people.

The main concern of this discussion is to present the crisis of Philippine culture in relation to the crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal society. We focus on the dominant cultural forces as they seek not only to reflect but also to react to politico-economic realities and trends, and in the process contradict newly emerging cultural forces and play their reactionary role in the crisis of Philippine culture and society.

Let us focus on the dominant forces as they play their antinational, antiscientific and antipeople roles against the newly

emerging forces of a national, scientific, and mass culture.

### ***The dominant cultural forces***

The two dominant cultural forces in the Philippines are US imperialism and the Roman Catholic Church. The first is the more dominant force. In the semicolonial and semifeudal culture of the Philippines, these forces purvey the dominant ideas and control the dominant cultural apparatuses.

In defeating the old democratic revolution and imposing its power on the Filipino people, the US employed not only its superior military power and its readiness to promote the rise of a resident or Filipino comprador big bourgeoisie but also the ideology of a pro-imperialist liberal democracy to coopt the revolutionary nationalism and progressive liberal democracy of the old democratic revolution.

The US built and expanded the public educational system and established the University of the Philippines (UP) in order to purvey the propaganda of modern imperialism (couched in the terms of conservative liberal democracy) and produce literate workers and more native professionals and technicians than the colonial and feudal system could accommodate.

To produce the cream of US-educated Filipinos, the US undertook the pensionado system in the US colonial period. In the semicolonial period, the US has instituted scholarship grants under official agencies and private American foundations to produce a new crop of pro-US academicians, government technocrats, and private managers. It has systematically provided training for Filipino military officers in the US forts.

At every level of the Philippine educational system, pro-imperialist concepts and methods hold sway through US-trained educators and US-oriented programs of study and study materials. These make up the latest colonial mentality of the educated Filipinos who come mostly from the urban petty bourgeoisie and exceptionally from the toiling masses; and who pursue careers as high bureaucrats, professionals in private practice, business executives and military officers.

The mass media comprise one more cultural field dominated by US imperialism and its cultural agents. The print and electronic media have grown as vehicles of pro-imperialist and reactionary

propaganda and advertisers of US products and shapers of Filipino consumer taste. US-made movies and TV programs and US-oriented radio programs are the most effective purveyors of pro-imperialist concepts and style, including the most vulgar and decadent notions.

The Catholic Church adjusted itself to US domination as soon as this started at the beginning of the century. The Church had big comprador agencies during the Spanish colonial period, and could sell its friar estates to expand its big comprador interests in banking and new commercial firms.

Since then, the Church has maintained its essentially feudal ideology together with the ascendant ideology of modern imperialism and reluctantly accepted the principle of separation of church and state. The superimposition of modern imperialist ideology on feudal ideology has reflected the semifeudal economy and politics.

As an institution, the Church has been a strong ideological defender and sanctifier of the comprador big bourgeoisie and landlord class. Its cultural influence is widespread among the people through catechetical work, rituals, sermons, prayer campaigns, publications and Christianized native customs or what is called folk Christianity.

The pontifical University of Sto. Tomas is no longer as prestigious as it used to be when it was at the apex of the educational system in the Spanish colonial period. But the church has developed its own extensive educational system. It accounts for most of the private schools at every level, rivals the public educational system at the primary and elementary levels, and surpasses it at the secondary and tertiary levels.

The "best" Catholic schools are well known as schools for the children of the exploiting classes. And even if the social encyclicals of the Pope denounce both capitalism and liberalism on the one hand, and socialism and Marxism on the other, in order to uphold the spiritual mission of the Church and feudal values as being transcendent over social classes, the Catholic universities and colleges are in fact efficient propagators of bourgeois economic theories, methods of business management and the most rabid anti-communist, and counterrevolutionary ideas.

The Catholic traditional facilities, schools and mass media; and other modern facilities augment the major non-sectarian facilities in spreading pro-imperialist and reactionary ideas and in producing men and women with mixed-up values of feudal idealism and bourgeois subjectivism.

### ***The antinational role***

In laying the foundation of semicolonialism through unequal economic and military agreements in the latter half of the 1940s, the US used the Cold War to equate anti-imperialism with communism as malapropism and cussword. Cleverly, the US and its Filipino cultural agents counterposed the abstract liberal concept of individual rights against the concept of national sovereignty and against that of the Philippines as an independent nation-state.

US imperialism has been playing the most forceful role in opposing the national sovereignty and independence of the Filipino people. For Filipino patriots to stand for national sovereignty and independence is to meet the indifference or disdain of the US-leaning intellectuals and incur the loss of opportunities within the cultural and educational system, if not gain the dreaded classification of “subversive.”

An effective subaltern of US imperialism in fostering colonial mentality and discrediting the anti-imperialist movement as a communist ploy is the institutional Catholic Church. It has played the special role of counterposing religious sentiments against the anti-imperialist movement in the same manner that it did during the Spanish colonial period against the anti-colonialist movement.

In the 1950s, the Church vociferously opposed in quick succession the anti-imperialist revolutionary movement, the propagation of such national liberal treasures as the *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, the Recto nationalist crusade, the progressive liberal works in the University of the Philippines and President Garcia’s “Filipino First” policy. As intellectual commandos of the Church, American Jesuits and their Filipino disciples stood out in seeking to suppress anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist ideas and in pushing the Anti-subversion Law.

In the 1960s, however, the anti-imperialist initiative of proletarian revolutionaries and their united front with progressive liberals moved

to counterattack the pro-imperialists and cold warriors, and won great victories for the anti-imperialist movement in the political and cultural fields. A new democratic culture with a strong content of anti-imperialism sprang up despite continued US cultural aggression through American foundations. Marxism-Leninism took the lead in the great intellectual and cultural movement.

Filipino intellectuals became increasingly proud of their own national language and used it in defiance of the longstanding supremacy of English in classrooms, official communications and high literature. Pride in the revolutionary tradition and folk achievements in the national cultural heritage was also strong.

In 1970-1972, a new democratic cultural revolution burst out and flowered. Large numbers of the educated began to question, criticize and reject the imperialist features of American culture and education. They were agitated by the crisis of the ruling system and inspired by the growing mass movement. Special mention should be made of the First Quarter Storm of 1970. The educated were disgusted with the US war of aggression in Vietnam, and were encouraged by the example of an increasing number of American intellectuals rejecting the reality and ideological presumptions of US imperialism.

The imposition of the fascist dictatorship in 1972 was the desperate answer of the US and local reactionaries to the rising anti-imperialist movement. Like all other revolutionary forces, the forces of the cultural revolution continued to grow in the urban underground and guerrilla zones.

The fascist dictatorship carried out the US-dictated PCSPE (Presidential Committee to Study Philippine Education) recommendations to “streamline” the Philippine educational system for the supposed purpose of turning out more technically skilled graduates for the foreign multinational firms. But jobs were never significantly increased by the foreign monopolies in the increasingly depressed economy.

The fascist regime also carried out the US-dictated policy to produce more textbooks funded by World Bank loans. The textbooks became vehicles of pro-imperialist and fascist propaganda to augment the daily propaganda churned out by the controlled mass media.

Public education was starved of government funds. And the teachers were deprived of decent pay as the students also suffered higher costs of living and study.

Leaders of the Catholic Church endorsed or condoned the fascist dictatorship of the US-Marcos clique because it presented itself as an anti-communist force. But in most of the 1970s and onward, progressive religious leaders and church people rose in increasing numbers to side with the people in defense of their human rights in the face of outrageous atrocities and abuses by US-instigated fascists, as well as in defense of their national rights in the face of imperialist plunder through multinational firms and banks, and the violation of national sovereignty and territorial integrity through US military bases.

The defection of the educated from the antinational cultural control and influence of US imperialism as well as the increase of religious progressives who take a patriotic stand within the Catholic Church are a manifestation of the crisis of a cultural system which is pro-imperialist and reactionary.

Serious breaches in the dominant cultural forces are bound to widen and be taken advantage of by the forces of the new democratic cultural revolution.

### ***The antiscientific role***

It is easy to be impressed with US scientific and technological advances, and to fall into thinking that the US can help in the scientific and technological progress of the Philippines.

However, if we consider that the US opposes national industrialization of the Philippines and wants our country to remain agrarian and to hope for nothing more than some labor-intensive enterprises, then the US cannot be expected to be the wellspring of scientific and technological progress for the country while it remains semicolonial and semifeudal in character.

The Philippine educational system is deliberately bereft of programs to promote studies in the basic sciences. However, it produces a considerable number of engineers and technologists whose number is quite excessive relative to the job opportunities in the pre-industrial economy. So they take on jobs as sales personnel

of the multinational firms. And those who cannot get jobs locally, emigrate.

The relative excess of engineers and technologists was the result of a rapidly expanding educational system in the 1950s and 1960s and a slowly expanding educational system falling behind the increase of children and youth of school age in most of the 1970s. The general deterioration of the educational system that has become obvious in the 1980s will produce less engineers and technologists even for emigration.

There has also been a lessening of demand from the US and elsewhere abroad for health professionals, engineers, technologists and skilled workers.

While some people like to flatter themselves that the export of professionals and skilled labor is a manifestation of the progressive status of the Philippines, it is actually a manifestation of stagnance and crisis—the inability of the national economy to absorb that which has to be exported at a cheap price despite the high costs of education that Philippine society has to shoulder.

There is one phenomenon that is being missed. While some professionals choose to seek jobs abroad, others join the revolutionary movement. This is one phenomenon that manifests a grave crisis in the system. As a matter of fact, an increasing number of students and college graduates are predisposed to join the revolutionary movement. The entire urban petty bourgeoisie is swinging to the side of the toiling masses in a common struggle against oppression and exploitation.

Philosophy, the social sciences, arts and letters, law, education, economics and business courses are fields of explicit and extended theorizing and propagandizing by the cultural and educational agents of US imperialism and the Catholic Church.

The overwhelming majority of college students and graduates are in these fields. In less critical times, they are the carriers of the most unscientific, obscurantist, pro-imperialist and reactionary ideas. But in more critical times, they are assailed by the basic ills of society that their formal education cannot explain and they are drawn to the scientific theory and practical struggle of the proletarian revolution and the broad national democratic movement.

Some can reject both the bourgeois subjectivism of imperialist ideology and the medieval metaphysics of the most numerous church and find their way clear to proletarian revolutionary theory and practice. Others learn to keep whatever is scientific and useful in their formal education and even their religious convictions and at the same time understand and accept the general program of the new democratic revolution.

The conspicuous swing of college students and graduates to the national democratic movement is a manifestation of the crisis of Philippine culture and society. They are calling for relevant education and the radical transformation of society.

### ***The antipeople role***

US imperialism and the Catholic Church have produced together a semicolonial and semifeudal culture that suits the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class as ruling classes.

This culture serves to rationalize, sanctify, legitimize and prettify the system of oppression and exploitation. It seeks to disarm and lull the oppressed and exploited people mentally, emotionally and morally and make them accept their condition.

At the highest level of the cultural system, the ruling classes reign supreme as the policymakers, owners and controllers of the main cultural institutions, the educational system, the mass media and all other major means of influencing the thinking, feeling and morality of the people.

The intelligentsia is the recruiting ground for the most efficient cultural personnel of the ruling classes. But the overwhelming majority of the intelligentsia cannot climb the social ladder from the level of the salaried to that of the ruling classes. In times of crisis, the intelligentsia tends to link up with the toiling masses of workers and peasants and increasingly criticizes and denounces the system of oppression and exploitation.

The semicolonial and semifeudal culture does not only assert in explicit and subtle ways the prerogatives of the big compradors and landlords, but also deprives millions of children of educational opportunities and limits most of the school children to the level of Grade IV, a level which does not guarantee literacy. It further churns out a vulgar and degrading cultural fare to distract the toiling masses

of workers and peasants from their own class interests and from the class struggle.

But the crisis of the economic system breaks out into a crisis of the political system. The social unrest and the inability of the ruling classes to rule in the old way result in the most bitter economic and political struggles within the ruling classes and between the ruling and the ruled classes. The class struggle extends to the cultural field. In seeking to win political power, the most advanced productive and political force—the working class—is represented by its party which has a theory and a practical program which encompasses not only economic and political objectives but also a cultural objective—the new democratic culture—to arouse and muster the basic alliance of the working class and peasantry as the main force, and to win over the middle social strata in a national united front.

This new democratic culture serves the people and combats the culture of the semicolonial and semifeudal society.

# A national, scientific and mass culture

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**E**ighth of the Series of Ten Lectures  
from *Philippine Crisis and Revolution* at the Asian  
Center,

University of the Philippines Diliman, from April 15 to May  
20, 1986

May 13, 1986

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TO ACCOMPLISH THE FILIPINO people's new democratic revolution, which is a comprehensive social revolution, it is necessary to make revolution not only in the economic and political fields but also in the cultural field.

Otherwise the US and the local reactionary classes could use their cultural institutions and influence to control without cease the hearts and minds of the people and facilitate counterrevolution in every field. Up to the end of the 1950s, the attempt to resume the national democratic revolution was a dismal failure, and among the essential causes was the failure of the revolutionary party to undertake a new democratic cultural revolution.

The vigorous ideological and other cultural work of proletarian revolutionaries in the 1960s ushered in the new democratic cultural revolution which broke out in the 1970-1972 period starting with the First Quarter Storm of 1970. This cultural revolution would help carry forward the new democratic revolution in a big way.

### ***The new democratic cultural revolution***

Pursuant to the dictum that there can be no revolutionary movement without a revolutionary theory, the proletarian revolutionaries engaged in ideological work despite the dangers posed by the Anti-Subversion Law.

Ideological work involved the study of the classical works of Marxism-Leninism, the contemporary works of successful proletarian revolutionaries in other countries and the writings of Filipino revolutionaries. It necessarily involved the study of Philippine history and circumstances with close attention to the basic social problems

of the Filipino people and the Philippine revolutionary movement from 1896 to the 1950s.

The point was to integrate the revolutionary theory of the vanguard class and party with the concrete practice of the Philippine revolution. The ideological work resulted in the re-establishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines under the theoretical guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, and on the basis of the program of people's democratic revolution.

What the proletarian revolutionaries did was no different from what the principal leaders of the Katipunan and the Philippine revolution had done in applying the principles of revolutionary liberal democracy on the concrete conditions of the Philippines.

The proletarian revolutionaries challenged the dominant promperialist and feudal culture in three ways: the adoption of Marxism-Leninism as their theoretical guide; the application of this on Philippine conditions through the program of people's democratic revolution; and the promotion of a national, scientific and mass culture.

Soon enough, the new democratic cultural revolution broke out. This took the form of massive rallies and marches, widespread teach-ins and discussion groups, the vigorous promotion of the national language, the efflorescence of protest art and literature, and the reorientation of social research and science teaching among many teachers and students. All these were undertaken along the new democratic line.

The popular call for a national, scientific and mass culture was resounding. The students, labor leaders, teachers and other professionals were in the forefront of the new democratic cultural revolution. They formed organizations in the Manila-Rizal region and other urban areas to pursue the new democratic revolution and create a new democratic culture.

At the same time, proletarian revolutionaries who were in the countryside intensified their ideological work and promoted a new democratic culture. As a matter of course, they were engaged in theoretical and political education but they also conscientiously established cultural organizations in the rural areas.

It can be assumed that the proletarian revolutionaries have advanced in their ideological and other cultural work as they have advanced in other aspects of their revolutionary work despite the rigors of the life-and-death struggle between revolution and counterrevolution.

To speak of a new democratic cultural revolution espousing and creating a national, scientific and mass culture is necessarily to affirm the fruitful activism of proletarian revolutionaries in ideological and other cultural work.

But the progressive liberal democrats have also made significant contributions to the preparations and conduct of the new democratic cultural revolution. They have done well in recalling the revolutionary spirit of 1896, joining the anti-imperialist and antifeudal struggle, combating the reactionary character of the dominant church and defending civil liberties.

The progressive liberal democrats can make bigger contributions to every major aspect of the new democratic revolution only in combination with the proletarian revolutionaries. Both proletarian revolutionaries and progressive liberal democrats recognize that together they can win the new democratic revolution and create a national, scientific and mass culture.

Under the impact of the new democratic cultural revolution, which has militated large numbers of educated youth, quite a number of professors and other professionals who have taken higher studies in American and local reactionary schools, and even priests and nuns of the dominant church, have recognized the need for a national, scientific and mass culture.

The new democratic revolution is creating its own organizations and means and at the same time penetrating and taking portions of cultural institutions and processes which have been used to dominate the people.

### ***The national aspect***

The new democratic culture has a national character. It upholds, defends and promotes the national sovereignty and independence of the Filipino people. It celebrates the revolutionary struggle and achievements of the Filipino nation. It inspires this nation to realize its aspirations and attain greater achievements.

It does away with colonial mentality and confronts every form of US cultural aggression. It enhances patriotism, the self-respect and the self-reliance of the nation. But it is ever ready to learn and accept foreign things that benefit the nation.

It preserves and cherishes the national cultural heritage from as far back in time as can be brought to light. It seeks to learn from the past in order to serve the present without prejudice to the future.

It promotes the use of the national language as the principal medium of official communication, education and information. The point is to facilitate the common understanding of the entire nation. The dominance of English must be ended although this language may remain the principal language for foreign intercourse. While it is concerned with maintaining and developing a modern nation-state, the new democratic culture embraces, respects and promotes the local languages and cultures, especially those of national minorities that have rebelled because of Filipino chauvinism and discrimination. Linguistic and cultural plurality enriches Philippine culture. US control of Philippine educational and cultural policies through direct official and unofficial instruments and indirect ones like the World Bank must be terminated. Foreign assistance for education must not result in foreign control of educational policies, staffing, scholarship and research grants, construction of facilities, acquisition of materials and textbook content and production.

Educational policies, courses of study and textbooks (especially in the social sciences and humanities) must be made by Filipino educators imbued with the national spirit and patriotic ideas of the new democratic culture. Textbook writers must be encouraged and well remunerated.

All imported cultural materials like movies, TV programs, books, periodicals and the like as well as cultural performances which do not help in the cultural progress of the Philippines should either be highly taxed or banned, if corrupting.

Filipino writers and artists and their cultural productions must be supported with grants and other incentives through their organizations and must not be taxed. They must be enabled to live on their cultural work rather than depend on other means of livelihood.

No foreign entity whatsoever should own any major medium of communication, education or information. Political propaganda by any foreign entity would be prohibited. Commercial advertising by US and other transnational corporations shall be under strict supervision and control.

### ***The scientific aspect***

The new democratic culture has a scientific aspect. It adopts a scientific outlook and methodology. It combats the promperialist and reactionary ideas of feudal metaphysics and bourgeois subjectivism. But it does not waste its time in public on theological and philosophical issues. It respects the freedom of thought and belief. And it seeks the united front and practical cooperation of all scientists, engineers and technologists for the industrial and all-round development of the motherland whether they be dialectical materialists, bourgeois empiricists or believers in a deity.

Science and technology is promoted with the clear purpose of developing the country industrially and economically. The ranks of scientists, engineers and other technologists will be rapidly expanded. Their scientific and technical expertise shall be used creatively and productively. No longer shall their priorities be limited to seeking positions as sales executives or minor technicians in foreign transnational corporations here and abroad. They shall be in charge of basic processes and full-scale construction.

Programs of study in the basic sciences, engineering, and modern agriculture shall be rapidly expanded. Teachers and students in these fields shall be given top priority and all-out support in remuneration and facilities. They shall be given opportunities to learn the most adaptable and latest advances in science and technology abroad through exchange programs and the acquisition of new equipment from abroad. The scientific outlook and methodology shall prevail in the social sciences. Social science studies and research shall concentrate on the processes of oppression and exploitation through the ages and in recent or current circumstances and on the struggles of the oppressed and exploited to liberate themselves. The point is not only to understand or interpret the laws of social change, but to change oppressive and exploitative social conditions.

The social scientists should be encouraged to do their social research among the people and not to limit themselves to library research. The point is to learn how the people themselves can change their own conditions for their own benefit without the strictures of dogmatism and bourgeois scientism and the unreasonable trends of thought and belief among the people.

In the humanities, it is part of the scientific outlook and methodology to know and respect all the cultural accomplishments of the past, preserve them for appreciation or criticism, and adopt traditional cultural forms for the promotion of revolutionary ideas and sentiments.

Social realism, revolutionary romanticism, social criticism and other healthy schools of thought and trends of style must be encouraged in new artistic and cultural creations and in critical work. Large numbers of artists must be able to live on their artistic professions through their own organizations and cultural production units. Health, sports, entertainment and all other cultural programs must be geared towards the mental and physical well-being and fitness of the people for social revolution and construction.

Within and outside definite programs in the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities, in direct relation to definite programs of the social revolution and construction, full play must be given to the initiative and creativity of individuals and collectives.

The professionals and technicians of the country would not have to go abroad if opportunities for their gainful employment and creativity were assured and expanded by the industrial and all-round progress of the country.

### ***The mass aspect***

The new democratic culture has a mass character. It serves the people, especially the toiling masses of workers and peasants, in their all-round revolutionary struggle and productive work.

To raise their own consciousness and effectiveness in revolution and production, the people must become literate. The public school system must be expanded and high school education for the youth must become universal. Campaigns must be waged to wipe out illiteracy, and must be effective because they are related to revolution and production.

The higher the level of formal education that certain persons attain, the greater is their tendency to be divorced from the toiling masses. To close the widening gap between those who have higher education and those who have lower education, there must be no let-up in promoting the revolutionary spirit that binds the two and there must be practical programs of bringing to the people the direct service of the educated as well as programs to raise the educational level of the people who have had no opportunities to enrol in formal schools.

The print and electronic media must be used to bring complete courses of study to the unschooled as well as to popularize scientific and technical knowledge on current problems in social revolution and production.

Artistic and other cultural creations that are of high aesthetic standards and that reflect the sufferings, struggles and achievements of the working people must be promoted. At the same time, a great mass of artists and cultural activists must be developed to create what they can, using traditional and modern forms.

There must be cultural cadres who live with the people and lead the educational and cultural work among them through educational and cultural organizations.

There must be cultural cadres deployable from centers ranging from the national to the municipal. And there must be cadres who come from local communities which sponsor their higher education and training for the purpose of serving them for a definite period of time.

The revolutionary orientation of education and culture and the spirit of service to the people are the motivation that will keep the professionally and technically trained in the country. So long as these motivations are instilled in them, and they get decent remuneration, the educated will not leave the country only to get higher remuneration but suffer the pain of exile.

In the course of the new democratic revolution, cultural cadres arise in the urban centers and in the local rural communities. The new democratic revolution will win because these cultural cadres do their work well, increase their ranks, and serve the people well.

# The Role of the Church in Social Change

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**A**ddress before the staff of the National Secretariat for  
Social Action  
April 1986

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THE CATHOLIC CHURCH has played a key role in social change in the Philippines. It has taken major initiatives and effected results of great profundity and comprehensiveness in every aspect of social change—moral, political, economic and cultural.

The church came with Spanish colonialism more than four centuries ago. It was under royal patronage. It may be said to have been an instrument of colonial policy and an adjunct of the brutal conquest of the people. And it may also be said to have been a civilizing force and a practical utilizer of colonialism as a means of carrying out the overriding spiritual mission.

At any rate, the Catholic church teamed up with Spanish lay authorities in building a colonial and feudal society out of the less developed and disparate native communities and in running a theocratic state from the 16th to the 19th century.

What stands out in the revolutionary anti-colonial and democratic consciousness of the people is that as a temporal or historical institution, the Catholic church, especially the friars, engaged in oppression and exploitation and that the officialdom of this church was determinedly against liberal reforms and then far more vigorously against the Philippine Revolution of 1896 whose main line was separation and independence from Spain.

But the church was also composed of people who owed loyalty to it as a religious institution. And there were leaders of the church—like Father Burgos—who inspired patriotic sentiments as they demanded respect for the rights of native secular priests and suffered injustice. There were priests who joined and took active part in the Philippine revolution. Father Aglipay stood out as vicar general of the Philippine revolutionary army and as an active guerrilla leader against the US war of aggression. There is more than enough basis

in Philippine history for Filipino priests to formulate and espouse a theology of liberation.

Through the Malolos Constitution, the Philippine revolution and the Filipino people established the liberal democratic principle of separation of church and state, as well as the freedom of thought and belief. But in both principle and practice, the relationship of church and state would remain problematic.

The claim of the church to moral authority over the flock can easily encompass political, economic, social and cultural issues controversial to the state or any entity outside of the state. Most bothersome to all those who stand for social progress and justice is that the institutional church and most of its leaders have a reactionary class character and tend to be akin to and enmeshed with the system of oppression and exploitation in the country at every stage of Philippine history.

The friar estates were a major cause of the Philippine Revolution of 1896. Though these are no longer a dramatic issue at present, the church and its officialdom are widely regarded as a bulwark of reaction and anti-communism in the service of US imperialism and the local exploiting classes. The church is often seen as a mundane investor in big comprador banks and firms, a landlord and a service institution for the exploiting classes.

The church assumes and presents itself as being above the existence of classes and class struggle and draws inspiration on social justice from the Holy Scriptures and the social encyclicals. But critics continue to point out that the first of the two great commandments is used to obscure the second and sanctify or legitimize social injustice.

It is often said by both believers and non-believers that were the institutional church and its officialdom to promptly and decisively use their material and moral power and influence in denouncing the grossest forms of injustice, especially foreign and feudal domination, such injustices would not last long.

It has been observed that Spanish colonialism lasted for centuries and that US imperialism has dominated the Philippines for close to a century because the church does not care to use its great

moral power in favor of the Filipino nation but instead makes itself available as a witting or unwitting tool of oppression.

For a change, the Catholic church and the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines have lately gained tremendous prestige from the issuance of the pastoral letter that declared the Marcos regime's lack of moral basis and legitimacy soon after the snap election and from Cardinal Sin's call for the people to protect the breakaway forces of Enrile and Ramos and in effect make their own uprising last February 22 to 25.

But acute observers still note that the Catholic church and the bishops would have prevented the US-Marcos regime from oppressing the Filipino people for so many years had they denounced it in the clearest terms of justice within the first two years of the fascist dictatorship. It took a long time before a pastoral letter could be issued to denounce Marcos tyranny at its roots.

We know for a fact though that the progressives among the priests, nuns and bishops have been a minority and that it had to take time to bring the middle roaders and the conservatives to a consensus of making a fundamental denunciation of the fascist dictatorship. And even now, conservatives can accept the overthrow of the despot Marcos only in the manner of reacting to and seeking to preempt armed revolutionary action by the people.

Nevertheless, despite the overthrow of the tyrant, the process of dismantling all the structures of the fascist dictatorship and restoring democratic rights is still incomplete and needs to be finished. At the same time, the basic problems of US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism remain to be solved and must be solved. So long as these continue to afflict the people, fascist dictatorship continues to have a basis for reemerging and armed revolution is bound to expand and intensify.

The thrust of my discussion is to suggest to the progressives within the church to increase their ranks, strive to change the promperialist and reactionary character and tendencies of the institutional church and officialdom and let the entire church become both a spiritual and social instrument for the liberation of the oppressed and exploited people.

There is an ample basis in the teachings of the church, in the tradition of Filipino revolutionary priests and in the example of Catholic religious leaders elsewhere for the religious progressives of today to persuade the bishops, all priests and nuns and the entire laity to take an active part in the just and noble movement to complete the struggle for national freedom and democracy.

# The Struggle for National and Social Liberation in Asia

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**S**peech delivered at the Literary Conference of Asian  
Writers  
at the Cunera Auditorium in Utrecht  
June 18, 1993

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I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE honor of being invited to speak on the subject of national and social liberation in Asia in your literary conference.

In the contemporary world, there are great sufferings and struggles of the peoples of Asia due to the ever worsening global crisis of monopoly capitalism and the rampage of reactionary monsters in various countries. There is an abundance of the raw material for reflection and distillation by creative writers in order to make a new wave of great revolutionary literature in the various forms.

The time constraint does not permit me to discuss extensively the past and current state of the art in Asian literature. But I think that I can make a modestly worthwhile contribution to your conference if I try to clarify the social reality and common problems that confront the people of Asia.

We cannot write any significant work of literature in any form if we do not grasp the socioeconomic, political and cultural realities and the great contradictions in society. We need to know and understand the facts of life, especially at this time when dramatic changes are occurring in the entire world and we are moving from an old period of revolutionary struggle to a new one.

A work of literature draws its content from real life. It is an abbreviated form of life. The constant challenge to the literary author is to create and concentrate so much life into the space limited by the literary form. In acquiring a life of its own, its organic unity, a work

of literature must be able to integrate the universal with the particular, the typical with the unique.

The creative writer has to comprehend what are the contradictions, the struggles and tensions in real life and has to make a choice between the progressive and reactionary stand. No one can escape the choice of taking a stand between being proletarian and bourgeois in the era of modern imperialism and proletarian revolution. For whom does the writer write? The choice has to be made between serving the people, especially the workers and peasants on the one hand and their oppressors and exploiters on the other.

No one can operate in the realm of culture, particularly in the field of art and literature, without a sense of the socioeconomic and political realities. Even the most absurd or the most nonsensical fancies and fantasies of the unremolded petty-bourgeois writers spell their typical egotistic role which is subservient to the big bourgeoisie and the reactionaries.

I presume that I speak before literary colleagues and friends who have a comprehensive view of society and yet take a stand partisan to the proletariat, all the working people and the oppressed nations and peoples. There is no other way to be progressive or revolutionary. After I discuss the sufferings and struggles of the peoples of Asia, I shall proceed to discuss those of the Filipino people because I know them better than any other people in Asia. I do so with the recognition of the fact that the Filipino people have a lot in common with other Asian peoples in terms of situation, suffering and struggles.

### ***The situation, sufferings and struggles of the peoples of Asia***

The overwhelming majority of the peoples in Asia have a common historical background of colonial and feudal subjugation and humiliation and are still living under agrarian semicolonial and semifeudal conditions. They suffer and struggle for national and social liberation within societies that are in chronic crisis and are now reeling from the unprecedented global crisis of monopoly capitalism. This is true in East Asia, South Asia, Central Asia and West Asia.

The neocolonialism practised by the imperialist powers has brought about the continuous state of depression and the further

degradation of societies in most Asian countries since the 1970s. The client states of neocolonialism have betrayed the people's aspirations for political and economic independence by becoming more corrupt, more servile and more dependent on foreign loans and foreign direct investments that favor the import of finished products and the production of cheap raw materials for export.

The prices of the raw-material exports of Asian countries have been consistently driven down by the overcapacity in the production of these, the stifling of national industrialization and by the substitution or lesser use of this type of exports by the industrial capitalist countries due to the rapid adoption of high technology in both industrial and agricultural production.

Thus, the neocolonial client-states in Asia have become more dependent on foreign loans to cover their trade deficits, to maintain their operations and waste resources on military forces and the overconsumption of a privileged few. But since the end of the 1970s, the general tendency of the international money lenders has been to hold back on new loans and to earn more from the debt service on the accumulated debt in most Asian countries.

In the 1980s, the foreign loans went more freely into China and India, for the purpose of economic subversion and converting these countries, together with the Soviet Union, into neocolonial appendages of the economic superpowers. Now in the 1990s, the whole of Asia has to face the general tendency of the three centers of world capitalism (United States, Japan and Western Europe) to retrench and consolidate themselves economically and financially in their own homegrounds and regions as they are buffeted by oceans of bad debts and by the unfolding of their domestic economic and social crisis.

Under these conditions, the neocolonial states in Asia have nowhere to go but plunge from one level of socioeconomic and political degeneration to another. The worst manifestations of the social crisis are the rampage of bureaucratic corruption, fascism and militarism, chauvinism and ethnic centrism and religious fundamentalism.

The peoples of Asia now suffer unprecedentedly intolerable oppression and exploitation in the course of the worsening world

crisis of capitalism and the crisis of the domestic ruling systems. The ground is fertile for the gradual resurgence and eventually rapid advance of the revolutionary struggle of the people for national and social liberation. In describing the Asian situation, I have started by referring to the general condition of most Asian countries, which in common are bereft of basic industries and are economically backward and underdeveloped. But Asia includes countries with different levels of socioeconomic development. In all these countries, there is an intensification of oppression and exploitation.

They are all in the web of monopoly capitalism and the global crisis of overproduction. This crisis is generated by high technology, the cut-throat competition among the three centers of world capitalism, the new investments of the winning supermonopolies that kill jobs with higher technology and by the long-running depression of most third world countries and the former Soviet bloc countries since the 1970s. In this global context, the bubble economy of industrial capitalist Japan has burst. The attempt of the United States to wrest back fields of investments and markets and at the same time compel the other centers of capitalism to share military costs in order to reverse or delay US strategic decline is causing serious economic crisis in Japan and is inducing the growth of nationalism and militarism.

The people of Asia can expect more oppression and exploitation, as a result of the drive of Japan, together with the United States and Western Europe to increase superprofits. The proletariat and people in the underdeveloped countries as well as those of Japan are stirring to resist the further degradation of their lives and the growing dangers of Japanese military adventurism, now licensed by such arrogant catchphrases as “UN peacekeeping,” “multilateral force” and “regional security.”

China has taken the road of capitalism, assumed the status of a neocolonial society and gone into social polarization, resulting in social turmoil such as that seen in 1989. Recent reports point to the widespread peasant unrest due to levies and exactions reminiscent of the days of Guomindang rule. These are in addition to reports about unrest among the workers, the unemployed and the middle social strata in the urban areas.

Conditions are now similar to those in pre-revolutionary times, when the bureaucrat capitalists, big compradors and landlords were always becoming richer and the broad masses of the people were always becoming poorer. The gloss in the Chinese economy is dependent on the pleasure of the United States concerning the most favored nation treatment as well as on the accommodation of Japanese monopoly capitalism while large parts of China are falling into levels of refeudalization and underdevelopment similar to most of Asia.

The export-oriented industries of the coastal areas of China are in the same bracket as those of Taiwan, South Korea, Hongkong and Singapore. Altogether they have created a glut of consumer goods which can no longer be absorbed as much as before by the overconsuming US and other industrial capitalist countries. The conditions of prolonged recession and even depression in these countries have resulted in underconsumption and social tensions and have induced the reemergence of nationalist, fascist and racist currents.

In the years to come, there will be a sharpening of struggle between those who wish to retain the socialist facade of Chinese bureaucrat capitalism and those who wish to establish an undisguised bourgeois state, as in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. At the same time, there will be a sharpening of the class struggle between the forces of revolution and those of counterrevolution.

In Northeast Asia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is exerting every effort to defend the cause of national independence and socialism and is under heavy political, economic and military pressures. In Southeast Asia, Vietnam is weighed down by problems of its specific history, including Soviet revisionist influence, and by its current drive to follow the example of Deng's China.

In the Philippines, the revolutionary forces and the people are resolutely waging people's war. They are determined to carry aloft the flaming torch of revolutionary armed struggle as a matter of patriotic and internationalist duty, especially at this time when the people of the world have just moved into a new period of revolutionary struggle. In Cambodia, the armed struggle for national

liberation and democracy is still continuing notwithstanding the truce settlement arranged by the United Nations.

In Indonesia, there is a high potential for the upsurge of the legal democratic movement and the development of people's war. In Burma, Malaysia and Thailand, objective conditions are favorable for the eventual resurgence of the revolutionary forces.

In South Asia, the semicolonial and semifeudal societies are prevalent and are in grave crisis. In India, which used to boast of basic industries under the ownership of the national bourgeoisie, there has been a process of neocolonization and compradorization, undermining the national industry and keeping the country under the dominance of the comprador big bourgeoisie and landlord class.

Under the greatly deteriorated conditions of South Asia, there is a ceaseless drive of the bourgeoisie and the reactionaries to promote all sorts of ethnic and communal violence, religious fundamentalism and ethno-linguistic strife to deflect the attention of the people. In Sri Lanka, there is a protracted armed conflict between forces driven by ethnic and religious motivations.

But there are persevering revolutionary forces that can ultimately lead the people on the road of armed revolution. South Asia, especially India, is one part of the world where the epic of protracted peoples' war comparable to that of China can be carried out.

In Central Asia, the new world disorder is exacting a heavy toll. The former Soviet republics are in violent turmoil. They are afflicted by the ravages of Soviet neocolonialism and by ethnic and religious conflicts. In Afghanistan, the savagery of ethnic conflicts continues among armed Islamic contingents.

In West Asia, the oil-producing countries in West Asia (except the states with small populations but with large oil production) are afflicted by grave socioeconomic crisis due to the global glut in oil production and misallocation of the oil income of the 1970s. The Gulf war of 1991 was the outcome of severe contradictions between Iraq and other oil producers as well as with the imperialist countries.

The secular states are either being replaced or threatened by Islamic fundamentalism. The forces that opposed Western imperialism but depended on Soviet social-imperialism are now in disarray. The hope of the people for national and social revolution

can be realized upon the exhaustion of bourgeois nationalism and religious fundamentalism.

The longrunning depression of the overwhelming majority of Asian countries is recoiling upon the centers of capitalism. In turn, the aggravated global crisis of capitalism inflicts further suffering on the people of Asia. The downward spiral is going on. All kinds of reactionary monsters are on a rampage as never before and continue to be manipulated by the neocolonial powers in order to divide and subjugate the people. But the very deterioration of the neocolonial states and societies provide the ground for the eventual resurgence of the revolutionary forces under proletarian leadership.

### ***The revolutionary struggle of the Filipino people***

Let me now focus on the Philippines as a typical victim of neocolonialism and as a country in which the people are engaged in a revolutionary struggle for national and social liberation against foreign monopoly capitalism and domestic reaction.

The Filipino people won victory against Spanish colonialism in 1898. It must be noted that they were ahead of the other colonized peoples in Asia in winning victory in the old democratic revolution against old-type colonialism. Unfortunately, the United States intervened and launched a war of aggression in 1899 to conquer the Philippines and convert it into its own colony under the aegis of modern imperialism.

Under direct colonial rule of US imperialism, the Philippines shifted from a feudal to a semifeudal society, chiefly dominated by a domestic comprador big bourgeoisie in the cities in collaboration with the more widespread landlord class in the countryside. In 1946 the United States adopted indirect colonial rule, granted nominal independence to the Philippines and turned over the national administration to the politicians of the local exploiting classes. Thus, the Philippines became a neocolony of the US in both political and economic terms.

As a neocolony, the country was again ahead of so many other colonized peoples of Asia, gaining formal independence in the aftermath of World War II, when the wave of national liberation and socialism became unprecedentedly strong. The neocolonization of the Philippines was also ahead of the general application of

neocolonialism by the US and other capitalist powers on the third world and the Soviet bloc countries.

What has become of the Philippines is a clear and continuous demonstration of the evils of neocolonialism. The Filipino people are suffering from aggravated underdevelopment, rapid extraction of superprofits and debt service payments, bureaucratic corruption, the ever-growing trade deficits, breakdown of production and social services, accumulated unemployment beyond 50 percent and impoverishment and malnutrition of the 80 percent of the people below the poverty line.

To suppress the legal democratic movement and revolutionary armed struggle, the reactionary government is carrying out a brutal total war policy. But the campaigns of suppression and deception succeed only in further inciting the people to take the road of armed revolution. Among the reactionaries themselves, there are violent contradictions because of the shrinking ground for their mutual accommodation within their own system.

As soon as the Philippines became a semicolony or neocolony, the revolutionary forces which had been born out of World War II were compelled to wage armed struggle. However, this was suppressed successfully by the US and its local puppets from the late 1950s onward. But notwithstanding all repressive measures carried out in the 1950s, the legal anti-imperialist and antifeudal movement resurged in the 1960s.

Ultimately, the revolutionary party of the proletariat, the Communist Party of the Philippines, was able to rebuild itself in 1968 and rectify previous errors and resume the revolutionary armed struggle in 1969 along the general line of people's democratic revolution against US imperialism and the local exploiting classes.

In the world era of modern imperialism and proletarian revolution the class leadership of the Philippine revolution cannot be but that of the proletariat. In a semicolonial and semifeudal country, it is also necessary that the peasantry which is the majority class be the main force of the antifeudal democratic revolution as well as that of the revolutionary armed struggle. The worker-peasant alliance is the foundation of the broad united front against the enemies of the revolution.

If we know our Marxist-Leninist theory of state and revolution, there can be no national and social liberation without the revolutionary overthrow of the big bourgeoisie and other reactionaries. This liberation cannot be achieved through an indefinite series of reforms and elections within the political and legal system of the big compradors and landlords.

In the Philippines, all forms of struggle are being waged—political, military, economic and cultural. Each of these has a distinct character. But all of them complement and help each other in advancing the revolutionary cause. The politico-military and socioeconomic forms of struggles progressively interact with the cultural forms of struggle. The political form of struggle involves the legal and illegal. It would have been impossible to launch the revolutionary armed struggle in the Philippines had it not been for the legal struggle in the entire decade of the 1960s. In the course of people's war, the legal struggle has always been coordinated with the illegal struggle.

The revolutionary armed struggle is the highest form of political struggle because it answers the central question of revolution, which is the seizure of political power. Social revolution is impossible without the prior overthrow of the ruling exploiting classes.

Thus, the Filipino people and the revolutionary forces are waging a protracted people's war. This is a politico-military form of struggle to empower the proletariat and the rest of the people. In the course of the people's war, the revolutionary party of the proletariat, the legal and illegal mass organizations, the alliances and the organs of political power are built. Even as the reactionaries are still well entrenched in the cities, the people's government can be built in the countryside where the people can build and accumulate their revolutionary strength.

The struggle for social and economic reforms is waged not only within the constraints of the political and legal framework of the big compradors and landlords, in which such reforms always come too late and too little. Far more significant and far more decisively, the social and economic reforms are being achieved in the guerrilla fronts and other areas where the revolutionary party of the

proletariat, the mass movement, the people's army and the organs of political power are carrying them out.

At the moment, land reform which involves land rent reduction, elimination of usury, improving of prices of farm products, raising of farm wages and promoting agricultural and sideline occupation is being well undertaken in the guerrilla fronts. Wages for non-agricultural workers are also being raised where the strength of the labor unions is directed by the Communist Party of the Philippines and enhanced by the presence of the New People's Army.

The cultural form of struggle is being vigorously waged. The general line of cultural work is to promote a national, scientific and mass culture. At the core of this are the cultural cadres who take a proletarian revolutionary stand, viewpoint and method.

In the Philippines, it is difficult or impossible for the enemy to stop the open and legal mass campaigns of political education and artistic and literary creations and presentations along a progressive and patriotic line. There are of course the great risks for the cultural cadres in the urban areas but they persevere and enjoy the support of the broad masses of the people. It is in the guerrilla fronts where the literary and artistic works are presented most freely and in the fullest revolutionary terms.

In Philippine revolutionary literature, traditional and modern, national, local and foreign forms and techniques are utilized. The point is to take up the revolutionary subject matter and present the workers, peasants and the Red fighters as the heroes. The oppression and exploitation of the people is concretely depicted but the revolutionary determination, the militant struggles and bright future of the people are also concretely unfolded.

Comprehensively and profoundly, Philippine revolutionary literature involves the continuity of the Filipino people's struggle for national and social liberation from the period of the old democratic revolution to the new democratic one. The creative writers, artistic performers and all other cultural workers in the revolutionary movement are conscious of carrying out a democratic cultural revolution of a new type.

They hope that in the future they shall also be able to carry out a socialist cultural revolution in order to further revolutionize the

superstructure and make sure that the socialist revolution will continue in the Philippines without let-up until the people of the world defeat imperialism and make communism possible.

In view of the degeneration and restoration of capitalism in previous socialist societies, they are acutely aware of the fact that when the bourgeoisie and other reactionaries are defeated politically and economically in a certain country the initial ground for their comeback is in the sphere of culture. In fact, the old and new agents of oppression and exploitation bank on the millennia of greed and superstition as well as on the influence of the international bourgeoisie in order to be able to undermine and destroy the socialist revolution.

In this conference I take this opportunity to call your attention to the 100th birth anniversary of Mao Zedong on December 26. It is pertinent for me to refer you to Mao's "Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art" as well as to all his teachings regarding the new democratic revolution, socialist revolution and construction and the theory and practice of continuing revolution under proletarian dictatorship in order to consolidate socialism, combat revisionism and prevent the restoration of capitalism in socialist society.

If we wish to have the most comprehensive and profound understanding of the situation in Asia and the world and our role as creative writers, we cannot dispense with the teachings of the great communist Mao Zedong on literature and society.

If we stop short of grasping those teachings, then we cannot have the clarity and effectiveness of the correct line and we cannot take full advantage of the new period of revolutionary struggle. This is a period when the bipolar world of the two superpowers is gone, when neocolonialism is getting exhausted, when the bankruptcy of modern revisionism is fully demonstrated and when the escalating oppression and exploitation of the people compels the reemergence of the proletarian revolutionary forces and the resurgence of the revolutionary movement at a new and higher level in all the continents at the same time.

# Cultural Imperialism in the Philippines

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**Lecture before a research class under  
the American Studies Program of Utrecht University  
November 23, 1994**

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FROM A EUROCENTRIC viewpoint, the Philippines is in the Far East. It is a group of 11 major islands and more than 7,000 minor islands. The islands total more than 300,000 square kilometers of land in the Pacific.

The archipelago has a configuration of being strung on a north-south axis, parallel to the coast of southern China and Vietnam which are hundreds of kilometers away westward. Northward are Taiwan and Japan and southward are East Malaysia and Indonesia, with which you are very familiar in Dutch history. East of the Philippines is the vast Pacific Ocean and some thousands of kilometers away in the same direction is the United States of America.

Since the Spanish-American war at the close of the 19th century, the United States had eyed the Philippines as a prize colonial catch because of its comprehensive natural resource base and its strategic location in the US imperialist design to turn the Pacific into an American lake for US big business and take a piece of the huge Chinese market.

The Philippines has a current population of 67 million. Its gross national product is about USD50 billion. By averaging this, you get an average annual per capita income of around USD700. This figure is dismal enough, but the reality is so much worse. Most of the income actually goes to the foreign transnational corporations and banks and to the local exploiting classes. Some 80 percent of the people, mainly workers and peasants, including urban and rural odd-jobbers, fall below the poverty line.

Around 85 percent of the people may be considered Malay. The rest include the aboriginal negroids, hill tribes of Austronesian origin and mixed-blood descendants of Chinese and Caucasians, including

Spanish, American and Indian mestizos. Since 500 B.C. the Malays have lived along the seacoast and big riverine areas. They speak more than 87 Malay languages and dialects. But the overwhelming majority speak 8 major Malay languages: Tagalog (29.7 percent), Cebuano (24.2 percent), Ilocano (10.3 percent), Ilonggo (9.2 percent), Bicol (5.6 percent), Kapampangan (2.8 percent), Pangasinan (1.8 percent) and Waray (0.4 percent).

The Malays were the most exposed to the control and influence of Spanish colonialism and Catholicism from the late 16th century to the end of the 19th century. They have also been the most exposed to the control and influence of American imperialism since the beginning of this century. But they retain their ethnolinguistic diversity.

Around 4.3 percent of the Philippine population belong to 12 ethno-linguistic communities called the Moro people in southwestern Mindanao, with Islam as a rallying point in their culture since the 13th century. Around 5 percent belong to the hill tribes whose origins may be traced back to the Austronesian migrations in the neolithic period. Only a fraction of one percent belong to the Negrito clans whose origins date back to 25,000 years ago, according to archeological evidence.

Manila-based Tagalog is the national lingua franca. Comprehension and use of this language have been popularized mainly by nationwide radio networks, Tagalog cinema, comics, the public school system and accelerated inter-island migrations. But there is the regional lingua franca in various parts of the country.

Regional and local languages are retained by the people, despite the spread of Manila-based Tagalog, the preferred use of English as a medium of instruction in the school system, as official language in the bureaucracy and as the language of the major electronic and print mass media and the use of Taglish (mixture of Tagalog and English) mainly among the university-educated people in Manila.

Eighty-five percent of Filipinos are baptized or registered Catholics; 4.3% are Muslim; 3.9% belong to the Philippine Independent Church (a patriotic breakaway from the Roman Catholic Church in the aftermath of the old democratic revolution in the Philippines); 3.6 percent belong to the Protestant churches of US

origin and 1.3 percent belong to the Iglesia ni Kristo (Church of Christ), one more Protestant sect of Philippine origin.

### ***Brief historical/cultural primer on the Philippines***

Philippine history may be divided into five periods: the precolonial period up to the late 16th century; the Spanish colonial and feudal period from late 16th century to the end of the 19th century; the brief but highly significant period of the old democratic revolution from 1896 to 1902; the period of US colonial and semifeudal rule up to 1946, with an interregnum of Japanese colonial rule from 1942-1945; and the current period of semicolonial and semifeudal rule which started in 1946.

In precolonial Philippines, small autonomous societies of patriarchal slavery prevailed among the predominant Malays. There were slave owners, a large number of free men and full slaves and half-slaves.

The highest sociopolitical formation achieved was that of the Islamic sultanates in southwestern Mindanao, especially that of Sulu.

The iron age culture of the Malays persisted. However, the people absorbed the influences of neighboring Southeast Asian countries and China. There were no megalithic structures but the sultans, rajahs and barangay chieftains had large wooden houses and boats of varying sizes and capacities. The barangay which could carry a few persons was commonplace. The caracoa which could carry 50-100 persons was used for trade and war on an interisland scale. The joangga which could carry more than 300 persons was used for trade on a grander scale.

Spanish colonialism came to the Philippines upon the impulse of European mercantilism and the drive to spread Catholicism. The process of colonial conquest started in the late 16th century. A colonial and feudal social system evolved in the course of more than 300 years, with the Spanish colonial administrators and religious friars on top of the colonised people, extracting taxes from them, mainly in the form of labor, rent from the land, religious tribute, and commercial profits from the Manila-Acapulco trade until the early years of the 19th century and finally from trade with the industrial capitalist countries in most of the 19th century.

In the colonial and feudal society, the landlords comprised the highest class among the natives. They rode roughshod over the peasants who were about 90 percent of the population. The artisan and manufacturing workers were a small minority. The native priests, professionals and administrative clerks were even smaller in number up to the end of the Spanish colonial rule.

The overriding cultural force in colonial and feudal society was Catholicism propagated by the religious orders under royal patronage. The Spanish priests enjoyed social, political, cultural and moral power over the colonized people. They used catechetical instruction, the pulpit, the confessional box and the rituals to control the people and legitimize the colonial and feudal system. In fact, they effectively shared power with the lay colonial administrators in what was veritably a theocratic state.

In the 1880s, the reformist leaders of the Propaganda Movement of the *indios* and mestizos imbibed the rational philosophy and liberal political ideas of the French enlightenment, the French revolution and the Spanish enlightenment. In the 1890s, the leaders of the Philippine revolution grasped the revolutionary ideas of bourgeois nationalism and liberal democracy. Thus, the Philippine revolution burst out in 1896.

By 1899, the revolutionary forces of the Filipino people had wiped out Spanish colonial power throughout the country, with the exception of the walled citadel of the Spaniards in Manila, and established a nationwide revolutionary government. But also in the same year, after pretending to help the Philippine revolutionary movement against Spain, the United States launched the Filipino-American war to seize the Philippines for itself.

The Filipino people and the revolutionary forces valiantly fought the militarily superior US forces. To effect the conquest of the Philippines, the United States resorted not only to military force and genocide, killing off at least 10% of the population, but also the deceptive slogans of "benevolent assimilation," Jeffersonian liberal-democracy, Christianity and "free enterprise" in order to sow confusion among the ranks of the leaders of the revolutionary movement.

The United States imposed its own colonial rule on the Philippines. But this was different from the old colonial system of sheer plunder by Spain. It was the colonial rule of a modern imperialist power which was out to dump on the Philippines its surplus commodities and surplus capital. It was out to go through the motion of investing capital in the colony in order to extract superprofits.

From the outset, the United States was willing to evolve a semifeudal society with the big compradors and landlords as the basic exploiting classes among the natives, with the middle social strata of the urban petty and middle bourgeoisie and with the workers and peasants as the basic exploited classes.

To effect the shift from feudal to semifeudal society, the United States broke up a portion of the much-hated landed estates of the religious organizations, allowed the free movement of peasants to resettle on frontier lands or work in plantations, opened the mines, brought in more milling facilities in plantations and the mines, initiated the manufacturing of household products from local raw materials, improved transport and communications and established a public school system to produce the personnel for expanding business and bureaucratic operations.

To achieve economic and political control, the United States had to exercise cultural control over the Filipino people. It did so by superimposing itself on and penetrating the priorly existing colonial and feudal culture and on the folk culture of precolonial Philippines.

After the brutal conquest of the Philippines, some of the American troops ingratiated themselves with the people by becoming public school teachers and teaching English. Then, shiploads of American teachers came. The development of the public school system came into sharp contrast with the lack of it in the Spanish colonial era. American Catholic and Protestant missionaries also came in.

English became the medium of instruction at all levels of the educational system. It became the means for propagating a promperialist liberal political philosophy and denigrating the patriotic and progressive ideas and values of the revolutionaries who themselves were being coopted within the colonial and semifeudal

system. At the same time, political power was exercised to suppress as criminal offense the mere display of the Philippine flag or any other manifestation of patriotism through written articles, theatrical performances or mass actions.

School children were indoctrinated in the so-called American way of life and came to know more the anecdotes about George Washington than about the heroes of the Philippine revolution of 1896 and about the national and democratic aspirations of the Filipino people. At an early age, Filipinos were made to adopt ideas, attitudes and tastes receptive to US colonial rule and to commodities made in the USA.

Teachers' schools of the colonial government propagated mainly John Dewey's pragmatist philosophy. The University of the Philippines (UP) was founded on a promperialist kind of liberal philosophy and became the highest institution of learning for producing the leaders of the country in all fields. The so-called pensionado system of scholarship grants and assured job promotions involved the sending of bureaucrats and graduate students to the United States for higher education.

Not to be left behind in the Americanization of the Philippine educational and cultural system, the American Jesuits took the lead among the religious organizations to replace the Spanish priests with American priests in their upper-class academic institutions. While they babbled about the supremacy of the Catholic faith over capitalism and socialism in accordance with the social encyclicals of the Pope, they enthusiastically prepared their students to take their professional place in the society dominated by American monopoly capitalism.

In all the years prior to World War II, the US colonial rulers harped on subjecting the Filipino people to a "tutelage for self-government and democracy." The US steadily developed the semifeudal economic foundation and the political and cultural superstructure for semicolonial or neocolonial domination. The political, economic and cultural leaders were trained and prepared for the shift from a colonial to a neocolonial arrangement.

By 1936, the Commonwealth government was established to prepare for the establishment of a neocolonial republic ten years

hence. Also by this time, English as the official medium fully replaced Spanish in the civil service. Professional and technical training was done in the American way. Writers and artists patterned their works after US literary and artistic models. Hollywood films, American pop music, dances and clothes fashion and Philippine imitation of these became the craze in the archipelago.

### ***I. US cultural imperialism in neocolonial Philippines***

After World War II, the United States granted nominal independence to the Philippines in 1946 and gave to the politicians of the big compradors and landlords the responsibility for national administration. The Philippines became a neocolonial republic. Its social economy remained semifeudal and its political system, semicolonial. The United States touted the Philippines as the show window of democracy in Asia, a proof of American “altruism” or “benevolence” until only 25 years in 1972 Marcos imposed on the Philippines 16 years of fascist dictatorship until 1986.

Just as it retained the property rights of US corporations and citizens, parity rights in the exploitation of natural resources, its military bases and control over the Philippine armed forces through treaties and executive agreements, the United States retained control over the Philippine educational and cultural system through the accumulated colonial mentality and through new arrangements, new programs and new techniques.

Anti-communism which first became pronounced in the 30s became even more amplified as a crucial component of colonial mentality and it intensified after World War II in reaction to the communist-led national liberation movement in the Philippines and to the socialist countries and the national liberation movements in Asia and elsewhere in the world. The cold war became a driving force in American cultural imperialism in the Philippines.

Anti-communism has become the pretext for continuing US domination of the Philippines, preserving the unjust colonial system of the big compradors and landlords and for suppressing the national and democratic aspirations of the people. It has been a strong glue of the antinational antidemocratic combination of US cultural imperialism and the feudal culture at various levels of Philippine society and in various fields of social activity.

Since then, the study programs and textbooks have been ideologically designed and directed by US educational advisors, visiting professors and their Filipino sidekicks and have been financed by grants under the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and its predecessor agencies, under US Public Law 480 and under a variety of US foundations like Ford and Rockefeller.

Scholarships and study travel grants under the Fulbright and Smith-Mundt programs, the private US foundations, US-based religious organizations and direct exchange relations between US and Philippine universities and other institutions have been exceedingly important in determining or influencing the mode of thinking of university professors and their students.

The US Information Agency and its predecessor agencies, the Voice of America, the Peace Corps and American religious missionaries have been active in spreading anti-communist and promperialist propaganda and biases against the national and democratic aspirations of the people.

Information from abroad is fed to the Philippines mainly by US wire services, like the Associated Press and United Press International, and by the Voice of America. A recent powerful US source of information is CNN on television. In its shadowy ways, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) deliberately plants stories in the Philippine mass media in order to slander and demonize personalities and movements considered anathema to US national interests.

The agents of US cultural imperialism always raise a hue and cry about objective reporting whenever they are confronted with the proletarian revolutionary stand and with the anti-imperialist line of national liberation. But in fact, news and features in the bourgeois mass media are characterized by selectivity and a slant against those who oppose the dominance of foreign monopoly capital and local reaction.

But the direct purveyors of US cultural imperialism do not have to be Americans. The print and electronic mass media have been nationalized since 1972 and are again under the pressure of denationalization. Nonetheless, Filipino owners, broadcast managers

and editors have colonial mentality and use either canned US-made or Filipino-made features and programs aping the current US trend or fashion.

In the first place, commodities in the market are prestigious and preferable because they are US-made or of US origin. Coca Cola, MacDonald's and Marlboro are popular brands. Commercial advertising in electronic and print media popularize US goods. The biggest advertising firms in the Philippines are American, or if Filipino-owned, advertise US products and ape Madison Avenue style.

In the field of mass entertainment and pop culture, especially in the urban and semiurban areas down to town centers, the US has unquestioned supremacy over any other foreign influence and has a big headstart over any other foreign influence and even those who wish to give more play to Filipino cultural products or bring in more Filipino characteristics into cultural products and activities.

The agents of US cultural imperialism use the slogan of pure entertainment with regard to pop culture. Their objectives are to spread apathy, cynicism and escapism by playing on the instincts and the ego, preempt the revolutionary message from spreading among the people and push ideas and sentiments directly or indirectly supportive of the position of US monopoly capitalism.

Hollywood films, canned US TV programs, musical pop hits and modes of dressing dominate the cultural world of the upper classes, urban petty- and middle-bourgeoisie, the rural bourgeoisie and even the urban poor. The poor and middle peasants and the ethnic minorities in the hinterlands are less bombarded by US cultural imperialism. But there is no escape from its influence through the radio, the entry of certain US products or the occasional trip to the urban areas.

Even in sports, US cultural influence is excessively strong. Basketball is the No. 1 popular male sport and spectator sport in the Philippines, despite the low height of the average Filipino. Filipinos are very much acquainted with the names and playing styles of US basketball stars in the NBA just as much as they know Hollywood stars. Since the 60s, the US promoted the multinational approach to foreign investments in the Philippines and to the exploitation of the

people. Since then, Japan has beaten the United States in the sale of motor vehicles and consumer electronic products in the Philippines. But the Japanese cultural influence is of far lesser weight than the American. The video-players or compact-disc players may be Sony but the film or the music is still American. The general run of Hollywood films are trash and the pop hits, saccharine love songs.

The persistence of English as the principal medium of instruction in schools and likewise of official and mass communications provides an ever ready medium of US cultural imperialism. English is not simply the No.1 foreign language in the Philippines. Together with its Taglish (Tagalog-English admixture – like Brutch in the Netherlands) byproduct, English is the No.1 language to which the Pilipino or Manila-based Tagalog runs a far second as a medium of communications among Filipinos who have gone beyond high school.

The gains made by the movement for a national and democratic culture, from the 60s to the early 70s, were reversed by the Marcos fascist regime, starting in 1972. For instance, the increasing preference of university teachers for Tagalog as medium of instruction and radio broadcasters for Philippine music in Tagalog were reversed. Of course, songs, films and articles critical of the oppression and exploitation of the people by US imperialism and the local exploiting classes were banned and their authors came under severe persecution, including job dismissals, confiscation of property, incarceration and torture.

Literature in English enjoys a higher stature than that in Tagalog among the university-educated even if the latter enjoys a wider readership in Tagalog publications. In fact, the standards and canons of what is considered good creative writing are still set in the main by aesthetics and literary criticism derived from US bourgeois literature by the general run of university teachers, writers and critics who are rotated on scholarships and travel grants to the United States. Whatever are the sophisticated theories that revolve around art for art's sake or the so-called purity of poetry among the university-educated, the fact remains that when they leave the classrooms, they buy mostly the mediocre American pulp novels or potboilers

featuring sex and violence, comics and magazines featuring movie and athletic pop stars.

One very striking manifestation of the widespread and deep-going influence of US cultural imperialism in the Philippines is the result of a poll survey among public school children for someone's doctoral dissertation in the 80s. The children were asked what citizenship they would opt for had they been given the choice. The overwhelming majority opted for US citizenship.

US cultural influence, imperialist or otherwise, runs strong in the Philippines not only because of its superimposition on or penetration of the culture in the Philippines by American agencies and agents but because of the heavy traffic of Filipinos between the United States and the Philippines and the fact that around two million Filipinos now reside in the United States.

Since 1989, when the revisionist bureaucrat capitalist regime of China went into turmoil and similar regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union masquerading for a long time as socialist started to disintegrate, the US ideological and propaganda machinery has gone into high gear in spreading the line that the struggle for national liberation and socialism is hopeless and that history can go no farther than capitalism and liberal democracy.

A small section of the intelligentsia has tended to be carried away by the imperialist ideological and political offensive. And a handful of paid agents of the US and a few renegades have drummed up the idea that the anti-imperialist struggle and the class struggle have become marginalized and futile. They have prated that nothing can be done but to seek bourgeois democratic reforms within a "new world order" under the single hegemony of the United States. The NGOs financed by US, West European and Japanese funding agencies have misrepresented themselves as the alternative to the revolutionary mass movement led by the working class party.

Notwithstanding the hegemony of US cultural imperialism in the Philippines, tightened by high technology in transport and communications, it rides on the persistent layers of feudal and folk culture due to the unchanged semicolonial and semifeudal character of Philippine society. There is resistance and collaboration between imperialist and feudal culture but there is mainly a schizophrenic

collaboration, especially in the maintenance of the economic, political and cultural status quo.

## ***II. Resistance to US cultural imperialism***

There is strong and consistent resistance to US cultural imperialism by patriotic and progressive forces that take the general line of the national-democratic revolution and call for a national, scientific and mass culture. I count myself among these forces. Modesty aside, I have been known as an articulator of these forces since 1959 when I was still a graduate student and lecturer at the University of the Philippines.

The current national-democratic revolution may be considered as a resumption of the unfinished Philippine revolution of 1896. It is a movement to complete the struggle for national liberation and democracy against foreign and feudal domination. This struggle has been frustrated by the United States since the beginning of this century.

The ongoing national-democratic revolution may be described as one of a new type. There is a shift of class leadership from that of the nascent liberal bourgeoisie in the old democratic revolution of 1896 to that of the working class. At the core of the revolutionary movement are the cadres who are guided by Marxism-Leninism; whereas at the core of the Philippine revolution of 1896, were cadres who were guided by an anti-colonial liberal bourgeois ideology.

The national-democratic revolution now takes into account the objective and subjective conditions in the era of modern imperialism and proletarian revolution. While upholding the class leadership of the working class, it bases itself on the alliance of the working class and peasantry, seeks to win over the middle social strata and tries to take advantage of the contradictions among the reactionaries in order to oppose and depose foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

The national-democratic revolution programmatically takes up political, economic and cultural issues to arouse, organize and mobilize the people. It aims to replace the US-controlled big comprador-landlord state with a people's democratic state to dissolve the agrarian semifeudal economy with a program of national

industrialization and land reform and the antinational, feudal and culture with a national, scientific and mass culture.

Why must Philippine culture become national? It has long been captivated, burdened and exploited by colonial mentality under more than three centuries of Spanish colonialism and then by a colonial and neocolonial mentality imposed by US imperialism.

The local cultures and the developing national culture must be cherished and affirmed and integrated into a revolutionary national consciousness in order to serve national liberation and do away with the stultifying sense of subservience to foreign domination. Thus, the Filipino nation can take its place in the community of nations with dignity.

Why must Philippine culture be scientific? It must do away with the deadening weight of feudal and semifeudal culture, release the people from the bondage that is due to superstition, lack of education and miseducation and avail itself of the scientific advances in the world.

The scientific culture must release the working people and other creative forces from the forces of oppression and exploitation. Science and technology must serve the all-rounded development of the people. The scientifically educated men and women must no longer be the mere servants of the imperialists and the local reactionaries.

Why must Philippine culture have a mass character? It must serve the toiling masses above all. The people themselves must develop this kind of culture. The most vital knowledge is drawn by knowing their conditions, needs and capabilities. Whatever higher knowledge there may be from any section of the people can and must be popularized. The people should not be regarded as a vapid mass. At this historical stage of the Philippine revolution it is clear that the working class leads the people and that they are constituted mainly by the workers and peasants in the overwhelming majority. The intelligentsia must take a choice in their favor against the exploitative owners of land and capital.

Before World War II, there were efforts to undertake the resumption of the Philippine revolution by either the working class or the urban petty-bourgeoisie. But these were always frustrated after

some time until 1959 when something could be started and developed continuously up to the present.

The Student Cultural Association of the University of the Philippines (SCAUP) was established in 1959 as an exponent of the new-democratic revolution and a culture along this general line. It included a secret core of Marxist-Leninists. This eventually became the main engine for the establishment of the Kabataang Makabayan (KM - Patriotic Youth), a comprehensive organization of young workers and peasants, students and young professionals on 30 November 1964.

KM became the most outstanding organization promoting the legal democratic movement along the anti-imperialist and antifeudal line in most of the 60s until 1972. It considered its educational program, its propaganda and militant mass actions as constituting the Second Propaganda Movement, reminiscent of the first propaganda movement in the 1880s that paved the way for the Philippine revolution of 1896. KM became in fact the training school of revolutionary cadres in the political and cultural fields. Among the mass organizations of various types, it was chiefly responsible for promoting a new-democratic cultural revolution against the dominant promperialist and reactionary culture since the latter half of the 60s and for carrying out the First Quarter Storm (FQS) of 1970, which involved a series of mass actions ranging from 50,000 to 100,000 people and consequently inspired the formation of several cultural and literary organizations advocating a national, scientific and mass culture.

From the 60s to 1972 when Marcos proclaimed martial law, KM promoted the adoption of the national language as the principal medium of instruction at all levels of the educational system, the reconstitution of study and reading courses as to include progressive and revolutionary works, the program of sending teams of students, writers and cultural workers to the factories and farms to conduct social investigation and learn from the masses, the organization of cultural groups among the workers and peasants.

The martial law regime forced KM and all the legal patriotic and progressive cultural organizations into the underground. But many of the cultural activists joined the revolutionary armed struggle in the

countryside and continued the cultural revolution on a wider scale and in a more profound way. Since 1969 when it was established by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the New People's Army (NPA) had been promoting an anti-imperialist and antifeudal cultural revolution in the countryside.

Even during the harshest years of martial rule, anti-imperialist and antifeudal cultural activity could thrive even in the urban areas despite censorship and military suppression. The cultural cadres secretly wrote and circulated their poems, plays, short stories and novels. Many dared to improvise stage performances among the workers and peasants. There were lightning cultural performances and lightning exhibits of visual art works. When the fascist regime started to crumble and eventually fell in the 80s, the revolutionary mass movement and the cultural movement that it nurtured came out strongly and brilliantly.

The cultural movement is a major component of the national democratic revolution. It is connected with the legal democratic mass movement based in the urban areas as well as with the people's war based in the countryside. The cultural cadres undertake cultural studies among the masses, create works such as music, paintings, poetry, plays, short stories, novels and produce films, stage and street performances.

There are specialized cultural associations both aboveground and underground. Aboveground are the Concerned Artists of the Philippines (CAP), Sining Bugkos, Panulat and the like. The most prominent and comprehensive cultural organization underground is ARMAS which is an allied organization within the framework of the National Democratic Front. All the major legal mass organizations of workers, peasants, youth women and many of their lower organizations have their own groups of cultural cadres and performers.

In the countryside there are also the cultural teams attached to the NPA and there are the countless cultural groups of the local communities. The benign content and forms of folk culture have been adopted and integrated with the proletarian revolutionary line of the working class, the national-democratic program and the national,

scientific and mass culture. Revolutionary content is put into the traditional forms of art and literature.

You might ask whether the national-democratic revolution and its cultural movement are adversely affected by the unprecedented globalization of production, the apparently unquestioned single hegemony of the United States, the use of high technology for the extraction of superprofits, the collapse of the revisionist regimes ruled by bureaucrat capitalists masquerading as socialist, the apparent success of neocolonialism and the unprecedentedly strong imperialist ideological and political offensive since 1989.

As I have earlier pointed out, only a small section of the intelligentsia is confused and disappointed. It is the same section that has always tended to be subservient to the United States and the local exploiting classes. Some elements in this section of the petty-bourgeoisie appeared to be Left in the past, especially in the fight against the Marcos fascist regime, but upon the frustration of their illusions of quick victory in the revolution they have openly taken a Rightist position.

As far as the masses of workers and peasants and most of the urban petty-bourgeoisie are concerned, they say resolutely that there is no choice for them but to keep up their anti-imperialist and antifeudal struggle in the same manner that their revolutionary predecessors never gave up their struggle for national liberation and democracy despite centuries of Spanish colonial rule and decades of US imperialist domination. They look forward to the resurgence of the anti-imperialist movement and socialist movement precisely as a consequence of the current world disorder.

### ***Concluding remarks***

In conclusion, I wish to make a few remarks comparing the Philippines and The Netherlands with regard to US cultural influence. I hope that these can help sharpen your understanding of what I have discussed at length.

Definitely, there is strong US cultural influence in the Netherlands. It is a country often described as having the closest cultural relations with the United States among the countries in mainland Europe now and since the Dutch settlers went over to the North American continent. It is a close all-round US ally and one of

the major US allies in the colonial, imperialist and neocolonial exploitation of 20th century Asia, in the cold war of the bygone bipolar world and in the current new world disorder.

US cultural imperialism is exceedingly obvious in the Philippines because my country is a preindustrial neocolony of the United States. The Netherlands is far more independent because it is a well developed industrial country and is even a neocolonial power on its own account.

Let me use language as a point of reference. The Dutch use English as their No.1 international language because it is objectively the No.1 language in international affairs. But within the Netherlands and among the Dutch people, the Dutch language is prevalent and dominant over any foreign language in all fields of activity. In the case of a neocolony like the Philippines, the English language is in fact dominant over what is formally recognized as the national language and is a vehicle of ideas, attitudes and tastes that subordinate the people to US power.

There is a high degree of consumer interest in certain US products in the Netherlands. But the Dutch people have a far wider range of its own products and a wider choice of imported products for the Filipinos. Urbanites in the Philippines are captives of a wide range of US consumer products and are subject to the barrage of commercial advertising not only in the electronic and print media but also in the most unsightly billboards.

My impression is that the Netherlands is far more selective in importing American films. But the Philippines import a lot more indiscriminately, catering to the most vulgar taste. Filipino filmmakers produce far more feature films than do Dutch filmmakers but the general run of movies in Tagalog are patterned after Hollywood films and also after martial arts films from Taiwan and Hongkong. Moviehouses are far more capacious in the Philippines because videoplayers are fewer and less available to the people who have far lesser income than in the Netherlands.

My impression is that Dutch and Philippine TV stations have a penchant for canned American programs, especially the soap opera and comedy series. So far, I have not yet made even a rough

estimate of the degree of addiction to such programs in the Netherlands and the Philippines.

With regard to American pulp novels, there are probably more Dutch buyers of these from the Bruna bookstore chain in both the English original and in Dutch translation than Filipino buyers who are usually university-educated and who so much prefer to read these in English that no Tagalog translations are made of these.

I hope that in my comparisons of US cultural influence on the Philippines and the Netherlands you can grasp both the differences and similarities between a neocolonial vassal and a neocolonialist partner of the United States.

# Fight for Campus Press Freedom and Advance the New-Democratic Revolution

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**G**reetings of Solidarity to the College Editors' Guild of the  
Philippines  
July 22, 1996

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I HEREBY CONVEY WARMEST greetings of solidarity to the College Editors' Guild of the Philippines (CEGP) on the occasion of its 65th anniversary, its 56th Annual National Convention and the 28th Biennial National Student Press Congress in Los Banos, Laguna.

I join you in your battlecry, "Struggle for press freedom! Commemorate and continue the principles of *Kalayaan* of 1896!" The campus journalists must be conscious and militant participants in continuing the revolutionary struggle of the people for national liberation and democracy. The student masses suffer the depredations of foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism not only in terms of the ever deteriorating socioeconomic conditions, adversely affecting the study and living conditions of students, but also in terms of the increasing repression, suppression of civil and political rights and the stultification of intellectual freedom.

You are correct in focusing on the worsening state of the campus press and in launching a nationally coordinated campaign for campus freedom and democratic rights. The systematic campaign of the reactionaries to violate and curtail campus press freedom, as in the cases of the *Philippine Collegian* and more than 80 campus publications, requires resolute and militant resistance.

The curtailment of campus press freedom and elimination of free campus publications are calculated to pave the way for the further imposition of neocolonial, neoliberal and all kinds of reactionary

ideas on the student masses, for the most repressive conditions beneficial to the imperialists and their agents and for the further commercialization of education.

I salute the CEGP for being at the forefront with the League of Filipino Students (LFS) and the National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP) in the struggle of the student masses against campus repression and tuition fees. You must arouse, organize and mobilize the student masses in the revolutionary spirit of *Kalayaan* of 1896 and in the pursuit of the new-democratic revolution. There is an urgent need for the student masses to engage in general strikes and other concerted actions as they have already started to do so.

I congratulate you for expanding the CEGP, up to 650 member-publications in at least 527 schools nationwide. I support your determined effort to make your Congress an occasion to consolidate your ranks and advance the struggle for the freedom of the campus press within the context of the people's revolutionary struggle for national liberation and democracy.

I am confident that CEGP will continue to win ever greater victories in the struggle for an activist campus press in the service of the students and the people. Long live the campus journalists! Use your pen to draw the line of advance and arouse the student masses to fight and defeat the enemy!

Long live the College Editors Guild of the Philippines!

# Impact of the GPCR on the Philippines and Continuing Global Significance

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**C**ontribution to the Chinese Cultural Revolution  
30th Anniversary Symposium  
December 14-15, 1996

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I WISH TO EXPRESS MY warmest greetings to the China Study Group of New York, *Monthly Review* and ESU of the New York School and all the participants of the Symposium, "Reexamining the Chinese Cultural Revolution," which is held to mark the 30th anniversary of the launching of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) as well as the 20th anniversary of its effective end in September 1976.

I also wish to thank the organizers for inviting me to contribute a paper devoted to the GPCR, in particular about its impact and the way this ended or continued in revolutionary struggles in the third world. Due to some burden of work, I am unable to submit on time a more elaborate paper on the impact of the GPCR on the entire third world. But let me deal with this in general terms and give some focus on the Philippines and proceed to make some remarks on the continuing global significance of the GPCR.

For your reference, there is a longer article which is pertinent to the impact of the GPCR on the Philippines. This is "Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought as Guide to the Philippine Revolution," contributed by Armando Liwanag, chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), to the International Seminar on Mao Zedong Thought, held in 1993 in Germany, on the occasion of the 100th birth anniversary of Mao Zedong.

And let me take the opportunity to cite the General Declaration on Mao Zedong Thought, issued by the aforesaid seminar. It upholds the theory of continuing revolution under proletarian dictatorship and the GPCR as the greatest contribution of Mao to the further

development of Marxism-Leninism. This declaration diametrically opposes the common view of the imperialists and the Chinese revisionists and bureaucrat capitalists that the GPCR was a total disaster.

### ***Impact of the GPCR on the Philippines***

The GPCR inspired the building and strengthening of many Marxist-Leninist parties in the third world. To this day, a significant number of them persevere in revolutionary struggle in Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, Latin America and Africa. Some of them are in the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations, upholding Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought.

At the forefront are revolutionary parties of the proletariat guided by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought or Maoism and leading new-democratic revolutions through people's war against imperialism and reaction. They are the most tempered and most serious advanced detachments of the proletariat. They follow the basic teachings of Mao Zedong and respond to the central question of revolution.

They stand in sharp contrast to the parties that previously avowed themselves to be Marxist-Leninist and anti-revisionist but have become drawn to the path of revisionism and reformism. They have also withstood the attempts of the followers of Deng Xiaoping and Enver Hoxha to fragment and destroy the anti-revisionist parties as well as certain attempts to reduce adherence to Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought to a question of defending one or another Chinese figure or group regarded as the principal successor or supporter of Mao.

The parties most prone to abandoning the Marxist-Leninist position have been those constituted by the unremolded petty-bourgeois, especially in North America and Western Europe. In the late 70s and early 80s, they were confused and driven towards liquidationism or abandonment of Mao's line by the Deng revisionist line of reversing the GPCR, betraying socialism and making out US imperialism and the bourgeoisie as the principal positive forces for China's economic development and for a pretended opposition to Soviet social-imperialism, as well as by the Hoxha line of holding

Mao chiefly responsible for Deng's misuse of China's three-world diplomatic concept as a substitute for proletarian internationalism.

The theory and practice of the GPCR pertained directly to China as a socialist country, with the proletarian revolutionaries, the proletariat and the rest of the masses striving to continue the revolution under proletarian dictatorship in order to consolidate socialism, combat revisionism and prevent the restoration of capitalism.

But in a comprehensive and profound way, the GPCR has also inspired and influenced the revolutionary parties of the proletariat in the third world even as these are not yet in the process of socialist revolution and construction. It has enhanced the understanding of the basic principles for making the new-democratic and socialist stages of the revolution and for aiming at the ultimate goal of communism.

It has urged the study and application of the basic teachings of the great communists, including the major contributions of Mao in the advance of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, political economy and social science. It has educated proletarian revolutionaries in building the vanguard party and in carrying out the new-democratic revolution through protracted people's war and subsequently the socialist revolution and construction.

It has clarified the basic principles and methods of class struggle for combating modern revisionism, preventing the restoration of capitalism and consolidating socialism in socialist society, up to the threshold of communism in the long process of making a radical rupture from the millennia-old institution and consequences of private ownership of the means of production. Thus, it has shed light as never before on the road to communism.

The proletarian revolutionaries in the Philippines reestablished the Communist Party of the Philippines on December 26, 1968 on the theoretical foundation of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. They sought to apply the universal theory of the proletariat on the concrete conditions of the Philippines. They drew inspiration and encouragement from the full range of Marxist-Leninist teachings, from the Chinese revolution as a whole and from the GPCR.

They earnestly learned crucial lessons from the experience of the Chinese revolution and criticized and repudiated modern revisionism centered in the Soviet Union. They were thereby armed with a powerful ideological weapon to fight and defeat the long-running line of revisionism and opportunism of the Lava revisionist renegades in the old merger party of the Communist and Socialist parties.

They studied and endeavored to apply the teachings of Mao Zedong on the law of contradiction and social practice, on Party building and the rectification movement, the class analysis of semicolonial and semifeudal conditions, the new-democratic revolution, the strategy and tactics of protracted people's war and united front policy.

The revolutionary forces and the people advanced from victory to victory for so long as the CPP adhered to the ideological line of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought and to the general political line of new-democratic revolution through protracted people's war. From 1969 to 1977, the CPP grew in strength and became nationwide in scale and deeply rooted among the masses in the course of the armed revolution against the US-Marcos dictatorship.

Departing from the "Tribute to Mao Zedong" written by Amado Guerrero, chairman of the CPP Central Committee, soon after the death of Mao, the central leadership of the CPP fell silent over the Dengist attack on the Marxist-Leninist line and accomplishments of Mao, which attack started to become full scale and conspicuous in 1978, in favor of capitalist-oriented reforms and integration into the world capitalist system. Eventually, the silence opened the way to neglecting the study and application of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought and for subjectivism and opportunism to thrive.

Mao Zedong became reduced to just one in an amorphous array of revolutionary leaders. Even the petty-bourgeois radical leaders of anti-imperialist movements in Central America gained a standing higher than Mao's among some members of the CPP Central Committee (CPP/CC). These stirred up the revisionist notion that the Philippine revolution could win only if it had direct or indirect Soviet military and financial assistance. They frowned upon the principle of self-reliance. And they started to consider the Soviet Union as

socialist in violation of the CPP's long-standing criticism and repudiation of Soviet revisionism and social-imperialism.

Contrary to the facts, the subjectivist notion arose that the Philippines was no longer semifeudal and that the US-Marcos regime had industrialized and urbanized the country to the extent that the strategic line of people's war, requiring the encirclement of the cities from the countryside, was no longer valid. The worst of the "Left" opportunists called for armed urban insurrection as the principal form of struggle. And the worst of the Right opportunists called for urban-based legal struggle as the principal form of struggle and for cutting down the leading role of the CPP in the united front.

The Right opportunists became assertive from 1986 onward under the influence of the US-Aquino regime and later on by Gorbachovism. Frustrated by their own errors and setbacks, the "Left" opportunists swung to the Right in 1989 and joined the long-running Right opportunists along a revisionist and liquidationist line under the influence of events in China and the Soviet-bloc countries.

The "Left" opportunists inflicted severe damage on the revolutionary movement with their revisionist concept of armed struggle, divorced from painstaking mass work. The damage was only overshadowed by the advances made by the proletarian revolutionaries and revolutionary masses up to 1986.

Because good Party cadres and members continued to stand on the CPP's strong foundation in Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, the revisionists and opportunists could not go on spreading their erroneous line and inflicting damage to the CPP and the revolutionary movement. Exactly when they were at the peak of their anti-CPP activities, the CPP was ready to launch a rectification movement. Since 1992, this movement has been conducted and has won resounding victories.

The CPP owes to Mao Zedong the principle and method of rectification. It has been able to strengthen itself ideologically, politically and organizationally by reaffirming the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. It has defeated the revisionists and liquidationists. It has also thwarted the imperialist ideological and political offensive.

This offensive uses as grist the disintegration of the revisionist bureaucrat capitalist regimes in the former Soviet-bloc countries, the restoration of capitalism in China and the uprisings in 80 Chinese cities in 1989, especially the massacre at Tienanmen; and misrepresents the revisionist regimes as socialist and as proof of the futility of the socialist cause in order to dissuade the people from the revolutionary cause. The imperialist offensive also involves the use of Filipino revisionist renegades and anti-communist petty-bourgeois grouplets in carrying out anti-CPP propaganda as a component of the psychological warfare in the US-instigated "low-intensity conflict." Thanks to Marxism- Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, the CPP has been able to consolidate its ranks and continues to reap victories in performing the critical and constructive tasks of the rectification movement.

By reaffirming and carrying out the basic revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought in ideology, politics and organization, the CPP has revitalized itself and has become more confident than ever before in holding high the banner of proletarian leadership and carrying out the new-democratic revolution through protracted people's war.

It is proud of persevering in the highest form of revolutionary struggle and being in the forefront at a time that the anti-imperialist and socialist movements are at an ebb on a global scale. At the same time, it is humbly well aware of the tremendous odds that it faces. It is conscious of performing its internationalist duty by carrying the Philippine revolution forward and contributing to the stimulation and resurgence of the anti-imperialist and socialist movements.

### ***The continuing global significance of the GPCR***

Let me make just a few remarks on the continuing global significance of the theory and practice of the GPCR. I hope that these are relevant and useful in your discussions. I make these remarks against the notion that because the GPCR was defeated it has lost significance and validity.

As long as capitalism exists, the cause of socialist revolution does not cease. In making revolution, there are twists and turns, victories and defeats until total victory is won on the scale of one

country and that of the whole world. The struggle between capitalism and socialism will continue for a whole historical epoch, as Lenin and Mao pointed out, until socialism wins on a global scale and communism becomes possible.

The proletarian revolutionaries never gave up the cause of socialism when the short-lived Paris Commune of 1871 was defeated. They were never discouraged when the fascists crushed the communist parties and invaded the Soviet Union and other countries. The capitalist counterrevolution by the revisionists in socialist countries do not spell the end of the socialist cause. The proletarian revolutionaries always come out the wiser and more victorious when they learn lessons from previous victories and defeats.

The fact that the GPCR triumphed in Mao's time should not be glossed over. Until now in the history of mankind, there has never been as intensive and extensive a democratic process as the GPCR, with the proletariat and the people being able to express themselves freely, seize back the authority usurped by capitalist-roaders and overthrow such deeply entrenched high officials of the Party and the state. The victory of the GPCR came as the culmination of a series of struggles between the proletarian revolutionary line and the bourgeois renegade line within the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Chinese socialist state. The contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie started to simmer in 1956, following the overthrow of the proletariat by the revisionists in the Soviet Union and the basic socialist transformation of the ownership of the means of production in China and in the course of the Eighth Congress of the CPC.

The basic principles and practical methods that Mao drew up for the GPCR were guided by and developed from the basic teachings of his great communist predecessors and arose from the two-line struggle within the CPC and from the lessons learned from the building of socialism by Lenin and Stalin, from the mistakes and shortcomings of Stalin and from the betrayal of socialism by the Soviet revisionists. Among the points that Mao put forward during the GPCR were the following: that the main contradiction in socialist society is between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, that class

struggle is the key link in all spheres, that revolutionary politics must be in command, that the mass line must be pursued, that both the mode of production and the superstructure must be revolutionized, that the youth and the masses must be trained and gain experience as revolutionary successors through cultural revolution, that there must be the dialectical interaction and mutual supervision and cooperation between the leadership and the masses, that there must be a three-in-one combination of cadres, masses and experts, that there must be freedom and discipline, that special attention must be paid to the revolutionary education of the intelligentsia and the bureaucracy lest they become the ideological and social base of revisionism and capitalist restoration.

Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping and the like opposed the proletarian revolutionary line of Mao with such notions as the harmony of Marxism-Leninism and revisionism, self-cultivation and expertise above the heads of the masses, dying out of the class struggle, the main contradiction in socialist society is between the backward productive forces and the advanced relations of production, the Kautskyite “theory of productive forces” (building socialism is merely an economic operation), dealing with the means of production as commodities, the consolidation of the national democratic revolution and Bukharinite prolongation of concessions to the national bourgeoisie and the rich peasants and shunning the restriction and eventual elimination of bourgeois rights. The Chinese capitalist roaders wanted to overthrow Mao and his proletarian line. In the demagogic fashion of the Soviet revisionists, they depicted him as guilty of the cult of personality and even as a feudal autocrat. But on the way to the GPCR, Mao succeeded in putting forward the general line of socialist revolution and construction, launching the Great Leap Forward and building the people’s communes, making a comprehensive critique of Soviet modern revisionism and defeating the most overt Right opportunists from 1957 to 1959 and redirecting the socialist education movement against the Party persons in authority taking the capitalist road as the main target.

What makes the theory and practice of the GPCR the greatest achievement of Mao is that by this he was able to identify the crucial problems that, if unsolved, can spell the peaceful change of

socialism into capitalism and to win victory in the solution of those problems up to a certain point. The defeat of the GPCR urges us to learn both positive and negative lessons, in the same way that Marx analyzed the Paris Commune and upheld its revolutionary significance.

Some lessons include the necessity of precluding factionalism, ensuring that the Left win over the Middle to isolate the Right, using due process in addition to Party leadership and mass movement in order to narrow the target and limit the number of those punished or humiliated, directing the ideological and political offensive against the highest capitalist roaders, using education and persuasion on those who merely lag behind and preventing the return to power of the incorrigible and systematic capitalist-roaders like Deng Xiaoping. Because of serious errors, the proletarian revolutionary succession to Mao could not be fulfilled after his death.

The Chinese revisionists who have reversed the proletarian revolutionary line of Mao and falsely judged the GPCR as a total disaster cannot gloat endlessly over their betrayal of socialism. The actual restoration of capitalism in China indubitably proves the correctness of Mao in putting forward the theory and practice of continuing revolution under proletarian dictatorship through the GPCR. The basic revisionist notions of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping against the socialist line of Mao have led to capitalist counterrevolution and the unbridled exploitation and oppression of the proletariat and people by the imperialists and the Chinese bourgeoisie.

The Chinese revisionists and bureaucrat capitalists still masquerade as communists and pretend to run a socialist state. But the truth can be easily drawn from the facts. The class rule of the proletariat has been overthrown in all spheres and the capitalist-oriented reforms and integration of China into the world capitalist system have created a powerful bureaucrat and private comprador big bourgeoisie. Especially after Mao's criticism of Soviet revisionism and monopoly bureaucrat capitalism, it is naive of some people to say that China is socialist simply because of the existence of state-owned enterprises and the formal rule of a communist party. These are merely the base of a bureaucrat monopoly bourgeoisie, which is

growing as a big comprador bourgeoisie increasingly in collusion with the imperialists and private bourgeois entrepreneurs in the whole Chinese economy. It is important for the symposium to clarify and demonstrate how the Chinese revisionists and bureaucrat capitalists have revised the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, overthrown the class dictatorship of the proletariat, redirected and reorganized the CPC, adopted and enforced policies and laws that have destroyed the socialist character of China and turned it into capitalist in politics, economy and culture and in fact inflicted severe oppression and exploitation on the broad masses of the people by the imperialists and the domestic Chinese bourgeoisie.

It is interesting to try answering the following questions: how much longer will the bureaucrat and private capitalists use the signboards of the communist party and the socialist state to legitimize and enforce their bourgeois class rule before giving way to openly anti-communist political liberalization as the inevitable consequence of economic liberalization; and whether there are still sufficiently resolute and courageous proletarian revolutionaries to avail of the legacy of Mao Zedong and the GPCR and lead the masses in a revolutionary movement.

The completely undisguised restoration of capitalism in the former Soviet Union and the disintegration of the Soviet Union verify and vindicate the correctness of Mao's critique of modern revisionism and the theory and practice of the GPCR. The direction in which the Chinese revisionists are taking China is presaged by the earlier 35-year experience of the Soviet revisionist renegades.

In a manner of speaking, the Chinese revolution was overtaken by the betrayal of socialism in the Soviet Union in 1956. Mao's opponents took inspiration from the Soviet revisionists and tried to cast away his proletarian revolutionary line. But Mao prevailed while he was alive. His successful resistance to modern revisionism and defense of Chinese socialism actually lasted for 20 years from 1956 to 1976 and gave him the opportunity to make a pathbreaking critique of an unprecedented phenomenon.

A necessary component of Mao's theory and practice of the GPCR is his comprehensive and profound critique of Soviet modern

revisionism. History presented to him the task of analyzing something unprecedented, revisionism subverting and gaining power in a socialist society. And he performed his task well, up to predicting correctly the undisguised restoration of capitalism and disintegration of the revisionist regimes. So many had believed for a long time before that Khrushchov would build the material and technical foundation of communism and also that Brezhnev's "real socialism" was irreversible.

Mao's theory and practice of continuing revolution under proletarian dictatorship through the GPCR is indispensable to proletarian revolutionaries in understanding the problems of making socialist revolution and construction in the face of imperialism, revisionism and reaction.

Without this theory and practice, Marxist-Leninists would be at a loss in the face of the attempt of the imperialists, the revisionists and all their anti-communist petty-bourgeois camp followers to completely discredit the socialist record of Lenin, Stalin and Mao, further attack socialism by misrepresenting the anti-Stalin and anti-Mao revisionist regimes as socialist and prate about the futility of the socialist cause. With Mao's critique of modern revisionism and his theory and practice of the GPCR, there is ample scientific basis for revolutionary foresight and optimism and for the confidence that when socialist societies shall again arise from the crisis of imperialism and upsurge of proletarian revolution, the communists will have a better grasp of what to do in upholding, defending and advancing socialism towards the ultimate goal of communism.

Because of the defeat of socialism since 1956 in the Soviet Union and since 1976 in China, the proletariat and the people of the world are still very much in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution and are being subjected to ever worsening conditions of exploitation and oppression.

The centralization and concentration of capital are more rapid than ever before in the entire history of capitalism because of the use of high technology and the most speculative forms of finance capital. The destructive consequences of present-day capitalism are unprecedented in both industrial capitalist countries and underdeveloped countries. The uneven development of capitalism is

far grosser than ever before, as most evident in the general run of third world and former Soviet-bloc countries.

Insofar as the new-democratic and socialist revolutions will still have to be waged in various countries at different times, the basic teachings of the great communists from Marx to Mao and the lessons from successful revolutions will continue to be relevant and applicable long into the future. The basic principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought shall be upheld and further developed on the basis of persistent, worsened and new concrete conditions.

In closing, I wish you all the success in the symposium and I eagerly await the results to be published.

# Social Liberation as Precondition for National Liberation

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**F**oreword to *Muog*  
October 18, 1997

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IT IS A BEAUTIFUL WAY to celebrate the centennial of the old democratic revolution by anthologizing literary works that evoke the fighting spirit of the new-democratic revolution.

This anthology unfolds in literary terms the decisive importance of the countryside in the people's struggle for revolutionary change against the oppressive and exploitative semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system.

The authors deserve the highest commendation for expressing their revolutionary commitment and depicting the revolutionary struggle and aspirations of the toiling masses, especially the peasantry and the revolutionary forces.

The old and new types of democratic revolution are linked by the Filipino people's unceasing struggle and aspirations for national independence against foreign domination and for democracy against feudal exploitation.

The main content of the democratic revolution is the solution of the land problem. This concerns the peasant majority of the Filipino people. The social liberation of the peasant masses through their participation in the revolution is the precondition to national liberation. The new-democratic revolution can advance only if the proletarian leadership can arouse, organize and mobilize the peasant masses. They are the main mass base for the protracted people's war, for allowing the revolutionary forces to grow from weak to strong and from small to big until the defeat of the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class.

Thus, the leading force in the continuation of the national-democratic revolution has sought to develop the peasant masses as

the main force and to make the countryside the iron bastion of the revolution politically, economically, socially and culturally.

When the rural mass base grows strong, the entire revolutionary movement grows strong on the basis of the worker-peasant alliance. The weakening of the rural mass base always necessitates a rectification movement to ensure the revitalization and resurgence of the entire revolutionary mass movement.

The selection of literary works from year to year allows the anthology to reflect the phases of the revolutionary struggle, the sacrifices and victories of the heroic masses and the Party cadres and members, the Red fighters and mass activists in various parts of the country and in the country as a whole.

The anthology is inspiring. It encourages the toiling masses to continue their revolutionary struggle and their all-round advance, including the cultural and literary. It urges the creative writers of this generation and later generations to avail of the rich material and soul of the protracted people's war.

This anthology is of incalculably far-reaching significance and relevance. We owe a debt of gratitude to the authors as well as the anthologists of the Instityut sa Panitikan at Sining (IPASA-Institute of Literature and Art) under the steady leadership of the poet, Gelacio Guillermo, who has been consistently at the vanguard of contemporary Philippine revolutionary literature.

# On 100 Years of Struggle against US Imperialism

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**F**ebruary 3, 1999

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IN THE SPIRIT OF ANTI-imperialist solidarity, I convey warmest greetings to all the participants in the International Conference on 100 Years of Struggle Against US Imperialism.

We recall the outbreak of the Philippine-American War on February 4, 1899 and we celebrate the people's revolutionary struggle against US imperialism. We draw inspiration from our revolutionary forebears, honor our people who persevere in the struggle, learn lessons from the past and current circumstances and define the tasks for completing the struggle for national liberation and democracy.

In celebrating the 30th anniversary of its reestablishment, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) has expressed the resolve to continue the national democratic revolution through protracted people's war against US imperialism and the local reactionaries even if this revolution should take another hundred years.

For as long as the Filipino people remain under US imperialist domination, we do not cease to wage all forms of revolutionary struggle for national liberation and democracy. As the enemy never gets tired of oppressing and exploiting them, the people can never get tired of resisting oppression and exploitation and fighting for national and social liberation.

The absence of genuine national independence and the reign of greed and terror in our country are the bitter consequence of the successful US war of aggression. The US destroyed the Philippine republic that issued from the armed revolution against Spanish colonialism. The US imposed its own colonial rule on the people and granted them nominal independence only after making sure that it could continue to profit from semicolonial rule through the local exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords.

I commend CONTEND for celebrating the Filipino people's armed resistance against the US war of aggression and the continuing US imperialist domination. This celebration comes into sharp contrast with that of the big comprador-landlord state which has spent a lot of tax money in order to gloss over the people's revolutionary struggle and the need to continue it.

### ***The US war of aggression***

Since the beginning of its alliance with the Aguinaldo-led revolutionary movement against Spain, the US had been driven by its monopoly capitalist interests to deceive and betray the Filipino leaders, wage a war of aggression against the Filipino people and take over the Philippines as its own colony. It coveted the Philippines as a strategic post for turning the Pacific Ocean into an American lake and for allowing US monopolies to take a slice of the Chinese melon.

The historians present in your conference can tell you all the facts about the double-faced dealings of US agents in Singapore and Hongkong, the arrogant and clever military maneuvers of the US forces in Manila, the pre-arranged surrender of the Spanish authorities and the mock battle for Intramuros, the Proclamation of Benevolent Assimilation, the US-Spanish Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898 ceding the Philippines to the US for USD20 million, and the US provocation at San Juan bridge on February 4, 1899.

To impose themselves on the Filipino people, the US aggressors arrested, tortured and killed hundreds of thousands of Filipinos. Millions of our people suffered forced relocations and food blockades. The genocidal methods previously used against the Native Americans were used in the conquest of the Philippines and would be used again and again in the 1940s and 1950s and from 1969 to the present. The same methods were also used against the Vietnamese people during the 1960s and 1970s.

The estimate of Filipino casualties from the US war of aggression ranges from 250,000 to one million or more than 10% of the entire population. General Bell testified before the US Congress that at least 600,000 Filipinos were killed in Luzon alone. Until now, there has been neither the full satisfaction of the people's demand for

revolutionary justice nor an official apology from the US government over its dastardly crimes against the Filipino people and entire humanity.

Moved by the spirit of patriotism and by democratic aspirations, the Filipino people fought heroically against the US imperialists. The Philippine-American war lasted from 1899 to 1902 when the main forces of the revolutionary army were destroyed or their leaders capitulated. But the armed resistance, including that of the Moro people, continued in many regions up to 1916.

At great cost to Filipino lives and property, the US imperialists were able to conquer and impose direct colonial rule on the Philippines. This persisted until the Japanese imperialists invaded and occupied the country in 1942. The interimperialist war was a big opportunity for the people to build their own independent revolutionary armed strength. But the subjective forces, of the revolution could develop strength only in Central Luzon, Manila and Southern Tagalog.

### ***Continuing US domination***

The US reconquered the Philippines in 1945. In advance of the grant of bogus independence to the country, it made sure that US military bases and US property rights and privileges would persist. And yet it tried vainly to postpone the shift to semicolonial rule. However, confronted by an armed revolutionary movement, it relented and gave way to such a rule in 1946, with national administration conceded to the politicians and bureaucrats of the big compradors and landlords in subordination to US imperialism.

The key factors for continued US control over the Philippine neocolonial state are the following: the conversion of the economy into a semifeudal one since the beginning of the century; dependence of the coercive apparatuses of the state on US indoctrination and military supplies; the promperialist training of puppet political, business and cultural personnel and the merger of imperialist and feudal culture.

In the semicolonial political system, the people have suffered a series of puppet regimes. The US is the most responsible for the prolonged oppressive and exploitative policies of all these puppet regimes, from Roxas to Estrada, and for the prolonged Marcos

fascist dictatorship. The US dictates all major policies either bilaterally or through US-controlled multilateral agencies like the IMF, World Bank and WTO. The US remains as the No. 1 imperialist power dominating the Philippines even as it has found it convenient since the 1960s to take cover behind multilateral arrangements.

The US military bases have been closed down since 1992 because after all US military control is effected through the puppet military and police forces, and US military bases in nearby countries and spy satellites are being used as additional instruments for US control over the Philippine archipelago. In addition, there is the US-Japan security partnership. But the US is always interested in multiplying its military control over the country. Thus, it is pushing the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), which the people are now vigorously opposing.

So far, US imperialism has succeeded in keeping the Filipino people under its domination, not only because of its superior military force but also because of its capabilities for deception. In the face of US imperialism, the old democratic revolution was not only limited by its inferior arms but was confounded by a foreign power that used bourgeois liberal slogans to advance its monopoly capitalist interests. To this day, US imperialism misrepresents itself as the teacher and prime example of democracy and its Filipino marionettes in the political, economic and cultural fields echo and ape the misrepresentation. In this regard, we have always taken pains to distinguish the official ideology of promperialist conservative liberalism from the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist progressive liberalism that has characterized the best of petty-bourgeois thinking since the old democratic revolution. US imperialism and the local reactionaries use the subjectivist and opportunist ideology and language of the petty bourgeois to sugarcoat imperialist as well as subservient policies, trample upon the basic national and democratic rights of the toiling masses of workers and peasants and attack the new-democratic revolution. They talk about free enterprise and individual rights in the abstract to obfuscate the reality of imperialist and class exploitation and oppression.

The neoliberal language of so-called globalization is, nothing but a recycling of the antiquated bourgeois-liberal catchphrase, “free

marketplace of goods and ideas.” It is calculated to assail and put aside the Marxist-Leninist critique of modern imperialism, exactly at a time that the rapidly rising social character of the productive forces through the adoption of higher technology by the imperialists in their own countries makes the capitalist relations of production and the relations of the imperialists and the oppressed peoples more untenable than ever before.

In a conspicuously sinking “emerging” market like the Philippines, the mainstream exponents of “free trade” globalization insist on using neoliberal language. But marginal though special ideological and political agents of the ruling system tout globalization as an irresistibly new fact of life, as something that supposedly makes the anti-imperialist and class struggle irrelevant and outdated and as something that can be reformed for making “civil society.”

Since the late 1970s these pseudoprogressive recruits of imperialism and local reaction from the petty bourgeoisie have claimed that the Philippine social economy is no longer predominantly agrarian and semifeudal but an industrial capitalist one because of the supposed economic development under the big comprador-landlord Marcos regime. Since the coming to power of Ramos in 1992, they have proceeded to claim that the Philippine economy is so tightly integrated into the global economy that the question of national sovereignty and independence has become passe.

The current worsening crisis of the world capitalist system is bringing to the surface the basic contradictions between the imperialist countries and the oppressed peoples, among the imperialist countries themselves, and between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the imperialist countries. The illusion of free trade globalization is dissipating. The reality of nation-states and distinct modes of production are more conspicuous than ever before. The whole world is now in social and political turmoil. This is the eve of social revolution on an unprecedented scale.

We are clearly still in the era of modern imperialism and the proletarian revolution and not in a nebulous era of “globalization” or in a utopia of liberalism where everything is for sale and the invisible hand of self-interest peaceably settles everything in the market. In

fact, the crisis of overproduction is already driving the imperialists to wrangle over the shrinking market.

### ***Most important development***

So far in Philippine history, the most important development by way of continuing the unfinished democratic revolution against the imperialists and the local reactionaries is the reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) under the guidance of the theory of the revolutionary proletariat and its adoption and implementation of the general line of new-democratic revolution through protracted people's war.

In representation of the revolutionary proletariat, the CPP brings to a new and higher level the revolutionary struggle of the Filipino people for national liberation and democracy. It is armed with the ideological weapon to contend with and defeat the fallacies and lies of imperialism, revisionism and reaction. It has also proven in deed for more than three decades that it has an effective strategy and tactics to preserve and accumulate the revolutionary armed strength of the people.

Without the ongoing new-democratic revolution through protracted people's war, there is no hope for the Filipino people to liberate themselves from the clutches of foreign and feudal domination. Foreign domination would continue for another 400 years and US domination would continue for another hundred years if all that we did in that course of time were to seek accommodation, reforms and civility from a ruling system that is inherently oppressive and violent against the toiling masses.

For the Filipino people to achieve national liberation and democracy, there must be organized forces, including a revolutionary party, a people's army, mass organizations and organs of political power to carry on the struggle and defeat the enemy. Fighting the enemy also involves fighting its special ideological and political agents who are used either to penetrate and liquidate from within the revolutionary forces or attack them from the flanks or behind.

The Second Great Rectification Movement within the Communist Party of the Philippines is of great importance not only for the Party itself but also for the broad masses of the people. It is an educational movement to heighten revolutionary resolve against the enemy and

to rectify both malicious and honest errors. It is also a practical constructive movement to further strengthen the revolutionary forces and the people in their struggle.

In the new-democratic revolution, there is always the need for an echelon of alliances: the basic alliance of the workers and peasants, the progressive alliance of the toiling masses and the urban petty bourgeoisie, the patriotic alliance of the progressive forces and the middle bourgeoisie and, whenever possible and necessary, the unstable temporary alliance with sections of the reactionaries—all for the purpose of isolating and destroying the power of the enemy, the most reactionary puppet of the imperialists.

### ***Frontrunner in the anti-imperialist struggle***

By staying on the road of new-democratic revolution through protracted people's war, the CPP builds the strength of the people to win victory and march further on to socialism. In the whole world today, the Filipino people are among front runners in the revolutionary struggle of the oppressed peoples for national liberation and democracy against imperialism and the local reactionaries.

In the past, the Filipino people had the distinction of being the first nation in Asia to wage and win the old democratic revolution against colonial power. Again, they have the distinction of being among the most persevering and most successful in waging the new-democratic revolution through protracted people's war. They serve as a torch bearer of international significance in the transition from the 20th to the 21st century.

This transition is one from a century of great victories of socialist and national liberation movements, temporarily defeated due to revisionist betrayal, to a century of greater struggles and greater victories of the world proletariat and oppressed peoples. It is pure nonsense to think that history ends with monopoly capitalism and bourgeois liberalism. The scientific basis for our revolutionary optimism is the chronic and ever worsening crisis of the world capitalist system and the irrepressible efforts of the revolutionary forces to learn from history, to resist oppression and exploitation and to carry the revolutionary struggle forward.

# Defeat the Enemy in the Cultural Realm as a Whole and in Art and Literature in Particular

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**C**ongratulations to the Kabataang Artista  
Para sa Tunay na Kalayaan (KARATULA)  
September 16, 2006

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I AM PLEASED TO CONGRATULATE the leaders and members of the Kabataang Artista para sa Tunay na Kalayaan (KARATULA) on the occasion of their sixth founding anniversary on September 16.

I am in solidarity with your objectives of arousing, invigorating and advancing the youth movement through cultural work within the frame of the Filipino people's struggle for national liberation and democracy against US imperialism and the local exploiting classes.

I praise KARATULA for achieving victories in strengthening its organization and producing and staging creative works. Based on your victories and lessons from experience, you can decide on and implement further advances in the struggle.

You now face tremendous challenges in improving your work and using your artistic abilities to promote, defend and advance the rights and interests of the youth and students and the broad masses. You are in the midst of a severe crisis besetting the local ruling system and the world capitalist system and you are likewise up against the Arroyo regime which is puppet, corrupt, brutal and deceptive to the core.

The Filipino people are already suffering grievously, especially the toiling masses and those in the middle strata. These are the conditions of the majority of the youth and students. The people's intolerable suffering is due to US imperialist-dictated policies. Exploitation has worsened under the so-called policy of "neoliberal globalization." Intense state terrorism prevails under the so-called "global war on terror."

You must thoroughly resist and defeat the Arroyo regime as the immediate enemy that serves as the main representative of the current ruling classes. This way, you can build your strength to resist and overthrow the entire exploitative system of big compradors and landlords. The people wield various weapons in the struggle. There are various forms of struggle.

You have as your distinct weapon revolutionary, patriotic, democratic and scientific culture. Use this against the reactionary, pro-imperialist, violent and deceptive culture being propagated by the Arroyo regime. Constantly hone your weapon and aim it at the correct target. Always make an effort to ensure that the messages of the creative works you produce and stage are clear and their content and style interesting to the masses you are arousing, organizing and mobilizing.

Written works, songs, music, drawings, poems and plays must be well-crafted and well-staged. They must move readers, audiences, observers and listeners. They must be easily propagated among the masses and the entire country. We cannot defeat the enemy if we do not achieve victory in the cultural realm as a whole and in art and literature in particular. Any movement that does not wield culture as a weapon is dull and lifeless.

You must be meticulous, diligent and energetic in attending to your task of organizing young artists. If your organization grows bigger and broader, you will be able to do more in the field of cultural struggle. You must purposely rouse the interest of, and encourage young artists or the artistically inclined among them to join you. Pay attention to those who approach you because they have been attracted to your works and prestige. Everyone who joins your organization must be given basic orientation and education. Further education and involvement in organizational tasks relating to the mass movement will validate their membership and lead to the establishment of branches of KARATULA. Revolutionary artists play an important and decisive role. They can easily and rapidly propagate revolutionary spirit, thought and emotions through artistic presentations. The message of revolution can be easily accepted if it portrays the needs and aspirations of the masses in a clear and

persuasive manner. When millions of people patronize revolutionary songs, this is a sure sign of the revolution's advance.

# Message to Philippine Advocacy through Arts-Canada on the Occasion of Its Concert “Songs of Our Times”

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**D**ecember 8, 2007

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ON BEHALF OF THE INTERNATIONAL League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS), I wish to express warmest greetings of solidarity to the officers and members of the Philippine Advocacy Through Arts-Canada (PATAC). We appreciate PATAC highly as an organization of Filipino artists that envisions a future where human rights, real freedom and a just peace reign and that strives to promote the Philippines, its people, culture and struggles through music, visuals, spoken word, prose and poetry and other artistic forms.

We commend you for holding the concert for peace and human rights, Songs of Our Times-Touch a Life, Help a Soul, in order to commemorate human rights day and to raise funds for helping the Philippine-base Children's Rehabilitation Center to run its programs and aid the children victims of militarization and human rights violations in the Philippines. We wish you the utmost success in this noble and lofty purpose of serving those among the most vulnerable in Philippine society.

In connection with the concert, you have an excellent partner in the Children's Rehabilitation Center which has long devoted itself to serving children and families that are victims of state violence. It focuses its services on children in the rural and urban areas who suffer physical health problems, emotional disorders, and social maladjustments due to such traumatic events as arrest, torture, forced displacement, strafing, bombing, massacre, disappearance, and other forms of human rights violations.

We hope that PATAC would be able to attract and encourage more Filipino artists in the Greater Toronto Area to express themselves and relate themselves to the Filipino community and other people in Canada and to the Filipino people back home in the struggle for their rights and for better conditions. You can amplify and extend your strength by developing alliances with community organizations, institutions and key individuals that are interested in the promotion of the arts and social justice.

You are on the correct track in responding to the need for advocacy on human rights, justice and peace issues in the Philippines and Canada and in supporting programs and activities that are meant to help the most oppressed and exploited people. To achieve your purpose, you need an ever expanding audience and participation of people.

You have chosen the arts as truly a potent instrument for reaching out and inspiring the people to act and change their lives and the world. The arts are an effective way for letting the people understand what are the problems of social injustice that confront them and what are the possible solutions to such problems.

We wish PATAC to become a learning centre for the understanding of socially significant issues and for developing artistic skills such as in songwriting, popular theatre, spoken word and visual arts. May PATAC be successful in promoting Philippine arts in various forms for the purpose of enlightening, inspiring and mobilizing the Filipinos here to stand and act for their democratic rights and legitimate interests and to support the Filipino people back in their struggle for national and social liberation against imperialism and the local exploiting classes.

# Foundation for Sustained Development of the National Democratic Movement in the University of the Philippines<sup>1</sup>

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2008 . . . . THE US COLONIAL REGIME established the University of the Philippines (UP) in 1908 in order to attract the cream of the Philippine intelligentsia towards a pro-imperialist and conservative kind of bourgeois liberalism, to draw them away from the anti-colonial and progressive kind of liberal ideas which had guided the old democratic revolution and to train and assimilate the professionals and bureaucrats for a semifeudal social system in which the interests of US imperialism and domestic feudalism were harmonized.

In the first fifty years of its existence, the UP carried out well its colonial (1908-1946) and then neocolonial (starting 1946) mission of coopting and training the youth that passed through its portals. It maintained its equanimity as an academic institution of the status quo despite occasional controversies between its constituency or its officials and the state or government officials as well as the recurrent efforts of the sectarians of the dominant church to undermine the university's avowed secular and liberal character.

The founding of the Communist Party of the Philippine Islands in 1930, the Great Depression and the anti-fascist struggles in the 1930s and the revolutionary movement during World War II and up to the early 1950s stimulated the study of Marxism and the Philippine revolution among a few UP faculty members and students. But these successive events did not bring into being the cellular multiplication of study circles and revolutionary party groups nor any sustained mass movement, with an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal character, among the UP constituency.

The most outstanding of the patriotic and progressive intellectuals produced by the UP before World War II included Jose

Lansang, Salvador P. Lopez, the Lava brothers Vicente, Jose and Jesus, Dr. Agustin Rodolfo, Angel Baking, Samuel Rodriguez and Renato Constantino. With the exception of some, these intellectuals would continue to take and express the Left position and face extreme reaction from the US imperialists and local reactionaries after the war. Some of them would be arrested and detained in 1950 and thereabouts. Those who were released tended to be cautious and expressed themselves in Aesopian language, within the bounds of nationalist and liberal terms. Aside from keeping academic and newspaper jobs, they became speechwriters and political analysts for nationalist members of Congress.

Dr. Elmer Ordoñez is the best living witness who has written about the anti-communist witchhunt and the resistance that took place on the UP campus from the early 1950s to 1957. Even the liberal and logical positivist Dr. Ricardo Pascual was pilloried as a communist by religious sectarians and other anti-communists for supposedly organizing secret cells. Dr. Agustin Rodolfo was among those who formed the Society for the Advancement of Academic Freedom to resist the witchhunt. In those years of severe anti-communist suppression, the anti-imperialist speeches of Senator Claro Mayo Recto kept alive the spirit and hopes of the progressives in the UP from 1951 onwards. Recto was assisted by Renato Constantino. Senator Jose Laurel also expressed nationalist and liberal positions on certain major issues. He was assisted by Jose Lansang.

When we were in UP Diliman for our undergraduate studies from 1956 to 1959, the Cold War was running high and the rabid anti-communists in our country were still touting McCarthyism, which had already been discredited in the US. The US puppet president Ramon Magsaysay and the like-minded UP president Vidal Tan sought to make the UP a regimented bulwark of anti-communism by using religious sectarianism as its base. Subservience to US imperialism was cultivated among faculty members and students through the US-influenced curricula and study materials as well as prospects of Fulbright, Smith-Mundt and other US scholarships and travel grants, or highly-remunerated employment in US and local comprador corporations.

The struggle between the liberals and the religious sectarians was intense. Under the direction of their American Jesuit chaplain Fr. John P. Delaney up to his death in early 1956, the UP Student Catholic Action (UPSCA) and its faculty version the Iota Eta Sigma had made political capital out of some fatal initiation hazing incidents in certain fraternities to discredit and subvert the non-sectarian and liberal character of the UP. They gave an anticommunist spin to their virulent opposition to the influence of the Recto nationalist crusade, the UP publication of Teodoro Agoncillo's *Revolt of the Masses: The Story of Bonifacio and the Philippine Revolution*, the clamor for the study of Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, and so on.

The Anti-Subversion Law was passed in 1957 supposedly in order to destroy once and for all the Marxist ideology and the CPP or any of its successor, extension or front by imposing the death penalty on the officers. It was drafted by the American Jesuit Fr. Arthur Weiss and the political officer of the US embassy openly lobbied for its passage in Congress. It was a bill of attainder, establishing guilt by association, and was meant to suppress the freedom of thought, speech and assembly. It would become a constant weapon of anti-communist witchhunt and oppression.

After Magsaysay died in a plane accident in 1957, his vice president, Carlos P. Garcia, assumed the presidency and won it in the elections in the same year. He appointed Dr. Vicente Sinco as UP president in 1958. The latter suspended the UP Student Council after it held a rally against his policy of preventing a religious organization like the UPSCA from dominating the council. He introduced the General Education Program with the objective of giving all college students a well-rounded basic knowledge of the sciences and the humanities and developing their ability for critical thinking. He appointed as full professors Hernando Abaya, Teodoro Agoncillo, I.P. Soliongco, Armando Malay, and others who were well known for their patriotic and progressive writings. He also appointed as deans and heads of departments those who were patriotic and progressive. He promoted the colloquia on nationalism among the faculty members and students. In the year 1958 we gained access to some Marxist books in the UP Main Library. The military had ordered these to be destroyed in 1950 or thereabouts. But the librarian

simply put most of these aside, piled up uncatalogued and unclassified, at the basement of the UP Main Library where one of us found them among other donated secondhand books. Students of library science were encouraged to volunteer in retrieving usable books from among the dusty piles. These were brought upstairs for cataloguing and classification and eventually added to the UP Library System collections. Thus were many Marxist and progressive books retrieved and made available to those interested in them.

We avidly read and studied these books as well as others that we borrowed from private collections, including that of a non-communist university professor and an Indonesian graduate student. We learned, particularly from Lenin and Mao, that the bourgeois democratic revolution of the new type (under the leadership of the working class) rather than of the old type (under the leadership of the liberal bourgeoisie) was necessary for the people to win victory in the struggle for national liberation and democracy in the era of modern imperialism and world proletarian revolution. We also learned that the toiling masses of workers and peasants and the urban petty bourgeoisie must unite for the revolution to win victory.

The progressive liberal trend in the UP proceeded well even as an ambiguous side controversy occurred. The UP Journalism Club in early 1959 had invited Fr. Hilario Lim, a recent expellee from the Society of Jesus, to speak on the need to Filipinize religious institutions. We and the faculty adviser Prof. Armando Malay were chagrined by the refusal of the Sinco administration to let Fr. Lim speak on the ground of his being a religious, despite the fact that he was demanding the nationalization of religious and religious-run institutions in the Philippines. A few years later, Lim would step out of the Catholic clergy, join the faculty of the UP history department and become an outspoken advocate of the national democratic movement.

### ***From SCAUP founding to the eve of KM founding, 1959 to 1964***

By 1959 when we founded the Student Cultural Association of the UP (SCAUP), we who were the core organizers drew from our study of Marxism and the history and circumstances of the Philippines the understanding that the Philippine revolution could be resumed under the leadership of the working class and that such a

leadership could bring together the working class, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie against US imperialism and the local exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords.

We considered the character of the UP and the possibility of developing the national democratic movement within the UP. We had no illusion that SCAUP or even all the UP students could change the character of the UP as a pro-imperialist and conservative liberal institution without the prior victory of the national democratic movement in society at large. But we aimed to build a progressive university within the reactionary university or to develop the national democratic movement among the students, faculty members and non-academic employees. It was with some sense of humor that we adopted the acronym SCAUP to stress the fact that we were diametrically opposed to the UPSCA as it was then. We also stressed that we were a cultural group, not a religious one. But we were most interested in raising the level of debate in the university from one between the liberals and the religious sectarians to one between the Left and the Right or one between the progressives and the reactionaries on basic and urgent social, economic, political and cultural issues. We used the terms nationalism and liberalism in a progressive way to mean anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism, respectively.

We called for a Second Propaganda Movement to prepare the resumption of the Philippine revolution under global conditions of modern imperialism and proletarian revolution as well as under local semicolonial and semifeudal conditions. We were for the resumption of the Philippine revolution against US imperialism and the local exploiting classes. We were for national liberation, democracy, social justice and development. We were for academic freedom and civil liberties in the UP and we were definitely for upholding, promoting and advancing a system of education and culture that is of national, scientific and mass character.

We were of the view that the Marxists and the progressive liberals could and had to unite in order to form the national democratic movement in the university and that they could also ally themselves even with the conservative liberals on certain issues, like

academic freedom, civil liberties and welfare for all UP constituents. The SCAUP adopted two levels of education through seminar-style discussions. One was openly done on the principles, program and basic issues of the national democratic movement among members and applicants for membership. The other was discreetly done among the most politically advanced SCAUP members because the Anti-Subversion Law prohibited the study of Marxism-Leninism and its relevance to the Philippine revolution.

It was sufficient for every SCAUP member to have a basic knowledge of the national democratic movement. As a form of initiation, applicants for membership were collectively and individually instructed on the movement and were assigned a book, article or a current issue to analyze and discuss. The discussions were carried out anywhere the participants wished, be it in a classroom, cafeteria or in the open air. The discreet discussions on Marxism-Leninism were done either on the campus grounds or in private homes.

The charter members of the SCAUP were graduate and undergraduate students. The organizational policy was to give priority to the recruitment of those who were already holding responsible positions in other campus organizations, who had the ability to write for the *Collegian* as editors and feature writers or who had the qualifications to run for the UP Student Council in case of restoration. The political and academic quality of the SCAUP was so high that sometimes some SCAUP members immodestly joked among themselves that they could someday take over the reactionary government from within. In fact, some would join and become cadres of the revolutionary movement and others enter the reactionary government and rise to the high positions of cabinet members, governor of the Central Bank, ambassadors, congressmen and senators and justices of the Supreme Court.

SCAUP members were encouraged to debate with their teachers and oppose reactionary ideas inside and outside classrooms. They had a keen interest in attending the colloquia on nationalism and in initiating or joining open forums where they had the opportunity to raise questions and debate with the speakers. Some SCAUP members regularly attended the seminars and informal discussions

organized by the graduate assistant Petronilo Bn. Daroy on behalf of Dr. Ricardo Pascual, dean of the graduate school of arts and sciences. They went there to test their knowledge of dialectical materialism by debating with the dean who was a logical positivist and to ventilate their political views and seek consensus on current issues with participants who were mostly graduate students and faculty members, including Dr. Agustin Rodolfo who could skilfully render Marxist ideas in liberal language.

The members of fraternities who were members of SCAUP stood above inter-fraternity rivalries and took a common ground in opposing the UPSCA and attended SCAUP study meetings. Because of the vacuum created by President Sinco's suspension of the UP Student Council, they took the initiative in spearheading the formation of the Inter-Fraternity and Sorority Student Council (IFSC). This alliance would later make up for the limited membership of SCAUP and provide the broad organized base for arousing, organizing and mobilizing the UP students in 1961 against the witchhunt conducted by the Committee on Anti-Filipino Activities (CAFA) against the UP faculty members and students.

The CAFA invoked the Anti-Subversion Law and targeted for inquisition the editors of the *Philippine Social Sciences and Humanities Review* for having reprinted in 1958 the 1946 pamphlet "Peasant War in the Philippines: A study of the causes of social unrest in the Philippines—an analysis of Philippine political economy," the 1960 *Philippinensian* for the editorial "Tower of Babel" and the *Philippine Collegian* for the March 1, 1961 feature article "*Requiem for Lumumba*" under the SCAUP chairman's nom de plume, Andres Gregorio. The articles had an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal content. The editors were accused of subversion, promoting Marxism and the outlawed Communist Party.

The key leaders of the IFSC, who were also SCAUP members, convened a meeting of all campus organizations to agree on holding a demonstration in response to the CAFA witchhunt. The SCAUP, the IFSC and the *Philippine Collegian* rallied the students to the defense of academic freedom and civil liberties. The SCAUP drafted the manifesto and organized the machinery for the March 14, 1961 rally against CAFA. We prepared the placards at our rented cottage

in Area 14 and at the Stalag 17 (the moniker for the quonset barracks left by the US Army). The SCAUP chairman and the graduate assistant Petronilo Bn. Daroy arranged with the JD bus company and signed the rent contract for the buses to ferry the students from Diliman in Quezon City to Congress in downtown Manila.

Five thousand students converged on Congress and literally scuttled the CAFA hearings. This was the first demonstration of its kind, protesting against the anti-communist witchhunt and the Anti-Subversion Law and defending the freedom to express anti-imperialist and anti-feudal ideas, which the targeted publications carried. Following the resounding success of the anti-CAFA rally, the *Philippine Collegian* published a crescendo of editorials, columns and feature articles that did not only defend academic freedom and civil liberties but also propagated the ideas of the national democratic movement against imperialism and feudalism.

The consecutive editorships of Reynato Puno, Leonardo Quisumbing, Luis Teodoro, Jr., Ferdinand Tinio and Rene Navarro from 1961 to 1962 firmly established the predominance of *Philippine Collegian* editors who adopted the editorial policy that adhered to the line of the national democratic movement in the 1960s and thereafter. The editors either belonged to or were friendly to the SCAUP and welcomed the contributions of the SCAUP writers. The *Philippine Collegian* became a highly important vehicle for carrying and ventilating the ideas of the national democratic movement not only in the UP but also beyond. We also aimed to avail of the pages of the *Literary Apprentice* of the UP Writers' Club and the *Diliman Review*.

In addition to the *Collegian*, we had the Diliman-based little magazines that were dedicated to the task of stirring up anti-imperialist and anti-feudal ideas. These were the *Fugitive Review*, *Cogent* and *Diliman Observer* in 1960 and 1961. They were edited by such SCAUP writers as Petronilo Bn. Daroy and the SCAUP chairman, and were invariably short-lived for lack of funds to pay for printing. It would only be in 1963 that the *Progressive Review* could come out as a relatively stable publication, lasting until 1968. The

editorial board consisted of UP faculty members and graduate students.

As a result of the anti-CAFA rally, the teaching fellowship of the SCAUP Chairman was not renewed by the UP English Department. Also before being fired from the department, he engaged the department head in a debate on the pages of the *Philippine Collegian* regarding the content of a subject called Great Thoughts in which the study materials were written predominantly by Catholic thinkers, like Cardinal Newman, G. K. Chesterton, Jacques Maritain, Belloc, Gibson, and so on. He demanded that progressive writings, including those of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and other Marxist thinkers and revolutionaries, should also be accommodated in the subject.

Having lost his job at the UP, the SCAUP chairman gained time to do political work not only on the UP campus but also on other campuses. As a result of the anti-CAFA rally, students in other universities in downtown Manila took interest in the student movement in the UP. SCAUP promoted the formation of study circles among students in the Philippine College of Commerce, the University of the East, the Manuel L. Quezon University and the Lyceum University in 1961 and 1962. Eventually, the SCAUP members and their friends in the other universities in Manila would constitute a significant part of the student contingent at the founding of the Kabataang Makabayan (KM) in 1964.

The general secretary Jesus Lava of the underground merger party of the communist and socialist parties (MPCSP) tried to contact the SCAUP chairman soon after the March 1961 anti-CAFA rally. But the intermediary failed to deliver Lava's message to him. The SCAUP chairman went to Indonesia on a scholarship grant to study Bahasa Indonesia in the first half of 1962 and had the opportunity to study the Indonesian mass movement. From there he effected the flow of Marxist-Leninist reading materials to some faculty members and student activists in the UP and some other universities in Manila. It would only be in December 1962 that he could link with and join the MPSCP.

Soon after the anti-CAFA rally in 1961, we of the SCAUP were already planning to form a comprehensive youth organization by linking up with young workers, peasants and professionals. We

joined the Lapiang Manggagawa (LM, Workers Party) and became active in its youth, and research and education departments in the latter half of 1962. From this, we gained access to the young workers in several labor federations and major independent unions. We established links with the peasant association Malayang Samahan ng Magsasaka (MASAKA, Free Peasants Association) in 1963 and we visited a number of barrios in Central Luzon in order to encourage the peasant youth to join the projected Kabataang Makabayan.

After the anti-CAFA rally, the SCAUP initiated or joined a number of other mass actions. These included the campus protest action (in cooperation with the UP Student Union of which Enrique Voltaire Garcia III was chairman) against the appointment of Carlos P. Romulo as UP President and off-campus rallies and pickets against US imperialism on the issues of the US-RP Military Bases Agreement, the Laurel-Langley Agreement, US military intervention in Cuba and so on. The political mass actions initiated from 1962 to 1964 by Lapiang Manggagawa on various issues were small, ranging from 500 to 1,000 participants. The SCAUP promoted and assisted the campaign against the Spanish Law, which required students to take 24 units of Spanish. The campaign culminated in the demonstration of 50,000 people (the majority of whom came from the youth of Iglesia ni Cristo).

### ***National expansion of the new democratic movement, 1964-1968***

The national democratic movement that started in the UP in the period of 1959-1964 became well established on a national scale in the period of 1964-1968. The UP student contingent took an outstanding role in the founding of the Kabataang Makabayan (KM) on November 30, 1964 and in its further development as a comprehensive youth organization for students as well as young workers, peasants, professionals and women. In turn, the national democratic movement developing in the entire country had salutary effects on the patriotic and progressive forces within the UP. KM echoed and amplified the call of the SCAUP in 1959 for a Second Propaganda Movement. Through KM, students and young faculty members of UP led by KM chairman gained access to and

cooperated with the Lapiang Manggagawa, which became the Socialist Party of the Philippines (SPP) in 1965, the trade union movement and MASAKA. By its own efforts, KM was able to organize new trade unions as well as community organizations in both urban and rural areas. Eventually, it spearheaded the formation of the broad anti-imperialist alliance, Movement for the Advancement of Nationalism (MAN) on February 8, 1967.

As soon as it was founded in 1964, KM established a chapter in UP. This had interlocking membership and always cooperated closely with SCAUP as a partner. KM and SCAUP had their respective internal educational activities but they also had joint public activities. SCAUP held the Claro Mayo Recto Lecture Series every year and KM members attended these. KM and SCAUP cooperated with other organizations such as the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation (Philippine chapter) headed by Dr. Francisco Nemenzo, Jr. to popularize the anti-imperialist teach-ins, especially against the US war of aggression in Vietnam in the mid-1960s. KM organized the inter-university Lecture Series on Nationalism.

In most semesters during the 1960s, the *Philippine Collegian* had as editors and writers either members or close friends of KM and SCAUP. It often carried feature articles promoting the national democratic line against imperialism and reaction. When revived in 1966, the UP Student Council chaired by Enrique Voltaire Garcia III cooperated very well with KM and SCAUP in promoting the national democratic line on intramural, national and international issues. It held the National Student Congress for the advancement of nationalism. The delegates joined KM and gave it a national spread. As UP Student Council chairman and later as *Collegian* editor-in-chief, Garcia was outstanding in pursuing the national democratic line. The National Student Congress for the advancement of nationalism. The delegates joined the KM and gave it a national spread. As UP Student Council chairman and later as *Collegian* editor-in-chief, Garcia was outstanding in pursuing the national democratic line.

KM dispatched educational-organizational teams to organize chapters in schools, factories, urban poor communities and rural areas. It also availed of the national conferences of national student

organizations like the College Editors' Guild, National Students' League, Conference Delegates Association (CONDA), Student Council Association of the Philippines (SCAP) and the Student Christian Movement (SCM) to recruit KM members nationwide. The students recruited during such conferences were followed up by members of the KM National Council and by organization-education teams and were encouraged and guided to form KM chapters. Until after 1970, the National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP) and the Student Catholic Action of the Philippines were usually run by the conservative and reformist student leaders from the Catholic schools.

KM played the key role in planning and organizing the youth participation in the omnibus rally of 25,000 people on January 25, 1965 against US imperialism with regard to the Laurel-Langley Agreement, the US Military Bases Agreement and other forms of US control over the Philippines. The people rallied in front of the US embassy and marched in a torch parade to the presidential palace. The youth contingent was larger than those of workers and peasants. The protest action marked a new peak in mass mobilization by the national democratic movement. Some elements of the national bourgeoisie gave support to the mass action.

When US President Lyndon B. Johnson attended the so-called Manila Summit to round up support for the US war of aggression in Vietnam from governments in the Asia-Pacific region, UP students belonging to KM were among those who picketed the summit at its Manila Hotel venue on October 23, 1966. The following day, UP students mustered by both KM and the UP Student Council composed the bulk of the 5,000 students who protested against the summit and were attacked by the military and police. Consequently, the UP Student Council led by Enrique Voltaire Garcia III formed the UP Nationalist Corps to wage a nationwide campaign against state brutality and to conduct mass work among workers and peasants, thus reinforcing the work of the KM Learn from the Masses, Serve the People teams. KM chairman had drafted the manifesto launching the UP Nationalist Corps.

In 1967, soon after the establishment of the Movement for the Advancement of Nationalism (MAN) the MAN general secretary

made the first draft and together with Renato Constantino formed a working group to make MAN report against the further Americanization of the University of the Philippines under the presidency of Carlos P. Romulo. Romulo was acting as chief agent of the cultural agencies of the US government, US corporations and the Rockefeller, Ford and other US foundations. KM and the SCAUP cooperated with all other patriotic student organizations, student leaders, campus writers and faculty members in a sustained campaign against the ideological and cultural dominance of US imperialism in UP.

The *Philippine Collegian*, under the editorship of Miriam Defensor, would expose in 1968 the contract between the UP College of Agriculture in Los Baños and Dow Chemicals Inc. which was notorious for supplying the American armed forces in Vietnam with napalm and defoliants. This was followed by another *Collegian* expose of the contract between the same college and the US Air Force regarding the study of plant life, which could be used in US chemical and biological warfare in Vietnam and elsewhere. The student protests on the Diliman and Los Baños campuses forced the UP administration to cancel the contracts.

The chairman of Kabataang Makabayan who was concurrently vice chairman of the Socialist Party of the Philippines and general secretary of MAN published his book, *Struggle for National Democracy*, in 1967. This was a compilation of his articles and speeches on the issues and concerns affecting Philippine society as a whole and its various major sectors. It was avidly read by the activists of the youth, labor and peasant movements and served to consolidate their understanding of the national democratic movement. It stimulated the further advance of the movement for national liberation and democracy against US imperialism and the local reactionary classes.

Within the old merger party of the CPP and SPP, the debates and contradictions between the proletarian revolutionaries and the Lavaite revisionists came to a head in April 1967 when the latter made an organizational maneuver against the former who were the ones actually leading the mass movement. The proletarian revolutionaries had long criticized and wanted to repudiate the

influence of modern revisionism centered in the Soviet Union and the major subjectivist and Right and Left opportunist errors in the previous 25 years within the MPCSP. They carried out a rectification movement to prepare for the reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the waging of a protracted people's war against the ruling system.

By 1968 the Kabataang Makabayan had established chapters in the universities, colleges and high schools in nearly all provinces of the country. It provided the organizational framework for building a nationwide revolutionary movement. It established the schools for national democracy. It provided a nationwide broadcast network for the ideas of the national democratic movement. It was the training school of young activists not only from the schools but also from the factories, urban poor communities and farms. It gained repute for the spread of student strikes on a national scale. It was involved in a number of outstanding worker strikes. It struck roots among the peasant youth in Central and Southern Luzon.

As a result of the break of the proletarian revolutionaries from the MPCSP, the Lavaite revisionists formed the Malayang Pagkakaisang Kabataang Pilipino (Free Union of Filipino Youth-MPKP) which took away a few scores of members from KM in 1968. Also in the same year a group of KM members who opposed a pre-congress proposal to elect Nilo Tayag as KM chairman broke away from KM and formed the Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan (Democratic Youth Association-SDK). The contradictions involved were not promptly and properly handled because we were then pre-occupied with the intensified struggle against the Lava revisionist clique. However, the SDK proclaimed a national democratic line similar to that of the KM.

### ***Mass movement against the rise of fascism, 1968-1972***

What incubated in UP from 1959 to 1964 and conspicuously spread nationally from 1964 to 1968 helped greatly in paving the way for the re-establishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines on December 26, 1968, and the rise of a powerful mass movement challenging the entire ruling system from 1969 to 1972. The national democratic movement grew in strength among the toiling masses of workers and peasants and the middle social strata as the crisis of

the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system worsened and the Marcos regime became more servile to imperialism, more corrupt and brutal and prepared to impose a fascist dictatorship on the people.

Workers' strikes spread throughout the country in an unprecedented way in 1969. The peasants were likewise restive and demanded land reform, even as the Marcos regime became more intimidating and the religious sectarians, reformists and revisionists tried to lead them astray and calm them down. On March 29, 1969 the CPP founded the New People's Army (NPA) and launched people's war. In November 1969, peasants from Central Luzon numbering to 20,000, joined by their workers and youth supporters, massed in front of Congress in order to demand land reform.

Student strikes continued to spread throughout the country. They inspired the students to join the chapters of KM and attend KM schools for democracy. The UP Chapter of Kabataang Makabayan and SCAUP allied themselves with other student organizations to launch a strike in January 1969 and succeeded in moving the university administration headed by UP president Dr. Salvador P. Lopez to give in to most of the demands of the students, faculty members and non-academic employees. Being himself a libertarian and an advocate of the university as social critic, Dr. Lopez showed sympathy for the cause of the students and led the UP administration in preventing the outside police forces from entering the university campus.

Among the reforms demanded by the students and met by the UP administration were the representation of the students in the Board of Regents and the university councils and in the process of electing college deans and department heads, the autonomy of student organizations and optionality of having faculty advisers, transparency of university financial accounts, the spending of students' fees for the very purpose for which these are collected, and so on. Until now, many of the reforms won by the students in the period 1969-1972 have survived despite reactionary efforts to reverse or undermine them.

The *Philippine Collegian* under the editorship of Ernesto Valencia serialized Amado Guerrero's *Philippine Society and Revolution*

(PSR) under the title *Philippine Crisis* in 1970. It was enthusiastically received and closely read by the students, especially with the understanding that it was a further development of *Struggle for National Democracy* (SND). The first edition of the PSR in book form in 1970 was sold out mainly in the lobbies at UP Diliman. The *Collegian* under the editorship of Antonio Tagamolila and the Amado V. Hernandez Foundation under the chairmanship of Antonio Zumel cooperated in publishing the second edition of the *Struggle for National Democracy* in 1971.

The *Collegian* under the editorship of Victor Manarang, Valencia, Tagamolila and Rey Vea from 1969 to 1972 brought to a new and higher level the adherence of the student publication to the national democratic line by publishing documents of the re-established Communist Party of the Philippines and articles of CPP chairman Amado Guerrero and other prominent progressives and anti-imperialists. Creative works in the form of short stories, poems and plays reflecting social reality and the discontent and revolutionary aspirations of the people appeared in the *Collegian*, *Collegian Folio*, *Literary Apprentice* and *Ulos*.

In late 1969 KM and the Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan (SDK) reconciled along the national democratic line, with the former welcoming the latter's formal founding in January 1970.

The reconciliation gave further impetus to the development of the national democratic movement in UP. It came in time for the preparations for the student strike on the UP campus in the second week of January 1970 and the demonstration in front of Congress against President Marcos' state of the nation address on January 25, 1970. The police brutality inflicted on the 10,000 mainly student demonstrators on this day ignited the First Quarter Storm of 1970.

KM and other organized forces of the youth and the workers launched militant mass protests from 50,000 to 100,000 people every week (excluding the people who cheered along the streets and from windows of houses) during the first three months of 1970. They formed the Movement for a Democratic Philippines to broaden and strengthen the alliance against the rising brutality of the Marcos regime and at the same time frustrate the attempt of the revisionist party to outflank the progressive forces with the false charge that

they were purely anti-Marcos and were not at all opposed to US imperialism.

The First Quarter Storm subsided. But mass protest actions by the student masses proceeded throughout 1970 in provincial capitals where KM had established chapters. The mass protests resumed in Metro Manila with the May 1 worker-student demonstration and continued in earnest though intermittently through the rest of the 1970s on a wide range of domestic issues such as the superprofit-taking by the foreign monopolies, rising prices of fuel and basic commodities, anti-labor policies and practices and the lack of land reform and also on international issues such as the use of US military bases for aggression and military intervention in Southeast Asia and the escalation of the US war of aggression in Indochina.

On February 1, 1971 the UP students declared a strike to protest successive oil price hikes. The Marcos regime deployed military and police forces against the UP after a pro-Marcos member of the faculty killed Pastor Mesina, a freshman student. These prompted the students, the faculty members, non-academic employees and other campus residents to unite and resist the hostile armed forces. They took over the entire university from the administration and proclaimed the Diliman Commune. They established barricades and other forms of defense and they improvised missiles and fireworks to discourage the helicopters from landing armed personnel.

They used the radio facilities of the university, increasing its power and range to broadcast to as far as Palawan revolutionary propaganda against the Marcos regime, including the reading of all three chapters of *Philippine Society and Revolution*. They also used the UP printing press to print leaflets and publish their own revolutionary newspaper. They renamed the buildings of the university after revolutionary leaders. The Diliman Commune promptly captured national attention and gained wide and enthusiastic support. Food, clothing, and all sorts of donations and other forms of encouragement poured in continuously, some coming from far-flung provinces. Workers, public transport drivers, students from other schools and assorted volunteers came to reinforce the barricades.

The Diliman Commune ended on February 9, 1971 only after the UP administration accepted several significant demands of the students and the Marcos regime accepted the recommendation of the UP president to end the military and police siege and declare assurances that state security forces would not be deployed against the university. After the Diliman Commune, the broad masses of the Filipino people continued to engage in legal protest actions on a nationwide scale. The Marcos regime confronted these with increasing violence. On August 21, 1971 it attacked the opposition by lobbing grenades at the Liberal Party *miting de avance* at Plaza Miranda in order to have the pretext for blaming communists and suspending the writ of habeas corpus. It arrested the leaders of KM and other progressive organizations and raided their offices and homes.

KM and all other progressive forces in the Movement for a Democratic Philippines recognized the rising threat of fascism and expanded their alliance by forming the Movement of Concerned Citizens for Civil Liberties (MCCCL). This included the reformists, bourgeois nationalists, anti-Marcos reactionaries and religious organizations. Activists most likely to be arrested by the regime either went underground or prepared to go underground. Nevertheless, the legal forces of the national democratic movement continued to mobilize the people in order to make protests and demands.

Under the auspices of the MCCCL, the legal mass protests continued until September 21, 1972 when 25,000 demonstrators denounced the plot to declare martial law. Indeed, Marcos started the mass arrests on September 22, issued the declaration of martial law on September 23, 1972 and imposed a fascist dictatorship on the people for the next 14 years. The legal forces of the national democratic movement went underground but took deeper roots in the UP and in the entire country, especially because the armed revolution raged in the countryside and kept the hopes of the people alive.

Enrique Voltaire Garcia III set the example and established the tradition of pursuing the national democratic line in the UP Student Union and Student Council. But more importantly, the student

organizations and the student masses welcomed and followed the national democratic line. Student parties competed for support from the students along this line during the campus elections. By 1970 every student party and almost every campus organization wanted to be recognized as having a national-democratic character.

The KM and SDK were the engines of the student parties that excelled in espousing the national democratic line. They generated the kind of student leadership that culminated in the militant presidency of Gerry Barican of Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan and the student party Partisans and Eric Baculinao of Kabataang Makabayan and the student party Sandigang Makabansa [Nationalist Bulwark] (formerly Partisans) from 1969 to 1971. However, as long as the ruling reactionary system remained, the national democratic line in the UP Student Council could not always remain secure.

The Marcos regime and the intelligence services pushed the fraudulent election of a reactionary student leader to the presidency of the UP Student Council for 1971-1972 by literally using smear tactics against the Sandigang Makabansa candidates. Famous slogans from the writings of Mao (like Oppose Book Worship and Combat Liberalism) were smeared in red paint on the walls of the university and furniture were thrown out from buildings on the eve of the campus elections. This vandalism was ascribed to the progressive student party in order to misrepresent it and swing the votes to the reactionary party. It was a coup calculated to cripple the UP Student Council and the national democratic movement in UP in preparation for the Marcos coup d'etat. But in the campus elections of 1972, a few months before the declaration of martial law, the Sandigang Makabansa headed by the candidate for chairman Jaime Tan won by a landslide.

Due to space constraint, we have referred to the principal mass organizations as active factors and indicators in the development of the national democratic movement. Also deserving of attention were those traditional organizations and institutions that adopted in varied ways and degrees the aims of the national democratic movement. Many individual officers and members of the fraternities and sororities became militants of the national democratic movement and

tried to reorient their organizations. The Alethea, the Kilusang Kristyano ng Kabataang Pilipino (Christian Movement of Filipino Youth-KKKP) and the Christians for National Liberation (CNL) gained adherents among religious believers. The rabid religious sectarians that were associated with the UPSCA and Iota Eta Sigma seemed to recede.

The years from 1969 to 1971 saw a flurry of mass organizing along the national democratic line. Various student organizations arose as affiliates and allies of KM and SDK. They formed their respective cultural performing and visual arts groups, like Panday Sining and Nagkakaisang Progresibong Artista at Arkitekto (United Progressive Artists and Architects-NPAA) of KM and Gintong Silahis [Golden Rays] and Sining Bayan [People's Culture] of SDK. There were the mass formations based on certain colleges in UP Diliman, such as the Progresibong Samahan sa Inhinyeria at Agham (PSIA) in the College of Engineering, the NPAA in the College of Fine Arts, the Progresibong Kilusang Medikal (Progressive Medical Movement-PKM) in the College of Medicine and the Samahan ng mga Makabayang Mag-aaral ng Batas (Association of Patriotic Law Students-SMMB) in the College of Law. The propagandists formed the Samahan ng mga Progresibong Propagandista [Association of Progressive Propagandists]. The UP faculty members had their own progressive organization, Samahan ng mga Guro sa Pamantasan (Association of University Teachers-SAGUPA).

The national democratic movement reached and swept the UP units in Los Baños, Baguio and Tarlac. It was strongest in UP Los Baños because the SCAUP, KM and SDK chapters were formed there soon after their Diliman counterparts were established and because this unit had the largest student population among the UP extension units. The progressive students led the student government and edited the student publication. They aroused and mobilized the student masses to support the Diliman Commune and make their own demands. UP Los Baños became the beacon of other schools and colleges in the Southern Tagalog region and the staging base for long protest marches to Metro Manila.

The basis and course of development of the national democratic movement in UP Baguio were similar to those of UP Los Baños.

Progressive students and young instructors built chapters of KM and SDK. The student members led the student government and took charge of the student publication. The teachers espousing the same general line formed the Ugnayan ng Makabayang Guro (Association of Patriotic Teachers-UMAGA). UP Baguio became a base for organizing KM chapters in other schools, universities and communities in Baguio City and the provinces of the Cordillera. UP Tarlac also became a base for progressive student organizing in Central Luzon.

National mass organizations came into being, with UP students, faculty members and alumni as members. They included Students for the Advancement of National Democracy (STAND), League of Editors for a Democratic Society (LEADS), Katipunan ng mga Samahang Manggagawa (Alliance of Workers Associations-KASAMA), Pagkakaisa ng mga Magbubukid sa Pilipinas (Unity of Philippine Peasants-PMP), Katipunan ng mga Gurong Makabayan (Alliance of Patriotic Teachers- KAGUMA), Malayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan (Free Movement of New Women-MAKIBAKA), Panulat para sa Kaunlaran ng Sambayanan (Pen for People's Progress- PAKSA), Samahan ng mga Makabayang Siyentipiko (Patriotic Association of Scientists-SMS) and Makabayang Samahan ng mga Nars (Patriotic Association of Nurses-MASANA). The CPP formed party groups in various types of mass organizations and groups of professionals. From these would arise the allied organizations within the National Democratic Front.

The fascist dictatorship failed to destroy the national democratic movement in the university and in the entire country. It only succeeded in unwittingly persuading many of the UP students, teachers and alumni to join the people's struggle for national liberation and democracy. The best sons and daughters of the university became communists and sought to remold themselves as proletarian revolutionaries. Many of them decided to participate in the people's war, contributing whatever abilities they had and ever ready to make the necessary sacrifice in order to advance the revolutionary cause.

From one reactionary regime to another after the fall of Marcos in 1986, the national democratic movement has kept a deeply-rooted

foundation in UP and has always strived to grow in strength against tremendous odds. So long as the semicolonial and semifeudal system persists, the movement goes through ups and downs and twists and turns for whatever reason at any given time. So far, it continues to exist and grow because there is a fertile ground and need for it and the activist organizations and individuals are inspired by the noble cause of serving the people and carrying on the struggle to which so many revolutionary martyrs and heroes from UP have dedicated their lives. The UP constituents are ever critical of the dire conditions of society and are ever desirous of change for the better.

In the last fifty years the national democratic movement has become the principal challenge to the pro-imperialist and reactionary character of the University of the Philippines. It aims to overthrow the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system and liberate the university completely so that UP can become the shining center for upholding, defending and promoting national independence and democracy, development through national industrialization and land reform, a national, scientific and popular system of culture and education, and international solidarity and peace.

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<sup>1</sup> Article co-authored with Julieta de Lima and published in *Serve the People: Ang Kasaysayan ng Radikal na Kilusan sa Unibersidad ng Pilipinas* [The History of the Radical Movement in the University of the Philippines], edited by Bienvenido Lumera, Judy Taguiwalo et al. (Manila: IBON Foundation, CONTEND & ACT, 2008). The article was solicited for the UP centenary celebration but published in <http://josemariasison.org> only on August 8, 2010.

# Strengthen and Advance the Cultural Revolution

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**M**essage to Kabataang Artista para sa Tunay na Kalayaan  
(KARATULA)  
September 18, 2008

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I WARMLY GREET ALL of you on the anniversary of Kabataang Artista para sa Tunay na Kalayaan (Young Artists for Genuine Freedom-KARATULA). I am in solidarity with your principles and objectives. I join you in celebration.

### ***Grave crisis of the system***

Semicolonial and semifeudal Philippine society is always afflicted by chronic crisis due to extreme exploitation by big compradors, landlords and the corrupt bureaucrats. But an even more serious crisis afflicts the Philippine today as a result of the rapid growth of private monopoly capital through extreme exploitation of the working people and financial manipulation under the policy regime of neoliberal globalization. This policy is what prevents national industrialization and agrarian reform thus deepening the deterioration and weakness of the Philippine economy.

The broad masses of the Filipino people today experience extreme poverty. The ranks of the unemployed are growing rapidly. The income of most our countrymen remain insufficient. The price of basic commodities continue to soar. Hunger and malnutrition are widespread due to the high price of rice and other foodstuff. The monopoly capitalists continuously raise the price of oil, thus the prices of goods and services also continue to rise. The masses are groaning under the rapid rise of transportation costs, electricity, education and medical costs.

Extreme exploitation is accompanied by severe oppression. This is driven by the greed of the Arroyo regime, the exploiting classes of compradors and landlords and the US-led imperialists. Under the US policy of the global “war on terror”, the Arroyo regime has launched

Oplan Bantay Laya in perpetrating gross and systematic human rights violations against legal activists and the broad masses of the oppressed in urban and rural areas. The regime perpetrates violence not only to suppress the progressive forces and the masses but also to sow fear among its rival opposition forces. Thus the political crisis of the ruling system is aggravated.

The cultural and moral crisis is related to the socioeconomic and political crisis. The policies of the Arroyo regime and its dominant institutions are contrary to the interests and needs of the youth and the Filipino people for a national, scientific and mass system of education and culture. The regime and the ruling class emphasize the culture and morality of treason over the rights and interests of the nation, greed and corruption, and lies and violence against the working people and all those fighting exploitation and oppression.

### ***Challenges and tasks***

The all-sided crisis of the ruling system challenges you, KARATULA to more vigorously promote the cultural revolution among the ranks of the Filipino youth until it spreads more widely to the broad masses of the Filipino people. There is a need for continuous cultural revolution in order to advance the movement for national freedom and democracy. It is an important factor that provides inspiration and guide to action. It invigorates and sharpens the mind and feelings of the people for revolutionary change.

In creating every form of art and culture, you need to grasp and depict the basic contradiction in the history and current condition of the Philippines. You must draw your themes for your creations and presentations from the life and struggle of the Filipino youth and people. Uphold national freedom and democracy against foreign monopoly capitalism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. Uphold national industrialization and genuine land reform against imperialism and local reaction.

In the field of culture itself, where you are focused, promote revolutionary, patriotic, democratic and scientific education and culture. Fight reactionary, pro-imperialist, exploitative and oppressive culture and education. Emphasize the ideas, feelings, sufferings, struggles and aspirations of the exploited and oppressed. Serve the working people being led by the proletariat. Make the workers,

peasants, cadres, soldiers of the people and progressive activists in the different fields of struggle the heroes of your works and presentations.

Relentlessly sharpen your weapon and aim it at the target. In your creations and presentations, the message should be clear and well presented. Make the content concrete but typical and the style attractive for the masses you wish to arouse, organize and mobilize. Works, songs, music, drawings, poems and plays must be artistically composed and performed. Pay attention to their effect on those who read, watch, observe and listen. Make sure to smoothly disseminate them to the masses and across the country. Use any traditional and modern technique or technology that is effective in promoting and presenting your creations.

It is not enough for the leadership and membership of KARATULA to excel in art alone. You must also strengthen and increase the number of chapters in schools and communities. You can do more in the arts and in performances if your mass base among the youth is broader and more consolidated. Always expand and consolidate your organization by learning and stimulating creativity and performances.

The stronger your organization, the bigger and more effective you will be in mobilizing the broad masses of the youth and the people. Your cultural work becomes meaningful and decisive when it effectively serves the interests and aspirations of the Filipino people, especially the working people and the youth, by arousing, organizing and mobilizing them. When you mobilize the broad masses of the youth and people, you will surely attract more members and patrons of KARATULA.

As you focus on the struggle within the Philippines and rely on the own strength of the Filipino youth and people, you must nurture the spirit of revolutionary solidarity with all the peoples and youth of the world. To the best of our ability, let us support just struggles overseas. We are all being exploited and oppressed by the imperialists and their minions. We all deserve unity, cooperation and coordination in the struggle along the anti-imperialist and democratic line.

### ***Conclusion***

You already have rich experience in cultural work. Always learn lessons from your positive and negative experiences. Make your accumulated victories and the rectification of mistakes and weaknesses the basis for further advancing. I have great confidence that you will reap greater victories and that you will be able to contribute more to spreading and advancing revolutionary culture and art.

Continue to use art and culture to invigorate the struggle against the Arroyo regime. Use this current struggle as a way to strengthen yourselves and the Filipino people toward revolutionary change.

In the end, the Filipino people should dismantle the entire semicolonial and semifeudal system and replace it with a system that is independent, democratic, just, progressive and peaceful. A system that is based on the democratic power of the working people and that is led by the proletariat and with a socialist perspective.

Long live KARATULA!

Long live the Filipino youth!

Long live the Filipino people!

# Resist the Neoliberal Policy in Education

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**K**eynote Address to the International Conference  
on Education, Imperialism and Resistance,  
Shih Hsin University, Taipei, Taiwan  
August 10, 2009

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FROM THE INTERNATIONAL Coordinating Committee and entirety of the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS), I convey warmest greetings of solidarity to all the educators and social activists now gathered. I express high appreciation to the ILPS Working Group on Teachers, Researchers and Other Educational Personnel for organizing this international conference on education, imperialism and resistance and to the International Center for Taiwan Social Studies for hosting it.

Thank you for affording me the honor and privilege of delivering this keynote address. The theme of your conference is urgent and of great importance to the educators, the youth and the people of the world. We need to underscore the decisive importance of education in the service of the people, to criticize and condemn the depredations of imperialism and all reaction and present the anti-imperialist and progressive perspectives of struggle for a new and better world. I keep in mind that the participants of this conference come from advanced industrial economies as well as from underdeveloped ones.

### ***The decisive importance of education***

The availability of formal education at the basic and higher levels to comparatively larger numbers of people differentiates the modern world of the bourgeoisie and working class from the ancient world of the slave masters and feudal lords. The wider extent of education is made possible by the larger amount of surplus product created by the modern forces of production and required by the greater need for mass literacy, professional and technical skills to maintain as well as to advance the level of material and cultural development.

Every exploitative ruling class in modern society, be it the monopoly bourgeoisie in imperialist countries or the bourgeoisie in combination with the landlord class in the underdeveloped countries, always puts its class imprint on the character and content of education and lays stress on the preservation of the ruling system and continuing exploitation of the working people. In opposition, the revolutionary forces of the people lay stress on the transformative character and content of education for the purpose of national and social liberation, all-round development and the attainment of socialism.

In broad historical terms, capitalism has outlived its progressive character in opposition to feudalism in the industrial capitalist countries. It has reached the stage of monopoly capitalism or modern imperialism since the beginning of the 20th century. It has been responsible for ever worsening levels of economic and financial crisis, state repression, fascism, colonial and neocolonial domination, inter-imperialist global wars, wars of aggression against independent countries, damage to the environment and the use of the most backward forms of reaction, including racial, religious and gender biases.

### ***Critique of imperialism***

You are absolutely correct in declaring that imperialism is at the root of the suffering and misery of billions of people throughout the world. Indeed, imperialist banks and corporations reap superprofits from the exploitation of the working people in both imperialist and underdeveloped countries and do so far more in the latter countries. The gap between rich and poor countries is ever widening. Widespread poverty and unemployment are deliberately maintained in order to keep ever available a large pool of cheap labor for super-exploitation. Concomitantly, environmental destruction proceeds unabated for the same purpose of extracting superprofits.

In recent decades, it seemed as if capitalism and imperialism were perpetual and as if the cause of national liberation, people's democracy and socialism were hopeless in the face of the betrayal of socialism by the revisionists, the full-scale restoration of capitalism in revisionist-ruled countries and the imposition of neoliberal globalization on the world by the imperialist powers and their local

puppets. With Russia having shifted from social-imperialism to rejoin the ranks of the traditional imperialist powers and with China aiming and trying hard to be a major imperialist power, the contradictions within the world capitalist system have intensified, such as those between the imperialist powers and the people of the world, among the imperialist powers themselves and between the bourgeoisie and the working class in the imperialist countries.

The slogan of free market or neoliberal globalization stands for the systematic attack by the monopoly bourgeoisie on the working class and the rest of the people. It blames supposed wage inflation and social spending by government for the stagflation that surfaced in the imperialist countries in the 1970s and manifested the crisis of overproduction and the financial crisis in the imperialist economy. Since then, the imperialist countries headed by the US have gone on a rampage of pressing down the real wage level, cutting back on social spending for education, health and other social services and curtailing the rights and hard-earned social benefits of the working people.

The imperialist powers have pushed the underdeveloped countries to denationalize their economies, liberalise investments and trade in favor of the foreign monopolies, privatize state assets and social services and deregulate all previous restrictions on foreign monopoly capital and on the exploitation of the working people, women, children, migrants and the environment. The essence of the policy of neoliberal globalization is gobble-ization of the world by the monopoly banks and corporations. It unleashes the insatiable greed of the monopoly bourgeoisie.

Such monstrous policy has degraded and devastated education. Government spending for public education has been reduced. Teachers, researchers, and other education personnel suffer the consequences of stagnant and decreasing real salaries as these do not keep up with the rising costs of living. Large numbers of education personnel are laid off as governments close down schools and universities. As the academic and non-academic employees and the student masses become restive, they are subjected to repression by state authorities.

The imperialist powers keep on tightening their grip on education on a global scale. They use the World Trade Organization (WTO) General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) to treat education as a commodity for profitmaking in the so-called free market and to push the privatization of public schools at all levels. The purpose, content and conduct of teaching and research are made to serve the interests of the imperialist powers and local reactionaries. These factors of mis-education design and produce the curricula, study materials, education and research programs and institutional structures. They use the combination of schools, mass media and other means of information and education as tools of imperialist domination in the cultural field as well as in the socioeconomic and political fields.

The adoption of higher technology in combination with the pushing down of the incomes of the working people in order to maximize corporate profits have engendered a series of worsening crises of overproduction under the policy of neoliberal globalization. Every rise of production has been accompanied by the reduction of wage incomes and the shrinkage of the market. The attempt of monopoly capitalism to override the crisis of overproduction and the tendency of the profit rate to fall through massive doses of debt financing, the creation of financial bubbles and the financialization of the economy have served to aggravate the crisis.

We are now faced with the worst financial and economic crisis of the world capitalist system since the Great Depression. If we look at the drastic fall of economic growth, unemployment and trade on the global scale since the second half of 2007, we can say that the current crisis follows a trajectory which is already worse than the Great Depression. But the officials and propagandists of the US obfuscate the severity of the crisis by calling it euphemistically as the Great Recession and merely focusing on some temporary effects of the huge bank bailouts in the US.

The downward trend of the US economy continues. It is most evident in the rise of unemployment and the concomitant decline in consumption. The Obama regime continues the neoliberal bias of the Bush regime for bailing out the banks and feeding the greed of the finance oligarchy. The funds that are supposed to stimulate the

economy are channeled to certain monopoly corporations that use them to make profits rather than to expand production, create jobs and revive consumer demand. The US will continue to generate crisis in the world capitalist system, worsen the conditions of the working people and even the middle social strata, cause political turmoil within the ruling systems and incite the people to wage all forms of resistance.

The worsening crisis of the world capitalist system leads to the escalation of state terrorism and wars of aggression. The imperialist powers continue to band together to shift the burden of the crisis to the working people and the underdeveloped countries. But the broad masses of the people are bound to fight back for national and social liberation. The imperialist powers become ever more driven by greed as the financial and economic crisis constrains their profitmaking. Their struggle for a redivision of the world is bound to intensify as they scramble for the sources of cheap labor and raw materials, markets, fields of investment and spheres of influence. The worsening crisis, the rise of fascism and the imperialist propensity for war are driving the workers and the rest of the people to fight back and move for a radical change of social system in various countries.

### ***Struggle for a new and better world***

To be able to fight for a new and better world, the people need to be aroused, organized and mobilized by the revolutionary party and progressive alliances in every country. In this regard, the revolutionary party analyses the global and domestic situation and sets forth the general program of action and the strategy and tactics. The people must be aroused through information and education work. They must be organized on the basis of class or sectoral affinity as well as on the basis of major social issues. They must be mobilized through mass campaigns and through sectoral and multisectoral alliances.

The teachers and researchers play a crucial role in the struggle of the people for a new and better world. They must develop and utilize knowledge and research against the imperialist domination of these and for the liberation of the people from national and class oppression, for the realization of democracy, for all-rounded development in the service of the people, for world peace and the

protection of the environment. They must promote and realize a new type of education and culture that is anti-imperialist, scientific and pro-people.

It is of urgent necessity that the teachers and researchers put forward a critique of imperialist ideology. Such a critique is an important instrument for defining the targets and tasks in the struggle for a radical transformation of society. We must be able to confront imperialist globalization and its terrorist complement of state repression and wars of aggression. In this regard, we must be able to build ever stronger the solidarity of the people of the world and advance their struggle to defend their rights and welfare, including the people's right to education, and advance in stages the struggle for a new and better world of greater freedom, justice, development and peace.

I am pleased to know that participants in this conference are urged to contribute to the critique of any aspect of imperialism and education and are encouraged to make interdisciplinary approaches to such concerns as access to education, the so-called neoliberal reforms in the education sector, the right to education and livelihood, the political economy of education, the politics and theories of knowledge, production and research, the impact of privatization and liberalization on educators and students and adverse effects of neoliberal reforms in education on societies.

The organizers of this conference guide well all the participants by setting forth certain tracks of discussion and calling for papers under each track. I look forward to the publication of the papers on education and imperialism, dealing with historical perspectives, the relation of imperialist globalization to the basic and higher levels of education and the relation of debt and so-called aid to education; to the papers on education and markets, dealing with the relations of education with industry and imperialist globalization, free trade agreements and transnational education; and to the papers on education, oppression and resistance, dealing with the relations of education to social movements, the cause of national liberation, the issues of race, ethnicity and gender and the rights and welfare of educators and related personnel. The direction, scope and content of your conference are comprehensive and take up the most important

issues and concerns. I wish you the utmost success. I am confident that your conference will be very successful not only in interpreting the world but also in proposing how to change it. Thank you.

# The National Democratic Revolution against so-called Neoliberal Education<sup>2</sup>

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**S**haring of Views with the Center for Nationalist Studies  
January 29, 2010

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I GLADLY CONGRATULATE the Center for Nationalist Studies on the occasion of its 28th anniversary as an organization of students of the University of the Philippines (UP) in Diliman. Noteworthy is your promotion of a patriotic, scientific and mass educational system against the current antinational, commercialized and reactionary system.

I salute your achievements in propagating the patriotic and progressive consciousness and struggle for the rights and welfare of the students and the people. It is fitting that you should continue and further enhance your programs and campaign to study, organize and mobilize. Thank you for your invitation for me to share with you my views on how the national democratic revolution can strip so-called neoliberal education. I am honored to participate in a series of lectures with the theme “Combat neoliberalism.”

The national democratic revolution aims to combat and dismantle neoliberal education not merely as a particular stream, but as the overall pro-imperialist, anti-scientific and antidemocratic system of education, and further on not merely this educational system but the entire ruling semicolonial and semifeudal system.

I propose to present first the problem of the rotten ruling social system, next, the entire system of education and last, in particular, neoliberal education. Afterwards, I shall present the national democratic revolution and the system of patriotic, scientific and mass education as the solution.

## **The ruling social system and its education system**

The ruling system in the Philippines is semicolonial and semifeudal. Politically, the system is semicolonial. Although on paper it is independent, in fact the puppet state remains under US

imperialist control. In socioeconomic terms, the system is semifeudal. It is controlled by the big compradors and landlords servile to foreign monopoly capitalists, led by the United States.

For more than three centuries, the Philippines was a Spanish colony. The country was directly administered by a foreign power. The Filipino people freed themselves through armed revolution in 1898. But the United States intervened and crushed the revolutionary government and movement and took over direct administration and colonized the Philippines until Japan attacked and conquered the country from 1942 to 1945.

After wresting the Philippines from its kindred imperialist and colonial power Japan, the United States made the pretense of granting independence to the Philippines in 1946 and passed the national government to its puppet politicians of big compradors and landlords. Beforehand, the US ensured its control over the Philippine economy, the repressive apparatus of the state, the educational and cultural system and other major aspects of Philippine society.

At the very beginning of colonization, the US determined the semifeudal character of the Philippines. It superimposed monopoly capitalism on domestic feudalism and collaborated with the local exploiting classes in exploiting the Filipino people, especially the toiling masses of workers and peasants. The US used some direct investments, taxation and borrowings of the colonial government to facilitate and accelerate the exchange of raw materials from the Philippines and finished products from the US.

This type of economy necessitated a system of education wider than the one during the Spanish colonial regime in order to produce more literate business entrepreneurs, professionals, bureaucrats and employees. The so-called Thomasites came and so-called "pensionados" were also sent to study in the US.

On a national scale, a public school system from primary and elementary, high school and college was built. The US imperialists even boasted that they would teach democracy and Christianity to the Filipinos so that they would learn to govern themselves.

In fact, the Americans just wanted to control the minds of the people they colonized and produce the personnel for their businesses and for colonial administration. Modern imperialism

needed more staff with formal education than the old colonialism needed for pure plunder.

As in the economy imperialism was superimposed on feudalism, in education pro-imperialist education was superimposed on the feudal and religious education being propagated by the religious. For a long time, most private schools were the property of the Catholic church and its religious orders.

Among the public schools, the philosophy of liberalism was imposed as the official ideology. This is different from the revolutionary liberalism of the French revolution, the American revolution and Philippine revolution of 1896. It is not only conservative and counterrevolutionary liberalism of the Gironde or Burke type but bourgeois-monopolist disguised as petty bourgeois existence and thinking.

The slogan “free market place of ideas” became commonplace in the University of the Philippines as did “free market place of goods” in the economy. The ideas, policies and actions of US monopoly capitalism were masked as petty-bourgeois liberal. Among the teachers trained in the normal schools, the pragmatism of John Dewey was propagated.

Under its colonial rule, the US firmly held the leadership of the Department of Education and the University of the Philippines. Under the bogus republic of 1946, the principal positions in these institutions were contested by the pro-imperialists and the religio-sectarians until the US-trained pro-imperialists through such scholarships as Fulbright and Smith-Mundt and such foundation grants as Ford and Rockefeller were able to prevail.

In the University of the Philippines, the policy of the Cold War and the climate of McCarthyism and the Anti-Subversion Law prevailed in the latter part of the 1940s and the following decade. Various trends of subjectivist philosophy were echoed by US-trained teachers. Despite this, publications of patriotic and progressive professors and students emerged.

The study circles of the Student Cultural Association of the University of the Philippines (SCAUP) started in 1959 to raise the level of debate in the UP from that between the liberal and the pro-Catholic Church towards the debate between the Left and the Right

on the issues of national independence, development, social justice, education, etc. When the Left trend became conspicuous in UP during the early years of the 1960s, the reactionary government appointed Carlos P. Romulo as UP president upon the advice of the US imperialists.

Romulo used Ford and Rockefeller foundation grants to further strengthen and deepen the US influence in the UP in making the curriculum and assigning academic personnel. The next big intervention in the UP and the entire educational system was the World Bank educational involvement and funding related to policies, assignment of personnel, curriculum and textbooks.

Under the Aquino regime, the slogan of trade liberalization signaled the spread of the US-dictated wide-ranging policy called neoliberal globalization extending to so-called neoliberal education.

Since then, over the past three decades, the idea of neoliberal education has been systematically spread in the UP and the entire educational system.

Adam Smith's notion (reinforced by Milton Friedman's) that the invisible hand of self-interest (of the capitalists) and the "free market" (in fact, monopoly) yield social welfare and resolve problems; Hayek's notion that socialism and social purposes would lead only to slavery or poverty; and Karl Popper's open society that blatantly deny historical consciousness are being propagated.

The commodification of education has been intensified. The further commercialization and privatization of schools are being pushed. Private and public schools are allowed to increase tuition fees. The appropriations for UP and other public schools have been reduced to compel them to raise student fees and provide the World Bank and foreign foundations substantial margin to intervene in matters regarding the content and course of education.

### ***The national democratic revolution and the content of the cultural revolution***

At present, the character of the Philippine revolution to overthrow the rotten ruling semicolonial and semifeudal system is national democratic. It is national because the revolution is set to accomplish the national sovereignty and independence of the Filipino people. It

is democratic because its main content is the economic, social and political liberation of the peasant masses through land reform.

Within the framework of the national democratic revolution, the cultural revolution has a national, scientific and mass or pro-democratic character. The cultural revolution is part of the political revolution and is conducted simultaneous to this.

The cultural revolution has a national character. It upholds the independence and freedom of the Filipino nation and it responds to the needs of the Philippines. It upholds national dignity, cultural wealth and aspirations of the Filipino people. It rejects colonial mentality and pro-imperialism. It combats and demands a stop to policies and practices dictated or influenced by the imperialists, such as pro-imperialist liberal and neoliberal education.

The cultural revolution has a scientific character. It welcomes the achievements of mankind in science and technology and aims to use them in the development of the material and cultural conditions of the Philippines. Our firm desire is to multiply scientists and technologists to achieve industrial development and enhance the quality of life and the environment. It rejects superstition and beliefs that impede development.

The cultural revolution is democratic as it serves the toiling masses of workers and peasants. It upholds, defends and advances their rights and interests. The cultural revolution is the instrument of the toiling masses to liberate themselves from exploitation and oppression, to exercise all their potential, to pursue their decisions and actions and to gain power.

We should persist in demanding adherence to the social objectives of the system of education and culture against the poisonous neoliberal education that spreads and inculcates greed, exploitation and oppression of the working class and peasantry. We must fight the pro-imperialist and reactionary foundation and structure of the existing system of education and culture.

The national, scientific and mass-oriented cultural revolution can advance and prevail when it is led by the revolutionary party of the working class and when its cadres and members have a firm grasp of the Marxist-Leninist stand, viewpoint and method of thinking and acting. Any broad mass movement must have a strong and durable

core. When the national democratic revolution and cultural revolution have been basically completed, the socialist revolution can begin in the fields of economics, politics and culture. The transformation of the socialist base of society will be accomplished over a period of time. Socialist revolution and construction will advance in stages.

In the future socialist society, the theory and practice of continuing revolution through the proletarian cultural revolution will continue in order to combat revisionism, prevent the restoration of capitalism and consolidate socialism. We can benefit from the lessons we can draw from previous socialist revolutions and from the treachery of the revisionists. Thus, we can perform the task of continuing the great struggles of the working class for socialism until communism.

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<sup>2</sup> Translated from the original in Filipino and issued as Chairman of the International League of Peoples' Struggle.

# The Incubation of Activism in the University of the Philippines<sup>3</sup>

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**B**achelor of Arts in English, Class 1959  
June 26, 2010

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THE WAVES OF MASS PROTEST actions that followed the murder of Benigno Aquino in 1983 and culminated in the overthrow of the Marcos fascist dictatorship in 1986 would not have been possible without the incubation of student activists of the national democratic movement through the Student Cultural Association of the University of the Philippines (SCAUP), starting in 1959.

The student activists originating from the UP stirred up the masses of youth and working people to conduct concerted protest actions, shaking the entire country in the entire 1960s, from the demonstration of 5,000 UP student demonstrators that literally scuttled the anti-communist witchhunt of the Committee on Anti-Filipino Activities (CAFA) in March 1961 to the First Quarter Storm of 1970 which rocked the national capital region with almost weekly marches and rallies of 50,000 to 100,000 people against the Marcos regime.

In my undergraduate years in UP from 1956 to 1959, there was already a certain amount of intellectual and political ferment. The controversies arose mainly from the contradictions between the religio-sectarians and the liberal secularists. But it was often the rhetorical device of the latter to complain about the apathy of the students in order to arouse and range them against conservatism and the desire of the religio-sectarians to hark back to medieval and theocratic times. The religio-sectarians of the UP Student Catholic Action (UPSCA) and Iota Eta Sigma were pleased with the UP presidency of the church militant Dr. Vidal Tan. They were riding high in campus politics by harping on some fatal cases of fraternity hazing in the recent past, justifying the need for more religion in the state university and running counter to the separation of church and state.

They were opposed among others to the Noli-Fili law and Prof. Teodoro Agoncillo's *Revolt of the Masses*. Emboldened by the Anti-Subversion Law of 1957, they accused the logical positivist Prof. Ricardo Pascual of being a communist organizing communist cells.

The liberal secularists upheld the separation of church and state, the freedom of thought and belief and academic freedom. They had engaged in mass protests against the interference of the Philippine president in university affairs. After the resignation of Dr. Vidal Tan, who was known as a placeman of the dominant church, Dr. Vicente.

G. Sinco eventually became UP president and tilted the situation in favor of the liberal secularists by suspending the UP Student Council under the presidency of the UPSCAn Fernando Laguna, by giving full professorial tenure to progressive lecturers like Hernando Abaya, Armando Malay and I.P. Soliongco and by launching the Colloquium on Nationalism.

In my personal case, I believe that I matured in 1958 as a progressive liberal under the influence of my liberal professors and as a result of reading the scholarly works on the Philippine revolution by Professors Teodoro Agoncillo and Cesar Adib Majul. I considered myself as a Jacobin rather than as a Girondist or a conservative Burkean liberal and I became strongly critical of the pro-imperialist conservative liberal that was bred in the UP by the unceasing overwhelming influence of the US. Within 1958, I became an exceedingly devoted student of Marxism by gaining access to the forbidden Marxist books in the cellar of the UP Main library and borrowing books from the private collection of some friends.

Within the context of Marxism-Leninism and the world era of modern imperialism and proletarian revolution, I understood that the Philippine revolution needed to be resumed for the benefit of the toiling masses of workers and peasants and the middle social strata under the class leadership of the proletariat and no longer under the leadership of the bourgeoisie.

In this connection, I thought that the prevalent contradiction of the liberal secularists and religio-sectarians needed to be elevated to one between the Left and the Right not only on the issues of civil and political rights but on a comprehensive range of issues involving the contradiction between the US-dominated ruling system of big

compradors and landlords and the national and democratic demands of the people.

Together with other students, both undergraduates and graduate, we formed in 1959 the Student Cultural Association of the UP. We adopted a two-level program of education for members. The national democratic program was openly promoted. The Marxist program was discreetly carried out. We recruited those students who were already leading other campus organizations, those who could write for the *Philippine Collegian* and could compete for the editorship and those who had academic marks of 2 or higher for the purpose of someday fielding them as candidates for the student council.

The first big opportunity of the SCAUP to organize a mass protest was in March 1961 in opposition to the congressional witch hunt by the Committee on Anti-Filipino Activities against UP faculty members and students who were accused of writing or publishing Marxist materials in violation of the Ant-Subversion Law. These included the book-length "Peasant War in the Philippines" in the *Philippine Social Science and Humanities Review*, the editorial "Tower of Babel" in the *Philippinensian* yearbook of 1961 and "Requiem for Lumumba" in the May 1, 1961 issue of the *Philippine Collegian*, written under my pen name Andres Gregorio.

The SCAUP membership was of high quality. It included the *Philippine Collegian* editor Reynato Puno, key members of fraternities and sororities and graduate students like Rey Punongbayan, Jaime C. Laya, Petronilo Daroy and myself who was the chairman. But the SCAUP was too small. It needed a broad front of leadership to call on the students to join the mass protest in Congress.

The Inter-Fraternity and Sorority Conference (IFSC), which was chaired by SCAUP officer and Alpha Phi Betan Ferdinand Tinio, assumed the responsibility of calling on the students to defend academic freedom and protest against the CAFA witchhunt. Petronilo Bn Daroy, Heherson Alvarez and I signed the contract for the rent of 25 JD buses for the student ride from Diliman to Manila. We were able to muster 5,000 students in the first demonstration with an anti-imperialist and antifeudal character since more than a decade ago.

From 1961 to 1964, the SCAUP took a key role in organizing pickets, strikes and rallies of varying sizes by UP students alone or in combination with students from other universities on such issues as national independence against unequal agreements with the US (especially Laurel-Langley Agreement and the Military Bases Agreement), land reform and national industrialization, workers' rights, civil and political liberties and solidarity with other peoples against US acts of aggression in various countries.

By the time that Kabataang Makabayan was formed as a comprehensive youth organization in 1964, a number of the activist alumni of the SCAUP had already moved into key positions in the Workers Party (Lapiang Manggagawa) and in workers, peasants and teachers organizations and were in a position to convene delegations of young workers, young peasants, students and young professions in order to found the KM. In UP Diliman, the SCAUP and the KM chapter co-existed, cooperated with each other and conjoined with still other organizations in mass protest actions on and off the campus.

The student activists that originated from UP Diliman played an important role in propagating the line of struggle for national liberation and democracy against the US and the local exploiting classes, in building major national organizations taking such line and in promoting mass protest actions as the instrument of the people for realizing their national and democratic demands. From year to year the youth movement spread and intensified, leading to the First Quarter Storm of 1970 and further developing nationwide up to 1972 when the Marcos regime declared martial law and imposed a fascist dictatorship on the people. The fascist regime suppressed the urban-based mass movement and caused the detention, torture and murder of the activists. But many thousands of the activists went underground in the urban areas as well join the revolutionary armed struggle in the countryside. They were responsible for protest mass actions in urban areas from time to time from 1972 to 1983.

In the 1981-83 period, the urban-based mass organizations of workers, peasants and youth were already openly resurgent despite vicious reaction from the fascist regime against the trade union leaders. But consequent to the Aquino assassination, the regime

was utterly isolated and dazed by the public outrage. The mass organizations of the national democratic movement became the core of sustained protest mass actions that ultimately led to the overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986.

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<sup>3</sup> Published in the *2010 Yearbook* of the University of the Philippines.

# Class Struggle is the Key Link in Revolutionary Social Change

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**M**essage of solidarity to **CONTEND** on its 16th Anniversary  
August 23, 2010

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I WISH TO CONVEY WARMEST greetings of solidarity to all my academic colleagues in the Congress of Teachers/Educators for Nationalism and Democracy (CONTEND) on the occasion of its celebration of the 16th anniversary of its founding on July 22, 1994. I am proud to give you a message of unity as I did in 1998 during your anti-imperialist conference in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Philippine- American War.

I salute CONTEND as a combination of the associations of militant teachers and educators from public and private schools, colleges, and universities from all over the Philippines, who are fully aware of the semicolonial and semifeudal character of Philippine society and accept the role as agents of social change and who are ever committed to raising the social and political consciousness of teachers, the defense of their democratic rights, and sharpening of their skills for the purpose of promoting a progressive, nationalist, scientific and mass-oriented education and culture.

I congratulate you for all your efforts and achievements in arousing, organizing and mobilizing the teachers to serve not only their distinctive sectoral interest but also the entire Filipino people in the struggle for national liberation and democracy against US imperialism and the local exploiting classes. You have excelled at upholding, defending and promoting the anti-imperialist and antifeudal line against the semicolonial and semifeudal conditions.

You have attained outstanding and resounding success in the political work of clarifying the national democratic line and applying it on important issues affecting the academic community and the people on a national and international scale. You have persevered in struggle not only against barefaced adversaries who perpetuate pro-

imperialist and antipeople lines of thought, especially in the curriculum, but also against pseudo-progressives who stir up fashionable anti-Marxist trends like postmodernism, neoliberal economics and bourgeois feminism masquerading as socialist.

You have manifested your position in so many conferences and forums. You have issued so many enlightening books, pamphlets and statements. Academics and nonacademics are gratified to read the books that you have published: *Serve the People*, *Ang Radikal na Kasaysayan ng UP* [The Radical History of UP], *Mula Tore, Tungong Palengke* [From Tower to Market] against neoliberal education, three books of poetry and three anthologies of poetry on various themes, including the Hacienda Luisita massacre in 2004 and other grievous human rights violations and the people's demand to oust Arroyo from power.

To foster transformative education, you have undertaken film screenings of local and international films and documentaries. You have engaged in mass actions on every campus of tertiary education where your association exists and, as part of the wider frame of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers, you have participated in its activities. You have joined and even spearheaded broad formations in the University of the Philippines on issues with regard to good governance, electoral fraud, human rights and the ouster of Arroyo. You have played an important role in mass campaigns to oust Estrada and Arroyo, against the Hacienda Luisita massacre and other human rights violations and against US military intervention in the Philippines and US wars of aggression abroad, especially in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine.

I appreciate the extent of recruitment that has been done by CONTEND. I measure my appreciation in relation to your perseverance in struggle over the years and also in relation to the total number of teachers on the campus where your association exists. I believe that the national democratic line is so appealing to the broad masses of teachers that a substantial number of them can be recruited from year to year to become members of CONTEND. As regards those who do not join CONTEND, the policy of the united front can be applied in order to cooperate with them. The possibility of alliance on issues is always possible with teachers who are either

active or not active in the traditional faculty association or union and of course with the association of nonacademic employees.

I have read the Constitution of CONTEND promulgated in 1994. It envisions some kind of a federation of associations in various schools, colleges and universities. And it is quite elaborate in seeking to combine such associations and providing them with the organs of leadership at various levels. But it does not make clear the basic rule of recruitment, the basic tasks and basic rights and duties of individual members per association. It is advisable that in this regard the Constitution is amended or a provision of the By-Laws or a set of guidelines is made.

As it is, your Constitution is good in terms of its preambular description of CONTEND, its enumeration of principles and objectives and its conceptualization of so many associations to combine and to be governed by leading organs at various levels. But it is necessary to have clear provisions about the recruitment, basic rights and duties of individual members. Thus, the task of recruiting more members is made simple and easy through compliance with the provisions of the Constitution.

I urge you to intensify your efforts at solid mass organizing and thereby increase your political strength. You need to pay close attention to the recruitment of the individual members of every existing association of CONTEND as well as the recruitment of the initial members of an association that is in the process of being established or reestablished. I do not know how much has been the adverse effect of not having clear provisions on the recruitment of individual members. But I am certain that it does no harm to have such provisions.

Aside from the need to make clear the basic requirements for recruitment and membership of individuals, there is also a need to examine what are possibly the subjective tendencies that can prevent or slow down the growth of an association. These tendencies or factors may include the petty bourgeois small group mentality, contempt for mass organizing, unwitting conceit towards non-members and towards new members, plain neglect of the task of recruitment and failure to keep and develop those already recruited as members.

There should be no problem about recruiting an ever increasing number of individual members and building the member-associations of CONTEND. The national democratic line responds to the demands of the workers, peasants, urban petty bourgeoisie and even the middle bourgeoisie and upholds their rights and interests. We must trust and rely on the mass of teachers as being capable of understanding the principles and objectives of CONTEND and the national democratic movement, willing to be recruited and to recruit others and ever ready to participate in various campaigns launched by CONTEND.

I am pleased to know that by way of celebrating the founding anniversary of CONTEND you are holding a forum with the theme, *BACK to CLASS: O Kung Bakit Hindi Kadiri ang Makauring Pagsusuri [Or Why Class Analysis Is Not Yucky]* and with an array of distinguished speakers to discuss topics related to the concept and reality of social classes. I presume that the discussion of the subject is meant to deepen and heighten your understanding of who are the friends and who are the enemies of the national democratic revolution in class terms. I cannot help but contribute my share in the discussion.

We may define classes as divisions of society defined by ownership of the means of production and the relations of production, role in the process of production, share in the distribution of the social product and the mode of thinking on economic, political and social issues. To know best the character of a society, it is necessary to make a class analysis and know the class composition. The class analysis starts with looking at the material base or mode of production and proceeds to the political and cultural superstructure. But to avoid the pitfalls of economic determinism or reductionism, we must grasp the dialectical interaction of the economic, political and cultural aspects of society. In an exploitative society, there are basic exploiting and exploited classes and there are intermediate classes often called the middle class, usually the petty and middle bourgeoisie. In an industrial capitalist society, the capitalist class and working class are the basic opposite classes. In a semicolonial and semifeudal society, there are the comprador bourgeoisie and

landlord class on one hand and the working class and peasantry on the other hand.

The ruling exploitative class controls the economic base by owning the means of production and determining the relations of production and division of labor and the distribution of the social product. It uses the political and cultural superstructure to maintain its class rule. The legal system upholds the property rights of the ruling class and the coercive apparatuses of the state are used to enforce the laws favoring the ruling class. Cultural institutions and practices are used to make the ruling class look good and acceptable, to indoctrinate the people and to entertain and divert them from resisting the exploitative and oppressive ruling system.

To fight the ruling class and overthrow the ruling system, the exploited and oppressed classes have to wage a class struggle in the socioeconomic, political and cultural fields. The class struggle of the working class arises in the socioeconomic field and develops from the spontaneous actions of the class in itself to the more conscious better-organized trade union and political actions of the class for itself. The socioeconomic struggles give rise to political struggles which require the leadership of the party of the working class as a revolutionary class. Cultural class struggles also arise and develop. The all-round class struggle enables the revolutionary class to strengthen itself together with the rest of the people and to develop further until they can overthrow the old social system and establish an entirely new one. There is no other category more significant and effective than social class in the process of maintaining, reforming or radically transforming a social system. But we must also be mindful of categories smaller than the class and subsumable by the class. There may be elite groups of the ruling class which are distinguished by some outstanding competency or representation of a new dominant section of the class or rising type of economic activity. There may be groups or sections in any class that are identifiable by certain industries, occupations, clans and regions and by racial, ethnic, religious and other cultural characteristics.

Other than class, there are important social categories that seem to transcend class category such as individuals, families, clans,

tribes, associations, nations, nation-states and associations of states. Such categories are even used to obscure and deny the existence of classes and class struggle. But there is no category more important than classes in the consideration and realization of revolutionary change in any country even when the sense of national unity is also of decisive importance in the people's struggle for national liberation against imperialism.

A reactionary ruling class is always definitely conscious of and acts according to its own class interests and it always seeks to limit, undermine and divert the class consciousness of the exploited and oppressed people and prevent them from acting concertedly in their interest. It is afraid of the toiling masses of workers and peasants becoming conscious of their classes and becoming militated against the handful of exploiters and the conditions of exploitation.

Whatever is the level of class consciousness and militancy of the exploited classes, the exploiting classes always engage in class struggle against them. They do so in various ways in order to preempt and prevent the rise of class consciousness among the exploited as well as to counter and combat an already conscious and militant class struggle of the exploited against the exploiters.

Like the Philippine reactionary state, the University of the Philippines carries as official ideology a pro-imperialist kind of liberalism. It considers individual rights in the abstract as the most important aspect of democracy, glosses over the existence of classes and class struggle and pays lip service to national and public interest. It is a hotbed of self-serving individualism and subjectivism, variegated and yet all are in the mold of petty bourgeois thinking that is servile to the foreign monopoly capitalists and local exploiting classes. Its main purpose is to teach and train the professionals and bureaucrats for the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system.

A major method of the bourgeoisie for obfuscating or laying aside the theory and practice of class struggle is to play up individualism, narrow family interest, ethnocentrism, religious sectarianism, chauvinism and a pro-imperialist sense of globalization against the national and class rights and interests of the working people. Let us do the opposite. Let us uphold the class struggle of the working people as the key link and harmonize their class rights with our

legitimate rights and interests as individuals, as family, as group, as an ethnic community, as a nation and as internationalists against imperialism and all reaction. The theory of classes and class struggle was originated by bourgeois thinkers, who were then revolutionary democrats against the feudal order, and was an important element in the advance of social science in France in the 18th century. Marx himself said that he did not originate such theory but he pointed out as his unique achievement the extension and development of such theory to the theory of the proletarian revolution and class dictatorship of the proletariat against the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

It is of crucial importance that we deepen, widen and heighten our knowledge of the reality of social classes and the theory and practice of class struggle up to proletarian revolution and class dictatorship of the proletariat. Why so strong a term as class dictatorship? It refers in the first place to the bourgeois state as organized violence against the proletariat and consequently the proletariat must smash the bureaucratic and military machinery of the bourgeois state in order to liberate the proletariat and the rest of the exploited people. You may use the scientifically frank term of class dictatorship but also say in a more gentle way, people's democratic or socialist state or democratic rule of the working people, depending on the actual conditions.

It is of urgent necessity to study and apply the theory of classes and class struggle up to proletarian revolution and proletarian class dictatorship in view of the fact that the financial oligarchy and monopoly bourgeoisie have systematically and effectively propagandized that the working people of the world must forget about class struggle. And yet they have waged the most rapacious and violent class struggle against the working people in the last three decades under the policy regime of "neoliberal globalization" and unceasing state terrorism, foreign military intervention and wars of aggression unleashed by the US unilaterally or multilaterally in collaboration with other imperialist powers.

Take note that "neoliberalism" or "free market" is a petty bourgeois expression meant to appeal to the middle class and camouflage the big bourgeois interest in the policy. Under such a

policy, the imperialist powers and their agents all over the world have blamed any rise of the wage level of workers and government social spending for the recurrent and worsening economic crises and have adopted and implemented a wide variety of cruel measures against the working class and the entire people.

They have brought down the levels of income of the toiling masses and most of the middle class, attacked their hard-won social rights and cut back on government social spending. They have accelerated the accumulation of capital in the hands of the monopoly bourgeoisie through tax cuts, privatization of public resources, liberalization of trade and investments, deregulation against public interest, the working people, women, children and the environment and the denationalization of the economies of client-states like the Philippines.

It is high time that academics of the UP and all other schools strive to take the standpoint of the anti-imperialist progressive and optimally that of the proletarian revolutionary and contribute to raising the level of class consciousness and class struggle of the working people against the biggest financial and industrial bourgeoisie in the imperialist countries and the big comprador bourgeoisie and landlord class in the Philippines. We must aim for victory in the people's democratic revolution and advance to socialism.

The crisis of the world capitalist system and the domestic ruling system is worsening rapidly. It is now characterized by prolonged global depression and wars of aggression. The epochal struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is once more conspicuous in the imperialist countries and the rest of the world. In the Philippines, the people's democratic revolution is intensifying. The struggle for national liberation against foreign monopoly capitalism is necessarily linked to and interactive with the class struggle for social liberation against the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class.

I hope that the current generation of academics carry on the work to which we in my generation have committed ourselves. Take the stand, viewpoint and method of materialist dialectics and use class analysis in order to rip apart and debunk any attempt of the big

bourgeoisie and its political and intellectual agents (mostly recruited from the ranks of the university-educated and unremolded petty bourgeois) to misrepresent capitalism and liberalism as the end of history, ridicule proletarian class struggle and revolution as obsolete and irrelevant and misrepresent the latest petty bourgeois intellectual spin as new and therefore correct.

I have always told petty bourgeois faddists among the intellectuals on and off campus and NGO entrepreneurs who brag about their new ideas and new language that all the newly-minted petty bourgeois subjective terms coming from imperialist-directed think tanks, universities, institutions, business corporations and mass media can never make Adam Smith younger than Karl Marx.

It is capitalism, especially monopoly capitalism and finance monopoly capitalism, that is obsolete and moribund. We are in the midst of an unprecedentedly severe crisis of global capitalism and we are now on the eve of an unprecedentedly great rebound of the anti-imperialist and socialist movement to a new and higher level of revolutionary struggle from the deep trough caused by revisionist betrayal of socialism, capitalist restoration and neocolonialism.

# Art as Sword and Shield of the People

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**M**essage of solidarity to KARATULA  
September 15, 2010

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I AM GLAD TO EXTEND a message of solidarity to the leaders and members of KARATULA on its 10th founding anniversary tomorrow, September 16.

I have been informed of the theme of your celebration: A decade: art as shield against the brewing storm. However, you may still improve and sharpen your metaphors.

It is true that art may be compared to a shield. But it is more important to consider it as a sword. As a weapon of the people, art has the character of both sword and shield. You as art activists are not passively buffeted by the gale. You are active participants among the masses in producing the gale to shake down the ruling system from base to rafters in the efforts of the Filipino people to overthrow this system.

I expect you always to learn, grasp and perform the vital role of art and literary activists in cultural and propaganda work in creating a patriotic, democratic and mass culture. Likewise in advancing the people's revolutionary struggle on the path of national liberation and democracy against US imperialism and the local reactionaries.

I have full confidence in your success in artistic production such as monologue and drama, theater, roaming exhibition and festival of learning as an alternative class and forum to be held in the UP-Manila, PUP, PLM and UP-Diliman and a community of urban poor in the coming days of September 20-23.

It is my desire that you demonstrate your art works serving the Filipino people, especially the toiling masses of workers and peasants. You must expose and oppose the exploitation and oppression that they suffer at the hands of the imperialists and the big compradors and landlords. And it is appropriate to demonstrate their struggle for national and social liberation.

Long live KARATULA!

Make art a weapon of the people!  
Long live the working classes and the people!

# 40 Years of Philippine Society and Revolution

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**Interview by *Ang Bayan*  
November 20, 2010**

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IT HAS BEEN 40 YEARS since the Central Publishing House of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) first published *Philippine Society and Revolution* (PSR). In the past 40 years, PSR has served as the CPP's principal reference and guide in laying down the basic principles of the two-stage revolution in the Philippines based on the analysis of concrete conditions of the semicolonial and semifeudal system. To commemorate the anniversary of PSR and reaffirm the principles it laid down, Ang Bayan decided to interview Comrade Jose Ma. Sison who, as CPP founding chairman Amado Guerrero, was the author of PSR.

*1. Can you relate to our readers certain historical facts about PSR? When did you start writing it? Who were involved in the research and writing? When was it first published and in what form? To your knowledge, how many times has the book been printed?*

JMS: I wrote it soon after the launching of the people's war and on the eve of the First Quarter Storm of 1970. I started and finished writing it in the third quarter of 1969. Some comrades in the EC/CC (Executive Committee of the Central Committee) like Charlie del Rosario and Monico Atienza brought me the reference materials that I needed. When I finished the rough draft around August 1969, I gave it to Julie de Lima and other individuals and some members of the Central Committee for suggestions and comments.

The first edition of PSR was published in mimeographed form in October 1969, of which copy was submitted for publication in the *Philippine Collegian* under the title *Philippine Crisis and Revolution* (this can be considered the second edition). Pulang Tala Publications published the third edition and Ta Kung Pao of Hong Kong, the fourth edition in 1970. The fifth and sixth editions in English and Pilipino

were mimeographed by the CPP Central Publishing House in 1971. In 1977, the Katipunan ng Demokratikong Pilipino published the seventh edition in the US. This can be considered the fourth edition if the mimeographed editions are excluded.

Other editions were released after my capture in 1977. There were even German and Turkish translations and a comics edition.

*2. PSR is one of the most important Marxist-Leninist theoretical works of the revolutionary movement in the Philippines. What theoretical challenges faced its writing? What do you think are the key contributions of PSR to the theory of revolution in the Philippines? Has it made any contribution to theory that is relevant beyond the practice of the Philippine revolution?*

JMS: The biggest theoretical challenge was the application of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought to Philippine history and circumstances. It necessitated the concrete analysis of concrete conditions. The key contributions of PSR are its characterization of Philippine society as semicolonial and semifeudal and the corresponding line of national and democratic revolution under the leadership of the working class.

In this regard, PSR specified the allied classes (workers, peasants, the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie) and the class enemies (big compradors and landlords) in the new democratic revolution. It also laid down the principal task: national liberation and democratic revolution. It defined as well the stages of the Philippine revolution: people's new democracy and socialism.

*3. Before PSR, there were Struggle for National Democracy (SND) and the document "Rectify Errors, Rebuild the Party" (RERP) which were among the first major theoretical works of the national democratic movement in the Philippines. Can you recount the history of the development of the theory of Philippine revolution up to the publication of PSR in 1970?*

JMS: The publication of SND and the RERP document was necessary and essential. SND paved the way for the exposition of the people's basic problems and the possible revolutionary solution in legal and persuasive language. It was in line with the tradition of the old democratic revolution of 1896 and the new democratic revolution under the leadership of the working class. It was based on

the prevailing conditions and needs of the Filipino people, especially the toiling masses.

RERP was seminal in the analysis of the experience of the old merger party of the Communist and Socialist Parties. It exposed the errors and weaknesses which led to the failure of the revolution. It therefore laid down what must be done in order to realize the ideological, political and organizational requirements to rebuild the revolutionary party of the proletariat, the people's army and the united front and to rekindle and advance the revolution towards victory.

*4. What was the biggest contribution of PSR to the course of the Philippine revolution in the past 40 years? What role did it play in the different stages of development of the Philippine revolution?*

JMS: PSR greatly strengthened the general line earlier laid down by the Party Constitution and the Program for a People's Democratic Revolution. Since the first year of the people's war up to the present, PSR has played a key role in shedding light about the history, the basic problems and the revolutionary solution of the Filipino people. PSR has played an important role in every stage of the revolution.

PSR further enlightens with the help of recent writings based on the advances of the revolution and the worsening of the crisis of the rotten system. PSR has been an effective tool of the Party in raising the consciousness and fighting will of Party members and mass activists.

*5. The fourth edition of PSR included "Specific Characteristics of Our People's War" and "Our Urgent Tasks" which emphasized the theoretical importance of this document. What other theoretical works of the CPP do you think have equal weight and significance in terms of the development of the theory of revolution in the Philippines?*

JMS: The fourth edition (if the three mimeographed editions are not counted) indeed emphasized the theoretical importance of the two supplementary documents, which in turn further enhanced PSR. The documents of similar importance and significance in the development of the theory of revolution in the Philippines are "On the Mode of Production in the Philippines" (1983), "Philippine Crisis and Revolution" (1986), "Stand for Socialism Against Modern

Revisionism” (1992) and “Reaffirm Our Basic Principles and Rectify the Errors” (1992), the basic documents of the Second Great Rectification Movement, and basic documents against the policy of neoliberal globalization and other offensives of imperialism.

*6. It has been over 40 years since the PSR was first published. How would you compare Philippine society today to the conditions then? Do you think PSR remains an effective guide for the Philippine revolution? Do you see a need for a new edition, revision or supplement to PSR?*

JMS: The continuing semicolonial and semifeudal conditions are further worsening and deepening. Thus, PSR remains an effective guide for the Philippine national and democratic revolution. The Party continues to issue new editions of PSR and supplement it with new related documents. However, I am tempted to write a new edition with expanded text dealing with the past four decades.

*7. How can PSR further benefit the current stage of the revolution, especially in line with the CPP’s call to achieve the strategic stalemate in five years? What do you think are the crucial issues that have to be studied by Philippine revolutionaries in order to further invigorate the different fields of struggle?*

JMS: Always review PSR and apply it to current circumstances and events. Under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought (or Maoism), PSR explains why the people’s war is necessary and how to advance it in stages: from the strategic defensive to the strategic stalemate and from the strategic stalemate to the strategic offensive. PSR also laid down the need to fulfill the political requirements in order to advance the people’s war from one stage to the next. The Party must be strengthened ideologically, politically and organizationally. The people’s army must be strengthened through armed struggle, agrarian revolution and the building of the mass base and organs of political power. There must be a united front policy involving certain types of alliances: the basic worker-peasant alliance, the progressive alliance of the toiling masses and the urban petty bourgeoisie, the patriotic alliance of the progressive classes and the national bourgeoisie and the temporary and unstable alliance with reactionaries fighting the enemy.

# On Literature and Revolutionary Politics

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**C**ontribution to Literary Interrelations:  
Conference in Celebration of the Centennial of the UP  
Department  
of English and Comparative Literature, May 27, 2011

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FIRST OF ALL, LET ME thank the UP Department of English and Comparative Literature (DECL) for inviting me to participate in this conference titled Literary Interrelations. I feel highly privileged as I am aware that this conference is a major activity in the celebration of the centennial of the department and is in honor of the late UP President Salvador P. Lopez on his centenary and in celebration of the 81st anniversary of his work, *Literature and Society*.

## ***Literature and politics in general***

To be serious and significant, literature draws content from the economic, political and cultural aspects of society and processes such content to present a concise and concentrated expression of social life through the contexting and interactions of a cast of fictional characters. All great and major works of literature in ancient and modern times are similar in this regard. The great epics of ancient times contained a great amount of knowledge. So have the great novels of modern times.

Even in slave-owning and feudal times, when they had no sustained theory of classes and class struggle to go by, the creative writers observed and studied the mode of production in the concrete and learned how the various groups of people were differentiated by property ownership, the need to work and the unequal distribution of the social product. They had to know how society ran even if their works seldom focused on the antagonism between the exploiting and exploited class.

Ancient literature was always linked to politics. The creative writers were obeisant to the rulers, to the entire ruling political system and to the God or gods that had supposedly preordained them. But the literary masterpieces of ancient times have the most lasting

value when the theme is the struggle for freedom and justice against the tyranny and oppression by rulers who usurp authority or who lose their mandate from heaven or by invaders who have an overreaching political and economic interest and different system of religious belief.

Literature resides in the cultural sphere of society and has a vantage point over the political and economic aspects of society. It derives certain benefits from being in the same neighborhood as the other components of culture. On top of his observation of daily life or any focused social investigation, the creative writer can gain erudition and profundity by the reading and study of philosophy, sacred theology, mythology, earlier works of literature, the natural and social sciences, law and so on.

The theory of classes and class struggle was first put forward by French revolutionary democrats during the French revolution. It spread fast and motivated the rise of the socially-conscious novels in the 19th century in Europe. These were sharply critical of the exploitative conditions of bourgeois society, the proletarianization of the peasantry, the long and harsh working hours and the conspicuous poverty of working class families in the urban areas. Rizal was definitely influenced by some 19th century European novels.

Marx adopted the theory of classes and class struggle and extended it to the theory of the class dictatorship of the proletariat. Related to this was the development of materialist dialectics in philosophy, the critique of capitalist political economy and the theory of scientific socialism. Eventually, literature guided by Marxism would emerge vigorously under the banner of social realism. This would flourish in the Soviet Union and elsewhere.

A further major development in the theory of literature and art in the 20th century would be Mao's *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art*. This has widespread influence among the creative writers of the new democratic revolution in the Philippines. Mao answers a series of questions. For whom is literature? How related is it to the classes and class struggle in society? Who are the heroes? Should we not learn from from the masses first? What is the relationship of popularization and aesthetic standards?

### ***Literature and revolutionary politics in the Philippines***

The prototype of patriotic Filipino literature was provided by Francisco Balagtas' *Florante at Laura*, written in 1838. It is a long poem in the main about the romantic relationship of the Christian lovers Florante and Laura being oppressed in Albania and about the Muslim lovers Aladdin and Florida from Persia. Florante was tied to a tree in the forest and was about to be devoured by lions when Aladdin rescued him. The utterances of Florante against social and political conditions and against the tyrant tormenting him and coveting Laura may be interpreted as directed against the rulers in the Philippines. The story ends like a comedia with the Muslim lovers converting to Christianity.

The novels *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* of Dr. Jose Rizal may be considered the great literature of the old democratic revolution. They were the best and long-lasting literary contributions of Rizal to the Philippine revolution, despite his refusal to join the leadership of that revolution. The *Noli* gives us a penetrating criticism of the Spanish colonial system, especially the domineering friars and their pliant *indio* collaborators like Capitan Tiago, and explores reforms as advocated by Crisostomo Ibarra who is ultimately frustrated. In the *Fili*, he becomes Simoun the jeweler who takes the stance of the anarchist, keynotes the denunciation of the entire colonial system and seeks to overthrow it but fails. The poems of Rizal (*Mi Ultimo Adios*) [My Last Farewell], and of Andres Bonifacio (*Pag-ibig sa Tinubuang Lupa*) [Love for Motherland] and many other patriots are gems of patriotism and revolutionary politics.

The best known theatrical play against US imperialism in its first decade of dominating the Philippines was *Kahapon, Ngayon at Bukas* (*Larawan ng Inang Bayan*) [Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow (Portrait of Motherland)] written by Aurelio Tolentino in 1903. It unfolds the triumph of Inang Bayan over her tormentors, Haring Bata [Young King] (China), Halimaw [Monster] (the Spanish friars who continued to control the church and influence local politics), Dilat na Bulag [Opened but Blind Eye] (Spain) and Bagong Sibol [New Shoot] (US the new colonial power). The main scene is the liberation of Taga-Ilog [River Dweller] or Juan de la Cruz who at the beginning of the play is shackled and in prison. In this scene, he throws the

American flag to the ground and tramples upon it until it is torn and he breaks the shackles and opens the jail, while all characters of the play shout, "Long live freedom! Long live the Motherland!"

The novel *Banaag at Sikat* [Dawn and Daylight] written by Lope K. Santos in 1906 lets its characters talk explicitly about the great divide between the rich and the poor, the work of the associations of workers, capitalism and socialism. It tells of the story of Delfin in love with daughter of a landlord. Delfin is a socialist who wishes to spread the principles of socialism among the people and believes in change through peaceful means. His friend Felipe is an anarchist who believes in the violent overthrow of the rulers and the end of the cruelty of the landlords. Lope K. Santos has a naïve understanding of socialism and appears not to have studied scientific socialism. He also glosses over the issue of national independence. The conflicts among characters in the novel do not manifest class struggle but merely the cruel and exploitative behavior of rich persons towards certain individuals within their ambit.

Many more works (novels, plays and collections of poems) may be subjected to analysis and literary criticism in order to determine whether they belong to the old democratic revolution or to the new democratic revolution or neither or whether they may be considered as being on the road to the new democratic revolution even if they do not suggest revolution, because they expose and denounce enough of the exploitativeness and oppressiveness of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system. We must also take into account that some creative writers fall short of indicating or espousing the new democratic revolution because of repressive laws and censorship by popular publications or because of inability to break free from their petty bourgeois mode of thinking.

The novels and poetic works of Amado V. Hernandez are definitely literature of the new democratic revolution. They include *Mga Ibong Mandaragit* [Birds of Prey] (1969) and *Luha ng Buwaya* [Crocodile Tears] (1972) and his collection of poetry, *Isang Dipang Langit* [An Arms Length of Sky]. The works of Hernandez are based on his experiences as a resistance fighter, as a labor leader and as a political detainee. His sociopolitical novels and poems expose and denounce the exploitative and oppressive conditions of the ruling

system, point to the need for revolution by the working class and the people and actually call for revolutionary change. The works of Hernandez and Mao's *Talks at the Yen-an Forum* inspired the young creative writers in the 1960s to write in the service of the people and the new democratic revolution.

Since the 1960s, a great deal of creative writing has been done along the line of the new democratic revolution, in the countryside, in the urban underground and even quite openly. This includes novels, short stories, plays and poems. The quantity and quality of the output are high and are already more formidable than the output of those creative writers in the short-lived old democratic revolution. But the output of the revolutionary creative writers is still small relative to the abundant material offered by more than 50 years of the people's legal mass movement and more than 40 years of armed revolution. I leave to others interested in literary history and literary criticism to keep on surveying the literary field and appraising the literary output of the revolutionary writers.

I am confident that revolutionary creative writers will keep on surpassing themselves and producing more literary works of higher quality, because revolutionary practice keeps on expanding as possible material for creating the literature of the new democratic revolution.

# Uphold the Role of Art in Fundamental Social Change

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**M**essage of solidarity to the International Festival  
for Peoples' Rights and Struggles (IFPRS)  
July 5, 2011

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ON BEHALF OF THE INTERNATIONAL League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS), I wish to convey warmest greetings of solidarity to all the workers, peasants, women, youth, indigenous peoples, migrants, artists and cultural workers and all the people from other sectors and communities from all over the world who are now gathered in Manila for the first International Festival for Peoples' Rights and Struggles.

For their success in jointly organizing this festival, we congratulate the International Migrants' Alliance (IMA), the International Women's Alliance (IWA), Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN), League of Filipino Students, Concerned Artists of the Philippines, Habi Arts, RESIST, IBON, Peace for Life, People's Action Network, People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS), the People's Movement on Climate Change (PMCC), Asian Peasant Coalition, the UP College of Mass Communications, the ILPS Commission 14 and many other entities.

We welcome this festival for serving as an occasion for social activists in Asia-Pacific, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, North America and Europe to exchange ideas and experiences, to learn from each other regarding the vital issues that confront them, to network and build relations of solidarity and to celebrate the struggles and victories of the people.

We are grateful that this happy and enlightening occasion comes immediately before the Fourth International Assembly of the ILPS. The festival promotes the assembly, brings to it a significant number of delegates and enriches their journey and brightens their horizon. The conferences, colloquium, seminars, forums, workshops and

speak out under the auspices of the festival will certainly be helpful to several commissions during the Fourth International Assembly.

We appreciate that the festival confronts the global depression and the handful of imperialist powers that have caused it, protracting and deepening it under the piratical banner of neoliberal globalization and continuously passing the burden of crisis to the working people and the middle class. Trillions of dollars of public money have been used to bail out the big banks and favored corporations and serve their profitmaking interests and have not resulted in real economic recovery in terms of production and employment.

The public debt bubble is bursting and the monopoly bourgeoisie is adopting and carrying out austerity measures at the expense of the people. The incomes of the working people are being pressed down further and social services are being cut back. The prices of basic goods and services are soaring. While the big corporations and the upper class pay less taxes, the tax burden falls heavier on the broad masses of the people.

The imperialist countries are accelerating superprofit-taking at the expense of the underdeveloped countries through the practice of international usury, investment and trade liberalization, privatization, deregulation, denationalization, the takeover of natural resources and the rapid extraction of raw materials at grave costs to the people and the environment.

The imperialist powers are whipping up state terrorism and unleashing wars of aggression as in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya under the pretext of anti-terrorism or humanitarian intervention in order to suppress the people's resistance and attack countries that assert independence. But the people's resistance is irrepressible and continues to arise on the scale of entire countries and global regions.

Mass protests and strikes against austerity measures have spread across Europe, South Asia, Africa, Palestine, Thailand and the Philippines. In the Middle East and North Africa, the people's uprisings have been set off by protests against unemployment, food scarcity, corruption and despotic rule. The worsening crises of global capitalism and the local reactionary ruling systems are generating conditions that are favorable to the waging of armed revolution.

The crisis of the world capitalist system is inflicting terrible suffering on the people and is inciting them to rise up. As the imperialist powers and the puppet governments escalate the oppression and exploitation, we can expect the people to wage far greater resistance than ever before in both the underdeveloped and developed countries. We laud the festival for seeking to inspire the people to be resolute and militant in the struggle for national and social liberation against imperialism and all reaction.

We appreciate highly the RESIST Colloquium for seeking to analyze the crisis of the world capitalist system and the new world disorder and present the challenges and opportunities for the people's movement. A deeper understanding of the character and course of the crisis and the scope and intensity of the people's resistance can lead to further advances in the struggle for a new international political and economic order.

We are deeply pleased that the recently-founded International Women's Alliance (IWA) is holding its First General Assembly as part of the festival. We are confident that this assembly with the theme of building a militant women's alliance in the 21st century, will further strengthen IWA as an anti-imperialist, anti-patriarchal, anti-racist and anti-sexist force and will contribute to advancing the women's movement as a vital part of the people's movement for national and social liberation.

We anticipate fervently the International Conference on Progressive Culture: People's Art Shaping the Society of the Future. This is an opportunity for artists and creative writers from different parts of the world to come together, share their work and reinvigorate the role of art in the struggle for fundamental social change. The entire festival shall be enlivened by the art exhibit, film showings, workshops and the Kafe Kultura as the space for music jamming, mural painting, sculpting and social media.

We welcome the Second International Assembly of the International Migrants' Alliance, with the theme "Strengthen and expand our movement! Migrants, resist intensified imperialist attacks, achieve victories in our struggle!" The assembly will sum up and evaluate the level of struggle in relation to the major issues confronting migrants.

We also welcome the forum on “The Global Movement of Migrants: Current Situation and Resistance Against Imperialist Attacks.” We wish to know more about how the migrants are adversely affected by the crisis of global capitalism and how they are resisting the escalating attacks from the proponents of neoliberal globalization and the worst reactionaries, including the chauvinists, the racists, the religious bigots and the fascists.

We look forward to the seminar on the US “War on Terror” and Counterinsurgency. We must examine the US national security doctrine, the various dimensions and forms of US intervention abroad, the latest version of its counterinsurgency doctrine and its implications and consequences on the rights of peoples. An excellent case study can be the application of the US Counterinsurgency Guide in the Philippines through Oplan Bayanihan.

We also look forward to the International Panel Discussion and open forum on US Foreign Military Bases. We must ventilate the demands of the people for the dismantling of US military bases, forward stations and covert intelligence teams and for the repeal of military treaties and agreements that allow these. We wish to hear the reports of resistance against US military bases in Asia and Oceania, Middle East, Latin America and Europe.

We welcome the People’s Speak Out for the Right to Land and Life, a forum organized by the People’s Coalition on Food Sovereignty. It underscores the struggle for land and life amidst the food crisis and intensifying landgrabbing by foreign agrocorporations and their local reactionary partners. It is appropriate that the forum will be followed by a people’s march to the Department of Agrarian Reform.

We also welcome the V International Forum on Democracy and Cooperation which aims to amplify the voices from Asia in promoting active citizenship and realizing truly participatory democracy and at the same time seeks to build synergies and solidarity beyond geographical and regional borders as a way forward in finding alternatives.

We have high expectations from the Seminar on People’s Resistance and Struggles for Liberation, which features the

testimonies from leaders, activists and representatives of liberation movements from various countries, including Egypt, Tunisia, Sri Lanka, Greece, Palestine and the Philippines. We hope that in this regard there are no obstacles to the travel of outstanding leaders who are iconic of revolutionary struggle.

We anticipate to learn so much from the Workshop on the Permanent People's Tribunal. This intends to present its experiences as an opinion tribunal and a collective research effort towards the implementation of the principles of the Universal Declaration of Rights of Peoples (Algiers Declaration), to examine cases from Latin America to the Philippines

involving the impunity of so-called democracies and to show several initiatives that challenge such impunity through condonation by as well as circumvention of international law.

We look forward to the Solidarity Forum on Youth Struggles. It will gather young people from various countries to depict and analyze their situation in relation to the crisis of global capitalism, to share experiences and learn from each other in resisting imperialism and advancing their struggles, and to draw up a declaration to inspire the further spread and intensification of the struggles of the youth and the people for a fundamentally new and better world free from imperialism and all reaction.

We are confident that the International Festival of People's Rights and Struggles will obtain resounding success and will lead to further festivals in conjunction with the international assemblies of the International League of Peoples' Struggles. May all our efforts contribute to the advance and triumph of the people's struggles for greater freedom, democracy, social justice, all-round development and world peace.

# Advance Cultural Work as Integral Part of the People's Struggle against Imperialism

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**M**essage of solidarity and inputs on Millennium  
Development Goals  
and the Convention on Cultural Diversity  
July 5, 2011

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ON THE OCCASION OF the International Conference on Progressive Culture: People's Art Shaping the Society of the Future, may I as chairperson of the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) convey warmest greetings of solidarity from the League to all the participating artists, cultural workers and media practitioners from different parts of the world who are all engaged in anti-imperialist and democratic movements for fundamental change in their respective countries and milieus.

For their initiative and success in preparing and convening the conference, we congratulate all the participants, the Concerned Artists of the Philippines (CAP), the US-based Habi-Arts and the New York Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines (NYCHRP) and the member-organizations of Commission 14 of the International League of Peoples' Struggle in cooperation with the College of Mass Communication of the University of the Philippines.

We welcome and applaud the theme of the conference, "Cultural work as an integral part of the struggle of the peoples of the world against imperialism." We are deeply pleased to observe that the progressive artists, cultural workers and media practitioners have the opportunity to interface, share their ideas, experience and work, to discuss and clarify further the role of art, culture and media in the struggle for social change, to exhibit their works and to foster unity, networks and practical forms of cooperation.

I thank the International Organizing Committee of the First International Conference on Progressive Culture for inviting me to recite my poem, "The Guerrilla Is Like a Poet," and to make inputs on the Millennium Development Goals and its impact on arts and culture and the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diverse Cultural Expressions or in brief the Convention on Cultural Diversity. These two documents may be discussed in relation to the neoliberal economic policy of imperialist plunder and to your concern on arts and culture.

The severe problems that the Millennium Development Goals seek to address have been the consequence of relentless imperialist plunder, accelerated and aggravated by the neoliberal economic policy instigated by the US and known as the Washington Consensus. They are subject matter involving the suffering of hundreds of millions of people, mainly in the underdeveloped countries, who cry out for attention and expression by artists, cultural workers and media practitioners.

However, the Millennium Development Goals do not call on them for help and not one of the goals refers to arts and culture. Since the declaration of these goals in 2000, under the baton of the imperialist countries, not any of these has had any significant direct and positive consequence to arts and culture. And certainly the nonfulfilment of the goals and the aggravation of the economic and social problems provide rich raw material for the critical study and creative work by people involved in the arts and culture.

The Millennium Development Goals are as follows: 1) to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, 2) to achieve universal primary education, 3) to promote gender equality and empower women, 4) to reduce child mortality rates, 5) to improve maternal health, 6) to combat HIV-AIDS, malaria and other diseases, 7) to ensure environmental sustainability, and 8) to develop a global partnership for development.

The goals are supposed to be fully realized in 2015. But they, together with all previous claims of success to some extent here and there, have always been overtaken by the worsening crisis of the world capitalist system and the local reactionary ruling system. The problems sought to be solved have been further exacerbated and

deepened. In declaring these goals, the imperialist countries and the puppet regimes in the underdeveloped countries have been engaged essentially in a mere exercise of shedding crocodile tears and obfuscating the root causes of problems.

What the MDG identifies as the No. 1 problem, extreme poverty and hunger, as well as the other problems are rooted in the global system of people's exploitation and oppression by the imperialist powers and the reactionary ruling systems in the underdeveloped countries. So long as imperialism and reaction persist, such goals as spelled out in the MDG cannot be solved but are in fact worsened in the underdeveloped countries under conditions of chronic crisis and protracted global depression, relentless superprofit-taking by the multinational banks and firms, rising rates of unemployment, soaring prices of basic goods and services and the plunder of the natural resources of the underdeveloped countries.

In this connection, I urge the artists, cultural workers and media practitioners to intensify their efforts to depict the suffering, demands and struggles of the people, denounce such root causes of poverty and underdevelopment as imperialism and reaction and contribute their best efforts to the arousal, organization and mobilization of the broad masses of the people, especially the toiling masses, for their own national and social liberation and for building a fundamentally new and better world of greater freedom, democracy, social justice, all-round development and world peace.

The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions or the Convention on Cultural Diversity was adopted by 148 member-states at the UNESCO General Conference on October 20, 2005. Since then, it has been ratified as a treaty by 116 member-states and the European Union. The Convention recognizes the rights of Parties to adopt and implement policies and measures to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions, and impose obligations on the Parties at both domestic and international levels.

The key term "cultural expressions" is defined in Article 4.3 of the Convention as "those expressions that result from the creativity of individuals, groups and societies, and that have cultural content." Cultural content refers to "the symbolic meaning, artistic dimension

and cultural values that originate from or express cultural identities” (Article 4.2).

The general objectives of the Convention are as follows: 1) to reaffirm the sovereign right of States to adopt cultural policies while ensuring the free movement of ideas and works, 2) to recognize the distinct nature of cultural goods and services as vehicles of values, identity and meaning, 3) to define a new framework for international cultural cooperation, the keystone of the Convention, 4) to create the conditions for cultures to flourish and freely interact in a mutually beneficial manner, 5) to ensure that civil society plays a major role in the implementation of the Convention.

The Convention is supposed to ensure that artists, cultural professionals, practitioners and citizens worldwide can create, produce, disseminate and enjoy a broad range of cultural goods, services and activities, including their own. It has been considered as a response to the growing pressure exerted on countries to waive their right to enforce cultural policies and to put all aspects of the cultural sector on the negotiating table under international trade agreements and to subordinate intellectual property rights to the commercial and profit-seeking of the multinational corporations.

The Convention recognizes: 1. the distinctive nature of cultural goods, services and activities as vehicles of identity, values and meaning; and 2. that while cultural goods, services and activities have important economic value, they are not mere commodities or consumer goods that can only be regarded as objects of trade.

The main objective of the Convention is to uphold the sovereign right of States to adopt cultural policies that support their cultural industries. The Convention asserts and respects the diversity of cultural expressions as cherished and treasured assets for individuals and societies. It therefore regards the protection, promotion and maintenance of cultural diversity as an essential requirement for sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations.

Some commentators have considered the Convention as a breach on the neoliberal economic policy, on the WTO scheme to commodify and make everything for sale and on the dominance of US cultural imperialism, especially Hollywood movies. The

Convention seems to support the premise that cultural goods cannot be treated as mere commodities.

Articles 5 and 6 of the Convention grant nations the sovereign right to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions within their territory against the sweeping tide of neoliberal globalization. Article 8 recognizes that special situations may arise where cultural expressions (movies, music, magazines and other cultural industries) in a state's territory are at risk of extinction, are under serious threat, or are otherwise in need of urgent safeguarding. In such cases, "states parties may take all appropriate measures" to protect and preserve cultural expressions in a manner consistent with the provisions of the convention.

Article 18 sets up an International Fund for Cultural Diversity to be funded by voluntary contributions made by the Parties. But above all, the Convention assures governments of the right to favor domestic cultural activities, goods and services rather than a positive commitment to ensure minimum standards of protection or to allocate resources for the benefit of the artists, cultural workers and media practitioners. The Convention has been interpreted as an expression of the critical attitude of France and Canada towards the dominance of American cultural goods. Indeed, the United States together with Israel, has provided evidence of its own narrow self-interest by objecting to the Convention, calling it a "deeply flawed, protectionist, and a threat to freedom of expression." This is the US way of pushing its ultra-national protectionist position under the cover of such slogans as the "freemarket" and the "free flow of ideas."

The US has the least or no concern for different cultures flourishing in various countries. Its concern is the protection of cultural industries going against US cultural dominance, which has been effected through existing free trade rules and intellectual property rights under the WTO. While it has not signed the Convention, the US has succeeded in pushing the second paragraph of Article 20 which stipulates that the Convention does not modify other treaties, especially the WTO and whole gamut of trade agreements.

In case of any conflict between the WTO and the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity, US cultural imperialism can use WTO and subsidiary bilateral and multilateral trade agreements to its advantage. Furthermore, the UNESCO Convention is binding only to those countries that ratify it. The US has the upperhand in its competition with other imperialist powers and in compelling the underdeveloped countries to submit to US cultural imperialism.

I wish to admonish the participants of the International Conference on Progressive Culture to invoke and avail of just and fair principles and standards that are enunciated in the UNESCO Convention and that can be deployed against US cultural imperialism and the WTO. But there is no administrative or judicial venue offered by the UN, UNESCO or by any government for winning a case against the WTO and US cultural imperialism. What is needed is a powerful mass movement of the artists, cultural workers and media workers and the broad masses of the people for the revolutionary transformation of all major aspects of society—socioeconomic, political and cultural.

# Counter Cultural Imperialism with Revolutionary Cultural Work

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## **S**olidarity Message to AGITPROP International Film Festival July 5, 2011

On behalf of the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS), I wish to express warmest greetings of solidarity to the organizers, the filmmakers and all participants in the AGITPROP International Film Festival.

For their success in organizing the festival, we congratulate the Southern Tagalog eXposure, Mayday Multimedia, Tudla productions, KODAO productions and all the cooperating multimedia and cultural groups.

We welcome and appreciate the AGITPROP film festival as a highly significant contribution to the growing international solidarity movement of the people along the anti-imperialist and democratic line. It provides a venue for a wide range of films that present the dismal social realities and the aspirations of the people of the world for greater freedom, democracy, social justice and all-round development.

Today, the movies that dominate the international film industry conceal or obscure the realities that are laid bare by the films in AGITPROP. They serve only as a tool to distract and bend the consciousness of the people towards subservience to the dictates of imperialism and reaction. This is also true in the case of other cultural art forms that inundate the mainstream media.

Since more than a century ago, US imperialism has used culture, the arts and the mass media to help maintain and expand its power, to manipulate the consciousness of the people and draw them away from resistance. For this purpose, it has propagated decadent bourgeois culture and values that are distinctively colonial, feudal, patriarchal, selfish, racist and fascist.

In recent decades, the US imperialists have systematically generated a culture of greed under the policy of neoliberal

globalization and a culture of repression and aggression under the policy of global war of terror. They have misrepresented the forces and people that oppose and fight against imperialist plunder and war as terrorists, enemies of democracy and development and have targeted them for suppression. US imperialism is the No. 1 terrorist, exploiter and oppressor of the world.

The global economic and financial crisis that is ravaging the world today is rooted in the drive of the monopoly capitalists for superprofits at the expense of the people. We can expect the crisis to become worse, inflict more suffering on the people and incite them to struggle for their own national and social liberation.

In this context, the AGITPROP festival plays an important role. It shows us the way to counter cultural imperialism with revolutionary cultural work and advance the people's struggle with the use of films and other art forms. These do not merely expose the bitter realities but they also constitute a direct action against imperialism and all the social ills that come with it.

We must have more AGITPROP festivals to inspire the artists, the cultural workers and the entire people to take the road of revolutionary resistance against imperialism and reaction.

# Author's Preface to The Guerilla is Like a Poet

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**S**eptember 1, 2013

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I AM DELIGHTED AND honored that my book of poems, *The Guerrilla Is Like a Poet and Other Poems*, is published in connection with the project of the Academy for Cultural Activism to present to artists and students in The Netherlands the role of art and literature in the struggle of the Filipino people for national liberation and democracy.

I am gratified to have been asked to make the selection of poems, juxtapose the Pilipino and English versions and include commentaries that shed light on the significance, content and style of the poems and on my track record in the new democratic revolution of my people and the place that I have earned in Philippine literature.

I have divided the poems into three parts. Part I is titled "The People's Resistance" and the poems are about the revolutionary struggle of the toiling masses against their foreign and local oppressors. Part II is titled "Detention and Defiance" and the poems are about my torture and imprisonment by the Marcos fascist dictatorship from 1977 to 1986. Part III is titled "The Struggle Continues" and the poems are about the perseverance of the Filipino people and myself in struggle.

The poems in Parts I and II are selected from my book of poems, *Prison and Beyond*, which won the Southeast Asia WRITE Award for poetry in 1986 and which carries the poem, "The Guerrilla Is Like a Poet." Part III of the present book includes poems that I have written while in exile as a political refugee in The Netherlands.

These more recent poems reflect the continuous suffering of the Filipino people, the depredations of the imperialist policy of neoliberalism and my subjection to "terrorist" blacklisting initiated by the US government and to solitary confinement by the Dutch

government on false charges of murder by the Philippine government.

I refrain from explaining my own poems in this preface. I say just enough to open the door and welcome your reading. I hope that you understand and appreciate how I try to express within the brevity of poems, so much thought and feeling, which I would have otherwise expressed in volumes of prose.

Likewise to spare myself from commenting on my own poems and to help the reader appreciate them, I have included in the book as Part IV the commentaries of Filipino colleagues who on their own account are renowned in the Philippines and abroad as teachers of literature, literary critics and practising poets.

I take this opportunity to express my admiration and gratitude to Jonas Staal and all his colleagues in the New World Summit (NWS) for having provided democratic space to the Filipino people's struggle for national liberation and democracy. I appreciate the artistic way that NWS creates the architectural venue for the alternative parliament and for the expression of ideas excluded by those who wield power and amass private wealth.

In the First New World Summit in Berlin in 2011, the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) was featured as one of the major national liberation movements in the world. Luis Jalandoni had ample opportunity to present the revolutionary mission and vision of the NDFP.

In the Second New World Summit in Leiden in 2012, I was given the privilege of being the main speaker to articulate the Filipino people's democratic program and struggle for national and social liberation, to express my grievance against the "terrorist" blacklisting and to expound on the NDFP desire for a just and lasting peace in pursuing peace negotiations with the Manila government.

I am elated that the NWS and its founder Jonas Staal have proceeded to create the Academic for Cultural Activism. I believe that this endeavor will encourage artists and teachers of art to imbue their work with the revolutionary spirit and carry forward the necessary progressive and fruitful dialectical relationship of art and democratization towards a new and better world of greater freedom,

social justice, all-round development and international solidarity of the people.

# On the Master Puppeteer and the Puppet

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**M**essage to Kilometer 64 Poetry Collective  
March 11, 2014

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I SINCERELY EXTEND my solidarity with all of you patriotic poets and disciples of poetry brought together under Kilometer 64. I am glad that you have gathered to celebrate the eleventh anniversary of our relationship that was begun on March 14, 2003.

You already have a wealth of experience and should celebrate your victories. Your creative work, publications and presentations of patriotic poetry are praiseworthy. You are renowned for your diligent propagation of relevant poems for schools, streets, bars, picket lines and urban poor communities.

As the founding chairman of Kabataang Makabayan, I consider it a matter of great pride to the members of KM for Kilometer 64 to have been inspired by their patriotic spirit and militant actions. With KM's 50th anniversary fast approaching, let us prepare to celebrate it this November 30.

It is well that Kilometer 64 continues and further invigorates the propagation of the culture of patriotism and draw lessons from the revolutionary history of the Filipino nation. Our prominent icons are the patriotic poets Andres Bonfacio and Amado V. Hernandez.

So long as our motherland suffers from its semifeudal and semicolonial status, it remains our task to write and deliver poems as weapons in the struggle for national liberation and democracy against foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

Let us participate in all actions to arouse, organize and mobilize all of the oppressed and exploited classes and sectors of our nation. Let us engage in struggle whatever the danger, difficulties and sacrifice. The enemy is brutal and avaricious and we must exhaust all means to win the people's struggle.

Our constant inspiration is the brilliant role played by Kabataang Makabayan in advancing the democratic revolution before the

imposition of the fascist dictatorship, while it repressed and wrought havoc on the people and after it was defeated.

We are again at a time of being challenged to fight and defeat the ogre regime of the cacique Aquino which is dementedly servile to US imperialism. Our current struggle is part of advancing along the path towards complete national liberation and democracy.

To end this message, I would like to recite my poem, *The Master Puppeteer and the Puppets*,

In neocolonial times, the master puppeteer  
Lends grandeur to the puppets and places them  
On stage, the mass media and various gatherings.  
To create the illusion of democracy, he arranges  
Electoral contests like the colorful cockpits  
In many a town fiesta for a few months.  
But most important to the master puppeteer  
Is to choose the puppet politicians most eager to serve  
In collaboration with the US and local exploiters,  
And make the exploited and oppressed believe  
That they have freely chosen from the best possible.  
But the revolutionary movement arose  
To arouse, organize and mobilize the masses  
To confront the oppressors and exploiters,  
To seize power in the localities wave upon wave  
And attain the strength to liberate the nation  
Mainly the workers and peasants.  
The Filipino people hate the master puppeteer  
For changing the puppet leaders to oppress them.  
They reject Marcos' brazen despotism  
As well as the bogus democratic successors  
Who take turns in oppressing the people  
And serve the foreign and local exploiters.

# Amplify the People's Voice

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**K**eynote Speech to the First National Conference of  
Alternative Media  
Plaridel Hall, U.P. College of Mass Communications  
October 9-10, 2014

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I THANK THE CONFERENCE organizers for inviting me to be the keynote speaker of the First National Conference of Alternative Media, the theme of which is “New Situation, New Challenge: Strengthen the People's Voice.” I am deeply pleased and highly honored.

I extend my warmest greetings of solidarity to all the participants. I hope that your discussion of concepts and history of the alternative media and exchange of experience, estimate of the situation and plans related to alternative media practice in the Philippines will lay a sound basis for the plenary session to draw up a constitution and program of action and establish an alliance of alternative media organizations.

To be initially on the same wavelength with you, I am using the term “alternative media”. I know what you mean concretely as I look at the list of your participants: Bulatlat, Ibon, Peoples Media Center/Pinoy Weekly, Tudla Productions, Buhay Manggagawa, Kodao, Aklat ng Bayan, Arkibong Bayan, Nordis (Northern Luzon), Bicol Today, Davao Today, Cobraans (Bacolod), ST Exposure, Sineng Panayanon, Fardec, Hiligaynon, Lingganay Kamatuoran, Radyo Sagada, CPU, Migrante, Radyo Guimba; and publications of Gabriela, Bayan, KMP/Pamalakaya and Anakbayan.

### ***Preference for the Term “People's Media”***

To refer to the foregoing information media, I prefer to use the term “people's media”. You yourselves indicate by your conference theme that the media represented by participants in the conference are the voice of the people and that you wish to strengthen it. The people's media are in sharp contrast to the “imperialist media” based in the US and other imperialist countries or the “ruling class media”

in any exploitative social system, including the government-owned media and the corporate media of the press lords and their presstitutes.

The people's media serve the people, particularly the toiling masses of workers and peasants, the women, the youth, the intelligentsia, the national minorities, the low-income people and others who are oppressed and exploited and who have little or no access to the so-called mainstream media. They report the events, facts and issues that affect most the lives and future of the people. They provide ample space for the expression of the needs, demands and just aspirations of the people. They broadcast the sufferings, struggles and victories of the people against those who oppress and exploit them.

In the concrete conditions of the Philippines, what interest the people most are their own desire and striving for national independence, democracy, respect for human rights, social justice, development through genuine land reform and national development, the flourishing of a national, scientific and mass culture and international solidarity of peoples and countries for peace and development against imperialism and reaction.

### ***Critique of the Term “Mainstream Media”***

The term “mainstream media” is a cleverly minted phrase. It rides on the factual predominance of the media owned, controlled and directed by imperialist or reactionary governments and the private media monopolies in the gathering, processing and dissemination of information, sentiments and ideas that are slanted to preserve and promote the ruling system. Any other kind of media outside of the “mainstream” is by direct implication looked down as “marginal” even if serving public interest far beyond the narrow self-interest of the imperialists and reactionaries.

But the cleverness of the bourgeois phrase-makers does not end there. They avoid proclaiming the binary distinction or dichotomy between mainstream and marginal. What they downgrade as marginal, the tributary or the “other” thing, they often call the “alternative media” or sometimes the “independent media” to suggest emphatically that there is freedom of choice in bourgeois society. At other times, they can be blatantly nasty in labeling the

people's media with adjectives calculated to isolate them, making them appear as deviant or extremist.

With the term “mainstream media”, the government and corporate giants in print and electronic media preemptively appropriate the citizenry and the masses, seek to misrepresent themselves as the main timely sources of facts and the truth and facilitate their attempt to influence and manipulate the people. They play up the personalities, forces and issues that favor the ruling system and play down, obscure or vilify those entities deemed dangerous to the system.

### ***Advantages of the Media***

The governments and private corporations that own and run the media have certain advantages over the oppressed and exploited people and the people's media that strive to express their rights and interests and spread the pertinent significant and interesting information. They have the state power on their side. They have the capital to finance and organize their personnel and build their networks and technological means. They get their profits from the corporate advertisers and even from funds from state agencies, political parties and lobby groups loyal to the ruling system.

We saw how state power was used to close down print and electronic media and suppress press freedom wholesale during the Marcos fascist dictatorship. But even thereafter, state power has been used to prevent and limit the access of the people's media to information considered secret or confidential by the government and the big corporations. Even as there is a law on the freedom of information, as in the US and elsewhere, there are provisions and other laws which can block access to the most vital information. Security forces of the state can actually disable one way or another any journalist who is deemed dangerous to the state.

The combination of state psy-war and corporate advertising techniques perfected by the big bourgeoisie is able to fabricate a whole universe of lies and pass them off as truths. Thus the media across the world and in the Philippines can still use highly paid journalists to twist the news so brazenly, for example, as to canonize US imperialist aggression as “protection of human rights” and its installed puppet regimes as “legitimate governments,” and to provide

the needed “fog-of-war” smokescreens for its false-flag attacks while demonizing mass resistance as “acts of terrorism.”

Even when a certain amount of resistance media is legally allowed, the reactionary state has continued to violate human rights in a gross and systematic way, outlaw organizations of the people and compel the revolutionary media to go underground. There are tyrants at every level of the reactionary state in the Philippines, that target for job dismissal or assassination journalists that offend them. The Philippines is well-known for the serial killing of journalists and for the Ampatuan massacre of journalists.

It is important to know the social, economic, political and cultural context in which the media operate in the Philippines as well as the dominant interests abroad that currently use such catchphrases as neoliberal globalization, war on terror and so on. What predominate in the reactionary media are interconnecting layers of imperialist or big bourgeois, colonial, feudal, and fascist currents of thinking.

These are manifest in the content, methods, and forms that are preconditioned, directed or influenced by the entire ruling system, the structure of media ownership, the dominant political parties, the educational and cultural system, the Church and its institutions, the impartialist news agencies, the entire advertising and entertainment industry, big-budget cinema, the Internet and social media, all the way down to formerly traditional but now commercialized and politicized festivals, concerts and sports events.

All these sources generate ideological, political and cultural messages that resound in the reactionary mass media and incessantly barrage the people’s minds and influence their behavior, in all their waking hours on a 24/7 basis across the whole information spectrum. These messages tell their captive audience what is supposedly righteous, interesting, desirable, beautiful, valuable and beneficial, and what is not.

Reactionary culture predominates Philippine society so much so that even the most basic and common elements of culture such as language, folklore and traditions have become suffused with reactionary content. Among the vehicles of culture, mass media have become an extremely powerful and omnipresent tool of the ruling classes to deceive and distract the people.

### ***What the People's Media Can Do***

But as in all things, the law of contradiction or dialectics operates in Philippine society as a whole, in its economics, politics and culture, and the mass media. In the struggle against the US-dominated ruling system of big compradors and landlords, the national democratic mass movement of the people has grown to such an extent that it has inspired the rise of the people's mass media and has served as the basis of its current strength and further growth. Reciprocally, the people's media have informed, enlightened and encouraged the people's mass movement of patriotic and progressive forces.

Whatever are their limitations and disadvantages, the people's media can amplify themselves as the voice of the people by increasing their efficiency in gathering and disseminating the information and ideas that pertain most to the suffering of the people and their struggle for national and social liberation. The broad masses of the people can themselves further amplify what the people's media disseminate because it upholds their rights and interests and substantiate their complaints and demands for a better kind of life and bright future.

The rich experience of our own country's propaganda movement has produced study materials and training kits on how to develop the people's media with a truly mass character. All people's media practitioners study the principle and methods of the mass line applied to media work. In this regard, Mao Zedong's "A Talk to the Editorial Staff of the *Shansi-Suiyuan Daily*" remains an excellent point of reference.

The people's active role in amplifying and spreading the news can make up for the financial and technological limitations of the people's media. The current status and further development of the people's organizations against the ruling system at the level of the legal mass movement and the revolutionary mass movement can always foster the continuous realization of the high potential of the people's media. With the use of the internet and social media, the people's media can now transmit information far more efficiently than ever before to mass organizations and the people at large.

By providing the facts and speaking the truth, the people's media establish their high prestige and credibility. The people themselves on their own circulate the significant and interesting content by word of mouth and through the internet and social media. At the same time, the people's media must constantly expose and oppose the character of the imperialist media and the local reactionary media and how these spread outright lies and disinformation. Such critique should help to counter, weaken and defeat imperialist and reactionary propaganda.

Even if giant media firms are controlled by the big bourgeoisie, they will always employ members of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia and the working class to operate their media facilities and operations. There are also the small community and provincial media that are owned and operated by smaller firms or as family-owned enterprises—which are susceptible to big-bourgeois and bureaucrat control (e.g. via ads and payolas) but also exercise a certain degree of independence in certain cases. In addition to these are the non-commercial media outlets such as Church and NGO newsletters, campus newspapers, and since the past two decades, online journalists or bloggers.

The rank-and-file media professionals and workers and small media owner-operators, as part of the petty bourgeoisie, are open to revolutionary and progressive ideas and to reflecting more truthfully the lives of the masses, if only on the basis of exercising the right to press freedom and artistic expression, and increasingly in more politically radical terms as their work and living conditions are adversely affected by the crisis. Philippine history is rich with examples of patriotic and progressive journalists who worked in big-bourgeois-controlled media (e.g. Amado V. Hernandez, Henry Romero, Antonio Zumel, Satur Ocampo and Antonio Nieva) and eventually joined the ranks of the revolutionary movement.

### ***Building an Alliance of the People's Media***

I welcome the common determination of all the media outfits now gathered in this conference to build an alliance and network for sharing, coordination and cooperation in a number of projects and activities. I understand that you wish to enhance your respective capacities and create synergies to maximize your capabilities for

meeting the challenges and carry out the tasks in the immediate struggle against the antinational and antidemocratic US-Aquino regime and in the long-term struggle against the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system.

I am aware that you have prepared a program of action to make a greater and effective use of social media, to make a regular (possibly daily) internet news and analysis program and for the purpose organize a nationwide network of reporters and correspondents. I suggest that aside from producing texts for the internet and print publications you develop internet-based radio & TV broadcasting. You can develop modes of opinion poll survey to break the monopoly of the imperialists and reactionaries in using this sort of activity to misrepresent the people and condition their thinking.

While the core of your alliance should necessarily be composed of the media outfits that are categorically and solidly part of the people's movement and working closely with or organically within the mass organizations, you should also exert more effort in reaching out to organize and involve in your work wide sections of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia working in big corporate media and related service industries and, in coordination with the youth movement, the studentry of journalism, mass communications and fine arts colleges and schools.

Many of them welcome the opportunity to express in the people's media their own pro-people ideas and creativity that can't find space in reactionary media, to volunteer their time and skills in support of the propaganda movement, and as opportunities arise, to push for a degree of pro-people content within reactionary media. Sometimes, patriotic and progressive content can find its way in some reactionary media because of an avowed or even pretended policy of liberal democratic, objective, all-sided and enlightened journalism or in cases where the media owners are in contradiction with more reactionary entities.

You should pay attention to organizing or supporting the organization of media workers along the national and democratic line. When they can, people's media practitioners can join the National Press Club and the provincial press clubs. Historically, patriotic and progressive leaders and currents have arisen from

these press clubs as have ultrareactionary ones at certain times. You should also be able to form alliances with owners of small printing-press and Internet-café establishments that continue to proliferate in main and secondary urban centers, provide a wide technical base for the needs of people's media, and are traditionally supportive of media rights.

It is fine that you are resolved to take up urgent issues, such as the Ampatuan massacre, media killing impunity, charter change calculated by those in power to further denationalize the economy and make boundless executive power, the growing US military basing and intervention, the need to have genuine freedom of information, ensuring that no cybercrime law is enacted to tighten imperialist and reactionary control of the media and the dismantling of the pork barrel system.

You can take up many more domestic issues. And you must also take up international events and issues in order to prevent the imperialists and reactionaries from using these to mislead the people. You must always be alert to international events and issues that are relevant to and impact on the Filipino people and the Philippines. There are domestic events and issues that need to be disseminated among the Filipinos abroad or among the people of the world.

There are people's media abroad which you can cooperate with. Foreign friends and Filipino compatriots have progressive information networks. You must reach out to overseas Filipinos in every way possible through their organizations and their own media facilities and internet channels. They are hungry for solid news and analysis as well as literary and art works from their homeland, especially from their home provinces.

### ***Long-term Direction of the People's Media***

As the people's movement grows in strength and broadens nationwide, it would gain much higher capacity to promote, support and further develop the people's media. While the struggle will yet undergo many twists and turns—and we should be alert to the possibility of more repressive regimes imposing draconian measures to suppress media rights, as during the Marcos dictatorship—the general trend will be for the new-democratic culture to rise to

dominance and for the people to finally have the capacity to gain full access to and control of all available media technologies and facilities.

Even now, the people's media should vigorously campaign for a comprehensive program of building new-democratic media in the service of the people and within the framework of a national, scientific and mass culture, and implement those components of the program that can be immediately implemented. A united front among people's media outfits and other media formations and circles should be continually expanded and consolidated in the context of a broad cultural united front.

As the crisis of the world capitalist ruling system and that of the domestic ruling system worsen, the information gathered and circulated by the people's media would ring louder and the growing mass movement would accelerate and broaden the spread of the information. In the history of revolutions, the ruling system and the rulers direct and use the biggest instruments of propaganda until the eve of their overthrow. At any rate, despite limitations and disadvantages, the people's media even now are able to provide information and enlightenment to inspire and guide the people and their revolutionary forces.

# On Art, Culture, Science, and Ecology<sup>4</sup>

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**Interview with Lisa Ito**  
**January 24, 2015**

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“Without propaganda by the revolutionary forces and people, the propaganda of the imperialists and reactionaries would prevail without any challenge.”

*LISA ITO (LI): CAN you tell us more how you have been actively collaborating with artists on various cultural projects? How did you first get involved and how do you view these collaborations and projects?*

JOSE MA. SISON (JMS): Since my high school days, I have collaborated with artists on various cultural initiatives and projects because I have developed an interest in these as a creative writer, particularly as a poet. I have trained in and done some painting and have taken part in dramatic presentations. In the university, I acted in a number of stage productions and have associated with actors who would become movie directors and actors. I attend art exhibits because of my previous interest in painting and my humanities courses in the UP.

I have participated in poetry readings up to the time I was on a global university tour.

*LI: Who are your favourite poets and writers? Were there any particular figures who influenced your work as a poet? Whose work are you reading now?*

JMS: My favorite poets include Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh, Pablo Neruda, Amado Hernandez and Chairil Anwar (whose Indonesian poems I translated in 1962). Other favorite writers are Maxim Gorky, John Steinbeck, Carlos Bulosan and Bertolt Brecht. I am not reading a creative work at the moment. I am reading lots of analysis of the Philippine and global situation.

*LI: You mentioned an interest in painting. Do you have any favorite visual artists or artworks? What or whose practices do you*

*find interesting?*

JMS: Among my favorite visual artists are the contemporary social realist painters in the Philippines. I look intently at their works whenever these are published.

*LI: Are there any songs that you are particularly fond of? Can you give us a timeline of songs that also defined the different stages of your life as a revolutionary?*

JMS: The Communist Internationale since the early 1960s, Awit ng Kabataang Makabayan and Gumising Ka, Kabataan since 1964, Pag-ibig sa Tinubuang Lupa and Bayan Ko since the 1980s, Awit ng Proletaryo since 1990s and Ang Gerilya'y Tulad ng Makata since the first decade of the 21st century.

***On the SCAUP, Kabataang Makabayan and cultural work***

*LI: Tell us more about the days when the Student Cultural Association of the University of the Philippines (SCAUP) and Kabataang Makabayan (KM) were being established in the 1960s. How did you as organisers relate to other artists or artistically-inclined people? How were they mobilised and how important was their work?*

JMS: We in SCAUP were able to relate first to some creative writers—such as essayists, poets and playwrights—especially because we came to know them as colleagues in the school publications and the little magazines where they were editors and feature writers. The Kabataang Makabayan also began with creative writers and a few visual artists. However, as the KM grew, we were able to recruit the youth in the performing arts and in the schools of fine arts and architecture.

The KM had its Cultural Bureau for the purpose of organizing and directing the creative writers in Panulat para sa Kaunlaran ng Sambayanan (PAKSA), the central cultural performing group Panday Sining and its subsidiaries under various names in various schools, factories and localities and the Nagkakaisang Progresibong Artista-Arkitekto (NPAA).

In the years of 1969 to 1972, the PAKSA was responsible for essays, poems, skits and plays; Panday Sining for indoor and outdoor performances including vocal and instrumental music, dance, poem recitations; and NPAA for topical cartoons, comics,

thematic illustrations, effigies, paintings on canvas murals and some sculptural works. Various art forms were displayed and orchestrated during the street mass actions, especially the First Quarter Storm of 1970.

*LI: What was SCAUP's role in terms of building a movement against the dominant culture then?*

JMS: The organizing of the SCAUP was of crucial importance. It challenged the dominant antinational, antiscientific and antiworking people culture bred by colonial and feudal history and by the current semicolonial and semifeudal conditions. It opposed colonial and medieval mentality and advocated a national, scientific and mass culture. It put forward the national democratic line at the open mass level and undertook Marxist-Leninist studies as the discreet level. It vigorously opposed the Anti-Subversion Law and the anticommunist witchhunt against faculty members and students who had published progressive articles. It was a time of rabid anticommunism due to the Cold War, McCarthyism and a very reactionary kind of Catholic student action. The SCAUP supported the faculty members and student writers who were progressive liberals in opposition to the state anticommunist line and the religio-sectarianism of the UPSCA (UP Student Catholic Action) and the Catholic hierarchy. It had an alliance with the bourgeois liberals in general. At the same time, it was critical of the conservative pro-imperialist liberalism of the University of the Philippines and criticized most the faculty members who were outspokenly pro-imperialist, anticommunist and religio-sectarian as well as the US scholarship and travel grants that had spawned them.

*LI: What lessons from the experience of SCAUP are important to the activists now?*

JMS: We recruited into the SCAUP students with academic grades who could run for position in the student government, those who could write well so that they could become Collegian editors and staffers and those who were leading fraternities, sororities and other student organizations. To be able to engage in big student mass actions, like the anti-CAFA demonstration in 1961, the SCAUP forged an alliance with other campus organizations. From this account of SCAUP experience, students of the current generation

can learn some lessons on how to build a movement to counter the dominant culture.

### ***On the call for a Second Propaganda Movement***

*LI: Your earliest essays in the 1960s emphasized the need for a Second Propaganda Movement. How can we respond to this call for a counter-cultural movement against the dominant culture at present?*

JMS: The Second Propaganda Movement perseveres as a cultural movement to inspire, promote and invigorate the continuation of the Philippine revolution at a new and higher level of people's struggle, under the leadership of the working class against modern imperialism and local reaction. The general line of the people's democratic revolution and the demand for national, scientific and mass culture remains valid against persistent adversities.

*LI: What are the new conditions that the movement faces?*

JMS: The adoption of new and higher technology has at first been favorable to imperialism. But it has led to the faster and worse recurrence of the crisis of overproduction and financial speculation and financial crisis. The revolution in information technology has at first favored production, consumerism and imperialist propaganda. But digital communications have also facilitated the spread of revolutionary ideas and propaganda and the calls for mass resistance.

After revisionism destroyed the big socialist societies, neocolonialism prevailed over nearly the entire third world and neoliberalism held sway over nearly the entire world, the US seemed to last long as the sole superpower and the cause of national independence and socialism would be frustrated forever. But all major contradictions in the world are worsening and favoring the resurgence of the revolutionary movement. The inter-imperialist contradictions have becoming more intense as result of China and Russia becoming major capitalist powers. So the potential for the world proletarian revolution is high.

*LI: How important is propaganda work in this time of intensified crisis and modern revisionism in former socialist states?*

JMS: Propaganda is exceedingly important. It is necessary to arouse and educate people to wage social revolution. Without propaganda by the revolutionary forces and people, the propaganda of the imperialists and reactionaries would prevail without any challenge.

Since the revisionist-ruled countries became fully capitalist in the 1989-1991 period, the imperialists have spread the propaganda that the socialist cause is dead and even the cause of national liberation and democracy is dead. They also try to obscure in vain the total bankruptcy of the neoliberal economic policy, the economic crisis as the fuel to the wars of aggression and the resurgence of the anti-imperialist and socialist movements.

*LI: What does it mean to be an effective propagandist?*

JMS: To be a propagandist, you must write down your piece. Before writing, you must get enough information and ideas by reading or discussing with others. You must know your subject and analyze the issue or issues involved. Your purpose is to inform and educate your readers. Get them to join a certain action or campaign and have a lasting interest in the national democratic movement of the people.

***On the propagation of Mao Zedong's talks on art and literature***

*LI: You were able to attend the 25th anniversary of the Yanan Talks on Literature and Art in back 1967. Can you tell us more about this? What happened and what relevant lessons did you get from this engagement?*

JMS: Yes, I attended the seminar in Beijing to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Comrade Mao Zedong's Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art. I was one of the speakers. The Afro-Asian Writers' Bureau sponsored the seminar and published my speech in its publication, The Call. The seminar was attended by high Chinese officials. At the end of the seminar Comrade Mao Zedong met us.

Many important progressive writers of the third world attended the seminar. The wide influence of Mao's talks on literature and art was manifested. After coming from the seminar, I encouraged other Filipino writers and artists to read and study Mao's talks. Thus, his thinking on the subject gained influence in the Philippines.

*LI: What, for you, were the aspects of Mao's thinking on art, culture and propaganda that were particularly relevant to the Philippine struggle?*

JMS: We appreciate and accept as relevant and useful to the Philippine struggle. Mao's thinking on the relationship of the socio-economic, political and cultural aspects of society, culture as the finest product of social activity and as the reflection of the economy and politics, literature and art as being reflective of the ruling system and ruling class and therefore the need for art, culture and propaganda reflective of the rights, interests and aspirations of the revolutionary forces and people. The heroes and role models should no longer be the outstanding figures of the exploiting classes but the revolutionary workers, peasants and the Red cadres and fighters.

### ***On Building a People's Culture***

*LI: What do you think are current threats towards building a "people's culture" in the Philippines, in light of contexts and challenges such as the ASEAN integration?*

JMS: In the first place, US imperialism and the local exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords are responsible for the dominance of a pro-imperialist bourgeois and feudal culture in the Philippines. They generate threats to the people's culture that has been developing as national, scientific and mass in character. They are trying to suppress history from a patriotic Filipino viewpoint and are discouraging the use of the national language at the university level. The courses of study in the social sciences and textbooks are prepared by promperialist academics. The framework of ASEAN integration, for instance, is being used to favor English and the pro-imperialist orientation.

It is really the national democratic movement and its corps of patriotic educators, writers and artists who are promoting a national, scientific and mass culture. The national language may not be depreciated in the mass media and movies as much as in the schools. But in both mass media and schools, language is used to carry and promote antinational, feudal and antidemocratic ideas.

*LI: A project spearheaded by the New World Summit, the Artist Organizations International (AOI) in January 2015, tried to explore the question of solidarity among artist organizations. How important*

*to the people's struggle is unity among artists and developing a cultural mass movement?*

JMS: International solidarity of artists' organizations is important and necessary because it must confront and struggle against such global forces of monopoly capitalism, which exploits and oppresses the people of the world. Imperialism deploys multinational firms and banks, agencies of surveillance and subversion and military forces for intervention and wars of aggression.

The artists' organizations must learn together and know what issues to take up and how to take them up against imperialist forces and their local agents. They must present their programs of action and artistic products, hold conferences and festivals, inspire each other, learn from each other and strive for higher levels of achievements in the struggle against imperialism and its local reactionary agents.

*LI: You spoke of the role of language, history, and theory in building a people's culture. Are there any other aspects that we should also consider?*

JMS: We should take into account and call for the propagation and application of science and technology as an instrument of development in the economy and other aspects of society. We should give full play to the knowledge and abilities of our scientists, technologists and engineers in the development of the country, the improvement of the quality of life and protection of the environment. We should also avail of the advances of science and technology on a global scale to serve our national needs.

*LI: How should one view the fast paced discoveries in nearly all fields of science?*

JMS: The fast paced discoveries in nearly all fields of science should be used to benefit humankind, serve social needs and the cause of national and social liberation, promote economic productivity, political freedom and cultural creativity and improve the quality of life.

It should not to serve the profit motive and greed of the few that belong to the monopoly bourgeoisie and financial oligarchy and not to generate the weapons of mass destruction and not to unleash state terrorism and wars of aggression.

*LI: What do you think is the role of science and industry in the Filipino people's struggle for national liberation and democracy?*

JMS: Science and industry have a vital role in the people's struggle for national liberation and democracy. Even while the revolutionary movement is not yet in power in the urban areas, there are certain policy and practical needs for knowledge and skills in science and technology in the countryside.

That is why scientists and technologists are always being encouraged to join the revolutionary movement. When the revolutionary movement takes power over the cities and the entire country, science and technology will be used to carry out national industrialization, protection of the environment and other tasks in an all-sided social development.

### ***On national industrialization***

*LI: What is national industrialization?*

JMS: National industrialization has a foundation in heavy and basic industries and is capable of producing capital goods and processing the rich natural resources of the Philippines from the primary stage through the secondary stage to the tertiary stage. National industrialization may be carried out by the Philippine state and the Filipino private sector. It is not dependent on foreign ownership.

The neoliberal policy of imperialist globalization amounts to denationalization of the Philippine economy by violating and selling out economic sovereignty and the national patrimony and letting foreign firms take full advantage of investment and trade liberalization, privatization of public assets and the antisocial and anti-environmental deregulation.

National industrialization in combination with land reform has never been done in the Philippines. Thus, the underdevelopment. What is passed off as industrialization in the Philippines is dependent on imported equipment or on components in semimanufacturing or low value-added processing.

*LI: Science, technology and IT are important to an industrial base. How can we transform our economy into a modern and diverse economy?*

JMS: We have a more than adequate number of scientists and technologists to start with. And we can accelerate the education and training of these as we carry out national industrialization.

Filipino scientists and technologists can be encouraged to return home permanently or to carry out specific projects and programs. Foreign scientists and technologists can also be encouraged to help on the basis of international solidarity aside from those foreign experts that temporarily accompany initially imported equipment.

According to an old study which remains valid, Philippines is fortunate to have 14 out of the 16 minerals needed for industrial development. We have the natural resources on which our scientists and technologists can work on. Taiwan and South Korea were agrarian and underdeveloped and had less scientists and technologists than we have when they started to industrialize.

*LI: Some say that industrialization will only worsen global warming, so why should the Philippines pursue such a trajectory of industrialization?*

JMS: National industrialization can be carried out with the use of non-fossil fuel or with the greatly reduced use of fossil fuel while increasingly using non-fossil fuel. Such kind of industrialization will make the Philippines a model of development. With the appropriate program of national industrialization, we can wisely conserve and use our natural resources, instead of the wanton mining and export of mineral resources.

With continuing underdevelopment due to lack of national industrialization, we suffer the consequences of the plunder of the natural resources and destruction of the environment by foreign monopoly interests. We suffer more severe typhoons, floods, landslides, soil erosion, droughts, poisoning of the land and water resources. Underdevelopment also involves widespread poverty and want, malarial swamps and greater proneness to diseases and even epidemics.

### ***On environmental protection and defense***

*LI: How important is defending the environment to this overall vision of building the vision of a democratic, equitable Philippine society? Was this view also present during the incipient years of the CPP, NPA and NDF?*

JMS: Defending the environment is of crucial importance to the overall vision of building a democratic and equitable society. It is a necessary part of the anti-imperialist and class struggle to fight and defeat the imperialist firms, the big compradors and corrupt bureaucrats who collaborate in plundering the natural resources and grievously damaging the environment.

Since the incipient years, the CPP, NPA and NDFP have recognized the problem of environmental destruction. They have opposed the logging and mining firms for giving low wages, for exporting the primary products and causing serious damage to the environment and agriculture and certain forms of fishing were also causing serious damage to marine life. What I am saying is documented in Philippine Society and Revolution and Preliminary Investigation of Northern Luzon.

*LI: Can you share more about how this attitude or framework later developed within the context of the Philippine revolutionary movement, particularly in the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER)?*

JMS: In the economic program of the revolutionary movement and in our draft of the CASER, we want economic development to be in the hands of the people and its patriotic leaders and economists so that we can carry out land reform and national industrialization effectively and use our rich natural resources efficiently and wisely, protecting the environment and ensuring that it recovers from the ravages already done by the export-oriented logging, mining and plantation companies owned by foreign investors and big compradors.

*LI: What are your thoughts on different environmental issues? A large threat to the Philippines at the presence of transnational mining corporations. How important is the struggle against mining by TNCs in the Philippines and what is at stake here?*

JMS: The struggle against the TNC mining in the Philippines is extremely important. It must stop the digging up of mineral resources for export. These are nonrenewable. Their export means a permanent loss to the country and runs counter to our aspirations for national industrialization. The mining which is being done all over the country destroys the environment. It is aggravating deforestation and

soil erosion. It causes floods and landslides during the rainy season and droughts during the dry season. It is poisoning the streams, the fish and the farms.

*LI: How about natural disasters? In 2013, you collaborated with the New World Academy on an Open Source Tribunal on the idea of Typhoon Haiyan as an unnatural disaster. What are your thoughts on the almost annual disasters, usually related to typhoons and floods, that hit the country?*

JMS: Global warming has increased to such an extent that the warming of the surface of the Pacific Ocean has turned it into a speedway for generating and intensifying more typhoons that hit the Philippines. Every year the people are several times subjected to typhoons, floods and landslides. The natural disasters are aggravated by the social disasters in the form of continuing anti-environment policy, absence of risk minimization and, when disaster strikes, the lack of timely relief and rehabilitation.

*LI: Another large issue is the impact of climate change on the peoples of the world. It's interesting that you are rooted in the Philippines and the Netherlands, two different countries which are both very vulnerable to different impacts of climate change. What can the people's movement do to further address the question of climate change?*

JMS: The people's movement should demand immediate strategic withdrawal from the use of fossil fuel and shift to non-fossil energy like solar, wind and tidal wave and thus reduce carbon dioxide emissions or greenhouses gases, which are causing global warming. The imperialist powers and oil giants must be compelled somehow to give up their profit-making interest in fossil fuel.

Otherwise, the Philippines and The Netherlands will be among the first countries to sink when the level of the sea rises to a certain point. According to scientists, the global average surface temperature is now about 0.8 degree Celsius and is rising at a rate of 0.2 degree per decade. At this rate, the global warming at the end of the century shall be 3 degrees, which is enough to destroy the Amazon rainforest, turn large parts of the world into desert, raise the sea level by 25 meters and submerge coastal settlements. The

global warming starts to gallop towards 6 degrees, at which point mankind can become extinct.

### ***On the role of mass media and social media***

*LI: Let us talk about your thoughts on mass media, which is a crucial vehicle for the dissemination of ideas. You worked with prominent journalists turned revolutionaries, such as Antonio Zumel and Satur Ocampo. Can you tell us more about the role of mass media and journalists in bringing about social change?*

JMS: The revolutionary journalists and the revolutionary mass media are necessary for making revolutionary change. They propagate the line and make known the position and what action to take on every important issue. Their role is indispensable and is of crucial importance. Without revolutionary propaganda, there can be no revolutionary movement.

*LI: What are your thoughts on the internet and its role in the mass movement? How has the situation, in terms of technologies for propaganda, changed from the 1960s and what are the prospects for the use of the internet as a tool for social change?*

JMS: The internet is at the first instance a powerful tool of the US imperialists and the local reactionaries. But at the second instance, it is a powerful tool for propaganda, even for organizing and calling people to action. Certainly the internet is a far more powerful tool for communications than the telegraph and railways during the time of Lenin and of course the typewriter and mimeographing machine in the 1960s and 70s.

Even if the internet is under the control of the big bourgeoisie and uses it for counterrevolution, whatever information or message the revolutionaries can transmit through the internet at so great a speed is amplified by the crisis far beyond the ability of the enemy to fill up the internet with his own propaganda and far beyond the ability of the enemy to deploy troops for suppressing the prairie fire of revolution.

*LI: You are very active on Facebook. What is your attitude towards the use of social media? What do you find interesting or useful about Facebook? On the other hand, what should we be cautioned against, or be careful of?*

JMS: I like to post in Facebook my speeches, articles, photos and videos by way of informing comrades, friends and relatives. I also like being informed by them in this way. I come into contact with friends and relatives I have not seen for a long time. And I make new friends. The postings of other people are also interesting and enjoyable. Something you post may be misused or targeted by trolls. You have to estimate what you can safely post and be ready to counter any misuse or abuse by trolls. You do not avoid the highway just because there are dangers in using it.

*LI: Are you also working on any projects now? A book of your poems was published in 2014.*

JMS: I would like to make a video-recording of some of my poems and pursue a previous project to do videos on the various aspect of my work. I would also like some of our cultural workers to make karaokes out of our revolutionary songs for faster propagation. At the moment, much of my time is devoted to writing a book concerning the current contradictions in the world capitalist system and the prospects of socialism and communism.

Notes:

The AOI, a project initiated by was initiated by Jonas Staal, Florian Malzacher and Joanna Warsza was held from January 9-11, 2015 at the Hebbel am Ufer (HAU) Theater, Berlin.

The Open Source Tribunal (National Democratic Movement of the Philippines Versus Those Responsible for the Unnatural Disaster related to Super typhoon Haiyan) was held on November 23, 2013 at the Nicolai Church in Utrecht, Netherlands. Prof. Sison delivered his opening statement through a prose poem, The People's Cry for Justice. The event resulted from a collaboration with the New World Academy's Towards a People's Culture that took place from 15-17 November, 2013 at BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht.

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<sup>4</sup>This is an edited transcript of interview with Prof. Jose Maria Sison held on January 24, 2015 in Utrecht. The interview covers various topics, ranging from art, cultural and propaganda work within the national democratic movement as well as

the role of science, technology and environmental protection in the vision of the mass movement for social change. Interview published in [bulatlat.com/main/2017/05/16/art-culture-science-ecology-interview-jose-maria-sison/](http://bulatlat.com/main/2017/05/16/art-culture-science-ecology-interview-jose-maria-sison/)

# On the Philippine Press, 1945-72

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Interview with Patricia Ann Valencia Roxas of the UP Journalism Club  
April 2015

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1. *THE POST-WAR ERA to pre-martial law period (1945-1972) is called the golden age of Philippine journalism. Do you agree with this? Why or why not?*

JMS: From the viewpoint of a Filipino patriot and progressive, I do not agree with the glittering generality of golden age. The imperialists and the local reactionaries could boast of a free press but not the toiling masses and their revolutionary organizations. In most of the period of 1945-1972, the Philippine press was quite free to report and sensationalize charges and countercharges of graft and corruption and incompetence among the reactionary politicians, and occasionally to level charges of violations of civil liberties against ruling politicians up to the level of the president.

Anticommunist propaganda was rampant in the Philippine press. It was used to viciously silence patriotic and progressive organizations and personalities and to vilify the enemies of US imperialism on an international scale. The forces of the national democratic movement, which arose in the 1960s to expose and oppose US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, gained prominence mainly through their protest mass actions and limited publications.

2. *Could you describe the atmosphere during these years, specifically how the media practitioners reacted to the liberation from the Japanese?*

JMS: The media practitioners followed their pro-US press lords and editors. In the years just after World War II, the US was glorified as the savior and liberator of the Filipino people. In general, the pro-US puppet politicians took over from the pro-Japanese puppets. But in the outstanding case of Manuel Roxas, a pro-Japanese puppet, the US supported him to become president in 1946 because

President Osmeña had aligned himself with the Democratic Alliance to oppose the prospective Parity Amendment.

Anti-communist propaganda was strong, because the Hukbalahap and the communist-socialist merger party had become strong in Central Luzon, Manila and Southern Tagalog regions in the course of armed struggle against the Japanese occupation. After World War II, the US and the American advertisers controlled and influenced the Filipino press lords. US wire service agencies poured in anticommunist news and articles from abroad which were published in toto in the Manila and provincial press.

3. *How did you participate with the movement for a freer press?*

JMS: We exposed and opposed the control of the big mass media by the US, the foreign advertisers and the big comprador-landlords. We did so on the campus and in intellectual circles outside of the campus. We published the little magazines *Fugitive Review* and the *Diliman Observer* in the years of 1960-62. In 1962, I founded the *Progressive Review* which lasted up to 1968. I was the editor-in-chief. These publications had a print run of anywhere between 1000 to 5000 copies depending on demand for the issue but normally 1000 or 1500. These were distributed to key political leaders, trade union leaders, academics, columnists and key journalists of the bourgeois press.

In the 1960s, the student and youth mass movement became far stronger than in the previous decade of extreme reaction connected with McCarthyism and the Cold War. Patriotic and progressive editors ran the *Philippine Collegian* and published articles of mine and others against US domination and the ruling system. We considered the Collegian important and influential because it had a weekly circulation of 15,000 copies and carried the prestige of the University of the Philippines. The influence of the Collegian went beyond the campus, because it published articles that took up the issues that were of national significance, that galvanized the student youth movement and that were sometimes reprinted or endorsed by progressive journalists in the big media.

Progressive journalists arose in the major mass media. Among them were I.P. Soliongco, Ernesto Granada, Teodoro Locsin, Quijano de Manla (Nicanor Joaquin), Jose F. Lacaba, Antonio Zumel, Satur

Ocampo and Antonio Nieva. One after the other, progressive journalists became presidents and officials of the National Press Club. As a matter of course, they defended press freedom as in previous decades. But in the 1960s, they supported the mass struggles of the youth and toiling masses, and insisted to their publishers and editors to give more space to these mass struggles and their cause, to use the press statements and press releases of the patriotic and progressive mass organizations and to allow fair and accurate reporting of their protest actions.

*4. What actions were done by you or other practitioners when you heard of the rumors of the implementation of martial law?*

JMS: Starting 1969, we exposed the indications that Marcos was scheming to impose martial law in the Philippines. He became more violent in suppressing the protest mass actions and openly threatened to declare martial law in 1970. Thus, the mass protesters in the First Quarter Storm of 1970 and thereafter cried out, "People's War is the answer to martial law!"

The mass organizations issued their own leaflets and other publications. *Ang Bayan*, the central news organ of the Communist Party of the Philippines Central Committee, exposed and condemned all the machinations of Marcos to pave the way for martial law from 1969 to the proclamation of martial law in 1972. Progressive journalists shared with the mass movement their information about the martial law scheme of Marcos. Some of them prepared to go underground in case of a widespread crackdown on the anti-Marcos media.

*5. Tell us something about the Progressive Review and how it contributed to the shaping of public opinion at that time.*

JMS: The *Progressive Review* carried serious analytical articles concerning the major issues in the political, socio-economic and cultural life of the country, and the foreign relations of the reactionary state. Despite its small circulation, the *Progressive Review* was avidly read by the student activists, teachers, labor leaders, artists, writers, journalists and other professionals. It served to enlighten them on the issues and encourage them to spread further the national democratic line of analysis and action.

*6. What influenced you to found Kabataang Makabayan?*

JMS: Andres Bonifacio, the Katipunan and the Philippine revolution of 1896 influenced and inspired me to continue the struggle for national liberation and democracy against foreign and feudal domination. I also read the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao, and learned more about the principles and methods of waging the people's democratic revolution under the leadership of the working class in the era of modern imperialism and proletarian revolution.

*7. What is the most defining or relevant instance or happening that this era contributed to the formation of the Philippine press?*

JMS: The illusion that there was a free press in the Philippines from 1945 to 1972 became exposed and unraveled. At first, the national democratic movement of the youth and the people in the 1960s exposed the control of the major mass media by foreign and local reactionary interests. Finally, Marcos wiped out the "free press" that reflected the internal contradictions of the Philippine exploiting classes, and subsequently established the media monopoly under his fascist dictatorship. This was still beholden to the US imperialists and the proMarcos section of the big compradors and landlords.

*8. What lesson should future generations of media practitioners never forget during this era?*

JMS: The lesson is that the Philippine press cannot be truly free if the major print and electronic media are owned and controlled by the bourgeois press lords and are dependent on advertising income from the big foreign and local corporations.

The progressive press has an important role in advancing the cause of national and social liberation, in promoting press freedom, and in defending the exploited people who have no access to the so-called mainstream. The underground press made a major contribution to the effort to overthrow the Marcos dictatorship. And to this day, it perseveres to advance the people's democratic revolution against US imperialism and the local reactionaries, whether this takes the form of a multi-party bourgeois dictatorship, fascist dictatorship or an oligarchy. I suggest to the UP Journalism Club to honor and perpetuate the memory of Antonio Zumel and other journalists who played key roles in upholding, defending and promoting freedom of the press in order to serve the people's

struggle for national liberation and democracy and fight the Marcos fascist dictatorship. In particular, Zumel is most outstanding because he made the National Press Club the sanctuary of mass activists in the 1960s and demanded that the mass media widen the space for the youth and the toiling masses. When martial law came, he went underground to develop the revolutionary press against the dictatorship.

You can institute a semestral Antonio Zumel Lecture Forum with the cooperation of UP Journalism Club, the Antonio Zumel Foundation, and the UP College of Mass Communications. You can feature outstanding outstandingly patriotic and progressive Filipino journalists to inspire the semestral flow of journalism students. Thus, the life and work of Zumel will be perpetuated from generation to generation.

# Revolutionary Literature and Art in the Philippines, from the 1960s to the Present

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**G**uest speech at Alternative Classroom Learning  
Experience (ACLE) Program of the *Philippine Collegian*,  
University of the Philippines  
October 15, 2015

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I AM DELIGHTED AND grateful to be invited by editor-in-chief Mary Joy Capistrano and the *Philippine Collegian* to the Alternative Classroom Learning Experience program in order to share my experiences regarding revolutionary art, my views on the current state of the art and how artists and creative writers can serve the people and the country through their works.

## ***I. My experiences regarding revolutionary art***

As a grade school boy in my hometown of Cabugao, Ilocos Sur, I first became aware of revolutionary art in the form of statues of leaders of the Philippine revolution. At the southern end of the poblacion stood the figure of Andres Bonifacio with an upraised bolo and at the northern end the figure of General Antonio Luna on horseback. In the most central part of the town, was the figure of Dr. Jose Rizal, the martyred reformer.

The short stories that I read in the Ilocano vernacular magazine *Bannawag* and that were most interesting to me were patriotic ones about the Filipino resistance against the Japanese fascist invaders in World War II and romantic and populist ones about pairs of lovers coming from the rich and the poor and overcoming objections arising from the social divide. But the first story I wrote in Ilocano at the age of nine was about the romance of a poor boy and rich girl, which led to tragedy because of the social divide.

As a third and fourth year high school student at the Colegio de San Juan de Letran, I wrote short stories and poems critical of social

injustice. My knowledge of the Marxist-Leninist analysis of classes and struggle was close to nil. I had a smattering of it only as a result of reading an anticommunist book which made the mistake of quoting extensively from the texts of Marx and Engels. The quotations were more impressive to me than the anticommunist thesis of the book.

While I was an undergraduate student in the University of the Philippines in 1958, I matured as a progressive liberal, fully appreciating the old democratic revolution that began in 1896 and won victory in 1898 under bourgeois liberal leadership against Spanish colonialism. I had gobbled up the anticolonial and liberal works of Profs. Teodoro Agoncillo and Cesar Adib Majul and about the Philippine revolution and the two novels and essays of Dr. Jose Rizal and the essays of Marcelo H. del Pilar and Isabelo de los Reyes.

Within the same year of 1958, I made a great leap to understanding the need to continue the unfinished tasks of the Philippine revolution and to carry out the new democratic revolution under proletarian leadership against US imperialism and the local exploiting classes. I started to read Marxist works in earnest and to adhere to Marxism-Leninism. I gained access to Marxist works hidden in the basement of the UP Main Library and to the private collections of professor friends. I gorged on the available works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao, the novels written by Soviet writers like Maxim Gorky and Mikhail Sholokhov and American Left writers, like John Steinbeck and Howard Fast in the 1930s and the writings of Manuel Arguilla and Carlos Bulosan.

I tried to learn the basic principles of the great communist thinkers and leaders in philosophy, political economy and social science and what constituted social realism and proletarian art in the novels and other literary works that I read. I associated with fellow campus writers like Petronilo Bn Daroy, Luis V. Teodoro and others who were somehow influenced by various aesthetic theories and literary works opposed to such currents as art for art's sake, petty bourgeois self-titillation, mystical flights or art supposedly transcending classes but truly within the bounds of the exploiting classes.

We took the stand that literature and art must serve the exploited and oppressed people and necessarily the new democratic revolution as the way to their national and social liberation. We appreciated Salvador P. Lopez' 1940 essay, *Literature and Society*, his advocacy of proletarian literature and his demand for socially significant content in creative writing against the sect of art for art's represented by Jose Garcia Villa.

We formed the Student Cultural Association of the University of the Philippines (SCAUP) in 1959. We were determined to propagate the national democratic line and the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism. We were challenged to renew the revolutionary movement that had been crushed in the early 1950s. It was clear to us that it was necessary not only to propagate revolutionary ideas in discourses but also to express them in various literary and artistic forms.

We were among the most prolific writers of political and literary pieces for the Philippine Collegian and the Collegian Folio against foreign and feudal domination in socio-economic relations, politics, culture, and literature and art. We also published a series of daring but financially unstable little magazines like the *Fugitive Review*, *Cogent* and *Diliman Observer* from 1959 to 1962 until we could put up the relatively more stable *Progressive Review*.

Among the earliest Marxist works that I read were the *Communist Manifesto*, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, *Dialectics of Nature* and *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. The latter book equipped me well in my debates on logical positivism with Prof. Ricardo Pascual. But the Marxist works that I found most engaging in connection with Philippine society and literature were those of Mao which analyzed the classes and class struggle in semicolonial and semifeudal society and which presented literature and art as weapons of the revolution.

I benefited from conversations with patriotic and progressive colleagues and professors on a wide range of political, social and cultural issues. The SCAUP, together with the UP Journalism Club, the Philippine Collegian, most fraternities and sororities, stood with them in fighting against the anticommunist witchhunt undertaken by the Committee on Anti-Filipino Activities. I learned much from the

Peasant War in the Philippines published by my professor friends in the *Philippine Social Science and Humanities Review*. I studied aesthetics and poetics in graduate school and Prof. Leopoldo Yabes who seemed to enjoy letting me explain at length the Marxist theory of literature and art after he noticed my interest in it.

In the early 1960s, I had the good fortune of becoming friends and conversing frequently with Amado V. Hernandez on revolutionary politics and art and reading his works *Isang Dipang Langit*, *Mga Ibong Mandaragit* and *Luha ng Buwaya*. He was pleased with my first collection of poetry, *Brothers*, published by Filipino Signatures of our mutual friend Andres Cristobal Cruz. He enjoyed most satirizing the exploiters and oppressors and narrating his experiences as a guerrilla intelligence officer and as a labor leader.

We established Kabataang Makabayan as the assistant of the revolutionary proletariat. In seeking to develop the revolutionary mass movement along the national democratic line, my comrades and I responded to the call of Claro Mayo Recto for a Second Propaganda Movement. Under the banner of Kabataang Makabayan, we also called for a cultural revolution of the new democratic type. We underscored the role of creative writers and artists in the various art forms. We advocated a national, scientific and mass culture.

We favored the national language as the principal medium of education and literary development even as we respected the various languages and cultural heritage of the people in the provinces. We encouraged university teachers to use and conduct discussions in Pilipino; and writers in English to learn how to speak and write in Pilipino. Propaganda and agitation were done unavoidably among the toiling masses in Tagalog and other local languages.

Kabataang Makabayan, particularly its Cultural Bureau, was most active in engaging creative writers and artists in various art forms like graphics, music, dance and stage play. The signal act to avail of music was the request to Felipe de Leon to compose the anthem of the Kabataang Makabayan (KM) in 1964. The poem of Amado V. Hernandez, "Kung Tuyo na ang Luha mo, Aking Bayan" was set to

music and often featured in cultural presentations during protest rallies. We also revived the singing of the Internationale and other revolutionary songs of previous revolutionary movements in the Philippines and abroad. Cartoonists were in demand for publications and posters as well as effigy makers for mass actions.

Social investigation and mass integration teams of Kabataang Makabayan doubled as cultural performance teams when they went to factories, urban communities and farms. Revolutionary literature and art flourished with the upsurge of the mass movement of the workers, peasants and youth. Cultural performance groups arose in the latter years of the 1960s to present solo and choral singing, instrumental music, poetry recitation, dances and skits and to create illustrations on publications, posters and walls in order to enliven and invigorate the meetings, mass protests and workers' strikes.

Towards the founding of the Communist Party of the Philippines in 1968, we did ideological, political and organizational work and we created revolutionary literary and artistic works to inspire ourselves and the masses that we sought to arouse, organize and mobilize. As soon as we started the people's war in the countryside, we deployed and coordinated armed propaganda teams, cultural teams and medical teams.

When the First Quarter Storm of 1970 broke out, such organizations for cultural performances as Panday Sining of Kabataang Makabayan, Gintong Silahis of Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan and Kamanyang of the Philippine College of Commerce (now named the Polytechnic University of the Philippines) became outstanding among youth organizations in Manila and became models in the provinces.

I had the honor of sending messages in 1971 to the formation of two major cultural organizations of far-reaching significance. The first organization was Nagkakaisang Progresibong Mga Artista at Arkitekto (NPAA). It was composed of artists from the College of Fine Arts and Architecture of the University of the Philippines and from other schools. The artists had previously given comprehensive artistic support to the legal mass movement. I discussed the arts as a weapon of the revolution. The second organization was the Panulat Para Sa Kaunlaran Ng Sambayanan (PAKSA). It brought

together creative writers in both Pilipino and English, who were determined to serve the Filipino people with revolutionary literary works. I discussed the tasks of cadres in the cultural field, especially in literature.

When martial law was proclaimed and fascist dictatorship was imposed on the people, many creative writers and artists joined the underground and armed revolutionary movement and created more works about the dire social conditions, the sacrifices and struggles of the Filipino people. Literature and art flourished most among the propaganda and cultural teams of the New People's Army and the masses in the countryside. The central and regional publications of the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines published songs, poems, short stories and illustrations. Cultural organizations published, performed or exhibited the literary and artistic works of their members. It was futile for the fascist regime to detain creative writers and artists in order to silence them because they continued to produce creative works even in prison. Prisons became revolutionary schools and centers for creating songs, poems, paintings, drawings, carvings, handicrafts and other art works. These were circulated and sold outside prison in the spirit of antifascist solidarity. These were also distributed and sold to support groups in Europe and North America and to a lesser extent domestically among allies and friends.

To mention a few outstanding songs created in prison, Aloysius "Ochie" Baez composed the lyrics *Kay Taas ng Pader*, Jose Luneta Awit sa Kasal and Luis Jorjue the music of Andres Bonifacio's *Pag-ibig sa Tinubuang Lupa* in Bicutan. The Bicutan political detainees also wrote and performed plays on the struggles of the workers, peasants and the urban poor. They staged under direction of Behn Cervantes Bonifacio Ilagan's *Pagsambang Bayan*, the *Sinakulong Bayan* or street version of the Passion of Christ and Aurelio Tolentino's *Kahapon, Ngayon at Bukas*.

Anthologies of literary works and songs were published in the Philippines and abroad, under the direction National Commission on Culture of the CPP. The *Instityut sa Panitikan at Sining ng Sambayanan (IPASA)* published: *Akdang Pandigmang Bayan*, *Ulos*;

and *Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win*, 1973; *Hulagpos*, 1981 by Mano de Verdades Posadas; *Mga Tula Rebolusyong Pilipino 1972-80*; and *Mga Kanta ng Rebolusyong Pilipino*, 1984, issued by the Special Committee on Culture of the CPP Central Publishing House (reissued by IPASA with the title *Pag-ibig sa Tinubuang Lupa, mga Kanta ng Rebolusyong Pilipino* in 1995).

There was no way the fascist regime could stop the creation of literary and artistic works.

Literary works circulated among the people. Lightning cultural performances were held even in city centers. Protest graffiti, periodikits and sticker-posters of various sizes were posted on walls, waiting sheds, and inside buses and jeepneys. A collective of creative writers and illustrators was able to produce the illustrated version of *Philippine Society and Revolution*.

I was under maximum security detention and under constant electronic surveillance from 1977 onwards, I composed poetry like other political prisoners in bigger political prisons. I recited the poems even as the guards were taperecording the recitation. I was able to smuggle out my poems and have them published by Prof. Epifanio San Juan and included in the *Pintig* anthology. A committee openly dedicated to seek my freedom was able to publish in Manila my collection of poems, *Prison and Beyond* in 1985, before the overthrow of Marcos.

When the mass protest movement resurged in the urban areas from 1981 onwards and even more so, from 1983 after the Aquino assassination, protest and revolutionary art also resurged in the schools and communities, in workers picket lines, in the meetings of mass organizations and in the street mass protests. Many more literary works were published in the alternative legal press, among them *Midweek* and *New Progressive Review*; as well as campus publications that proliferated, including *Philippine Collegian* and *Diliman Review*.

Many types of protest visuals mushroomed, from T-shirts with slogans and creatively designed placards and streamers, to huge murals at the head of big marches and rallies. Protest music and street theater became widespread and popular through many small musical and theater groups based in unions, urban poor

communities and schools, and through the more regularized or professionalized ones such as PETA. The resurgence of revolutionary art in the urban areas ran parallel to the constantly rising of artistic and other cultural activities in the countryside.

## ***II. On the current state of revolutionary art***

Prof. Alice Guerrero Guillermo has written the most comprehensive survey and analysis of protest/ revolutionary art in the Philippines, from 1970 to 1990, and has continued to observe its further development to the present. She attests to the vibrant continuity and growth of revolutionary art. But there is yet no survey of literary and artistic works extending to the current decade of the 21st century. That is a project still to be fully undertaken even as I now try to scan and assess the current state of revolutionary art, with much info feed from cultural activists, creative writers and artists. After the delivery of this speech I intend to gather more information to fill in gaps in the current presentation.

Prof. Gelacio Guillermo has been able to collect in *Muog (Ang Naratibo ng Kanayunan sa Matagalang Digmang Bayan sa Pilipinas)* [Muog: The Narrative of the Countryside in Protracted People's War in the Philippines] the most outstanding literary narratives and poems in the countryside that he could collect from various regions from the period of martial law to the 1990s. With the *Muog* anthology and his other notable works "The New Mass Art and Literature" and "Ang Panitikan ng Pambandsang Demokrasya," he shows how the revolutionary creative writers and cultural activists make use of literary forms, including poems, narratives, songs, instrumental music and dances, that we learn from the masses, including the indigenous people.

Rogelio L. Ordonez presents comprehensively the development of revolutionary literature in the national language from the 1960s to the 1990s in his essay, "Literatura ng Uring Anakpawis." Lilia Quindoza-Santiago has chronicled and analyzed much of the protest and revolutionary poetry in the 1970s. I recommend for your reading and study *Nationalist Literature: A Centennial Forum*, edited by Prof. Elmer A. Ordoñez and published in celebration of the Philippine Revolution of 1896. The collection of essays here shows you the continuity and advance of revolutionary literature.

The richest source of literary and artistic works done by revolutionary writers and artists are the central and regional publications of the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army and the National Democratic Front. They publish songs, poems, short stories, illustrations and comic strips, aside from disseminating news and information about the revolutionary forces and the people in their respective areas. They have literary journals that are focused on literature and art.

The best known central publications are: *Ulos* (literary journal of ARMAS-NDF), *Sine Proletaryo* (video production-CPP Information Bureau), *Kalayaan* (Kabataang Makabayan), *Liyab* (KAGUMA) and *Malayang Pilipina* (MAKIBAKA).

In Northern Luzon: *Baringkuas* (Cagayan Valley), *Dangadang* (Northwest Luzon), *Ramut* (revolutionary education and culture-Northwestern Luzon) and *Rissik* (revolutionary cultural journal-Cagayan Valley). In Central Luzon: *Himagsik* (Central Luzon), *Inang Larangan* (cultural anthology, Central Luzon), *Lakas ng Masa* (Central Luzon) and *Dyaryo Pasulong* (Revolutionary People of Mount Sierra Madre).

In Southern Tagalog region: *Dagitab* (ARMAS-TK), *Diklap* (South Quezon-Bondoc Peninsula) and *Alab* (a revolutionary publication for the masses in Mindoro). In the Bikol region: *Gerilya* (NPA Bicol Regional Command), *Punla* (literary publication-Bicol Region), *Silyab* (CPP-NPA in Bicol), and *Ang Kusog* (Masbate).

In the Visayas: *Ang Panghimakas* (Negros Island), *Ang Budyong* (Leonardo Panaligan Command-Central Negros), *Daba-daba* (Panay), *Pakigbisog* (Central Visayas), *Sublak* (revolutionary cultural magazine- Panay) and *Pakigbisog* (Central Visayas).

In Mindanao: *Pasa-bilis* (NDF-Southern Mindanao), *Ang Kahilukan* (NDF in Northern Mindanao), *Asdang* (NDF-Far South Mindanao), *Lingkawas* (CPP-Northwestern Mindanao), and *Sulong!* (NDFP-Mindanao).

To this day, popular works in literature and art have flourished. They are in the form of songs, poems, short stories, cartoons, poster and shirt graphics, graffiti, playlets and skits, short monologues, dances, effigies and short films. They are displayed or performed during meetings, marches and rallies. They are created and

performed by organizations which are devoted to cultural work or focused on literature or any of the arts. These are affiliated with any of the major mass organizations or independent of them. There is a wide variety of cultural groups identifiable by their cause orientation and territorial scopes.

There are various cultural groups of creative writers and artists. They belong to Artista at Manunulat ng Sambayanan (Artists and Writers of the People-ARMAS) of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, to commands or units of the New People's Army and to mass organizations of workers, peasants, fisher folk, women, youth, teachers and others. There are also cultural groups which are independent of single mass organizations but which serve all or any mass organizations that invite them to mass actions, celebrations and other events.

Since 1983 the Concerned Artists of the Philippines (then a mass campaign base) and MASKARA [MASK] and since 1985 Artista ng Bayan (People's Artist-ABAY) and Luna have fulfilled the visual art requirements of mass actions by making murals, streamers and effigies in Metro Manila. Theatre groups under Bugkos (the national center for arts and literature) have also organized and staged street plays and flag dances. Yearly during Holy Week, Sining Bugkos together with Bayan Metro Manila and Kalipunan ng Damaang Mahihirap (Kadamay) hold the Kalbaryo ng Maralita to depict the suffering of poor Filipinos. Since the late 1992 BAYAN has undertaken more elaborate effigy projects in collaboration with UGAT Lahi Artists Collective (Ugnayan at Galian ng mga Tanod ng Lahi), which is a collective of artists and activists in the national capital region.

Worthy of mention are the role and contributions of political street theater in the struggle against Marcos during the 1980s. UP Tropang Bodabil and UP Peryante—using vaudeville theater as a form of protest theater—took to the streets and performed in the major mobilizations and transport strikes during martial law. The performers did “kilos-awit and interpretative movement of protest songs like Awit ng Tagumpay, Mendiola, etc. For example, my poem Fragments of a Nightmare rendered in Pilipino as Pira-pirasong

Bangungot was performed as dance, using the Japanese “Noh” theatrical form.

A big street theater production called “Oratoryo ng Bayan” based on the UN International Declaration of Human Rights was performed for several weeks. It was an unconventional production using the UP Palma Hall lobby as the stage with big sculpture installations as the only pieces (these are still there now) and the audience all sat around arena-style on the floor. Oratoryo was also toured in the other universities like Ateneo and UP Manila.

An arts alliance called Alamat—Alyansa ng Makabayang Teatro—was formed in Manila bringing together progressive theater and their performing arts groups.

Since 1995, Ugat-Lahi has joined with Sining Bugkos as a Manila-based alliance of cultural workers and formations for promoting national democratic culture and human rights. This group initiates art workshops for artists’ immersion programs in urban poor communities and workers’ organizations and organizing work among students, workers, urban poor and professional artists, exhibitions, mural projects, puppet theatre performances and effigy projects. In the provincial cities and in the rural areas, there are cultural formations similar to Sining Bugkos such as Tambisan sa Sining, Sinagbayan, Karatula, Sining Kadamay, Sining Bulosan, the Kaboronyogan cultural network and Dap-ayan ti Kultura iti Kordilyera.

Popular works in literature and art (like songs, poems, short stories, flag dances and skits) are generally considered shorter, easier to create and to disseminate and are less polished and of a lower standard than those works that are longer, more difficult to make and to produce or distribute and are more polished and of a higher aesthetic standard. But there are songs and poems which are more popular and yet more polished than a badly conceived and badly written novel or epic. There are such works which are short but are aesthetically excellent and have far reaching influence on the masses in a profound and lofty way.

While the presumption is that an excellent long piece is better or more laudable than an excellent short piece, there is also a presumption that favors the short piece. If a piece is popular, it has

something in it to which the people are receptive. It touches and moves the hearts and minds of the people because it concerns their needs and demands and in addition it spreads so fast because it is short. Posters at public places can be seen by so many people and songs can spread so widely. They carry messages that are clear and inspire the people to act. A long or a more complex piece can be excellent as revolutionary work only as its higher aesthetic standard is grounded on popularization, responding to the people's needs and demands.

Works that are more sustained and are expected to be of higher standard than short pieces include the following: novels, epics, anthologies of poems and short stories, collected essays, drama, opera or full-length musicales, paintings, sculpture, ballet, full-length feature films and massive effigies. Time constraint does not allow me to describe and evaluate those works that I shall mention. But identifying either the works or the names of authors in literary and art forms, which may be considered revolutionary, can indicate the level of artistic achievement and provide clues for further research.

In the course of the ongoing new democratic revolution, a significant number of novels have been written in the national language. These include: *Dekada 70* and *Gapo* by Lualhati Bautista, *Dilim sa Umaga at mga Kaluluwa sa Kumunoy* by Efren R. Abueg, *Dugo sa Bukang Liwayway* by Rogelio R. Sikat, *Sa Mga Kuko ng Liwanag* and *Sa Kagubatan ng Lunsod* by Edgardo M. Reyes, *Mga Halik sa Alikabok* and *Ginto ang Kayumangging Lupa* by Dominador B. Mirasol, *Apoy sa Madaling Araw* by Dominador Mirasol and Rogelio L. Ordoñez, *Hulagpos* by Mano de Verdades Posadas and *Gera* by Ruth Firmeza. Ninotchka Rosca has two novels in English, with *The State of War* (1988) an allegorical novel alluding to the explosive revolutionary situation in the Philippines and *Twice Blessed* (1992) a comic satire of the conjugal dictatorship and the competition of the oligarchs to serve foreign masters. More recent novels have been published depicting Philippine history and the new democratic revolution such as Lualhati Bautista's *Desaparecidos* (2012), Ramon Guillermo's *Ang Makina ni Mang Turing* (2013), Norman Wilwayco's *Gerilya* (2009), Edberto M. Villegas' *Barikada*

(2013) and Elmer Ordonez autobiographical *Snows of Yesteryears* (2015).

There are so many writers of anthologized protest/revolutionary short stories. They include Ave Perez Jacob, Domingo Landicho, Edgar Maranan, Dominador Mirasol, Jose Rey Munsayac, Epifanio San Juan, Jr., Wilfredo Virtusio, Levy Balgos de la Cruz, Jun Cruz Reyes, Ricardo Lee and many others. The new generation of fiction writers who have consistently published social realist prose since the 1990s includes Rolando Tolentino, Luna Sicat, Ramon Guillermo, and Rommel Rodriguez.

The most notable revolutionary poets include martyrs Emmanuel Lacaba, Lorena Barros, and Wilfredo Gacosta; and their contemporaries Gelacio Guillermo (Kris Montanez), Alan Jazmines and Jason Montana who either published individual poetry collections or were anthologized in "STR" and other revolutionary publications. Other revolutionary poets during Martial Law and thereafter include Bayani S. Abadilla, Ericson Acosta, Reuel Aguila, Mila Aguilar, Tomas F. Agulto, Mark Angeles, Lamberto Antonio, Teo T. Antonio, Joi Barrios, Levy de la Cruz, Jose F. Lacaba, Domingo Landicho, Bienvenido Lumbera, Ruth Elynia Mabanglo, Joel Costa Malabanan, Rogelio Mangahas, Edgar Maranan, Luchie Maranan, Alex Pinpin, Alexander Remollino, Fidel Rillo, Romulo Sandoval, Epifanio San Juan Jr. Jesus Manuel Santiago, Lilia Quindoza-Santiago, Roberto Ofanda Umil and many others.

The anthologies of poetry are: *Mga Tula ng Rebolusyong Pilipino, 1972-80*, *Prison and Beyond* (1984), *Moon's Face* by Allan Jazmines (1991), *Likhang Dila, Likhang Diwa* by Bienvenido Lumbera (1993), *Pakikiramay: Alay ng mga makata sa mga magsasaka ng Hacienda Luisita*, edited by Joi Barrios (2004), *Sa Loob at Labas ng Piitan* (2004) (poems of Jose Maria Sison) translated by Gelacio Guillermo, *Passage / poems 1983-2006* by Edgar Maranan, *Tugmang Matatabil* by Axel Pinpin (2008), *Poetika/Pulitika* and *Ka Bel* by Bienvenido Lumbera (2008), *Bulaklak at Pag-ibig: Mga Tula ng Pag-ibig at Himagsik* by Joi Barrios (2010), *Mga Tula* by Gelacio Guillermo (2013), *Ang Gerilya Ay Tulad ng Makata* (including poems up to 2013) by Jose Maria Sison and *Mula Tarima Hanggang XXX at iba pang tula at Awit* by Ericson Acosta (2015).

Contemporary poets in the legal democratic mass movement make their works accessible through various popular and mass medium including the internet. They also perform their pieces during mass mobilizations and protest actions. Among these are Axel Pinpin, Ericson Acosta, Richard Gappi, Kerima Lorena Tariman, Rustum Casia, Mark Angeles, Rogene Gonzales, Raymund Villanueva, and others belonging to cultural and writers' groups such as UP Alay Sining, Karatula, Kataga, and Kilometer 64 Poetry Collective founded by the late Alexander Martin Remollino.

Since the 1990s, ARMAS-NDF published revolutionary poetry and prose from Red fighters and cultural cadres in Ulos, while regions also came up with their local version of this revolutionary cultural journal, most of which are available online, such as *Dagitab* (Southern Tagalog), *Inang Larangan* (Central Luzon), *Punla* (Bikol), *Ramut* (Ilocos), *Rissik* (Cagayan Valley), *Sublak* (Panay), and *Bangkaw* (Mindanao). After the second great rectification movement, revolutionary poets and writers whose best works appear in these journals and at times, even in aboveground publications and anthologies include Joven Obrero, Ditan Dimase (*Salinlahi at iba pang Kwento*, 2006), Sonia Gerilya and Ting Remontado (*Anahaw: Mga Tula at Awit*, 2004); and Maya Mor (Maya Daniel), author of poems in English and Hiligaynon and also a visual artist.

Song pamphlets containing the lyrics of revolutionary songs have been issued from time to time since the late 1960s. Albums of recorded revolutionary songs have been released since the 1976 Philippines: *Bangon! (Arise!): Songs of the Philippine National Democratic Struggle*, protesting the Marcos dictatorship, the ruling system of big compradors and landlords and the role of American imperialism in backing the ruling system and the fascist regime.

Albums of revolutionary songs have been released under the following titles: *Mga Kanta ng Rebolusyong Pilipino*, *Agaw Armas*, *Alab ng Digmang Bayan* Volumes 1 and 2, *Armas Timog Katagalugan Album*, *Dakilang Hamon Album*, *Kumasa Album*, *Kanta ti Dangadang Album*, *Baligi Album*, *Martsa Ka Bicolandia Album*, *Salamin ng Northern Mindanao*, *Salidumay Diway Album*.

Progressive musicians and groups such as Asin, Tambisan sa Sining, Kalantog, Inang Laya, Patatag, The Jerks, Yano, Gary

Granada, Joey Ayala, Datu's Tribe, Grupong Pendong, Buklod, Musikang Bayan, Sining Lila, Lei Garcia, Mga Anak ni Aling Juana, Bersus, and others have released albums depicting sectoral issues and struggles. More recent groups and albums on particular campaigns such as Rapu-Rapu atbp, Taghoy ng KalikasanTayo ang Bosses: Mga Awit ng Paglaban sa Rehimeng Gahaman, Salugpungan: Tunog Bobongan,

Songs of Love and Struggle by Rica Nepomuceno, Poetry in Songs by Jose Maria Sison, Of Bladed Poems, and the People's Chorale Album. Popular rap artist and activist BLKD recently released the album Gatilyo, a tribute to Gat Andres Bonifacio. Marlon Caacbay performed as a rock band musician; a cultural activist and organizer, he died as a Red fighter in Southern Tagalog in May 2015. BLKD together with other young artists and bands such as Karl Ramirez, Plagpul, Gazera, Pink Cow, The General Strike, Tanghalang Bayan ng Kulturang Kalye (Tabakk), and Musicians for Peace, comprise the progressive urban music scene and perform in bars, communities and the streets. They produce songs that are closely linked to the various sectoral struggles and campaigns of the national democratic mass movement.

Biographies of revolutionary cadres have been created in various ways. They include the following: *The Philippine Revolution: The Leader's View* co-authored by Rainer Werning and Jose Maria Sison (1988), *At Home in the World: Portrait of a Filipino Revolutionary* by Ninotchka Rosca and Jose Maria Sison (2004), *He never wrote "30": a glimpse into the life of Antonio Zumel*, film production by Kodao Productions (2004), *Armando (on the life of Comrade Armando Teng)* by Jun Cruz Reyes (2006), *Abogado ng Sambayanan: A documentary on the life of Atty. Romeo Capulong*, film by Kodao Productions (2008), *Apostasy: Paglalayag ni Dan Vizmanos* (2008) *Ka Bel* by Ina Alleco Silverio (2010), *Sa Tungki ng Ilong ng Kaaway (Talambuhay ni Tatang)* published by Kilusan sa Paglilinigang ng Rebolusyonaryong Panitikan at Sining sa Kanayunan (2012), *Nanay Mameng*, Kodao Productions (2012), *Maita: Remembering Ka Dolor*, edited by: Judy M. Taguiwalo and Elisa Tita P. Lubi (2013), *Recca: from Diliman to the Cordillera* by Judy M. Taguiwalo (2015), *Louie Jalandoni, Revolutionary, an Illustrated Biography* (2015) by Ina

Alleco Silverio (2015) and *More than a Red Warrior: Arnold Borja Jaramillo Beloved Son of Abra* (2015). Consequent to the NPAA going underground and many of its leading members joining the armed revolution in various parts of the Philippines, Kaisahan (Solidarity) was formed in 1976 to advocate and practice social realism in their paintings, prints, sculpture, and other visual arts. It included Antipas Delotavo, Papo de Asis, Pablo Baens Santos, Orlando Castillo, Jose Cuaresma, Neil Doloricon, Edgar Talusan Fernandez, Charles Funk, Renato Habulan, Albert Jimenez, Al Manrique, Jose Tence Ruiz and Vin Toledo. Since then, social realism as a commitment and as a common ground allowing different styles, has become the most important trend in the visual arts, especially in oil painting.

The Kaisahan commits itself to seeking national identity not in a nostalgic love of the past but by developing art that reflects social conditions and is for the masses, breaking away from a Western-oriented pop or elitist culture and contributing to the creation of a collective subject that heeds the obligations of the historical imperative of revolution. The only limitation that they set to experimentation, the play of creative impulses, is the need to effectively communicate social realities to their audiences. Among current and active social realist painters, progressive visual artists, muralists, sculptors, and street artists are Boy Dominguez, Iggy Rodriguez, Manolo Sicat, Mideo Cruz, Renan Ortiz, Melvin Pollero, Rowena Bayon, Paolo Lorenzo, Frances Abrigo, Buen Abrigo, Buen Calubayan, and the group Ang Gerilya.

Political prisoners Alan Jazmines, Eduardo Sarmiento, Voltaire Guray and Juan Paolo Versoza create outstanding art works despite dismal prison conditions. Rights group Karapatan has organized several gallery exhibitions of their paintings and sculptures. Sarmiento, who used to contribute illustrations for Larab, the newspaper of the revolutionary movement in Eastern Visayas, will soon publish a series of illustrated children's books.

There are many painters in the various regions of the revolutionary movement. The painter that has stood out among them in recent years is Parts Bagani of Mindanao. The name is a nom de guerre derived from the name of his collective, the People's Artists.

His paintings depict the mountainous and forested terrain of the New People's Army and the Red fighters and the masses at work. They have been exhibited in the gallery of the UP Faculty Center and has been sold publicly. He has done illustration work for the publications of the Communist Party of the Philippines, especially Ulos which is the underground publication for the arts.

Leyla Batang, another Ulos artist, is also among the most prolific revolutionary visual artists and illustrators whose works appear in various publications and educational materials of the CPP and NDF such as textbooks, primers and visual aid sets for PADEPA (National Democratic School) and the basic party courses. Batang is also credited for the Modyul sa Pagdrowing para sa mga Instruktor. Another exemplary revolutionary artist is Artus Talastas (aka Ka Libre, Forawet) of the Mountain Province who joined the NPA and died a martyr in Ifugao in 2013.

The most popular and most visible kind of sculptural work in the new democratic cultural revolution is the effigy. This is usually a crude representation of someone who is ridiculed for certain crimes against the people. It is made of nondurable materials because it is meant to be destroyed in a culminating public event. However, it can be perpetuated in a certain way through videography. Effigies can be videorecorded while being made, displayed and burnt and can be studied as a definite and continuous form of art. In fact, Prof. Lisa Ito has seriously studied effigies as objets d'art. They tend to overshadow the other sculptural works made by sculptors in studios and those wood carvers in prison and in the villages.

The most outstanding sculptor today in the national democratic movement is Rey Paz Contreras, He espouses and practises people's art and social realism. He has created cultural works that signify the people's struggle and has gifted the major mass organizations with these. He is also a favorite sculptor of special tokens of award for outstanding cadres. He draws inspiration from the artistic works of the indigenous people. He has experimented with the use of durable materials from discarded materials and from the environment. He has also pioneered in the development of community-based people's art, conducted workshops in the provinces and inspired the formation of many local art groups.

All sculptors in the Philippines, including the major ones like Contreras, need to earn a living and are thus open to commissions by government institutions, private corporations and churches. But the various national democratic mass organizations can also raise the resources through cultural fundraising events to commission the people's sculptors to create monuments, statues and other sculptures to celebrate the victories of the Philippine revolution and honor the revolutionary martyrs and heroes in various places in the Philippines. In this way, the people's sculptors have greater opportunities for creating people's social realist art.

Dramatic works, plays, operas and ballets have been written for the theatre of the people. Anticolonial and anti-imperialist national heroes like Andres Bonifacio, Macario Sakay and General Antonio Luna have been depicted in plays and dramatic films to expose the villainy of cunning and capitulationist figures, such as Emilio Aquinaldo, the chief representative of the combination of conservative bourgeois liberal *ilustrados* and native landlords. The playwrights and critics Amelia Lapeña and Nick Tiongson aroused interest in the seditious plays against US colonial rule and inspired play writing in the revolutionary spirit. Religious rituals have also been transformed into protest plays like the Sinakulo, the Panunuluyan and the Pagsambang Bayan.

There are many writers of plays for the stage, movies and TV who have been influenced by the national democratic movement and who take a patriotic and progressive stand on historical and social issues related to the need for revolution. There is an anthology of plays that you can read and study, such as *Antolohiya ng mga Dulang Mapaghimagsik*, compiled by Glecy Atienza, Bienvenido Lumbrera and Galileo Zafra. In the files of the Philippine Educational Theatre Association (PETA), there are plays of national and social protest like Macliing Dulag in the 1970s, the updated play of Aurelio Tolentino, Kahapon, Ngayon at Bukas (restaged in 1992), Minsa'y isang Gamu-gamu (1991), Domestic Helper (1992) and Walang Himala (2003). Prof. Eugene van Erven of the Utrecht University has written extensively on the progressive plays staged by the PETA in the 1990s.

Bonifacio Ilagan is one of the most prolific playwrights. Despite having been imprisoned for his activism as a cadre of Kabataang Makabayan, he wrote in 1976 the play “Pagsambang Bayan” (People’s Worship”) to expose the corruption and cruelties of the Marcos fascist dictatorship and express the people’s outrage and cry for justice. The play was staged in 1977 in the University of the Philippines and many other venues. Since then, Boni Ilagan has written stage plays and screen plays as a matter of revolutionary service to the oppressed and exploited people. His stage plays include: Sigaw ng Bayan (1978), Langit Ma’y Madilim (1979), Anay sa Kahoy (1985) and Pulanlupa (1985). His screenplays include: The Flor Contemplacion Story (1995), Dukot (2008), Sigwa (2010), Deadline (2011) and Migrante (2012).

Operas, ballets, full-length musicales and multi-media productions that have been staged are: Andres Bonifacio, Ang Dakilang Anakpawis (1979), Ang Lampara (1980) involving the last moments Jose Rizal’s life, Noli me Tangere (restaged in 1987), Ang Babaylan (1988) culminating in uprisings led by a succession of babaylans, Sa Sariling Bayan (1989), Asdang (1995), Monumento (1996), Samar (1998), Piketlayn ng Bayan (2000), Nasa Puso ang Amerika (2003), Kabataang Makabayan @ 40 (2004), Pira-pirasong Bangungot (Fragments of a

Nightmare) (2007), EJ: Ang Pinagdaanang Buhay nina Evelio Javier at Edgar Jopson (2008), Ang Mga Lorena (2008), Makata’y Mandirigma (2009), U Ave (2009), Kalibre 45 (2003), Pitong Sundang (2010), Banaag at Sikat (2010) Hibik at Himagsik Nina Victoria Laktaw (2012), Maghimagisik! Andres Bonifacio: Rebolusyonaryo, Anakpawis (2013), Lean the Musicale (2013), Bayani (2014), Kabataang Makabayan: Paglingkuran ang Sambayanan (2015), Daluyong isang pahinumdom (2015) at Nanay Mameng: Isang Dula (2014 and 2015). National Artist Bienvenido Lumbera is the author of many of the aforementioned librettos. There have been other similar productions staged in regional urban centers by local cultural groups, typically in the local language of the region.

Inspired by the national democratic movement, movie directors like Lino Brocka, Ishmael Bernal, Behn Cervantes, Mike de Leon and script writers like Ricky Lee, Jose F. Lacaba, Lualhati Bautista, Jorge

Arago, Soxy Topacio and Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr. played a crucial role in bringing up major social issues in Philippine cinema and doing so with artistic excellence. They made master films during the martial law years despite repression. Brocka directed *Tinimbang Ka Ngunit Kulang* (1974), *Maynila sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag* (1975), *Insiang* (1976) and *Orapronobis* (1989); Behn Cervantes, *Sakada* (1976); Bernal directed *Manila by Night/City After Dark* (1980) and *Himala* (1982); Peque Gallaga, *Oro, Plata, Mata* (1982) and Mike de Leon, *Sister Stella L* (1984).

Within the last two years of the Marcos fascist regime, Mike de Leon's *Sister Stella L.*, strongly denounced oppression and tyranny. In 1985, Lino Brocka's *Bayan Ko: Kapit sa Patalim* (*My Country: Grip the Knife's Edge*) depicted images of arbitrary detention, torture and struggles against oppression. In the aftermath, no serious films were made to depict the revolutionary movement which had struggled hard against the dictatorship, with exceptions such as Brocka's *Orapronobis*. Instead, shallow action thrillers were made out of the guerrilla stories of Bernabe Buscayno, Conrado Balweg, Victor Corpus and the Alex Boncayao Brigade.

In a bid to raise his political stature, which had gone with the fall of Marcos, Joseph Estrada produced in 1989 *Sa Kuko ng Agila*, a dramatic film against the US military bases, directed by Augusto Buenaventura and scripted by Ricky Lee. The next big film with high national and social significance was *The Flor Contemplacion Story* in 1995. It was directed by Joel Lamangan and scripted by Boni Ilagan and Ricky Lee. It was artistically and commercially successful and won the FAMAS Award and the Golden Pyramid Award, a major international film award.

In the aftermath of the general decline of the Philippine movie industry from the late years of the 1990s to the first decade of the 21st century, independent film productions have sprung up using digital technology. Patriotic and progressive filmmakers have a large part in the resurgence of indie film productions. In the 1990s, Raymond Red directed full-length films on revolutionary heroes Andres Bonifacio (Bayani) and Macario Sakay (Sakay).

Since 1909, Joel Lamangan as movie director and Boni Ilagan as scriptwriter have created a series of films that take up major social

issues and challenge the ruling system. Sari and Kiri Dalena and Keith Sicat are also on the crest of a new wave by creating *The Guerrilla Is a Poet* in 2013. The very latest of patriotic and revolutionary films are: *Bonifacio: Unang Pangulo* by Enzo Williams (2014) and *Heneral Luna* by Jerrold Tarog (2015). Please anticipate the forthcoming film of Arlyn de Cruz *Tibak: Story of Kabataang Makabayan*. We can expect more films of high artistic merit to express the people's cry for justice and fundamental change.

Today we have an abundance of directors, writers, actors, musicians, videographers, photographers and other visual artists and editors for producing plays on stage and on the screen. They are motivated by the people's aspirations for national and social liberation and have experience in mass activism and learning from the masses. They are beyond the clutches of what used to be the big studios and are thriving and multiplying on low budget indie films. They know how to use the stage without expensive props and new technical equipment that facilitate indie film production.

At the national, regional and local levels, there are many groups and audiovisual collectives that are making use of the latest portable audio-visual equipment and are increasing their capacity to produce films and other popular forms, such as short documentaries, music videos, and animated videos that easily find their way to online outlets such as Youtube. They organise events such as festivals and exhibitions of songs, poetry recitations, plays, paintings and progressive films. Examples of audio-visual groups and alternative media organizations which have emerged during the past fifteen years are Sipat, Kodao, Southern Tagalog Exposure, and Tudla Productions.

The lifelong works of artists for the people such as Bienvenido Lumbera, Ishmael Bernal and Lino Brocka have likewise been recognized by the National Artist Award (Gawad Artista ng Bayan), the highest national recognition given by the Philippine government to Filipinos who have made a significant contribution to the development of Philippine art and to promoting the country's cultural heritage.

### ***III. How artists and creative writers serve the people through art works***

I am deeply pleased that for several decades already patriotic and progressive creative writers and artists have come forward to create works that are in the service of the people and carry a revolutionary character by exposing the basic ills of the semicolonial and semifeudal society in the Philippines and seeking the realization of a new democratic revolution for the national and social liberation of the people.

I am proud to have participated since the 1960s in clarifying and firming up the general line of people's democratic revolution and in striving in particular for a national, scientific and mass culture. So many creative writers and artists and the people have heeded the call for a Second Propaganda Movement and a cultural revolution of the new democratic type led by the working class.

It is a great honor for me that soon after the First Quarter Storm of 1970, I delivered key messages to the Nagkakaisang Progresibong mga Artista at Arkitekto (NPAA) and the Panulat para sa Kaunlaran ng Sambayanan (PAKSA), which had their respective founding congresses in August and December 1971. The significance of the messages in the continuing advance of revolutionary literature and art is indicated by their republication in *Rebolusyonaryong panunuring masa sa sining at panitikan* in 1992.

These messages discussed how the artists and creative writers could best serve the people, especially the oppressed and exploited, by taking the road of the new democratic revolution. For this purpose, the creative writers and artists who in most cases come from the petty bourgeois intelligentsia must remold their class outlook, learn from the toiling masses of workers and peasants, avail of every possible literary and form in order to infuse it with revolutionary content and promote the exemplary works through publications and performances

To serve the people through art works, artists and creative writers can begin to learn from their own observations and reading about the social conditions of the people but must soonest connect with the masses and learn from them their hardships and suffering, their needs and demands and their struggles and aspirations. They must know the social reality from the masses themselves and seek to

inspire them to fight and liberate themselves from exploitation and oppression.

They must grasp the point that their art works can have as much significance as they can serve the people in their most important struggles for national and social liberation. They must go to the workers and peasants to learn the concrete facts of life and draw the essential and typical for embodiment in their works. Whenever possible, they must go to the Red fighters to learn from them how they wage the most intense forms of struggle against the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system. They must depict the dignity and heroism of the workers, peasants and Red fighters.

Enlightenment or education is the most important aim of a serious and significant work. The aim of entertainment can be achieved by the life-like rendering of social reality in literature and art, by the satirical representation of adversaries and by a certain measure of comic self acknowledgment or self-criticism of errors and shortcomings. But entertainment to trivialize the basic problems and struggles of the people or deflect attention from these is a reactionary act of deception. Revolutionary literature and art are for raising and sharpening the fighting will and unity of the people. They are weapons for defeating the enemy and paving the way for national and social liberation. Creative writers and artists must be fully conscious of being cadres and commanders of cultural battalions for defeating the promperialist and reactionary propaganda and culture. They are an integral part of the revolutionary mass movement for overthrowing the ruling system and installing the people's democratic state.

They must continue to use the tools and methods of cultural work and literary and artistic production that are most available to most people. But they must also use the new technology for instant communications, efficient production and audio-visual presentations. The point is to spread the revolutionary message the quickest way on the widest scale and facilitate and accelerate the awakening, organization and mobilization of the broad masses of the people for the revolutionary cause.

# Celebrate Cinema's Role in Social Transformation

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**M**essage of Solidarity to the Second International Film Festival  
November 10, 2015

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ON BEHALF OF THE INTERNATIONAL League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS), I convey warmest greetings of solidarity to the organizers and participating filmmakers and viewers in the Second AGITPROP International Film Festival on People' Struggles. I congratulate the Southern Tagalog Exposure (ST eXposure), together with AlterMedia, PinoyMedia Center and other Philippine-based multimedia groups, for realizing this film festival.

We commend you for perpetuating the Festival, which you established in 2011, in order to provide a venue for films of artistic and social value that are not given space by the big commercial media and moviehouse chains, and to promote the theme of peoples' struggles against imperialism and reaction all over the world. We are glad that you feature films under such categories as: Local Struggles, Human Rights, Gender, Anti-Imperialism and Environment.

We are pleased that the festival is being held in proximity to the International Festival of People's Rights and Struggles (IFPRIS) and the 5th International Assembly of the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS). These events are meant to foster a stronger and broader solidarity among organizations and individuals in the struggle to uphold, defend and advance the people's democratic rights and aspirations for a socially just world.

We have the highest appreciation for your initiative in holding the AGITPROP Film Festival. It is of great importance that you undertake this in response to the need for mustering filmmaking and the filmmakers and all cultural workers in the service of the people of the world in their struggles for greater freedom, democracy, all-round

development, social justice, cultural progress and international solidarity against imperialism and all reaction.

We must confront and fight monopoly capitalism and reaction as the crisis of the world capitalist system is ever worsening and the people are increasingly suffering from the escalation of plunder, austerity measures against the working people, state terrorism and wars of aggression. We must promote and develop film making in its various genres and forms, including feature films, short films, documentaries, news clips, animated films, educational or instructional videos and so on, as a weapon against the escalation of oppression and exploitation and for national and social liberation. We must encourage more activists from all sectors to learn how to wield this weapon of mass agitation-propaganda effectively with available equipment, resources and platforms, which are exponentially growing in this age of affordable good-quality phone cameras, simplified editing software, DVD duplication, digital projectors, and online outlets such as Youtube and Vimeo. We agree with you that the AGITPROP Film Festival is a celebration of cinema's role in social transformation by providing voice and vision to people's desire and struggle for a fundamentally new and better world. May the creative work in the reel craft reflect the real world to expose the dismal facts of life and inspire the heroic efforts of the people to change these.

May your festival ignite enlightening discussion and forge the resolve to take revolutionary action by exhibiting films that take up the urgent social issues. May you succeed in constructing further a venue for consolidating efforts to produce a kind of cinema that fights imperialism and the exploiting classes, that is artistic and socially relevant, that is accessible to the broad masses, and that contributes to the liberation and upliftment of the people. May your festival serve to strengthen the ranks of the progressive filmmakers and other artists. We wish you the utmost success and we look forward to your next festival.

# Impact of GPCR on the Philippine Revolution

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**F**orum on the GPCR, Amsterdam  
May 29, 2016

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## ***Introduction***

IT IS IMPORTANT TO celebrate and review the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) on its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The GPCR gives us confidence in the current struggles for national liberation, democracy and socialism and gives us hope for the ultimate goal of communism. While the world capitalist system is now afflicted by unprecedented crisis, the GPCR gives humankind the hope that socialism can be attained and developed until communism is attained.

### ***1. GPCR influence in the reestablishment of CPP***

*a. Underscoring of Mao's correct leadership in the ND and socialist revolution*

The Chinese revolution under the leadership of the working class, Communist Party of China and Comrade Mao Zedong has had a strong influence and impact on the Filipino people, especially the toiling masses of workers and peasants and the patriotic and progressive forces because it is a revolution that prevailed over semicolonial and semifeudal conditions and against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism at the stage of the new democratic revolution and proceeded to the stage of socialist revolution and construction.

*b. Position against modern revisionism and theory and practice of GPCR*

Filipino proletarian revolutionaries have always had the highest appreciation for Comrade Mao in leading the struggle against the rise of modern revisionism centred in the Soviet since the 1950s. So have they welcomed and supported Mao's theory and practice of continuing revolution under proletarian dictatorship through the Great

Proletarian Cultural Revolution in order to combat revisionism, prevent the restoration of capitalism and consolidate socialism in China from 1966 to 1976.

The young proletarian revolutionaries re-established the Communist Party of the Philippines in 1968 by learning from the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao and pronouncedly from the Chinese revolution. All these were underscored by their resolve to struggle and win the people's democratic revolution and proceed to the socialist revolution and build socialism in transition to communism.

*c. Vindication of Mao through the Dengist counterrevolution and capitalist restoration*

From 1966 to 1976, the GPCR was on the whole victoriously upholding, defending and advancing the socialist cause. But underlying the GPCR were the persistent efforts of the bourgeoisie to bring China to the road of capitalism. After the death of Mao in 1976, the Rightists headed by Deng Xiaoping in alliance with the Centrists carried out a coup d'etat.

The coup brought to power the capitalist roaders and the class dictatorship of the proletariat was replaced by that of the bourgeoisie. By December 1978 the policy of capitalist-oriented reforms and opening up to the US-dominated capitalist world was proclaimed. The way was thrown wide open for the development of capitalism within China and for the integration of Chinese capitalism in the world capitalist system. In 1984, the communes were dismantled, thus breaking the alliance of working class and the peasantry.

The success of capitalist restoration in China proved that Comrade Mao was correct in posing the problem of revisionism and capitalist restoration and in putting forward as solution the theory and practice of continuing revolution under proletarian dictatorship. We owe to Comrade Mao a weapon by which to answer those who say that history cannot go further than capitalism and that socialism is dead. In fact, the people's struggle for national liberation, democracy and socialism is once more resounding in the world as crisis and wars beset the capitalist world, as monopoly capitalism knows no

bounds for its greed and violence under the auspices of neoliberalism and neoconservatism.

## **2. Current CPP View of Chinese Society**

*a. China is no longer socialist and CPC no longer a real CP: More on bureaucrat and private capitalism in China. Is China an imperialist power?*

The view of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) is that Chinese society has ceased to be socialist since it came under the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie through the successful coup in 1976. Since then, the bourgeoisie has taken over and changed the character of the ruling party despite the continued use of the name Communist Party. It has removed the proletarian revolutionaries from positions of leadership in the government, army and police, the state economic enterprises and from the cultural institutions, the schools and mass media.

China has developed both bureaucrat monopoly capitalism based on the state owned enterprises and a thriving private monopoly capitalism. These mutually support each other. The state sector of the economy has ensured the continued development of national industry and military production and has resisted the worst impositions of the imperialist powers, while Chinese private capitalism has enjoyed the benefits of collaborating with the state sector in promoting the big comprador capitalism in maintaining sweatshop production of consumer manufactures for export as well as in developing a big industrial bourgeoisie involved in heavy and basic industries providing supplies to the frenzy of private and public overconstruction.

### *b. Consequences of the Crisis of Global Capitalism*

The focus on the proliferation of sweat shops on the eastern coast of China and overheating due to the rapid spread of construction projects fuelled inflation and corruption which led to mass uprisings in Beijing and scores of cities in 1989. But the policy of incurring large public debt and continuing the private and public construction seemed to be able to keep high China's economic growth rate and tide China over the Asian financial crisis of 1997, the global financial crisis generated by the US mortgage meltdown in 2008 and the ensuing public debt crisis of Europe. And now the

China bubble bloated by extreme amounts of public debt for private and public construction to counter the shrinkage of export demand from US and the EU is bursting and causing further stagnation. The bad debts of local governments and private corporations can no longer be covered by further loose lending and the construction overdrive has to slow down as a huge number of office and residential buildings are unoccupied.

The dramatic decline of the Chinese economy since 2014 has come in the wake of the celebration of China as the second largest economy in terms of GDP although still far from the level of the priorly advanced capitalist economies in terms of per capita GDP. By Lenin's definition of the five economic features of imperialism, China qualifies as an imperialist power but still falls short of being fully such by virtue of the fact that it has not yet launched any war of aggression to occupy any country and turn it into a colony or semicolony in the course of expanding economic territory in the struggle for a redivision of the world. At rate, China and Russia have further complicated and aggravated the inter-imperialist contradictions in the world.

### *c. Polarization and class struggle*

At every stage in the development of Chinese capitalism, social polarization has occurred between the few who benefit most from exploiting the great mass of workers and the peasants who still number some 750 million. The most exploited have been the 150 million migrant workers and the great number of them who have been laid off by state and private enterprises due to the decline of exports and construction. The most militant and bloodiest uprisings on the widest scale so far have been those in 1989. But workers' strikes against deteriorating wage and living conditions and resistance of peasants to landgrabbing by local governments for the benefit of capitalist development projects have been spreading.

## **3. Sino-Philippine relations and the maritime dispute**

*a. Chinese taipans (Lucio Tan, Henry Sy, Salim group, etc.) as factors in the Philippine economy*

Chinese taipans who are entrenched in the Philippines, like Lucio Tan, Henry Sy, the Salim group and others, are financed by China's banks and have grown big in finance, trade, real estate

development, semi-manufacturing, plantations and mining. Philippine imports (mostly consumer manufactures) from China have increased because they are cheaper than those from elsewhere. In the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis of 1997, Philippine exports to China increased in the form of semimanufactures for the final assembly platforms in China and also in the form of mineral ores which are underdeclared for the purpose of tax evasion.

*b. The maritime dispute in the South China Sea*

The Philippine and Chinese authorities collaborate in economic policy and trade relations even as the former cry foul whenever the latter make an encroachment on the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and extended continental shelf (ECS) in the West Philippine Sea. By claiming to own 90 percent of the South China Sea, China is offending the Philippines and other ASEAN countries which have their EEZ and ECS under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. (UNCLOS).

*c. Prospects in the Arbitral Tribunal and possible further developments*

The Philippines has brought up a case before the Permanent Court of Arbitration (Arbitral Tribunal) in The Hague, pleading for the definition of the Philippine EEZ and ECS in accordance with the UNCLOS. The decision of the tribunal is expected to come out soon in favor of the Philippines. If that were the case, China would go into tantrums and continue to prate that almost the entire South China Sea is under the indisputable sovereignty of China.

But ultimately, China would calm down in the face of the world opinion and that of ASEAN. The Philippines will be able to have better diplomatic and trade relations with China. More than ever the US will have no reason to have its military forces based and deployed in the Philippines.

**4. US and China: collusion and contention**

*a. US-Sino relations in economic and security issues*

The relationship between the US and China in economic and security issues is one of collusion and contention. As the US increasingly declines strategically, it tends to be wary of countries it deems to be actual or potential rivals. Thus, it has become increasingly inclined to a policy of containment rather than of

engagement towards China. It is determined to pressure China to restrain itself from siding with Russia and to undertake further liberalization of the economy and politics so that internal forces more friendly and more subservient to the US would prevail.

*b. Further US entrenchment in the Philippines under various pretexts*

Since the end of the Cold War, the US has used a series of false pretenses in order to justify further military entrenchment and intervention in the Philippines. It has used such pretexts as joint military exercises for training purposes, humanitarian mission, war on terror and now stridently for the protection of the Philippines from China in connection with the maritime dispute.

But in fact the US maintains a neutral policy in the maritime dispute between China and the Philippines. It has not acted against the Chinese occupation of Scarborough Shoal and the reclamations in the Spratlys and has declared the maintenance of the freedom of navigation as its main interest.

*c. Developments in China affect the Philippines*

China is bound to become increasingly unstable in the years to come as a result of the long internal social polarization and class struggles and the current bursting of its big financial bubble. There will be intensifying contradictions within the ruling party and between the ruling party and the forces outside of it. The US has been trying to promote the Rightist forces within China that wish to cast away the Red flag or repudiate Communist Party. But such a development could be the occasion of the dramatic resurgence of the proletarian revolutionary forces under the Maoist flag.

**5. China in the context of East Asia and the world**

*a. ASEAN, US-Japan security alliance, TPPA and US strategic pivot to East Asia*

To pursue its policy of containing China, the US is trying to use its traditional influence over the ASEAN, hype the US-Japan security alliance, exclude China from a TransPacific Partnership Agreement and carry out its so-called strategic pivot to East Asia. The so-called rebalancing of forces in the strategic pivot aims to concentrate 60 per cent of naval assets and 50 per cent of ground and air assets in the Asia-Pacific region. The so-called strategic pivot is actually a

waste of resources because China will avoid a war with the US and the US is still very much bogged down in the bloody quagmires it has made for itself in the Middle East and Africa.

*b. Sino-Russia links in SCO, BRICS, AIB and Silk Road and Belt projects*

The strategic partnership of China and Russia has emerged for quite sometime. Becoming wary of the propensity of the US to unleash wars of aggression, they have been mainly responsible for putting together the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, pointedly against the US and the NATO. They have also formed the BRICS as an economic bloc, consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, to counter the worst US impositions. They have also formed the BRICS Bank to counter the IMF and US dollar dominance. China has established the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank by way of attracting investors in its plan to build the Silk Road and Belt as an outlet for surplus capital and as a new field of capital expansion.

*c. Worsening crisis: neoliberalism, state terrorism and persistence and possible spread of wars*

The crisis of the world capitalist system has been worsening at a rapid rate. The neoliberal economic policy has brought out the worst of monopoly capitalism by accelerating the accumulation and concentration of capital in the hands of the few and the disemployment of workers, impoverishment of the peoples and further underdevelopment of most countries. State terrorism has spread as the US and the puppet oligarchs try to suppress dissent and rebellion. And the US has stepped up war production as a major economic engine and has unleashed wars of aggression to expand economic territory for the multinational banks and firms.

### **Conclusions**

*a. The Filipino people must pursue the Philippine revolution and explore united front with Duterte government*

The Filipino people must pursue the Philippine revolution. They cannot expect to win national liberation and democracy without relying on the exploited and oppressed masses of workers and peasants and developing various types of alliances.

For the first time in the history of semicolonial politics in the Philippines, there is a president who has publicly expressed the wish to become the country's first Left president. We can explore the possibility of building a powerful patriotic and progressive alliance that may result in a government of national unity, peace and development.

*b. Arouse, organize and mobilize the masses against US imperialism and the local oligarchs, be vigilant and be ready for any eventuality*

We should persevere in arousing, organizing and mobilizing the broad masses of the people against US imperialism and the local exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords. We must ready for all eventualities. The conditions for the advance of the Philippines are always becoming favorable because the social and economic crisis of the world capitalist system and the Philippine ruling system does not cease and keeps on worsening. The people are pressed by intolerable suffering to fight back and win political power against their exploiters and oppressors.

*c. Avail of all positive forces in the Philippines and abroad*

We must avail of all positive forces in building solidarity and gathering support for the Philippine revolution from our compatriots in the diaspora and from all the peoples of the world, including their parties, mass organizations and movements. The Filipino people must carry out the Philippine revolution not only for their own benefit but also for inspiring the people of the world to wage their revolutionary struggle. The Philippine revolution plays a signal role in the impending rise of revolutionary movements on an unprecedented global scale.

In concluding this presentation, let me stress that victory belongs to the Filipino people and the peoples of the world in the entire range of struggles for national liberation, democracy and socialism. The GPCR assures humankind that when socialism is attained there is a theory and practice to learn from and develop further in order to combat modern revisionism, prevent the restoration of capitalism and consolidate socialism until the stage of communism can be reached.

# Continuing Need For Cultural Revolution

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**K**eynote Speech for the Cultural Conference 2016 in  
Bacolod City  
September 16, 2016

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FELLOW CULTURAL WORKERS, compatriots and friends, I am highly honored and deeply pleased to be invited as your keynote speaker in your Cultural Conference 2016. I thank the organizers, Concerned Artists of the Philippines and Sinagbayan for inviting me. And I congratulate the organizers and all participants for their accomplishments in cultural work and creative output.

In 1966, I delivered a speech on the need for a cultural revolution in the Philippines. I showed how the Propaganda Movement and the revolutionary issuances of the Katipunan and the Philippine revolutionary government overcame the Spanish cultural domination that had preconditioned the minds of the colonized people.

The Filipino revolutionaries of 1896 put forward a culture that was national, liberal democratic and pro-poor against what had been colonial, religio-sectarian, obscurantist, medievalistic and unconcerned about the dispossession and poverty of the Filipino people. They had to wage a cultural revolution that denounced colonial and feudal injustices and put forward a national and democratic line in order to prevail over more than three centuries of Spanish colonial rule.

The revolutionary demands for national independence and free economic development beyond the sway of colonial plunder would not have gained ground and enabled the victory of the Philippine revolution without the cultural revolution to win the hearts and minds and inspire the people to fight for their national liberation running ahead of the armed forces of the revolution.

## ***US Military Force and Liberal Democratic Deception***

Even as the Jacobinist essence of the French Revolution had strong influence on the Filipino revolutionaries, from Andres Bonifacio through Apolinario Mabini to General Antonio Luna, they

could not overcome the combined brutal use of superior military force and the deceptive liberal democratic language of the US, a newly-emergent modern imperialist power.

To deceive the leaders of the revolutionary government like Emilio Aguinaldo, Felipe Buencamino, Pedro Paterno and the like, the US aggressors and their emissaries paid lip service to patriotic and liberal democratic ideas. Even when they slaughtered the Filipino people by the hundreds of thousands, they always took pause to assure them that they did not intend to colonize the Philippines.

They pitched their imperialist propaganda mainly to the native liberal bourgeoisie in a bid to recruit more puppets. The Hearst newspaper chain drummed up the duty of the US aggressors to colonize the Filipino people, to train them for self-government and to grant them independence in due time. After all, the objectives of US imperialism was to secure fields of investment, cheap sources of labor and raw materials, a market and strategic base in the Pacific for participating in the plunder of China.

Like the Spaniards for more than three centuries of colonial dominance in the Philippines, the US knew the importance of cultivating the colonial mentality among the colonized people. The best way to promote colonial mentality is to use the language of the colonizer as the principal medium of governance, education, arts and literature and mass communications.

US imperialism surpassed Spanish colonialism in the speed, sweep and depth of US propaganda and education in English. It established the public school system. It mobilized the US troops and teachers from the US to serve as public school teachers. It brought in the Protestant missionaries to serve as teachers in the hinterlands. Early on it created the pensionado system to train Filipino government officials in the US.

It developed all levels of education to train the personnel for the bureaucracy, businesses and the professions. It was a colonial power determined to change the feudal system into a semifeudal one before the outbreak of World War II. It put up some manufacturing, using local raw materials. It developed the mining

industry and increased the mechanization of plantations for export. It improved the system of transport and communications.

In promoting a colonial mentality in the English language, a conservative kind of liberal democracy and the supposed primacy of the free market, US imperialism availed not only of the educational system but also the churches, mass media and entertainment, especially Hollywood films, radio broadcasts and pop music since before World War II and the avalanche of US produced television programs and glossy magazines laced with consumerist advertising and ultra-reactionary values after World War II.

After the US grant of nominal independence to the Philippines in 1946, the political system may be described as semicolonial, no longer under direct colonial rule of the US but under an indirect one through unequal treaties, agreements and arrangements that have lopsidedly favored the US. The top dogs of government were no longer the American colonial officials but the political agents and trained bureaucrats of the big compradors and landlords.

To keep the economy semifeudal, the US also relies on these local exploiting classes to make the Philippines dependent on the export of raw materials and import manufactures, to beg for loans and foreign investments to keep consumption and foreign trade going and to undercut any popular demand for genuine economic development of the Philippines. The strong demand for national industrialization in the 1950s and 1960s was derailed by the US and local oligarchs by opting for the so-called import-substitution industries which resulted in some reassembly and repackaging plants.

The US enhanced its cultural influence over the Philippines in many ways. It used scholarships and travel grants to win over the brightest of Filipino students, teachers, writers and artists, journalists to the point of view of US imperialism. US military bases were not just launching pads of attacks against neighboring countries but also to prettify its aggression by encouraging Filipinos to serve in the US armed forces and to enjoy PX goods.

In addition to its own direct cultural conduits such as the USIS and ostensibly philanthropic foundations, it used the mass media, the schools and churches as tools of the Cold War in order to justify

continuing US dominance over the Philippines and discredit as communist or pro-communist any thinking or work critical of US dominance and assertive of national independence.

***Challenging the Semicolonial and Semifeudal Rule  
with a Cultural Revolution***

It was in 1966 when we called for a national, scientific and mass culture in order to resist the semicolonial and semifeudal system of oppression and exploitation. We wanted to arouse, organize and mobilize the students, teachers and other professionals, the writers and artists, journalists and all cultural workers and activists to rally to the call for a national, scientific and mass culture and get rid of the colonial mentality, obscurantism and antipeople bias that block the way to full national independence, democracy, development, social justice and all round progress.

Since 1966 the semicolonial and semifeudal conditions have become aggravated and deepened. The educational and cultural system that has promoted it has become even more powerful. The Marcos regime had a knack for using outstanding issues with the US as bargaining tools in his scheme to establish a dictatorship. He assured the US that it could continue to have military bases in the Philippines. He also assured the US corporations of the ways to circumvent nationality restrictions in the ownership of land, exploitation of natural resources, operation of public utilities and other businesses.

His most important objective was to change the 1936 constitution through the constitutional convention of 1971 to suit his imperialist interests and his own fascist dictatorial ambitions. In the process, he used and outwitted the clerico-fascists who had long advocated constitutional amendments as the supposed way forward for the nation.

When he declared martial law in September 1972, he justified his brazen power grab and open terrorist rule with an immense array of fascist philosophy and myth-making. Martial rule conjured a false sense of public acceptance by creating a media monopoly and using it to harp on such deceptive slogans as “build the new society” “constitutional authoritarianism,” “discipline” and “revolution from the center”.

The Filipino people resisted the US-backed Marcos dictatorial regime through a broad anti-fascist and anti-imperialist mass movement, with the national-democratic revolutionary forces at the forefront. They fought back through various forms of armed and legal, underground and open struggles. In every arena of struggle, used all available means of propaganda and agitation to break the Marcos media monopoly and push the cultural revolution forward.

While in power, Marcos sought to favor his upstart group of bureaucrat capitalists and cronies to come on top of the old cream of the super-rich big compradors and landlords. He overborrowed from abroad to engage in graft-ridden infrastructure projects. He passed off as industrialization the import-dependent construction projects.

Subsequently, he put forward export-oriented manufacturing as the way to industrialize. This employed less people and involved even less processing of imported components than the import-substitution enterprises. With employment opportunities ever dwindling, Marcos adopted the policy of exporting cheap labor. All these would persist when the US instigated the big policy shift to economic neoliberalism. The Marcos regime completely ignored the demand of the third world for a new international economic order and even the requirements for an economy to become a newly-industrialized one like Taiwan and South Korea.

The neoliberal economic policy regime subdued all the pseudo-democratic regimes after Marcos. The global forces of anti-imperialism and socialism took a strategic retreat when the revisionist-ruled regimes and the Soviet Union disintegrated and gave way completely to the full and open restoration of capitalism. Consequently, the US and its imperialist allies gleefully spread the ideological and political offensive with the line that there is no alternative to capitalism. They pushed the neoliberal economic offensive and unleashed a series of aggressive wars in the Balkans, Central Asia, Middle East and Africa.

Since 1966 the national democratic movement in the Philippines has steadily pursued the people's resistance to the persistent and aggravated semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system and demanded a national, scientific and mass culture. It has aroused increasingly larger mass participants and audiences. It has created

cultural formations on a multisectoral and sectoral basis. There is no major organization of any kind without a cultural troupe. Cultural work has been a key factor in strengthening the various types of mass organizations and has been responsible for the militant participation of the people in mass mobilizations.

In this regard, I have written a quite extensive paper entitled, "Revolutionary Literature and Art in the Philippines from the 1960s to the Present," which I delivered in abridged form as my speech at the Alternative Classroom Learning Experience (ACLE) Program at the University of the Philippines Diliman on October 15, 2015.

### ***Continuing Need for the Cultural Revolution***

There is a continuing need to wage the cultural revolution because the chronic crisis of the ruling system continues to worsen and there is the need to pursue the all-round people's democratic revolution continues. The need to continue the cultural revolution is underscored by unprecedented opportunities for advancing the revolutionary cause on the scale of the Philippines and by the fact that the neoliberal economic policy regime is unraveling and the aggressive wars the US has unleashed in many countries of the world have become quagmires for US imperialism.

We must have a national culture that unites the people with a national language and a common cultural heritage and yet cherishes the local languages and diverse ethnic cultures. We have a rich national history of revolutionary struggles against Western colonizers and against foreign and local fascists.

Without a high sense of patriotism, we would only worship foreign cultures, neglect our own and lose the desire to learn from ourselves and from others for building the nation. We need to respect our own products, be proud of being able to create or manufacture them and not have awe and taste only for the imported products.

We must have a scientific culture. We must recognize the necessary role of science and technology to secure our own national independence, promote democracy and realize social and economic development. We must put into play science and technology and the broad range of professional knowledge and skills in realizing national industrialization in the country.

We must mobilize the working class as the most productive and progressive force in the country. We must avail of the knowledge and skills of scientists, engineers, technologists and professionals in the natural and social sciences. We can avail of the international solidarity and a broad range of foreign sources of science and technology.

We must have a mass culture. Always the main point is to serve the people, especially the toiling masses of workers and peasants who are oppressed and exploited in our country. Their full participation is needed in asserting national independence, in exercising their democratic rights and developing the economy. Their working and living conditions must always be improved as a result of their own work.

They and their children must have full access to social services, especially education, health and housing. Increasingly, education for the masses must also include their full access to other vehicles of information and culture such as the conventional and digital mass media, which must be democratized rather than just serve the elite and middle classes. The aim is to realize their social liberation of the toiling masses of workers and peasants in their millions.

At the moment, we are engaged in a peace process in which the leadership of the GRP assures us of the opportunities for obtaining social and economic reforms and political and constitutional reforms under conditions of truce and cooperation. Let us see what we can obtain in terms of gaining national independence, democracy, social justice, development and all-round progress.

There is a definite series of tests to prove whether the current peace negotiations is the way to obtain those reforms that are significant enough to enable a just and lasting peace. That the GRP finds it necessary to negotiate seriously with the NDFP is a testimony to the principled and excellent way that the Communist Party of the Philippines has led the people's democratic revolution.

We can hope to build a new democratic society in the Philippines only if the working class can play its leading role through a revolutionary party by carrying out ideological, political and organizational tasks. At best, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism provides the ideological framework and the program for a people's democratic

revolution and for a national, scientific and mass culture. This revolutionary ideology emphasizes the international character of the working class, and links the new-democratic culture being generated by the Filipino people to the much richer treasure-house of socialist, anti-imperialist, and progressive cultures in other parts of the world.

A new democratic society should prepare the way for a bright and happy socialist future in the Philippines. There is no way to reach socialism but to take every major opportunity to advance the national and democratic rights of the Filipino people against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. We need to prevail over these monsters in order to lay the ground for the advance to socialism. In the process, we must continue to wield the weapon of the cultural revolution as it helps consolidate and enhance the victories of the Filipino people at every stage and prepares them for still greater advances and victories in the future.

# A Poet in the Service of the People

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**B**ook Review: *Pandayan ng Paninindigan: Pagbisita at mga Tula ng Pakikibaka* ni Benito Concio Quillooy  
February 1, 2019

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THE POEMS OF BENITO Concio Quillooy are a major contribution to poetry created in prison in the tradition of Amado V. Hernandez' "Isang Dipang Langit."

The harsh conditions of prison serve to strengthen the revolutionary conviction of the political prisoner. He hankers not only for personal freedom but also for the freedom of the people, especially the exploited toiling masses, who are in the larger prison of the semicolonial and semifeudal system.

The alternating avalanche of thoughts and feelings and the aridity of boredom drive the revolutionary political prisoner to write poems in order to keep sanity and purpose and to assert his freedom, his creative role and his relations not only with family and friends but also the people he is sworn to serve.

Quillooy succeeds in becoming a poet from being a scientist, agricultural technologist and community development worker and in creating poems based on his personal and the people's experiences, needs, demands and aspirations in order to overcome the harsh conditions of imprisonment.

In writing this review, I have been tempted to choose what I consider the best five or ten poems in terms of theme and poetic style. But I prefer to come up with the general view that all his poems are paid for by the rigors of imprisonment and are worthy of serious reading and each one deserves to be read, appreciated and evaluated by every reader.

The poems are significant because they take up the issues that are carried by the program of the people's democratic revolution. In various poems, the reader can discern the author's scientific

knowledge, his closeness to the farm workers and peasants and the anguish of separation from his loved ones.

Most of the poems can pass the muster of literary criticism and can be appreciated as excellent works of art.

I am proud to be in the company of Quilloy and other poets driven by imprisonment to write poems not only to assert their freedom and creativity but more importantly to continue serving the people in their struggle for national freedom, democracy, social justice, economic development, cultural progress and a just peace.

May the subjective freedom of Quilloy become an objective fact through his release from prison. The charges against him are trumped up, on the basis of outright lies, planted evidence and false witnesses. May he gain the freedom to continue working as a development worker and writing poems in the service of the people.

# Preface to Tula't Awit 50 Binalaybay

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**O**ctober 1, 2019

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AS CHAIRPERSON, I EXPRESS the highest tribute of the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) to the seven comrades who were unarmed and were conducting study meetings and were brutally massacred while they were asleep by Duterte's military and police forces on August 15, 2018 in Antique province.

The ILPS join the Filipino people and their revolutionary forces in giving their highest respects to the martyrs who included Comrades Felix Salditos, Eldie Labinghisa, Peter Mecenasa, Karen Ceralvo Liezel Bandiola, Jason Talibo and Jason Sanchez. They were engaged in area social research, education and cultural work.

I am gratified that once more, as a comrade and fellow poet, I have the opportunity to express the highest appreciation to Comrade Felix Salditos for his resolve and militancy in pursuing the people's democratic revolution and for his excellence in creative writing and artistic illustrations that reflect and inspire further revolutionary struggle.

The publication of *Tula't Awit 50 Binalaybay* ni Roger Felix Salditos is an event highly significant to the Filipino people and to all who are interested in artistic and cultural work for advancing the revolutionary movement.

The poems in the books are divided into three parts under the headings: *Tumanduk* (the Indigenous People); People's War; and Memorial. The *Tumanduks* who are mainly peasants in the mountains and hills of Panay are among the most deprived and exploited people. They are ardent participants in the people's war. Their cause and role are crucial to the development of the people's war.

Perseverance in the people's war for national and social liberation involves hard work, sacrifices and victories. All these are well depicted in the poems of Salditos (often under his nom de plume Maya Daniels or Mayamor) in his rich nature imagery. He

refers to the natural and social environment of the people's war and attaches revolutionary meanings and purpose to the object that he comes across.

The current selection of Salditos' poems manifests the high quality of his creative writing and his serious interest in the people's needs, demands and revolutionary struggle. He is recognized as the most outstanding revolutionary poet in his native language. May this book be the key to the further publication of his poems which are in the hundreds as well as his scores of narratives and abundant artistic illustrations.

Salditos was the son of a poor fisherman and knew how to work as one. But he was able to go to school and reached the level of the seminary for the priesthood. Although he did not become a priest he developed the best of relations with the religious under the auspices of the Christian for National Liberation.

He used his high level of education and sensibilities in the revolutionary service of the oppressed and exploited toiling masses of workers and peasants. He was effective in educational, artistic and mass work because he had an intimate knowledge of the toiling masses.

He enjoyed his revolutionary work despite the difficulties, risks to life, hard work and sacrifices. He enjoyed it even more as he engaged in artistic work at the same time. Only a few hours before his death, he posted on his Facebook account 17 poems and illustrations for public sharing.

All his revolutionary political and artistic works have become part of the revolutionary movement that continues to grow in strength and advance. His poetry and artistic illustrations will remain as concrete points of reference in the hearts and minds of the people.

# Challenge to People's Artists and Cultural Workers

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**M**essage to Sining Bugkos on its Assembly on December 1, 2019

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DEAR FELLOW ACTIVISTS, I send jubilant greetings of congratulations and unity to the leadership and membership of Sining Bugkos on the occasion its assembly on December 1, 2019 at UP Diliman, Quezon City. I am with you in spirit and in commemorating the 20<sup>th</sup> year of the founding of Sining Bugkos, in acclaiming your sacrifices and victories and new resolve to advance on the path of struggle for national liberation and democracy.

The theme you have chosen for your assembly is appropriate and timely: "People's Artists, Serve the People!" I am glad that the theme was adopted from the instructions I provided during the founding of Sining Bugkos and based on what you viewed as necessary to invigorate the cultural work of the national democratic movement, and also its integration with the struggle of the masses and the need to increase people's artists and their groups.

Your calls are correct: Put into practice, enrich and disseminate the national, scientific and mass culture! Uphold and cherish the national language and cultural heritage! Defend and advance the national sovereignty and independence of the Filipino people!

You have the necessary strength and wealth of experience to respond and realize these calls. It is commendable that you have eight member-organizations of Sining Bugkos in the whole of Metro Manila, although with varying in size and activities. I trust that you will be able to strengthen yourselves, widenad the scope and raise the level of your work and struggle.

On your renewed efforts and struggle depend the strengthening of Sining Bugkos and its member organizations: Musicians for Peace, Ugatlahi Artists Collective, Liga ng Kabataang Propagandista (League of Young Propagandists), Kausap (organization for theater),

Sining Laya (group of youth artists in Quezon City), Association of Dramatists in Marikina, Tullahan Workers Cultural Alliance, and Art is the Bullet of the Youth (group of young artists in San Juan with chapters in high schools and universities).

We are faced today with the Duterte regime that is extremely hateful and intrinsically treacherous, tyrannical, mass murderous, plunderer and swindler. Its campaigns of suppression against the toiling masses and middle social strata and its scheme to impose once again a fascist dictatorship ala-Marcos on the Filipino people are not signs of strength but of weakness and the fast deterioration not only of the regime but of the entire semifeudal and semicolonial ruling system.

The systematic and gross violations of national and democratic rights and interests of the Filipino people in the name of anti-communism are intensifying the oppression and exploitation brought about by the three plagues of the country: imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

It is a challenge to Sining Bugkos and to us all who are fighting and undertaking all measures in all fields to intensify the struggle and achieve more victories. A people united and fighting will never be defeated by the enemy.

Your struggle in the field of culture is important and decisive. You must wield all forms of art to illustrate the horrible situation of our Motherland and assert the need for the Filipino people to fight in order to achieve a glorious future of national liberation, democracy, social justice, all-sided development and just peace.

In the ideology and creativity of the people's artists and cultural workers spring the different forms of art to encourage, strengthen their belief and inflame the feeling of the Filipino people to participate in the national democratic struggle and defeat the scourge and the greedy and cruel monsters prolonging the ruling rotten system.

I am confident that through your assembly, you will be able to consolidate, further expand and strengthen yourselves. You must sum-up your experiences, learn from your mistakes and weaknesses, rely on your strength and victories and define the tasks to further advance your work and achieve more victories in struggle.

Long live Sining Bugkos and all its member organizations!

Long live the people's artists and cultural workers! Long live the Filipino people and the national democratic movement!

# Create and Promote Art to Inspire the People to Fight for their Rights

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**M**essage to the Concerned Artists of the Philippines  
on its 37<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
August 31, 2020

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BELOVED CONCERNED ARTISTS,

We wish to convey to you warmest greetings of solidarity on the occasion of the 37<sup>th</sup> anniversary of your organization, the Concerned Artists of the Philippines. We salute you for your determination, efforts and sacrifices to create and promote art in the service of the Filipino people in their just struggle for national and social liberation. It is appropriate that you link your anniversary celebration with the National Heroes' Day.

We congratulate you for all your achievements and we join you in the online tribute to the people's martyrs who include artists and activists of all oppressed and exploited classes and sectors of society. It is fitting that you stream the art works that reflect and further inspire the people to fight for the national and democratic rights and interests.

We are confronted today by the Duterte regime which is tyrannical, traitorous, genocidal, plundering and mendacious. In the name of anti-terrorism, it is imposing on the people state terrorism and is escalating their conditions of oppression and exploitation. We must therefore strengthen our resolve to fight and intensify our struggle for national freedom, democracy and social justice.

The evil forces of foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism beset our country and use the current regime to do the worst it can to suppress the will of the people and subjugate them by violence and deception. Under these conditions, it is of high importance that concerned artists perform their duty of shedding light on the basic social problems and inspire the people to solve these with their revolutionary will and struggle.

The crisis of the world capitalist system and that of the domestic ruling system are rapidly worsening. They are aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Those few who are in power and rule against the people seem to thrive on the current crisis conditions. But in fact, they drive the people to desire and fight for revolutionary change. Thus, the revolutionary forces of the people are on the rise.

We wish you the utmost success in celebrating the 37<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Concerned Artists of the Philippines, in raising your resolve to do your best in serving the people and in creating the works and performances that enrich the cultural life of the people and inspire them to fight with all their might against the forces of foreign, feudal and fascist domination, realise their own national and social liberation and build a nation that is fully independent, democratic, socially just, prosperous and progressive.

Long live the Concerned Artists of the Philippines!

Create and promote the art to inspire the people to fight for their rights!

Long live the Filipino people!

# On Comrade Mao's "Talks at the Yen'an Forum"

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**Q**uestions by Host Edna Becher of Panday Sining Europa  
October 4, 2020

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1. *TALKS AT THE YENAN Forum* is a speech of Mao Zedong on the relationship between work in the literary and artistic fields and revolutionary work in general. Since the May 4th Movement, a cultural army has taken shape in China. To have a better background, can you talk about the May 4th movement? What can the Philippines learn from it?

JMS: The May 4th Movement was an anti-imperialist cultural and political movement which emerged from the student mass protests that began with 4000 students in Beijing on May 4, 1919. The student masses rose up against the traitorous policy of the Chinese reactionary government that complied with the Versailles Treaty of the imperialist powers and allowed Japan to rule territories in Shandong that Germany had surrendered.

The militant student protest movement spread nationwide from Beijing and gained the support of the broad masses of the people. It inspired the New Cultural Movement, which laid stress on anti-imperialism and the adoption of science and democracy as new rallying points against the Confucian tradition. It stimulated among the young Chinese intellectual, cultural and political leaders the study of revolutionary movements abroad, especially the Great October Socialist Revolution, and led to the founding of the Communist Party of China in 1921.

Mao Zedong was himself was influenced by the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement and praised it in 1939 in the following words: "The May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement twenty years ago marked a new stage in China's bourgeois-democratic revolution against imperialism and feudalism. The cultural reform movement which grew out of the May 4th Movement was only one of the manifestations of this revolution. With

the growth and development of new social forces in that period, a powerful camp made its appearance in the bourgeois-democratic revolution, a camp consisting of the working class, the student masses and the new national bourgeoisie. Around the time of the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement, hundreds of thousands of students courageously took their place in the van. In these respects the May Fourth Movement went a step beyond the Revolution of 1911.”

In his “Talks at Yenan Forum” on May 2, 1942, Mao further said: “In our struggle for the liberation of the Chinese people there are various fronts, among which there are the fronts of the pen and of the gun, the cultural and the military fronts. To defeat the enemy we must rely primarily on the army with guns. But this army alone is not enough; we must also have a cultural army, which is absolutely indispensable for uniting our own ranks and defeating the enemy. Since the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement such a cultural army has taken shape in China, and it has helped the Chinese revolution, gradually reduced the domain of China's feudal culture and of the comprador culture which serves imperialist aggression, and weakened their influence.

“The purpose of our meeting today is precisely to ensure that literature and art fit well into the whole revolutionary machine as a component part, that they operate as powerful weapons for uniting and educating the people and for attacking and destroying the enemy, and that they help the people fight the enemy with one heart and one mind. What are the problems that must be solved to achieve this objective? I think they are the problems of the class stand of the writers and artists, their attitude, their audience, their work and their study.”

The May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement was one of the major influences on the student activists in the Student Cultural Association of the University of the Philippines (SCAUP), which I co-founded in 1959. We were inspired by it to do our best in igniting a student mass movement against imperialism and feudalism in order to resume the unfinished Philippine Revolution of 1896 and raise it to the level of the new democratic revolution led by the proletariat in the era of modern imperialism and the world world proletarian revolution.

We understood and appreciated the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement as the signal for the advance of China from the old democratic revolution of 1911 to the new democratic revolution. At that time, we were avidly reading and studying Comrade Mao's works. As chairman of the SCAUP in the period of 1959-1961, I wrote a long article in the *Philippine Collegian* on the May 4th Movement to praise it as a historic event worthy of emulation by the Filipino youth and nation.

We considered the anti-CAFA demonstration of 5000 students on March 15, 1961 a historic anti-imperialist event like the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement. We also proclaimed our positive response to Claro Mayo Recto's call for the Second Propaganda Movement against US imperialism and local reactionaries. The anti-imperialist and democratic protest mass actions for the national and democratic rights of the Filipino people against imperialism and feudalism developed nationwide throughout the 1960s to the First Quarter Storm of 1970.

The key leaders of SCAUP also became leaders of the Kabataang Makabayan (KM), which was a comprehensive youth organization of students and young workers, peasants, teachers and other professionals. The KM was strongly linked to the trade union, peasant movement and student organizations and was in the forefront of the legal struggles of the national democratic movement until Marcos proclaimed martial law in 1972. The KM was forced underground and facilitated the participation of thousands of its members to join the armed revolution.

*2. In cultural work, there are some problems that need to be addressed. Mao talked about the class stand. Cultural workers should always have the stand of proletariat and of the masses. But how do we ensure this? What are the criteria that you have to fulfil in order to say, as an artist, you have the class stand of the proletariat and the masses?*

JMS: The semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system in the Philippines is exploitative and oppressive. It is dominated by foreign monopoly capitalism and run by the local exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords through corrupt politicians that we call bureaucrat capitalists. The most exploited classes are the workers and peasants and to some extent the middle social strata.

To be socially significant and relevant, the artists and creative writers must know not only the general statements that I have made but they must do as much social investigation as they can and interact with the people. Thus, they can find out for themselves that to be factually honest, truthful and socially just they must side with the exploited and oppressed masses of workers and peasants against the exploiters and oppressors and they must choose the class stand of the working class as the most productive and progressive class that stands for current social progress and for the future in a socialist society.

According to Comrade Mao in his *Talks at the Yen-an Forum*, "Our stand is that of the proletariat and of the masses. For members of the Communist Party, this means keeping to the stand of the Party, keeping to Party spirit and Party policy." The organs of the party, the cadres and earlier members of the party can facilitate understanding of the basic principles, policies and line that can guide the understanding of and needed action on concrete practical issues.

Even as they need to work and associate with their peers in the cultural field, the artists and creative writers can take the initiative to study the best that has been written about the role of the working class as well as about their own role as cultural workers from Marxist-Leninist classics to the current proletarian revolutionary thinkers and leaders. They do not have to read an entire library within a short period of time to learn enough of the revolutionary theory and practice of the proletariat. The point is to apply the already understood concepts on the understanding of social reality and in giving life to the people's struggle in artistic and literary works as organisms.

Comrade Mao teaches us, "It is right for writers and artists to study literary and artistic creation, but the science of Marxism-Leninism must be studied by all revolutionaries, writers and artists not excepted. Writers and artists should study society, that is to say, should study the various classes in society, their mutual relations and respective conditions, their physiognomy and their psychology. Only when we grasp all this clearly can we have a literature and art that is rich in content and correct in orientation."

*3. There is also the matter of audience. How do we ensure that our art and literature reach the audience that we want to reach, which is the masses? How do we not limit ourselves to the petty-bourgeois intellectuals?*

JMS: The matter of audience is indeed important. The revolutionary artists, creative writers and other cultural workers must go to and address the biggest possible audience, which consists of the workers and peasants. They can also help develop their own artistic, literary and cultural organizations and activities. Thus, a great movement of revolutionary art and culture as well as a great body of artistic and cultural workers and works would arise and develop beyond the control of the exploiting classes.

In the exploitative social system that we have in the Philippines, the artists, creative writers and other cultural workers must create and develop their own organizations and link up with the movements of the workers, peasants, indigenous people, youth, women and others in order to learn from the masses, their economic, social and cultural conditions and activities and try to create works that reflect their conditions, needs and aspirations, catch their interest and inspire them to fight for a brighter and better future.

It is wrong to limit the relations of the revolutionary artists, creative writers and other cultural workers to the petty-bourgeois intellectuals. It is worse to adopt the petty bourgeois pose of being without class or above classes and evading the reality of classes and class struggle and the question of what is just and what is unjust and what is truthful and what is dishonest in the exploitative society. It is worst when artists, creative writers and cultural workers outrightly cater to the class interests and sensibilities of the exploiting classes, simply because they wish to earn the good graces of the exploiters, reach a big audience and earn more money.

Comrade Mao points out that there is a big audience for revolutionary art and literature. According to him, "The cadres of all types, fighters in the army, workers in the factories and peasants in the villages all want to read books and newspapers once they become literate, and those who are illiterate want to see plays and operas, look at drawings and paintings, sing songs and hear music; they are the audience for our works of literature and art. Take the

cadres alone. Do not think they are few; they far outnumber the readers of any book published in the Kuomintang areas.”

*4. The question of “for whom” is fundamental in creating art. Is it for the oppressor or for the oppressed? Are all artistic works political? Is it not possible to have an art that is neutral?*

JMS: To be revolutionary, the artists and creative writers must be resolutely for the oppressed masses against the oppressors. This is of fundamental importance. In the final analysis, any work of art has a class character and is political. It serves either the oppressor or oppressed. Even works that are created from a petty bourgeois standpoint that opposes, obscures or evades the just cause of the oppressed amount to works serving the oppressor and falling into line with the class interests of the oppressor.

Mao points out that Marxists have long solved the problem of “for whom” in literature and art. He states: “This problem was solved long ago by Marxists, especially by Lenin. As far back as 1905 Lenin pointed out emphatically that our literature and art should serve... the millions and tens of millions of working people. For comrades engaged in literary and artistic work in the anti-Japanese base areas it might seem that this problem is already solved and needs no further discussion.”

“Who, then, are the masses of the people? The broadest sections of the people, constituting more than 90% of our total population, are the workers, peasants, soldiers and urban petty bourgeoisie. Therefore, our literature and art are first for the workers, the class that leads the revolution. Secondly, they are for the peasants, the most numerous and most steadfast of our allies in the revolution. Thirdly, they are for the armed workers and peasants, namely, the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies and the other armed units of the people, which are the main forces of the revolutionary war. Fourthly, they are for the laboring masses of the urban petty bourgeoisie and for the petty-bourgeois intellectuals, both of whom are also our allies in the revolution and capable of long-term cooperation with us. These four kinds of people constitute the overwhelming majority of the Chinese nation, the broadest masses of the people.”

“Our literature and art should be for the four kinds of people we have enumerated. To serve them, we must take the class stand of the proletariat and not that of the petty bourgeoisie. Today, writers who cling to an individualist, petty-bourgeois stand cannot truly serve the masses of revolutionary workers, peasants and soldiers. Their interest is mainly focused on the small number of petty-bourgeois intellectuals. This is the crucial reason why some of our comrades cannot correctly solve the problem of ‘for whom?’ In saying this, I am not referring to theory. In theory, or in words, no one in our ranks regards the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers as less important than the petty-bourgeois intellectuals. I am referring to practice, to action. In practice, in action, do they regard petty-bourgeois intellectuals as more important than workers, peasants and soldiers? I think they do.”

Therefore, Comrade Mao, gives the following admonition: “We encourage revolutionary writers and artists to be active in forming intimate contacts with the workers, peasants and soldiers, giving them complete freedom to go among the masses and to create a genuinely revolutionary literature and art. Therefore, here among us, the problem is nearing solution. But nearing solution is not the same as a complete and thorough solution. We must study Marxism and study society, as we have been saying, precisely in order to achieve a complete and thorough solution. By Marxism we mean living Marxism which plays an effective role in the life and struggle of the masses, not Marxism in words. With Marxism in words transformed into Marxism in real life, there will be no more sectarianism. Not only will the problem of sectarianism be solved, but many other problems as well.”

*5. Mao talked about the balance between popularization and raising of standards. What does that mean? Can you give an example on this for us to better understand it?*

JMS: Comrade Mao states that since in the first place our literature and art are basically for the workers, peasants and soldiers, "popularization" means to popularize among the workers, peasants and soldiers, and "raising standards" means to advance from their present level. He raises a series of questions and answers them: “What should we popularize among them? We must

popularize only what is needed and can be readily accepted by the workers, peasants and soldiers themselves. Consequently, prior to the task of educating the workers, peasants and soldiers, there is the task of learning from them.”

“This is even more true of raising standards. There must be a basis from which to raise. Take a bucket of water, for instance; where is it to be raised from if not from the ground? It means raising the level of literature and art in the direction in which the workers, peasants and soldiers are themselves advancing, in the direction in which the proletariat is advancing. Here again the task of learning from the workers, peasants and soldiers comes in. Only by starting from the workers, peasants and soldiers can we have a correct understanding of popularization and of the raising of standards and find the proper relationship between the two.”

Comrade Mao considers the relationship between popularization by pointing out first that popular works are simpler and plainer, and therefore more readily accepted by the broad masses of the people today. Works of a higher quality, being more polished, are more difficult to produce and in general do not circulate so easily and quickly among the masses in the course of the people’s war. He points out that the workers, peasants and soldiers are now engaged in a bitter and bloody struggle with the enemy but are illiterate and uneducated as a result of long years of rule by the feudal and bourgeois classes, and therefore they are eagerly demanding enlightenment, education and works of literature and art which meet their urgent needs and which are easy to absorb, in order to heighten their enthusiasm in struggle and confidence in victory, strengthen their unity and fight the enemy with one heart and one mind. He points out that the prime need is not "more flowers on the brocade" but "fuel in snowy weather" and that therefore, popularization is the more pressing task.

To round up, Comrade Mao concludes that through the creative labor of revolutionary writers and artists, the raw materials found in the life of the people are shaped into the ideological form of literature and art serving the masses of the people. Included here are the more advanced literature and art as developed on the basis of elementary literature and art and as required by those sections of the

masses whose level has been raised, or, more immediately, by the cadres among the masses. Also included here are elementary literature and art which, conversely, are guided by more advanced literature and art and are needed primarily by the overwhelming majority of the masses at present. Whether more advanced or elementary, all our literature and art are for the masses of the people, and in the first place for the workers, peasants and soldiers; they are created for the workers, peasants and soldiers and are for their use.

*6. In revolutionary art, there is the political criterion and there is the artistic criterion; what is the relationship between the two?*

JMS: Comrade Mao declares that in the world today, all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines and that there is in fact no such thing as art for art's sake, art that stands above classes or art that is detached from or independent of politics. He points out that proletarian literature and art are part of the whole proletarian revolutionary cause; they are, as Lenin said, "cogs and wheels" in the whole revolutionary machine. He stresses that Party work in literature and art occupies a definite and assigned position in Party revolutionary work as a whole and is subordinated to the revolutionary tasks set by the Party in a given revolutionary period.

He rejects any contrary arrangement that leads to dualism or pluralism, and that in essence amounts to "politics—Marxist, art—bourgeois," as preached by the muddleheaded Trotsky, Comrade Mao states:

"We do not favor overstressing the importance of literature and art, but neither do we favor underestimating their importance. Literature and art are subordinate to politics, but in their turn exert a great influence on politics. Revolutionary literature and art are part of the whole revolutionary cause, they are cogs and wheels in it, and though in comparison with certain other and more important parts they may be less significant and less urgent and may occupy a secondary position, nevertheless, they are indispensable cogs and wheels in the whole machine, an indispensable part of the entire revolutionary cause."

He emphasizes:

“If we had no literature and art even in the broadest and most ordinary sense, we could not carry on the revolutionary movement and win victory. Failure to recognize this is wrong. Furthermore, when we say that literature and art are subordinate to politics, we mean class politics, the politics of the masses, not the politics of a few so-called statesmen. Politics, whether revolutionary or counter-revolutionary, is the struggle of class against class, not the activity of a few individuals. The revolutionary struggle on the ideological and artistic fronts must be subordinate to the political struggle because only through politics can the needs of the class and the masses find expression in concentrated form. Revolutionary statesmen, the political specialists who know the science or art of revolutionary politics, are simply the leaders of millions upon millions of statesmen—the masses. Their task is to collect the opinions of these mass statesmen, sift and refine them, and return them to the masses, who then take them and put them into practice. They are therefore not the kind of aristocratic ‘statesmen’ who work behind closed doors and fancy they have a monopoly of wisdom.”

Comrade Mao gives guidance to united front in the world of literature and art in the following words:

“Since literature and art are subordinate to politics and since the fundamental problem in China's politics today is resistance to Japan, our Party writers and artists must in the first place unite on this issue of resistance to Japan with all non-Party writers and artists (ranging from Party sympathizers and petty-bourgeois writers and artists to all those writers and artists of the bourgeois and landlord classes who are in favor of resistance to Japan). Secondly, we should unite with them on the issue of democracy. On this issue there is a section of anti-Japanese writers and artists who do not agree with us, so the range of unity will unavoidably be somewhat more limited. Thirdly, we should unite with them on issues peculiar to the literary and artistic world, questions of method and style in literature and art; here again, as we are for socialist realism and some people do not agree, the range of unity will be narrower still.”

He gives further advice to the Party writers and artists in united front work with non-Party colleagues.

“While on one issue there is unity, on another there is struggle, there is criticism. The issues are at once separate and interrelated, so that even on the very ones which give rise to unity, such as resistance to Japan, there are at the same time struggle and criticism. In a united front, ‘all unity and no struggle’ and ‘all struggle and no unity’ are both wrong policies—as with the Right capitulationism and tailism, or the ‘Left’ exclusivism and sectarianism, practiced by some comrades in the past. This is as true in literature and art as in politics.”

Comrade Mao weighs the relationship between the political and artistic criterion in the following words:

“Politics cannot be equated with art, nor can a general world outlook be equated with a method of artistic creation and criticism. We deny not only that there is an abstract and absolutely unchangeable political criterion, but also that there is an abstract and absolutely unchangeable artistic criterion; each class in every class society has its own political and artistic criteria. But all classes in all class societies invariably put the political criterion first and the artistic criterion second.”

“The bourgeoisie always shuts out proletarian literature and art, however great their artistic merit. The proletariat must similarly distinguish among the literary and art works of past ages and determine its attitude towards them only after examining their attitude to the people and whether or not they had any progressive significance historically. Some works which politically are downright reactionary may have a certain artistic quality. The more reactionary their content and the higher their artistic quality, the more poisonous they are to the people, and the more necessary it is to reject them.”

“A common characteristic of the literature and art of all exploiting classes in their period of decline is the contradiction between their reactionary political content and their artistic form. What we demand is the unity of politics and art, the unity of content and form, the unity of revolutionary political content and the highest possible perfection of artistic form. Works of art which lack artistic quality have no force, however progressive they are politically. Therefore, we oppose both the tendency to produce works of art with a wrong political viewpoint and the tendency towards the ‘poster and slogan style’ which is

correct in political viewpoint but lacking in artistic power. On questions of literature and art we must carry on a struggle on two fronts.”

*7. In art school, works of the bourgeoisie are the ones being studied. Is it important to study the art of the bourgeoisie? Should the curriculum of art academies be changed after victory?*

JMS: It is of course in the nature of bourgeois art and literary academies to admire, study and celebrate the classical works of ancient slave and feudal societies and of course the great works of bourgeois artists and creative writers. The most reactionary administrations and faculty members of such academies completely shut out proletarian revolutionary works of literature and art, although at certain times some faculty members on their own initiative allow these works to be studied and appreciated by the students.

After the victory of the people’s democratic revolution, the art and literary academies will certainly change the curriculum and favor proletarian revolutionary art and literature against bourgeois reactionary art and literature. But there can be subjects for examining and criticizing reactionary works. These can be studied by specialists, although they are not subjects for general propagation or obligatory study by all students.

The critical study of bourgeois works of literature and art is important and useful, especially for specialists. We must know their positive and negative features and contrast them with revolutionary democratic and proletarian works. Remember that science and technology, the proletariat and machine large production have passed through capitalist society. Anyway, especially in the digital age, there is no way of shutting out completely works from the past and from the class enemy.

We must know the history of art and literature in the Philippines and other countries. Otherwise the artists, creative writers and the public will become ignorant of the contents of museums and the significance of artistic works and structures that continue to stand in public places. We must know the continuity and discontinuities in the cultural heritage of our nation and the world. Otherwise, we would not know how to measure and evaluate the revolutionary advances that we have made. But always the main point is to learn from the

past and others in order to serve the needs of the people and the present.

Comrade Mao states:

“We must take over all the fine things in our literary and artistic heritage, critically assimilate whatever is beneficial, and use them as examples when we create works out of the literary and artistic raw materials in the life of the people of our own time and place. It makes a difference whether or not we have such examples, the difference between crudeness and refinement, between roughness and polish, between a low and a high level, and between slower and faster work. Therefore, we must on no account reject the legacies of the ancients and the foreigners or refuse to learn from them, even though they are the works of the feudal or bourgeois classes.”

His caveat and positive guidance are as follows:

“But taking over legacies and using them as examples must never replace our own creative work; nothing can do that. Uncritical transplantation or copying from the ancients and the foreigners is the most sterile and harmful dogmatism in literature and art. China's revolutionary writers and artists, writers and artists of promise, must go among the masses; they must for a long period of time unreservedly and whole-heartedly go among the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers, go into the heat of the struggle, go to the only source, the broadest and richest source, in order to observe, experience, study and analyze all the different kinds of people, all the classes, all the masses, all the vivid patterns of life and struggle, all the raw materials of literature and art. Only then can they proceed to creative work. Otherwise, you will have nothing to work with and you will be nothing but a phony writer or artist, the kind that Lu Hsun in his will so earnestly cautioned his son never to become.”

*8. Art and literature, or cultural work in general, is part of organizational tasks. Would a revolutionary organization be effective without it? How important is it in organizing?*

JMS: Art and literature, or cultural work in general is a necessary and decisive part of the revolutionary machinery and tasks. Without it, a revolutionary organization or the entire movement would be ineffective. Cultural work facilitates in the most persuasive and pleasing way the people's understanding of the moral justness, the

principles, policies and line of the revolutionary movement. It hastens the arousal, organization and mobilization of the masses and inspires them to act as a revolutionary force against their oppressors and exploiters.

It would be a dull and ineffective revolutionary movement that has no culture. Cultural work raises the fighting spirit of the people and sharpens all weapons of the revolution. Without, cultural work, the revolutionary movement would be sluggish and would even fail. Even before being able to seize political power with the use of the people's army, the proletariat must be able to create and develop the cultural part of the superstructure of the socialist future during the people's democratic revolution. Otherwise, the cultural dominance of the exploiting classes would persist and hamper or even reverse the advance of the socialism.

*9. Should artists be organized? Some artists express that their art is being restricted by organization. How do we deal with such sentiments? How do we balance organizational tasks and the freedom of art?*

JMS: As I have already pointed out earlier, in accordance with the teachings of Lenin and Mao, it is absolutely necessary for the artists, creative writers and other cultural workers to be organized. Otherwise, as isolated individuals, they are ineffective elements against oppression and exploitation and they remain more subject and more vulnerable to attack or manipulation by the forces, agents and mechanisms of imperialism and the local exploiting classes.

Petty bourgeois subjectivists and opportunists preach that the artists, creative writers and other cultural workers must be against being organized in order to be free. But in fact, they thus become captive to the ruling system and the exploiting classes. In the just revolutionary struggle of the Filipino people, every creative writer, artist or cultural worker interested in the common struggle against oppression and exploitation needs to be organized and encouraged to contribute to the unity and strengthening of the revolutionary movement.

When they are organized, they learn from each other collectively, draw strength from each other and from their unity and collective capabilities and they can fight more effectively against the unjust

ruling system and the forces of class oppression and exploitation. And yet they can still create and develop their works individually and in necessary work collectives and draw inspiration from their multi-talented colleagues in their organization and from the entire revolutionary movement.

It is necessary to build the organizations of Party writers, artists and cultural workers under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and the leadership of the revolutionary party of the proletariat. And it is also necessary to build united front organizations which the Party elements and non-Party elements can join. The waging and advancement of the people's democratic revolution in the Philippines requires the broad united front of the patriotic and progressive creative writers, artists and other cultural workers.

*10. Maybe you can share some personal experiences how art and culture influenced your political activism, if it did?*

JMS: I am very much influenced by revolutionary art and culture in the development of my political activism. While I was in the university, as an undergraduate and graduate student, I practically gobbled up all creative writing that was available in the UP Main Library and had something to do with the Philippine revolution, with the Left movement in the US during the 1930s and the classic literary works from the Russian, Chinese and other revolutions.

I had the advantage of being a student in English and journalism and then a graduate student in comparative literature. But I was also intensely interested in literature with revolutionary content.

I also found it enlightening, invigorating and fulfilling to be with cultural and political activists in SCAUP with writers in the *Philippine Collegian* and the UP Writers Club. In my time, these became centers of discussions, mass communications and militancy along the line of national democratic movement.

I also acted in plays together with Behn Cervantes, Lino Brocka and Ishmael Bernal who became great film makers. It is in theatre that you learn to work with others, rehearse and coordinate with many others and blend with various artistic talents, in order to come out with a creditable total product in a series of stage presentations.

I have written poems, essays and other works with revolutionary content to this day. I wrote short stories and two novels and put them

away because of my own judgment that they were not good enough politically and artistically. I taught English literature and encouraged my students to study revolutionary literature even when this was not part of the syllabus. I also taught as a social science subject Rizal's novels *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*. I dealt with these as expose of the oppressiveness and exploitativeness of Spanish colonialism, with continuing relevance to the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system in the Philippines today.

# Cultural Imperialism in the Philippines

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**Q**uestions by Host Edna Becher of Panday Sining Europa, Anakbayan Europa and ND Online School  
October 11, 2020

1. *Can you talk about the Philippine culture before colonialism came? What kind of societies existed by then?*

JMS: With regard to the peopling of the Philippines, the Aetas are recognized as aborigines. Next came the Austronesians from across the South China Sea. Then came the Malays from the South with knowledge and skills in iron smelting and forging. The various local cultures had their respective origins and development but were exposed to outside influences by trading with neighboring lands in Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia as well as by wars and subjugation of one type of people by another.

When Spanish colonialism came to the Philippines, there was already a variety of societies and cultures of varying scales in the Philippine archipelago. There were the forest-based primitive communal societies of the Aetas, the patriarchal slave societies of the Malays along the sea coast and big rivers and the Islamic feudal communities with features of slavery mainly in Mindanao but also in other places up to Luzon, including Manila.

On the basis of the different types of societies, there were different kinds of cultures. There were distinct methods of production as well as distinct designs of products, especially in pottery, weaving and blacksmithing. There was a variety of scripts, songs and poems. Tattooing was widespread and was a way of self-dignification and artistic expression. There were various types of belief in the supernatural, such as animism, pantheism, polytheism and Islamic monotheism.

2. *A colonial and feudal society evolved during the Spanish colonization of the Philippines. How did it evolve and what did it look like?*

JMS: Spain conquered most of the Philippines with the use of the sword and the cross. The first colonial expedition headed by Magellan failed in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. But the subsequent Legazpi

expedition in the latter half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century succeeded with the use of divide-and-rule tactics. Legazpi had only some 250 men but he recruited Visayans to be able to conquer communities in Luzon.

Typically, the Spanish conquistadores launched an attack on a community that was resistant despite offers of friendship and gifts to the *datu* or *rajah*. After the success of the sword, the Catholic chaplain of the Spanish military force engaged in religious proselytization, usually converting the ruling families first and then the rest of the community. The subjugated Malay communities usually had a patriarchal slave system, with elements of feudalism already in its womb. Thus, it was not too difficult to use this as base for the feudal *encomienda* system.

In the first century of Spanish colonial dominion, slavery was still practiced in the *encomienda* system but it would be formally abolished and would dwindle. The slaves became share-cropping tenants or serfs and the house slaves became servants, with the former slave master's power of life and death over subjects neutralized and moderated by Christian and feudal rules and values. Thus, feudalism was adopted and became widespread in most of the more than three centuries of Spanish colonial rule.

*3. Catholicism was propagated by the colonizers. How could it be that it was effectively adapted by the native Filipinos? What role did it play in the colonization of the Philippines?*

JMS: The motives and objectives of Spanish colonialism are evident in the official slogans of God, Gold and Glory. Spanish colonialism was supposed to do the work of God in making Christians out of heathens. Gold in the Philippines was a prime target of Spanish mercantile capitalism. And of course Glory belonged to the Spanish crown/monarchy.

The friars accompanying the conquistadors had effective tactics in proselytization and conversion of the natives. Even after the conquest or submission by a community to the superior Spanish military force, they did not compel the *datu*s to become monogamous but they taught Christianity to the wives and baptized the children as Christians. They supplanted the worship of many *anitos* with the worship of many saints around the single God who supplanted Bathala wherever this was the supreme deity.

While the Spanish military and their native conscripts had the sword and guns as hardware of colonial power, the friars and their converts supplied the software like the crucifix, the Bible, the catechisms, novenas, the rosary beads, the daily twilight prayers, the Sunday masses and other rituals and the statues of Christ, Mary and the saints which dwarfed the anitos. In other words, while the Spanish soldiery was the essential politico-military instrument of domination, Christianity and the friars were the cultural instruments of persuasion and manufacturing consent or acquiescence to colonial domination.

*4. Were there any cultural factors that influenced the 1896 Revolution?*

JMS: There were cultural factors that arose in the Philippines, eventually influencing the Philippine revolution of 1896. As a result of further agricultural development for the purpose of export and inter-island trade in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, families of landlords and an increased number of bureaucrats and merchants could send their children to the university to study for various professions. Liberal democratic ideas seeped into the country in various ways, especially in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

When so many natives and mestizos became priests, they carried out the so-called secularization movement and demanded that the parishes be put under their charge, instead of the Spanish religious orders. The friars pressed the Spanish colonial government to punish the leaders of the secularization movement. Thus, Fathers Gomez, Burgos and Zamora were martyred. Their martyrdom stirred national consciousness among the Filipino people and inflamed anti-colonial sentiment.

There were contradictions among the colonialists themselves reflecting their contradictory interests in the colony as well as the contradictions between the monarchists and the liberal democrats in Spain. It was in this kind of situation when the Propaganda Movement of the Filipino expatriates began and developed in Spain. They were influenced by the French revolution but at the same time they limited themselves to demanding reforms and to making the Philippines a regular province of Spain.

In the meantime, there were Filipinos in the Philippines like Andres Bonifacio and Emilio Jacinto who became determined to establish the Katipunan, declare independence and wage a liberal democratic revolution against Spain. Spanish colonialism became more and more exploitative and oppressive in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, thus, the Moro people rallying to their Islamic society and culture became more combative against Spain. So were the indigenous people in the hilly and mountainous regions who had always resisted Spanish colonialism and retained their own local cultures.

*5. How was the colonial power in the Philippines transferred from Spain to the United States?*

JMS: The Kawit proclamation of independence was done on June 12, 1898. Then all over the Philippines Spanish colonial power was swept away by the Filipino revolutionary forces, except the Intramuros of Manila. In the meantime, the US and Spain engaged in peace negotiations in Paris and reached an agreement on December 10, 1898 whereby Spain sold the Philippines to the US for USD 20 million.

In accordance with such peace agreement, the American fleet headed US admiral Dewey and the Spanish fleet staged a fake battle at Manila Bay and the Spanish authorities in Intramuros surrendered to Admiral Dewey. From then on, relations between the Philippine revolutionary government and the US became openly hostile. War broke out between the Filipino people and US imperialism on February 4, 1899. US imperialism prevailed over the Filipino people by using superior military power and killing 1.5 million Filipinos.

*6. US colonial rule was different from the Spanish colonial rule. It shifted from feudalism to semi-feudalism. How were the changes that were made and how did it benefit the US?*

JMS: Spanish colonialism was at the most merchant capitalist, engaging in the Manila-Acapulco galleon trade and later on in the trade with Europe via the Suez Canal. It was mainly interested in the feudal mode of producing such agricultural crops as tobacco, abaca, sugar and the like for export and the import of consumer manufactures. To some extent, the feudal mode of production was eroded by the production of goods for exchange within the

archipelago and with foreign countries. But the relations of production was still predominantly feudal, with the landlord being the ruling class among the Filipinos.

To make the Philippines semifeudal, the US undertook a series of actions like the following: remove the feudal restrictions on the movement of the people, transfer ownership of the friar estates to Filipinos, expand the haciendas for the production of export crops, grab the land from the indigenous people and open the mines, set up enterprises to manufacture domestic consumables out of locally available raw materials, expand the infrastructure to facilitate domestic and foreign trade and commerce and expand the educational system to produce more bureaucrats and professionals.

The US benefited from its own colonial power by taxing the people to defray the costs of colonial administration and the social infrastructure building. Its monopoly banks drew superprofits from loans and direct investments. It favored the production of export crops and mineral ores and the import of consumer manufactures and equipment of the type that fell short of industrializing the country. Until now, the semifeudal economy persists. The US and other foreign monopoly firms continue to profit from the grossly unequal exchange of cheap raw materials from the Philippines and high-priced manufactures from abroad.

*7. To achieve economic and political control, the United States had to exercise cultural control over the Filipino people. Education played an especially significant role in this. How did the US use the educational system in influencing the Filipino people into submission?*

JMS: Spanish colonialism failed to establish a public school system. But the US was able to do so and also expanded the secondary and tertiary levels of educations. It designed the curriculum and study materials to favor and glorify the US. Like the Spanish colonialists used Christianity, the Catholic schools and the catechism to promote their colonial rule, the US propagated their so-called Jeffersonian kind of liberal ideology to prettify the monstrosity of imperialist conquest and domination of the Philippines.

US soldiers who could teach in the primary grades were allowed to teach and were called Thomasites. American Catholic and

Protestant religious missionaries also came in big numbers to the Philippines. Filipino students with high academic marks were enlisted for scholarship in the US in various fields of study and professional course. They were called the pensionados. The English language supplanted the Spanish language as the principal language of the ruling system and the educational system.

Since the end of direct US colonial rule, US cultural influence in the Philippines has remained dominant. It combines with the economic and political dominance and is supported by it as well as supports it. Many Filipino still take their postgraduate studies in US universities. And the Filipino people are daily bombarded by US propaganda and entertainment programs in printed and electronic media. The puppet leaders of the Philippines and the upper classes tend to follow and echo the latest propaganda from the US.

*8. Besides education, what were the other ways that the US used culture to dominate the Philippines?*

JMS: Aside from the educational system, the US has used the mass media to spread its cultural dominance not only among the formally educated but among the people in general. The mass media are used to spread US cultural influence by presenting US political leaders all kinds of celebrities in the movies, popular music and sports as role models and sources of ideas, cultural biases and consumer taste.

News broadcasts and entertainment programs are used directly to play up and favor US cultural imperialism in overt and subtle ways. Political and commercial advertising are also designed to favor the so-called American way of life and consumerism at the expense of one's own national, class and personal sense. It promotes the culture of automatically preferring the US side of controversial issues and choice of US products over local products. Whatever is the latest hype in the US cultural scene is often aped by the many pro-US creatures in Philippine society.

*9. In 1946, the Philippines became a neocolonial republic. Could you explain briefly what neocolonial means?*

JMS: Strictly speaking, in using the conventional language of Lenin and Mao, it is okay to say that the Philippines became a semicolony of the US from being a full colony under the direct

colonial administration by US colonial officials. But you may also use the term neocolony as a synonym of semicolony. There is no fundamental difference between the two terms, except that Sukarno and Zhou Enlai popularized the term neocolony in the 1950s to stress the nuance of economic and financial control by foreign monopoly capitalism.

Semicolony or neocolony means that a colonial or imperialist power has granted nominal independence to a colony but still retains economic, financial, political, cultural and military power over the former full colony by virtue of certain treaties, agreements and arrangements and through puppet leaders at all levels of the formally independent country.

In the case of the Philippines, the US made sure that when it granted nominal independence, US corporations and citizens retained their property rights and their right to engage in business on terms equal to those of Filipino, and the US military bases stayed on. The Military Bases Agreement, the Mutual Defense Treaty, the Military Assistance Agreement, the Quirino Foster Agreement (US control of the bureaucracy), the Laurel-Langley Agreement and other agreements followed to perpetuate US dominance.

The US Military Bases Agreement was not extended in 1991 but the Philippines was still bound to the US by the Military Assistance Pact, Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA), Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) and Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA). The multilateral agencies like the IMF, World Bank and the WTO and various financial and trading agreements have been used effectively by the US and its allies to subordinate the semicolony to the world capitalist system.

*10. The US conducted a strong an anti-communist campaign in the late 40s and 50s. Did this also reach the Philippines and what effect did it have? What cultural venue did it utilize for this campaign?*

JMS: The US carried out a vicious anti-communist campaign in the Philippines in opposition to the armed revolution of the Filipino people for national independence and democracy against the US and the local exploiting classes in the aftermath of the defeat of Japanese fascism and the US reconquest of the Philippines and also

in connection with the US Cold War against the Soviet Union as well as the US hot wars against the national liberation movements and the peoples of Asia, especially in Korea and the Philippines.

Aside from masterminding and drawing the so-called insurgency plans and supplying the military logistics, the US provided the anti-communist indoctrination to motivate and embolden the Filipino puppet leaders and their military and police forces to suppress the people and the revolutionary forces for national and democracy. They fabricated all kinds of lies against the supposed evils of communism and spouted the slogans of US-style democracy and free enterprise.

*11. The print and electronic mass media have been nationalized since 1972. How could colonial mentality still spread through these media?*

JMS: Colonial mentality can still spread through the print and electronic media because they are under franchise and regulation by pro-US ruling politicians, they are owned by big compradors who are tightly bound up with the foreign monopoly firms by financial arrangements, they are sustained and made profitable by the advertisements of US and other foreign monopoly firms and big comprador firms and they disseminate content produced by editors and producers who follow the dictates of the media owners and advertisers.

*12. What are the objectives of colonial mentality? What kind of culture do they want to dominate?*

JMS: Colonial mentality means subservience to foreign monopoly interests and pro-foreign comprador interests and holding political, cultural, economic and security biases in favor of the aforesaid interests against the national and democratic rights and interests of the people. It is a reactionary kind of mentality which is derived from pro-imperialist and reactionary upbringing and education or is adopted by those adhering to it by way of getting a higher position and compensation than others.

*13. Does language play a part in spreading colonial mentality? How?*

JMS: It is an advantage to know the language of a dominant foreign power, like Spanish in the time of Spanish colonialism or

English in the time of US imperialism. The language facilitates your understanding of the ideas and values of the dominant foreign power and your obtaining personal benefits from serving that foreign power and its puppets. Thus, you become a person with colonial mentality if you use the foreign language to serve the foreign power and its puppets against the Filipino nation.

But you can use a foreign language like Rizal did in order to criticize and repudiate colonialism and colonial mentality and to gain support from the Spanish people and other peoples abroad. That is what the proletarian revolutionaries and anti-imperialists do today. They use English to criticize, condemn and fight US imperialism among the English-educated people in the Philippines and to gain international support from peoples abroad along the anti-imperialist line and in the spirit of proletarian internationalism. Language is like a knife that you can use for a good purpose or for a bad purpose.

*14. A lot of other countries, that were not colonies of the US, are also heavily influenced by American culture. How do you compare this to the colonial influence in the Philippines?*

JMS: American culture, especially the imperialist kind of culture, has spread widely even to the countries not colonized by the US because of the overwhelming dominance of the US in the world capitalist system in economic, political and cultural terms and because of the powerful means of communications available from the time the US became No. 1 imperialist power, especially since the end of World War II. The US has systematically and vigorously spread its economic, political, cultural and military influence in order to counter socialist countries, newly-independent and the national liberation movements.

*15. Was there any resistance to cultural imperialism?*

JMS: Of course, where there are patriotic and progressive forces, especially where there are revolutionary forces led by the proletariat, there is resistance to cultural imperialism. In the Philippines, for instance, the legal national democratic movement and the armed revolutionary movement of the Filipino people demand national liberation and democracy; and in the specific field of culture they demand a national, scientific and mass culture.

*16. What kind of culture should we put forward to replace colonial culture?*

JMS: We demand a national or patriotic kind of culture which is anti-colonial and anti-imperialist. This means that we assert our national sovereignty and we cherish our national cultural heritage, including the achievements of individual compatriots in the field of arts and sciences and by the entire nation and all regional and local communities of diverse characteristics. The point is for culture to serve the needs of the entire Filipino nation and to give full play to its creativity and uphold its dignity.

We demand a scientific culture. This means that we avail of science and technology developed by us and others and use this to advance the Philippine economy, further democratize the political life, realize social justice and a healthy environment and raise the educational and cultural level of the people. In view of the information technology that we have now, we can more easily than before propagate and raise the educational and cultural level of the nation in schools and outside of schools.

We demand a mass culture. This means the culture is oriented to serving the people, especially the toiling masses of workers and peasants, in their struggle for national and social liberation and for a socialist future. It must inspire them to raise their economic, political and cultural level and to make the most and best contributions that they can make from one period to another in order to win and gain political power and advance the social revolution and construction.

# On the Tasks of Cadres in the Cultural Field

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**Q**uestions by Host Edna Becher of Panday Sining Europa, Anakbayan Europa and ND Online School  
October 18, 2020

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*1. REVOLUTIONARY CULTURE is a powerful revolutionary weapon for the broad masses of the people. How powerful is it? What role can revolutionary culture play in advancing the national democratic revolution?*

JMS: To serve the people is the single most important task of cadres and mass activists in the cultural field. This is their single most important task. In this regard, they perform a definite role in the revolutionary struggle for national democracy against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

The cultural revolution is a distinct yet integral part of the revolutionary mass movement. Without the preparation of public opinion, there can be no revolution. In the course of the national democratic revolution, cultural work is always necessary to heighten the fighting spirit of the revolutionary masses.

Revolutionary culture is so powerful and so decisive a weapon that without it the national democratic revolution cannot win. It is the most persuasive and pleasant way of arousing the broad masses of the people along the general line of the national democratic revolution. It inspires the people to join the revolution and fight for the just revolutionary cause until total victory is won.

According to Comrade Mao: "Revolutionary culture is a powerful revolutionary weapon for the broad masses of the people. It prepares the ground ideologically before the revolution comes and is an important, indeed essential, fighting front in the general revolutionary front during the revolution." He also points out that: "All our literature and art are for the masses of the people, and in the first

place for the workers, peasants and soldiers; they are created for the workers, peasants and soldiers and are for their use.”

*2. As the revolutionary mass movement becomes stronger and stronger the reactionaries also deliberately allow the spread of social-democratic or revisionist literature. How do we battle these ideas within our cultural workers? Do cultural workers play a significant role in battling these?*

JMS: Indeed, as the revolutionary mass movement becomes stronger and stronger, the reactionaries deliberately allow the spread of social-democratic or revisionist literature in an attempt to infect the revolutionary cadres and mass activists with fears of revolutionary wars and nuclear weapons and with the philosophy of survival and capitulation.

To preserve their power and wealth, which they have accumulated by oppressing and exploiting the people, the reactionaries deliberately employ the mass media to try to sow confusion within the ranks of the revolutionaries and among the people. The cultural workers of the revolution must promote Marxist-Leninist education and the national, scientific and mass culture in order to combat social democratic or revisionist ideas.

They can run study courses and learn how to criticize and repudiate such anti-communist and ideas. They can issue publications. They can run seminars and mass courses on culture and develop the education and cultural departments of mass organizations. They can organize cultural groups to learn from the toiling masses and create and present works and performances that express the demands of the people and inspire to wage revolution.

It is the task of cadres in the cultural field to keep on remolding their class outlook. They must firmly combat all erroneous ideas and their own selfish tendencies with the lucid ideology of the proletariat, Marxism-Leninism, and integrate themselves with the masses in the practical revolutionary movement.

Comrade Mao teaches us, “Our literature and art workers must accomplish this task and shift their stand; they must gradually move their feet over the side of the workers, peasants and soldiers, to the side of the proletariat, through the process of going into their very midst and into the thick of practical struggles and through the

process of studying Marxism and society. Only in this way can we have a literature and art that are truly for the workers, peasants and soldiers, a truly proletarian literature and art.”

3. *Why is it an important task for cultural workers to be in the midst of the revolutionary mass movement?*

JMS: It is an important task to be in the midst of the revolutionary mass movement. In the course of participating in the revolutionary struggles of the workers and peasants, our cadres in the cultural field will gain knowledge that they can never gain from textbooks alone. To conduct social investigation in the course of practical struggles is to gather the best material for a truly significant literature and art. One cannot write of the workers, peasants and soldiers without knowing them intimately.

By participating in the revolutionary mass movement, the cultural cadres can soonest realize their objective of inspiring the people to fight for their national and democratic rights and interests against imperialist domination and the local exploiting classes of big comprador, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists.

To be in the revolutionary mass movement, the cultural cadres must belong to distinctive cultural organizations independent of or associated with the people's primary or basic mass organizations. In any case they must be conscious of building a cultural army to complement and make more effective the mass struggles of the people and the people's army fighting to defeat the enemy. The partnership of the pen and the gun makes the revolutionary movement invincible.

Cadres in the cultural field are like commanders who lead cultural battalions—the masses in their thousands, tens of thousands and millions. The audience for revolutionary literary and art work is incalculable. A stage performance or an exhibit can be repeated so many times that it is extremely difficult to keep count of the audience. The printing capacity of a press may be limited but a good literary work nevertheless gets passed from hand to hand and discussed without end. If our cultural work truly serves the people, our readers and audience are inevitably aroused and become a tremendous force for the revolution.

We must always remember that the people will not be aroused and mobilized unless the literary and artistic work is drawn from their lives, particularly from their needs and aspirations. We bring to a higher plane the actions and thinking of the revolutionary masses so as to inspire them further to destroy and triumph over the enemy. The heroes that emerge from our work should be the people themselves and their superlative representatives who are tempered in the crucible of the revolution. The revolutionary struggle should be the essence of the organic unity of a literary or artistic work.

Chairman Mao teaches us, "Our purpose is to ensure that literature and art fit well into the whole revolutionary machine as a component part, that they operate as powerful weapons for uniting and educating the people for attacking and destroying the enemy, and that they help the people fight the enemy with one heart and one mind."

Inasmuch as culture is a reflection of economics and politics, literature and art are the finest and most sensitive ideological forms for summing up social reality. We can create revolutionary literature and art only by carefully and meticulously keeping to the revolutionary stand, viewpoint and method of the class which leads the broad masses of the people in the life-and-death struggle between progress and reaction.

Chairman Mao teaches us, "In the world today all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines. There is in fact no such thing as art for art's sake, art that stands above classes, art that is detached from or independent of politics. Proletarian art and literature are part of the whole proletarian revolutionary cause; they are, as Lenin said, cogs and wheels in the whole revolutionary machine."

*4. How important is criticism and self-criticism with our cultural workers and what are the way to conduct these?*

JMS: Criticism and self-criticism are important to identify errors and weaknesses and correct them in order to improve revolutionary cultural work, its content and style, and thereby make it more effective inspiring the oppressed masses fight and win victories. Cultural organizations can make timely sessions of criticism and self-criticism every week and after every major activity. Sessions to cover

longer periods involve the analysis and evaluation of programs and campaigns of duration beyond a week or a month.

There is nothing to fear and be uneasy about criticism and self-criticism. They are meant to identify mistakes and weaknesses of individuals and the collective in order to improve the work and style of work as well as to recognize the strengths and accomplishments, to learn from positive and negative lessons, in order to advance cultural work.

We live in a society that is semicolonial and semifeudal. It is inevitable that practically all our cadres in the cultural field have at one time or another been deeply influenced by bourgeois and feudal culture and they continue to be so influenced in varying degrees. The dominant frame of mind among those educated in the present cultural system is bourgeois. In the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, the bourgeois mind becomes so fantastic, regressive and desperate that it resorts to feudal mysticism in order to reinforce the most decadent influence of imperialistic culture and art.

Among the cultural workers, there is always enough practical and concrete basis for study and for criticism and self-criticism. The literary and artistic work that are created by them are subject to analysis and criticism. These are always subject to improvement. While the most advanced should be good at uniting with the less advanced cultural workers, who are willing to unite with us on the general line of the national democratic revolution, it should always be the task of the former to persuade the latter to further remold their outlook. Persuasion is our principal method of struggle with them.

We have no fear of criticism because our end is always to serve the people and therefore we must always be ready to give them the best that we can. Among our comrades and our friends we must be honest and modest even as to the enemy we are fierce and we must not show the least sign of obsequiousness.

Comrade Mao teaches us:

“In literary and art criticism there are two criteria, the political and the artistic...There is the political criterion and there is the artistic criterion; what is the relationship between the two? Politics cannot be equated with art, nor can a general world outlook be equate with a method of artistic creation and criticism. We deny not only that there

is an abstract and absolutely unchangeable political criterion, but also that there is an abstract and absolutely unchangeable artistic criterion; each class in every class society has its own political and artistic criteria. But all classes in all class societies invariably put the political criterion first and the artistic criterion second... What we demand is the unity of politics and art, the unity of content and form, the unity of revolutionary political content and the highest possible perfection in artistic form. Works of art which lack artistic quality have no force, however progressive they are politically. Therefore, we oppose both works of art with a wrong political viewpoint and the tendency towards the 'poster and slogan style' which is correct in political viewpoint but lacking in artistic power. On questions of literature and art we must carry on a struggle on two fronts."

It is not enough to undertake criticism and self-criticism only among fellow craftsmen. Though it is necessary for those who have an interest in the same field of work to have a union, cultural workers should avoid restricting themselves to the guild mentality of the petty bourgeoisie in medieval times. We should make it a task to encourage criticism of our works by the masses. After a cultural performance or art exhibit, we should invite the audience to submit their critical remarks and suggestions for improvement. In our publications, we should also regularly call for these. Even before a piece of literary or artistic work is put out, certain efforts can be made to consult the masses or their representatives.

*5. Sometimes cultural work is misunderstood as mere performing groups, etc. How can we ensure that other comrades understand the significance and tasks of cultural workers?*

JMS: We can ensure that all comrades understand the full scope of culture and cultural work, the significance and tasks of cultural workers by writing and publishing articles, staging cultural presentations and holding mass meetings in order to explain them. Revolutionary culture is the concentrated expression and reflection of revolutionary economics and politics.

It encompasses the ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, the general program of people's democratic revolution, the drive for a national, scientific and mass culture and people's aspirations for national and social liberation, social and environmental justice, all-

round development, equality of gender, nations and races, the spirit of proletarian internationalism and international anti-imperialist solidarity.

The cultural revolution that the cultural workers seek to carry out is meant not only to become a part of the existing cultural system of imperialism and the local exploiting classes but to replace them and become dominant in a new cultural system founded on the emancipation of the exploited classes and enforced by the people's democratic state under the leadership of the proletariat.

The need for having something to say, a clear ideological and political line, is most obvious in the essay form. There is daily a big pile of articles that may be subsumed under this form. The sheer weight of these in terms of newsprint is truly oppressive, mostly testaments as they are to the false virtues of the enemy. It is in the essay form, however, that the revolutionary mass movement has most expressed itself. It is inevitable that this form will always serve as the most explicit weapon for assaulting the enemy and defending the people.

In fiction, the short story has for quite a long time been the most popular form among Filipino creative writers. The novel form is quite neglected obviously because it requires sustained writing, something that our writers seem not to be able to cope with because they have to copywrite for an advertising firm, clerk in a government office or commercial house, work in a metropolitan newspaper or magazine or teach in a university. Short or long, fiction should be employed by revolutionary writers to serve the people.

Of the various literary forms, drama is the most in demand in the revolutionary mass movement today. The demand is stressed by the scarce quantity and low quality of the plays written for so long a period of time, and, more importantly, by the effectiveness of the drama in arousing and mobilizing the masses. This is a literary form that can be perceived and comprehended by the literate and non-literate masses when it is already staged. It is also a form by which local cultural groups can be most easily organized and by which local acting talents can be coordinated in great numbers. It is an exceedingly important task to write and produce revolutionary drama, one-act or full-length plays.

The *zarzuela* and *comedia* or *moro-moro* are traditional forms of drama that may be adopted by our revolutionary writers. Replace the mawkishness and class reconciliation in the zarzuela with the revolutionary spirit and proletarian standpoint; and foolish love songs with revolutionary songs. Replace the Christian chauvinism and the anti-Muslim line in the *comedia* or *moro-moro* with the tenets and values of a people's war waged by a people's army led by the proletarian party; and the thunder and lightning of the medieval crusade with the thunder and lightning of people's war. Of course, it is necessary to give these traditional forms of drama the compactness of modern drama.

There are other indigenous forms which can be as effective as the drama in promoting revolution. These are the *balagtasan*, the *duplo* and that indigenous and yet so universal form, poetry, that lends itself to singing. These can be performed to precede or serve as intermission numbers when a dramatic presentation is done. These can also be presented exclusively on their own account.

It is worthwhile to go into scriptwriting for the movies, radio-TV drama and the comics. It is difficult to get a revolutionary movie script filmed at the moment because of the technical and financial requirements. But it is relatively easier to turn out comics and to produce drama over the radio. The movies, radio drama and the comics can be turned into our weapons. It is the overriding task of revolutionary writers to infuse revolutionary class content into the various forms of literature and to make the workers, peasants and revolutionary soldiers the heroes under the red flag of the proletariat.

*6. Can you share some concrete examples in how cultural work is integrated in the tasks of the New People's Army? What is their practice in this field?*

JMS: If we talk about culture in the largest sense, it encompasses the work of social investigation to learn from the masses their social, economic, political and cultural conditions, needs and demands, the ideological and political courses of study and mass meetings, the literary and artistic works, publications and performances of the cultural workers.

All commands and units of the New People's Army, from the level of squads and propaganda teams to the level of the National

Operational Command are required to have their own educational and cultural life and have definite educational and cultural formations to enlighten and raise the fighting spirit of both the Red commanders and fighters and the broad masses of the people in the guerrilla fronts and in the areas of expansion. Cultural performances and publications are of course the most conspicuous kind of cultural work.

*7. As cultural workers, we have a lot of tasks besides producing art. How do we ensure that we produce more cultural workers and that they can have the time to work on the quality of the art that they produce?*

JMS: There are Party cadres and members, Red fighters and mass activists who must be able to participate in cultural work as instructors, creative writers, singers, music instrumentalists, researchers, directors and technicians. They devote more time to cultural work than the rest of the revolutionary movement. They can also use cultural products done previously by revolutionary writers, artists and formations in the Philippines and abroad. Awareness and appreciation of their cultural work and products through presentations and circulation of video recordings can generate interest among the revolutionaries in cultural work.

Calls can be made for participation in cultural work and study sessions and workshops can be organized to attract and break in those who wish to participate and join a particular cultural formation. It is through actual cultural productions and evaluation of these through the appreciation and criticism of audiences and the criticism and self-criticism of the cultural workers that the quality of the cultural product can be raised in terms of content and style.

The national democratic cultural revolution, under the leadership of the proletariat, has advanced brilliantly. So many writers have come to the forefront in the revolutionary struggle in the cultural field. They have come forward with works into which they have infused revolutionary class content as best as they could. It is of basic importance to analyze and sum up the concrete situation in the field of literature from one stage to another. The purpose is to improve current literary stock, choose the exemplary works for popularization

and set the tasks for raising the quantity and quality of further literary output.

At this stage, it is important for revolutionary writers to band together and make a conscious effort to create and promote literary and artistic models or outstanding works. These works should prove that revolutionary class content can be heightened and at the same time aesthetic standards can be raised. We must debunk all arguments of the bourgeoisie that only its ideas and notions can satisfy the demands of the various forms of literature.

The best way to do the debunking is to create and promote brilliant proletarian revolutionary literature and art. It is our task to make these literary models reach the factories, farms, schools and everywhere else in the country. By doing this, we promote the upsurge of revolutionary literature in our country.

*8. Are there any lessons from past mistakes from the Philippine experience of cultural work that cultural workers today can learn from?*

JMS: Because of the more than 50 years of cultural work done by the cadres under the Communist Party of the Philippines in the cultural field, there are many negative lessons to learn from past mistakes just as there are many positive lessons. I can mention a few. But others, especially those involved in cultural work, can certainly mention more.

Overdependence on one or a few writers, artistic directors can prejudice the development of cultural work. It is best to distribute responsibility among more cadres in order to produce more and better results. Cultural workers must be conscious of belonging to a cultural army engaged in a cultural revolution. They must be determined to be active and productive members of this army.

It is an army for arousing, organizing, and mobilizing a great mass of cultural workers and audiences to defeat the counterrevolutionary cultural army that flings all kinds of lies and slander against the revolutionary movement and has the advantage of controlling the mass media, social media and all the theatres of propaganda and entertainment.

While the proletarian revolutionary cadres must lead the revolutionary cultural army, they have made mistakes in failing to do

united front work with other patriotic and democratic forces in order to avail of greater human and material resources and larger audiences.

*9. Are there any tasks specific to the cultural workers organizing outside the Philippines?*

JMS: Filipinos are well-known to be good articulators of ideas and also to have abundant cultural talents. The existing various types of Filipino organizations in every country, every city or even in every neighborhood must form their respective cultural groups. Cultural formations independent of the various types of organizations can also be formed. They hold periodic and special cultural festivals on the scale of a whole country, region or a city.

I propose that national democratic movement of overseas Filipinos can establish TV and radio broadcast stations by using a digital platform. The various types of Filipino mass organizations as well as their foreign friends can supply informative, educational cultural and entertainment content. The important point is that all these cultural associations uphold and promote the national and democratic rights and interests of the overseas Filipinos and the Filipino people in the motherland.

*10. What is your advice to cultural workers who are challenged to fulfil their tasks amidst the current situation of the pandemic, as well as rising fascism?*

JMS: I have participated in so many webinars in this long time of the COVID-19 pandemic. The digital media can be a powerful and effective medium during and after the pandemic. Let us do more webinars on culture and art and even far more presentations of cultural and artistic performances with a revolutionary character, including songs and instrumental music, dances poetry reading, display of painting and other works, drama, comedy, parodies and others.

There can be as many cultural and artistic formations as possible, of varying sectoral or geographic scales. But the directors, producers and other participants must present the best they can so that they can be effective in enlightening and inspiring the people and even serve as models for emulation by cultural workers in the Philippines and abroad. The video tapes can serve to propagate

these cultural and artistic presentations. Karaoke versions of all the revolutionary songs should be produced so that these can be more easily popularized among the masses and the general public.

The national democratic movement has become so large and strong in the Philippines, with many millions as adherents. I propose now, as I have long proposed, that an initiative be taken to establish a digital platform for a TV network to be fed with informative, educational, cultural and entertainment content (in the form of video productions and instant telecommunications) from the many types of mass organizations of the national democratic movement as well as from friendly parties and mass movements abroad.

# On the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution

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**F**ourth Episode of Mao Serye  
of the ND Online School of Anakbayan-Europa  
Questions by Crisanto  
January 3, 2021

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1. *WHAT IS THE HISTORICAL significance of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) to China and to the world?*

JMS: Mao launched the GPCR in 1966 in line with his theory of continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat through cultural revolution in order to combat modern revisionism, prevent the restoration of capitalism and consolidate socialism.

This theory was the result of his study of the class contradictions in Soviet socialist society and his critique of the Soviet political economy and the rise of the Soviet modern revisionism under Khrushchov as well as the circumstances of China from 1949 to 1966, especially from 1957 to 1966.

Mao had also observed that there were already revisionists or capitalist roaders within the Chinese Communist Party and the socialist state since the planning and preparation of the Second Five Year Plan in 1957; and that the Soviet revisionists headed by Khrushchov had influence on the Chinese revisionists.

Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping sent study teams to the Soviet Union to learn from the revisionist reforms instituted by Khrushchov for application in China. They came into sharp conflict with the planning and preparation for the Second Five-Year Plan or the Great Leap Forward of China.

2. *How did Mao take notice of the capitalist roaders in the Chinese Communist Party? And why did he launch the GPCR only in 1966 if he noticed them 10 years earlier?*

JMS: Mao and the Central Committee had to observe first the pronouncements and behavior of the capitalist roaders, let them

unfold themselves first and do only what was warranted at a given time. Peng Dehuai who was defense minister and was well-known as close to the Soviet Union was the most brazen in opposing The Great Leap Forward at the Lushan conference in 1959 and was promptly made to account for his position.

In criticizing certain points or features of the Great Leap Forward, Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yun and Zhou Enlai were more prudent than Peng Dehuai. But Liu and Deng were systematic in taking advantage of contradictions and difficulties to undermine the entire Second Five Year Plan and not to solve them for the purpose of advancing socialist revolution and socialist construction.

They were for prolonging and enlarging concessions to the bourgeoisie in state-private corporations and to the rich peasants and private merchants. They were for the development of a “national democratic economy” instead of socialist construction. They exaggerated the need for private accumulation to run counter to the socialist drive for collective accumulation. In the name of using material incentives, they were for bigger wage differentials and for the piece-rate wage system.

Before and after the formation of the communes in the Great Leap Forward, Liu and Deng pushed the “Three Freedoms and One Contract” scheme to sabotage the advanced coops and the communes. The three freedoms were the freedoms: 1) to enlarge private lots, 2) to promote free-markets, and 3) for each individual household to be responsible for its own profit or loss. The one contract was to have each individual household sign a contract with the State for the production of a pre-set amount of crops. After the pre-set amount was met, the peasant would be free to sell everything on the free market.

*3. What was the Great Leap Forward all about? According to the anticommunists as well as the Dengist capitalist-roaders, it was entirely or mostly a catastrophe like the GPCR.*

JMS: After the basic socialist transformation of the Chinese economy in the First Five Year Plan from 1952 to 1957, the Great Leap Forward was planned and implemented to develop rapidly heavy and basic socialist industries as the lead factor in building socialism, agricultural collectivization through the communes as the

base of the socialist economy and light industry as bridge factor to provide for the immediate consumer and producer needs of households, especially among the peasants. This was supposed to learn from the over investment in heavy industry at the expense of agriculture in the Soviet experience under Stalin.

The Soviet revisionists and their Chinese followers were most vociferous in saying that agricultural collectivization was a certain failure if the agricultural machines were not yet provided everywhere. But the Great Leap Forward was successful in rapidly making the economy self-reliant through the wise and planned utilization of the available productive forces, through collective efforts, despite the continuing imperialist embargo, the Soviet abandonment of ongoing projects and the natural calamities which hit hardest in 1960 to 1961. The bumper crop came in 1962.

From then on, even the Chinese revisionists could not deny that the Great Leap Forward was greatly successful and that the Chinese people were enjoying stability and initial prosperity from year to year. Without the Great Leap Forward, China would not have developed its socialist economy self-reliantly on the two legs of industry and agriculture and would have succumbed to the imperialist embargo, the Soviet revisionist abandonment and the natural calamities.

Because of the Great Leap Forward, China scored major victories in developing socialist industry and the communes. Mao and the proletarian revolutionaries could not allow the Chinese capitalist roaders to get away with all the vitriolic attacks on his leadership when difficulties were misrepresented as insurmountable failures. Thus, he launched the Socialist Education Movement in 1963. But this was misdirected and sabotaged by Liu and Deng by promoting revisionism and they unwittingly laid the ground for the GPCR.

*4. How did the GPCR begin and develop until the Ninth Congress of the CPC in 1969?*

JMS: Liu and Deng themselves took part in the decision in January 1966 to explore the launching of the cultural revolution and to let Beijing Mayor Peng Zhen investigate how so much revisionist propaganda had run under the very noses of the responsible organs

of the Chinese Communist Party, especially the Propaganda Department.

Peng Zhen came out with the “February Outline” to dismiss as merely academic the issue over what his vice mayor Wu Han had written against the decision of the Party to dismiss Peng Dehuai from his position because of his opposition to the Great Leap Forward. He tried to suppress Yao Wen-yuan’s criticism of Wu’s satirical piece which compared Mao to a tyrannical emperor for dismissing Peng from office.

When faculty members and students in Beijing rose up against the “February Outline,” Liu and Deng dispatched “work teams” to quell them. The intervention from above merely outraged the university population. The chain of events led to the formation of the Central Cultural Revolution Group of the CPC, the drawing up of the August 18, 1966 16-point Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the spread of the Red Guards Movement among the youth and the workers and Mao praising the youth as the successors of the revolution and calling on the Red Guards to bombard the bourgeois headquarters within the CPC and on the People’s Liberation Army to support the Left.

The exemplary theatrical works began to roll out and be performed in theatres, on the streets, on various forms of transport, in offices, factories and farms. They celebrated as heroes of the Chinese revolution the workers, peasants and soldiers. They promoted the line of the proletarian-socialist revolution and socialist construction. They condemned the Chinese capitalist roaders and upheld the line of proletarian cultural revolution against the old ideas, old culture, old habits, and old customs.

The Red Guards Movement was described as the most extensive and intensive manifestation of democracy in the history of mankind, arousing, organizing and mobilizing hundreds of millions of people all over China and utilizing huge assemblies, big character posters, slogans on walls and other forms of propaganda that the people could easily make against officials taking the capitalist road. In accordance with the Constitution of the Anshan Iron and Steel

Company, the right of the workers to strike was spelled out and exercised to assert the leading role of their class.

The January Storm broke out in Shanghai in 1967. The workers overthrew the Municipal Party Committee and took power in the name of the Shanghai Commune. This was renamed the Revolutionary Committee the following month and became the model for forming revolutionary committees to take power all over China. They consisted of representatives of the Party, the people's army and masses. They became the base for delegates to the Ninth Party Congress in 1969.

*5. How did the Chinese revisionist or capitalist roaders fight back against the forces of the GPCR?*

JMS: Of course, the highest of the revisionists or capitalist roaders within the CPC resisted the GPCR. I have already mentioned the work teams deployed by Liu and Deng and maneuvers of Peng Zhen. There were those who used their high positions at various levels to maneuver and spread intrigues in order to counter the mass movement before they lost their positions. There were also those who pretended to be remorseful and pretended to be for the GPCR.

The worst enemies of the GPCR were those who created their own factions of Red Guards and worker rebels and took an ultra-Left line and carried out actions to discredit the GPCR. They were then denounced as those who raised the Red flag to attack it. They engaged in fighting the real Red Guards and carrying out physical actions and acts of vandalism against China's cultural legacy.

The objective of the Rightists in whipping up ultra-Left slogans and actions was to discredit the GPCR and conjure the demand for stopping the mass movement and stabilizing the situation by the authorities. The Rightists spread the intrigue that even Mao had been repelled by the unruliness of the Red Guards and they also sought to split the Left.

*6. After the Ninth Congress in 1969, what happened to the Left and to Lin Biao after being hailed as "closest comrade in arms" of Mao and "universally accepted successor"?*

JMS: Soon after the Ninth Congress, reports circulated that there was a falling out between Lin Biao and Chen Boda on one side and

the Shanghai Group of Four (Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao Yao Wenyuan and Wang Hongwen), that Lin Biao was in a hurry to become President and that he and his 24-year old son were plotting to overthrow Mao or to assassinate him.

Many outsiders express disbelief that Lin Biao could be rumored as plotting a coup for a long period of time before he was supposed to have botched his plot and taken a plane to fly to his Soviet foes with his top brass followers and with no sufficient fuel to reach the Soviet Union. After Lin Biao and his key followers were killed, the Group of Four would undertake a campaign to condemn Lin Biao and Confucius (a reference to Zhou Enlai).

It became apparent that the Left for which Mao called on Lin Biao and the PLA to support at the beginning of the GPCR was breaking up. It was reminiscent of how the top followers of Stalin (like Molotov, Malenkov and so on) had also split in the years before Krushchov took full power in 1956 in comparison to the re-ascent of Deng Xiaoping to power as Vice Premier and PLA Chief of Staff with the open support of Zhou Enlai.

*7. But it looked like the Group of Four was still on the rise up to the Tenth Congress of 1973 and even thereafter. How much was the weight of this Left group in relation to the entire Left, Middle and Right section of the Chinese Communist Party?*

JMS: Indeed, the Group was apparently on the rise as propagandists and icons of the cultural revolution up to the Tenth Party Congress in 1973 and even thereafter. Wang Hongwen became the Vice Chairman of the Central Committee, the third highest official after Mao and Zhu Enlai. He and other group members were raised to the Politburo.

Most of the time they enjoyed the support of Mao. Their strength was pushing the pen and doing propaganda pertaining to issues in culture, academia, education and similar matters. But by themselves they carried little or no weight within the Party, state and PLA. Without Mao to support them, they were ineffectual. At any rate, they were able to launch the campaign to criticize Lin Biao and "Confucius" in late 1973 under the direction of Jiang Qing. The name of Confucius was used to refer to Zhou Enlai who was also pointedly alluded to as Zhou in the criticism of the novel, *Water Margin*. The

Group of Four were known to be on the same Left side with the Politburo member Kang Sheng in opposing the re-ascendancy of Deng and in targeting Zhou for criticism as the Centrist figure responsible for rehabilitating and promoting Deng Xiaoping. But subsequently, there would be falling out between the Group of Four and Kang Sheng who died of illness in 1975.

*8. What were the accomplishments of the GPCR before it dwindled in effect and was finally defeated?*

JMS: The GPCR put into practice Mao's theory of continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat through cultural revolution in order to combat modern revisionism, prevent the restoration of capitalism and consolidate socialism. This theory is supposed to be Mao's greatest contribution to the development of Marxism-Leninism, thus making Mao Zedong Thought or Maoism the third stage of development in the revolutionary theory and practice of the proletariat.

Mao had the opportunity to study the continued existence of classes and class struggle and the emergence of modern revisionism in the Soviet Union and China. He confronted revisionism as a growing threat already embedded in the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese state. He hoped to succeed in preventing capitalist restoration and consolidating socialism through cultural revolution and in revolutionizing the political and cultural superstructure to promote the socialist mode of production against the one-sided revisionist and mechanical theory of "productive forces."

He succeeded in leading and generating the GPCR as the most extensive and intensive manifestation of democracy not only in the entire history of China but also of the entire mankind. The GPCR created the Red Guards movement among the youth, the three-in-one revolutionary committees as organs of political power, the three-in-one leading organs in factories, farms and institutions and the principle of mutual supervision between the cadres and masses.

The GPCR educated the cadres and masses in Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, the creation, created the exemplary literary and theatrical works and other artistic works, brought up the requirement for the youth to do mass work as part of their education

and for the masses to evaluate their fitness for further education, systematically deployed teams of educated youth, scientists and technologists to raise the level of production in factories and farms, generated rural clinics and barefoot health workers, scientific experiment and technological innovations flourished archeological works expanded, and so on.

Contrary to the claims of the Dengist capitalist roaders that the GPCR was an economic catastrophe, the Chinese economy had an annual growth rate of 10% despite the attempts to bring down the figures for certain years. Socialist industry and the communes advanced at an accelerated rate, inspired by the examples Daqing and Dachai. The high growth rate was accomplished self-reliantly in the direction of socialism and communism and not with the influx of foreign direct investments and loans for the purpose of capitalist restoration and integration of China with the world capitalist system.

*9. How did Deng Xiaoping and the like undermine and defeat the GPCR? How did they use the three worlds theory and call for modernization, reforms and opening up for the purpose?*

JMS: Since the Xunyi Conference in the Long March, Zhou had always or in the main supported the leadership of Mao. And he was known to consult Mao on every major issue in his line of work. Especially because of his deteriorating health, Mao relied on Zhou to keep the ship of state stable amidst the twists and turns of the cultural revolution and agreed with him when he recommended the rehabilitation of Deng to stabilize the situation after the fall of Lin Biao.

It is an interesting subject for study whether and how Zhou became a Centrist collaborator of Deng Xiaoping in the ultimate defeat of the GPCR. Did Zhou have his own reasons and initiative in collaborating with Deng or the Group of Four pushed him to collaborate with Deng to prevent the Group of Four from running him down.

Ultimately, the Group of Four was impotent in the face of the Centrist-Rightist combination against the GPCR no less within the CPC, the state and the PLA. Within the month after the death of Mao on September 9, 1976, the Group of Four was easily arrested under

orders by officials close to the late Zhou and Deng, like Hua Guofeng, Yeh Jianying, Li Xiannian and Wang Dongxing.

At the highest levels of policy-making by the Party and the state, the capitalist-roaders harped without cease on the line that GPCR had been chaotic and catastrophic and that therefore there was a need for stability and peace. Long before the arrest of Jiang Qing, Deng Xiaoping was also spreading the intriguing misogynistic joke that it would be a big tragedy if the Central Committee had come under the skirt of a woman.

But of course, in the most serious deliberations of the Central Committee, the Political Bureau or its standing committee, the Centrists and Rightists made use of the threats of Soviet social imperialism, the Zhenbao island incident in the Wusuli River and deployment of one million Soviet troops along the Sino-Soviet border as the pretext for drawing closer to the US, make a rapprochement with it as early as during the Nixon visit in 1972 and justify friendly relations with them as the way to “modernization.”

The struggle between the two superpowers, US imperialism and Soviet social imperialism, was utilized by the capitalist roaders to favor US imperialism instead of playing off one imperialist enemy against the other. The friendly relations of China with the US became ultimately the highway for capitalist-oriented reforms and China’s reintegration in the world capitalist system. The US welcomed such relations with China in order to support the advancement of capitalism in China and abandonment of socialism and proletarian internationalism by China.

*10. In the decisive year of 1976 how did Deng get overthrown and bounce back?*

JMS: Zhou Enlai was the main patron and protector of Deng in his rehabilitation and re-ascendancy to power after the death of Lin Biao. When Zhou died of cancer in January 1976, the Left in general and the Group of Four in particular, had Deng removed from power for proposing “modernization” as a big comprador scheme for integrating China into the world capitalist system.

But when Mao died in September 1976, the Rightists and Centrists combined to bring Deng back to power once more and arrest the Group of Four and thousands of cadres who adhered to

the GPCR. And they expelled Party members by the millions and replaced them with those opposed to the GPCR.

There was a total reorganization of the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese state and the PLA in favor of the capitalist roaders. The proletariat was definitively overthrown. And the Dengist counterrevolutionaries succeeded in carrying out capitalist-oriented reforms and the integration of China in the world capitalist system.

*11. What did the GPCR prove and what are the lasting lessons from it? Are you not dismayed that China has become capitalist and imperialist power contending for the No. 1 position?*

JMS: The GPCR proved that there were capitalist roaders within the Chinese Communist Party, the state and the people's army. They were in control of major portions of state power and grew in strength to overthrow the socialist state of the proletariat. After the 1976 coup, it became obvious that China was taking the capitalist road after the GPCR was condemned as a complete catastrophe, the commune system was dismantled, the bourgeoisie was given access to the state banks to finance capitalist enterprises, the privatization of rural industries and departments of the Party, state agencies and people's army were financed to go into business and make acceptable to Party cadres "going into business."

The GPCR successfully exposed the existence and growth of the bourgeoisie in China and combatted modern revisionism at least for some three to five years but it failed ultimately to prevent the restoration of capitalism and consolidate socialism. After 1976, China proceeded to become an unabashed oppressor and exploiter of the Chinese proletariat and other working people. Still further, it became the main partner of the US imperialism in propagating neoliberal globalization, especially after the Dengists crushed the mass movement against corruption and inflation in 1989 and the US steered China towards its entry into the WTO in 2001. Now, they have become the biggest contending imperialist powers.

Of course, it is dismaying that the two biggest socialist countries of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have become capitalist. But by becoming capitalist, after building a socialist industrial base, they have made the world capitalist system far more fraught than ever with the crisis of overproduction and the dangers of fascism, wars of aggression

and destruction of the environment by monopoly capitalism. All basic contradictions in the world are sharpening, between capital and labor in the industrial capitalist countries, between the imperialist countries and oppressed peoples and nations and among the imperialist powers themselves.

The current intensification of inter-imperialist contradictions, especially those between the US and China, are escalating the conditions of oppression and exploitation and driving the proletariat and the people to wage anti-imperialist and democratic struggles and aim for the resurgence of world proletarian-socialist revolution. The epochal struggle between capitalism and socialism, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, continues. Great revolutionary struggles are developing fast and great revolutionary victories of the proletariat and people are in the horizon.