

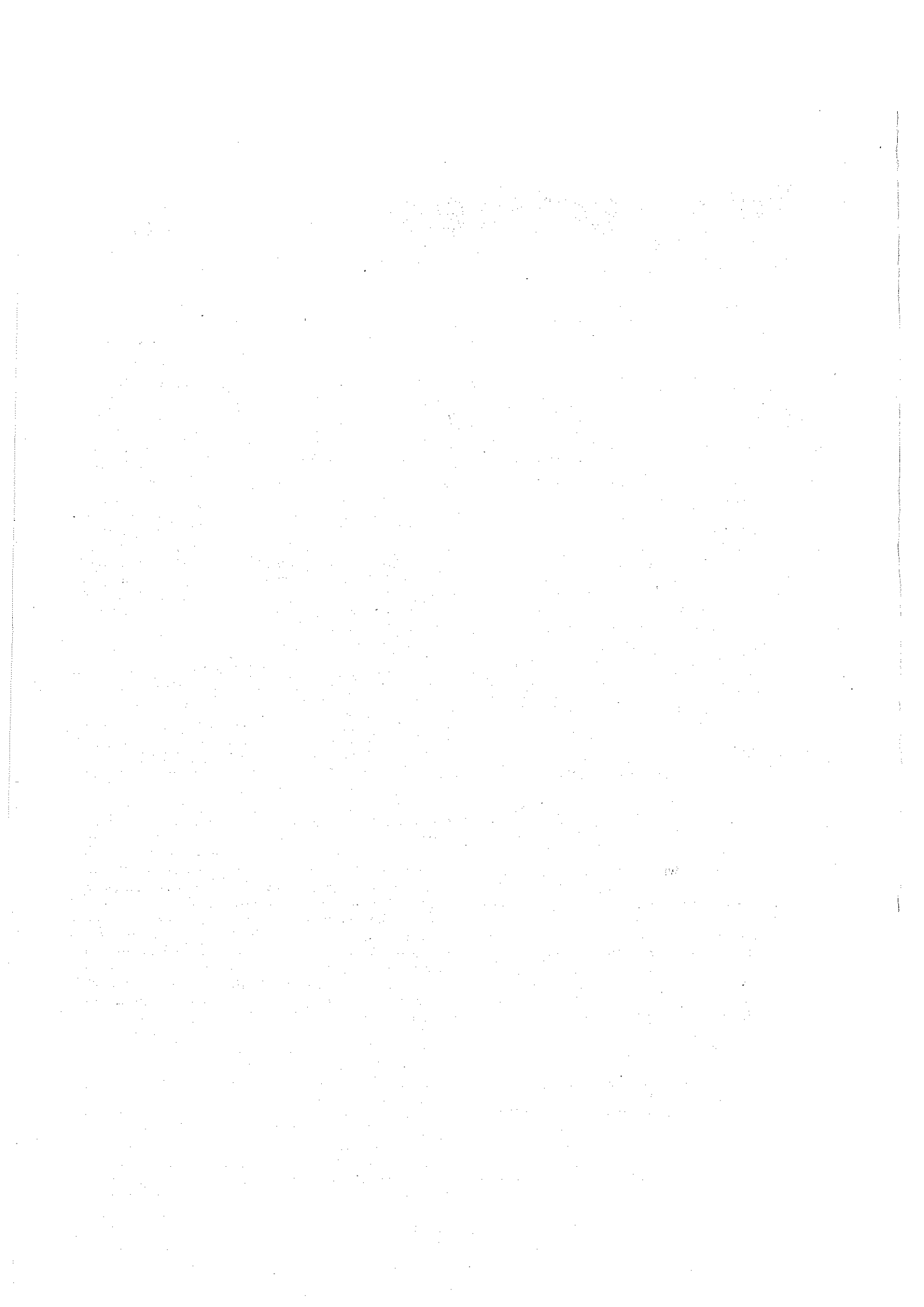


**Workers'
International
News**

No. 2



**Perspectives for the
Philippine revolution**



Perspectives for the Philippine revolution

NOTE: A ferment of discussion has opened up in the Communist Party of the Philippines in the last period. The following discussion document is a recent contribution towards this debate which has had a limited circulation within the CPP. We are reprinting it as we believe it will be of interest to Marxist activists internationally.

The overthrow of the Marcos regime opened up a new chapter in the protracted history of the Philippine revolution, and was a source of inspiration to politically conscious workers throughout the world. But it requires a conscious leadership to carry it through to a conclusion. If the subsequent course of the revolution were to be derailed or distorted for lack of such a leadership, it would be a blow to the Filipino masses and a source of confusion to workers and youth on a global scale. This document is therefore offered as a contribution to the debates currently taking place within the Philippine Labour Movement.

One of the consequences of the recent upheavals in Philippine society is the stimulation of a very important and long-overdue discussion within the organisations of the left in the Philippines. For nearly twenty years the CPP has been the dominant force in the movement to change society. In the spectacular advances of the guerrilla army the NPA it has earned great authority. The downfall of the Marcos regime was one indirect consequence of the growing movement of the NPA throughout the archipelago. And yet the admitted failure of the CPP and the other organisations around it to play a part in the mass movement in the period 1983 to 1986 and the mobilisation of the population of Manila in the uprising of February 1986 has caused a ferment of questioning within the movement. These events have created what is generally termed a "democratic space". To determine the most effective way to use this space, to decide the best way forward for the revolution, it is necessary first to clarify a number of the issues under debate. Among these are:—

- What are the tasks of the revolution? "National democracy"? Socialist revolution?
- Which class will play the decisive role? What are the respective roles of the "national bourgeoisie", the peasants and the proletariat?
- What are the appropriate methods of struggle? What are the limits of guerrilla war?
- What was the nature of the so-called "EDSA revolution"?
- What attitude should be adopted towards the Cory government?
- Is the ruling class capable of solving or attenuating the urgent problems of society?
- What are the prospects of a victory of the guerrillas?
- What kind of state would arise in that case?

The fate of the Philippine revolution depends on finding the correct answers. Marxism is a science, and for serious revolutionaries impressionism and eclecticism are impermissible in determining the solutions to such complex and weighty questions. It requires painstaking study. If a tendency is developed capable of providing clear and incisive answers and acting accordingly, it could relatively quickly transform the situation, because today, more than a year after the fall of Marcos, the objective situation is still fluid. If not, a new era of terrible repression, mass demoralisation, bloody social convulsions, lies ahead.

Tasks of the Revolution

The very name of the Philippines bears the brand of its enslavement, its centuries of humiliation, its rape by world imperialism. It was formally occupied for more than four centuries, by Spanish, briefly by British and Japanese, and by American imperialism, a piece of loot fought over by rival gangs of brigands. The Spanish friars and merchants bled the Filipinos for more than 350 years. The Americans, as part of their peace treaty with the defeated Spaniards, bought the islands for \$40 million, cynically exploiting the leaders of the Philippine revolution to act unwittingly as accomplices in their annexation of the islands. President McKinley justified the colonisation of the Philippines by talking piously of God's message to him: "They were unfit for self-government... They would soon have anarchy and misrule.... There was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilise and Christianise them." (Christianity was of course as old in the Philippines as in North America!)

The Americans' main interest was strategic. General Arthur Macarthur, father of Douglas who became virtual military dictator of the Philippines, wrote: "The finest group of islands in the world. Its strategic position is unexceeded by that of any other position on the globe. The China Sea ... is nothing more or less than a safety moat. It lies on the flank of what might be called a position of several thousand miles of coastline.... The Philippines is in the centre of that position. It affords a means of protecting American interests which with the very least output of physical power has the effect of a commanding position... to retard hostile action." US bases in the Philippines were later used for

military operations in China, Korea, Vietnam and Indonesia.

Having nominally achieved independence no less than three times — in 1898, with the proclamation by Aguinaldo, in 1943 under the Japanese occupation, and in 1946 under the patronage of the USA — the Philippines remains a classic example of a colony. US investments in the Philippines total \$3 billion. US imperialism owns about half the wealth of the Philippines, and other imperialist powers — notably Japan whose investments rose by 50% between 1970 and 1980 — a further 30%.

No progress is possible for the Philippines while it remains under the stranglehold of foreign imperialist domination. The principal task of the revolution is therefore the expulsion of imperialism. But this task cannot be tackled in isolation from the class contradictions within Philippine society itself. It is impossible to free any nation in the epoch of imperialism from foreign domination without tackling the class structure of society. Imperialism today does not rule the Philippines by armed occupation, as in the days of the Spanish, or during the brief conquest of the archipelago by the Japanese. Even during most of the period of direct American rule, and certainly since nominal independence in 1946, imperialism rules through its investments, its stranglehold of the markets, its financial domination through the banks, etc. The land is shared between the native landowning oligarchy and the multinational corporations which have dispossessed the peasants and carved out huge plantations producing for the world market. Likewise the native bourgeoisie owns a proportion of industrial, financial and commercial capital, which remain dominated by imperialism. To attempt to draw a dividing line between “compradore” capital and a so-called “national bourgeoisie” is sophistry. Likewise, the attempt to divide the revolution into watertight compartments or “stages”, beginning with an alliance with the so-called “national bourgeoisie” against imperialism and feudalism. The struggle for national liberation is the struggle against landlordism and capitalism which are inextricably linked with a thousand strings to imperialism.

This is the lesson of the law of Permanent Revolution, formulated by Trotsky before the Russian Revolution, which correctly predicted that the movement to overthrow the Tsarist regime would rapidly overstep the bounds of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and bring the proletariat to power despite its small size and the backwardness of Russian society. No more eloquent proof could be found of the applicability of this law to all the countries of the colonial world than the history of the Philippines, which provides a classic study.

Lenin summed up the whole experience of the Russian revolution in a withering repudiation of the idea of ‘two stages’. He explained that the revolution began by linking the proletariat and its party, the Bolsheviks, “with the whole of the peasantry against the monarchy, against the landlords, against the medieval regime, and to that extent the revolution remains bourgeois, bourgeois-democratic. Then, with the poorest peasants, with the semi-proletarians, with all the exploited against capitalism...and to that extent the revolution becomes a socialist one. To attempt to raise

an artificial Chinese Wall between the first and second stage, to separate them by anything else than the degree of preparedness of the proletariat, and the degree of its unity with the poor peasants, means monstrously to distort Marxism, to vulgarise it, to substitute liberalism in its place, it means smuggling in a reactionary defence of the bourgeoisie as compared with the socialist proletariat by means of quasi-scientific references to the progressive character of the bourgeoisie as compared with medievalism.” (Our emphasis.)

Which Class?

It follows that the native landlords and capitalists are incapable of leading a struggle to overthrow foreign imperialist domination. The history of the Philippines demonstrates this especially clearly. In spite of the myths it has propagated to prettify its history, the real traditions of the Filipino “national bourgeoisie” are utterly wretched and servile. The “ilustrados” considered themselves Spaniards. Even the saint of bourgeois nationalism Jose Rizal chose “exile over revolution” and died a passive hostage, a sterile martyr immortalised in his poems and novels. The revolution of 1896 exposed the true attitude of the ilustrados. It took the initiative of the insurrection of the Katipunan, party of the nascent Manila proletariat led by the worker Andres Bonifacio, to galvanise them into any activity. Then they moved with haste and implacable malice to hijack the movement. They sneered at Bonifacio and his worker comrades as Godless, ignorant ruffians. When Bonifacio denounced them and attempted to establish an independent revolutionary council, he and his brother were abducted, tried and executed, by the ilustrados’ military leader Aguinaldo. Thus the first act of the “national bourgeoisie” was the murder of the workers who had led the revolution. Having crushed the original cadres of the revolution, Aguinaldo’s second act was to accept a bribe of P 400,000 from the Spanish and sail away into exile in Hong Kong. Popular resistance continued despite Aguinaldo’s appeals to the masses to lay down their arms. If it had not been for the accident of the Spanish/American war, and the cynical exploitation of Aguinaldo by American imperialism, that would have been the end of Aguinaldo’s historical claims.

The mass struggle continued in his absence and the Spanish were expelled. Only then, having established communications with the Americans in Hong Kong, did Aguinaldo return to proclaim independence “under the protection of the mighty and humane North American nation.” The Americans brutally and systematically occupied the islands following their victory over the Spanish, and cynically made war against the infant Republic. Aguinaldo again and again whimpered for a peace with the Americans, but they were determined to crush the revolution. After a brief and unequal war Aguinaldo again capitulated and called on the masses to end their struggle. Once again, however, ferocious resistance continued up to 1916, by which time up to 600,000 Filipinos had laid down their lives in

the struggle for national liberation.

The Filipino bourgeoisie proved very flexible in their allegiances. They changed their national allegiance, their language and their culture as easily as they would change their suits. Under the Spanish they sought integration with Spain. Then came the American invasion, and their dominant party in the first period, the Federalists, immediately slavered for "Americanisation", the proclamation of the islands as a state of the American union. Popular revulsion at this stand led to their replacement by the Nationalists, led largely by former pro-Spanish loyalists who had opposed the revolution. But Quezon and Osmena proved equally pliable stooges of the Americans. They wheedled for concessions from the American imperialists on the basis of assurances of their responsibility, their loyalty to their new masters, and their "fitness for self-rule". So miserable was their "fight for independence" that when, under the impact of the depression of the 1930s, and consequent US pressures for restrictions on Philippine imports and immigration, the USA began preparing to divest itself of direct responsibility (a process leading to the 'Commonwealth' in 1935) Quezon desperately lobbied Congress with objections, and had to endure the taunts of US Congressmen who told him: "We believe you don't want independence."

The same thing happened when the Japanese occupied the archipelago in 1943. A neat division of labour was arranged. One favoured dynasty was allowed to evacuate together with MacArthur and the US - knowing that the USA could more easily absorb Philippine exports and moreover that it was more likely to win - while the rest were entrusted with the setting up of a Quisling puppet administration of the islands in collaboration with the Japanese. These included Laurel (father of the present Vice-President) and Aquino (father of Ninoy and father-in-law of Cory). And the ageing 'hero' of bourgeois nationalism, Aguinaldo, promptly launched a sycophantic campaign for fusion with Japan! So much for the principles of the so-called "national bourgeoisie".

The shameful record of successive Philippine Governments since independence in 1946 of collusion in imperialist economic and military exploitation needs no further comment.

Peasants and Workers

No serious attempt has been made by the bourgeoisie in the history of the Philippines for national liberation or social reforms. The fight was left to the workers and peasants. There is a glorious history of peasant uprisings in the Philippines. More than 200 have been recorded during the centuries of Spanish rule. It was the peasants who bore the brunt of resistance during the heroic and bloody revolutionary struggles of 1896-1916 against Spanish and American rule. The 1930s saw new peasant risings in East Pangasinan and South Tagalog. During the Japanese occupation, while the Laurels and Aquinos abetted the new conquerors, the Huks' peasant army put up a magnificent fight at appalling human cost against the Japanese tyrants. They fought 1200 engagements and inflicted 25,000 casualties on the enemy. Their numbers grew to 20,000 partisans and 50,000

reservists. One million people died of starvation or in savage raids at the hands of the Japanese during this period. 12,000 civilians were killed in one single punitive expedition. Manila suffered the worst damage of any city in the world during the war, with the exception of Warsaw.

US imperialism abandoned the Philippines and starved the resistance of aid. And, as in 1898, so once again in 1945 the tenacious struggle of the Filipino workers and peasants to free themselves from foreign domination was rewarded with a second American occupation. MacArthur fulfilled his 'promise' to the Filipino bourgeoisie before fleeing: "I shall return!" And, like the revolutionary army of the 1890s, so too the Huks suffered a long and ferocious war at the hands of American troops. The irony was that the Huks, even more so than Aguinaldo in 1898, had been fighting under the banner of support for MacArthur and the USA. But imperialism was determined to re-establish the state of the collaborationist landlords and capitalists, which had collapsed together with the rout of the Japanese. It took them eight years of bitter fighting, during which the Huks came near to capturing Manila.

American imperialism succeeded, barely, in stabilising the Philippines by a combination of bloody military repression and lavish economic 'aid' and investment. On this basis, American and other monopolies drove peasants off their land, especially in Mindanao, and established sugar, fruit and rubber plantations from which to supply the world market. Fishermen likewise were displaced by Japanese trawler fleets. The peasant economy, and the former self-sufficiency in food, were destroyed. As a result of the multinationals' merciless campaign of land-grabbing, landlessness has risen to half the rural population, hunger and unemployment stalk the islands, and the share of the landlords and plantation owners has swollen at the expense of the smallholders who are facing ruin.

These attacks on the peasantry led to two major guerrilla wars - the Moro revolt in Mindanao and Sulu, which was temporarily suppressed only at the cost of up to 100,000 lives; and that of the NPA. The NPA began in 1969 with 60 men and 35 rifles in one province. Since then it has achieved a meteoric growth. Today it is estimated at nearly 25,000 fully-armed guerrillas, operating in virtually every province. The success of the NPA in recruiting and mobilising peasant youth into an impressive military force was the major factor in the undermining of the Marcos state, which had become corrupt and parasitic, and the resulting split within the ruling class which led to the overthrow of Marcos.

However, it is necessary to underline the limitations of any struggle confined to the peasantry. The very persistence of the peasant rebellions in Philippine history testifies to these limitations. One of these uprisings, during the eighteenth century, actually lasted 85 years. The endless scattered peasant movements against the foreign oppressors were futile. This was not for want of heroism on the part of the peasants, but resulted from the innate fragmentation and lack of perspective of a peasant movement.

Marx and Lenin wrote extensively on this question which was of course the crucial issue facing them. It was not by accident or mistake that Marxism developed on the basis of insistence on the crucial and decisive role of the proletariat in modern revolutions. The very core of Marxism, or scientific as opposed to utopian socialism, is its insistence on the role of the proletariat as the agency of the socialist revolution. The material foundation for socialism relies, on the one hand, upon the development of technique on an international scale to the level that a potential global

economy of superabundance can be created; and on the other, on the modern proletariat, the "gravedigger of capitalism", a class without property, based upon a collective consciousness, which by taking power and suppressing the propertied classes has the unique capacity to usher in a worldwide classless society. Private property and the nation-state stand in the way of further progress today. Capitalism can develop the productive forces no further along this path, and it needs the proletarian revolution to establish transitional societies founded on state ownership to prepare the way for socialism. That in brief is the essence of Marxism.

This was also the key issue in the establishment of Marxism in Russia. Russian Marxism was born in the struggle against the naive and sentimental ideas of the Narodniks (Populists), who based their revolutionary activity on an idealised illusion of the role of the peasantry. They imagined that the peasantry could overthrow Tsarism and establish a kind of rural Communism based on the peasant commune. Plekhanov and Lenin argued mercilessly against this idea and insisted on the small but decisive proletariat as the key to the revolution. Like Marx and Engels before them, they explained that, for all the courage that they can muster in support of their cause, the peasants cannot play an independent and leading role in the revolution, among other reasons because social progress itself entails the abolition of small-scale production. They can only add their gigantic social weight to the support of one or other of the two major protagonists in modern society: capital or labour. Or, to add a vital qualification in today's conditions, **behind regimes resting upon the respective property forms of capital or labour: private property or state ownership.**

It is true that the last forty years have seen unprecedented revolutionary movements of the peasants in one country after another, which have resulted in major defeats for imperialism. The colonial revolution which has swept the continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America, especially since the Second World War, has transformed the face of the planet. Massive movements have taken place involving millions of anonymous heroes, peasants who were formerly hardly more than beasts of burden, who have risen to their feet to shape their own destinies. Revolution means the invasion of the masses on to the stage of history. The great movements, against overwhelming odds, of the peasant masses in the wars against imperialism in China, Indonesia, Algeria, Vietnam, Angola, etc., indicate the revolutionary character of the epoch.

But it is necessary to understand the special circumstances in which these events took place, if misleading conclusions are not to be drawn. These peasant uprisings erupted as a result of the extreme and intolerable crisis of society in the colonial world, at a time when the proletariat – both in the decisive metropolitan countries where there was a temporary respite from the wars and civil wars, revolutions and counter-revolutions which had characterised the previous epoch, and in the colonial countries – remained paralysed or inert. This was due to the false policies of the workers' parties. As a result of the passive role of the proletariat, as we shall see, the colonial revolution suffered peculiar distortions. Let us remind ourselves of the classic standpoint of Marxism and Leninism on the relationship of the peasants with the proletariat.

Russia was also a backward country dominated by world imperialism, with an overwhelmingly peasant population,

and a barbaric legacy of feudalism, where the land question was central to the whole fate of the revolution. Writing during the course of the 1905 revolution, Lenin approached the problems of the peasants not with the formula of peasant war, but by demonstrating to the peasants that their salvation lay in **common struggle with the proletariat, behind the banner of Socialism.**

"The peasantry wants land and freedom....All class-conscious workers support the revolutionary peasantry with all their might....Hence the peasantry can be certain that the proletariat will support their demands. The peasants must know that the red banner which has been raised in the towns is the banner of struggle for the immediate and vital demands, not only of the industrial and agricultural workers, but also of the millions and tens of millions of small tillers of the soil. Survivals of serfdom in every possible shape and form are to this day a cruel burden on the whole mass of the peasantry, and the proletarians under their red banner have declared war on this burden. But the red banner means more than proletarian support of the peasants' demands. It also means the independent demands of the proletariat. It means struggle, not only for land and freedom, but also against all exploitation of man by man, struggle against the poverty of the masses of the people, against the rule of capital."

Lenin continued by explaining that – even as early as in 1905 and in a country ruled by an absolutist monarchy, in which 90% of the population were peasants working on barbarically backward levels of productivity, using the medieval wooden plough – it was not enough to confine the struggle to the goals of the bourgeois-democratic revolution: i.e. to the demands for distribution of the land to the peasants, and a democratic republic. These were at that time the goals of the Narodniks. In view of the debates on the tasks and programme of the revolution in the Philippines today, it is worth reading again what Lenin wrote:–

"This is a great mistake. Full freedom, election of all officials all the way to the head of the state, will not do away with the rule of capital, will not abolish the wealth of the few and the poverty of the masses. Even on land belonging to the whole nation, only those with capital of their own...will be able to farm independently. As for those who have nothing but their hands to work with, they will inevitably remain slaves of capital even in a democratic republic.... **The idea that 'socialisation' of land can be effected without socialisation of capital...is a delusion....** Thus the red banner of the class-conscious workers means, first, that we support with all our might the peasants' struggle for full freedom and all the land; secondly, it means that we do not stop at this, but go on further. **We are waging, besides the struggle for freedom and land, a fight for socialism.** The fight for Socialism is a fight against the rule of capital." (Collected Works, Moscow, 1972, Vol 10, 40–43. Our emphasis.)

It is relatively simple to formulate a programme to end privilege, injustice and inequality on the land by calling for its division among the peasants (although today, with the massive expropriation and dispersal of the peasantry by the big corporations and the conversion of millions of peasants either into plantation labourers or into casual, seasonal, or unemployed workers, even this programme is largely outdated). But how to give justice to the workers? How to end the huge concentration of wealth in industry and commerce? The factories cannot be divided up, to give each worker a lathe or a proportion of the production belt! They

can only be 'shared' by collective ownership, social ownership through the state: i.e. by a socialist overturn.

Workers' Traditions

For all the heroic self-sacrifice of the Philippine peasants throughout the centuries in their efforts to drive out the oppressors, it took the leadership and initiative of proletarian movements like the Katipunan, or later of nominally communist organisations like the PKP and the CPP — which founded respectively the Huks and the NPA — to give a central direction and organisation to their discontent. In 1896 the proletariat mobilised the peasants behind its banner. Later, the PKP, in the search for the chimera of a "democratic popular front", and even more so the CPP, under the influence of Maoist delusions, relegated the proletariat to a minor and even a negligible role.

Testimony to the revolutionary and internationalist traditions of the Philippine proletariat from its earliest origins is provided by the revolution of 1896. Bonifacio was a revolutionary worker comparable to the Irish revolutionary James Connolly, who also gave his life in a struggle for national liberation and was betrayed by the bourgeoisie — but he preceded Connolly by twenty years. His party, the Katipunan, based among the semi-proletariat of Manila, swelled from 300 to 300,000 within months. Inspired by the democratic ideals of the French and American revolutions, the Katipunan represented nevertheless the first primitive stirrings of the nascent proletariat. Provoked into a premature insurrection by the treachery of an informer, it launched a revolution which ended — despite gross sabotage by the bourgeoisie who beheaded the movement by executing Bonifacio and capitulating to the Spanish — in the defeat of Spanish colonialism. These traditions provide the real guarantee for the revolutionary potential of the Philippine proletariat.

As early as 1903, 100,000 workers assembled in Manila to celebrate May Day, shouting: "Down with American imperialism! We demand the eight-hour day!" The Philippine Workers' Congress was formed in 1913, and the Union of Sharecroppers in 1919. Evangelista, leader of the Workers' Congress, made contact with American trade unionists and returned from the USA in 1919 already a committed Marxist. In 1924 he founded the Workers' Party, which later split to form the PKP. Despite the successive ultraleftist and opportunist policies it pursued during the late 1920s and 1930s, in accord with the twists of Comintern policy, the PKP led tremendous struggles of workers and peasants and suffered harsh repression.

The real tragedy of the situation today in the Philippines is that these traditions are buried, forgot-

ten. Fifty years of obsessive concentration on peasant struggles — first imposed on the PKP by the guerrilla war against the Japanese occupation, then reinforced by popular frontist illusions and by the American war on the Huks, and finally for the last twenty years dictated through Maoist misconceptions by the CPP — have left living generations of workers, even militant activists, completely uneducated even in their own class traditions. They are ignorant of their own history and unable to challenge the distortions of the bourgeoisie who have canonised Rizal and even elevated Aguinaldo into a hero. But the workers have shown a determination to fight. The fact of the rapid growth of the KMW to half a million members since 1980, despite the low priority accorded to this task by the CPP, is a sign of the workers' readiness to identify with revolutionary activity. The rise of other militant rank-and-file groupings within the existing trade unions is another.

In spite of the fact that the CPP largely stood aside from the urban movement against the Marcos regime during its last years, the working class nevertheless began to push its way to the forefront of this movement. If the meteoric growth of the NPA was the prime concern of the bourgeoisie, bringing on the crisis of confidence that undermined Marcos' rule, the proletariat also made their contribution. The massive mobilisations of 1970-72 ended with the declaration of martial law. But by the late '70s the workers were beginning to recover from the shock. 1982 witnessed the world's first-ever general strike in a free trade zone — the heavily-militarised Bataan Export Processing Zone — which brought 15,000 workers on to the streets. In 1983, there was a second general strike there, and in 1984 a third, in the course of which barricades were set up. The militancy of the Bataan workers — and also now the Baguio Export Processing Zone — represent a great achievement. In these heavily militarised free trade zones the workers are formally deprived of trade-union rights.

The workers of Manila, and especially the youth which made up two-thirds of them, made up the heavy battalions of the crowds at EDSA during the February days. As we shall see, however, they were lacking in organisation and did not clearly differentiate their tasks and interests from those of the petty-bourgeois 'cause-oriented' groups or even the liberal faction of the bourgeoisie. However, the workers have gained renewed confidence as a result of the fall of Marcos and their memories of their role at EDSA. They have taken at their word the protestations of the new Government about democratic rights and made ample use of the "democratic space" to avenge the injustices of the past and defend their rights. This is reflected dramatically in the strike figures below:—

	1983	1984	1985	Jan—Sept 1986
Number of strikes	155	282	405	490
Number of strikers	33,638	65,306	109,000	152,938
Days lost in strikes	581,291	1,907,762	2,440,000	2,979,000

The key to the future of the Philippine revolution depends on the development of Marxist cadres and organisation within the proletariat, basing themselves on its real but long-dormant revolutionary traditions.

Split in the Ruling Class

Marcos' place as the biggest thief in the Guinness Book of Records was earned by his plunder of the economy, estimated at \$10 billion. Among his cronies were odious characters like Robert Benedicto and Eddie Cojuangco (first cousin of Cory) who each embezzled hundreds of millions of dollars. Corruption, along with bonapartist repression, is also endemic among the colonial bourgeoisie: an inevitable reflection of the historic impasse of society, of that class' absence of any historic mission, its slavishness and moral debasement. That is why corruption has rapidly got its death-grip also on Cory's administration, which of course is composed of the old aristocratic dynasties: the Cojuangcos, Aquinos, and Laurels. Some of its leading representatives, including Laurel and Ramos (Marcos' third cousin), are leftovers from the Marcos regime. Others, such as Ongpin (who has replaced his brother as Finance Minister) and even Cory herself (cousin of chief crony Eddie Cojuangco) are linked to it by family ties. Even the clique divisions between the upstart 'cronies' and the traditional oligarchy which makes up the Cory government thus remain blurred.

The murderous rule of Marcos and his gangster cronies is not, to be scientific, an example of 'Fascism', despite the current fashionability of the term. Fascism is a specific form of bourgeois repressive rule, under which a mass movement of petty-bourgeois and lumpenproletarians is mobilised to annihilate and atomise every trace of independent proletarian organisation. Marcos did not have at his disposal the kind of mass movements that brought to power the regimes of Hitler, Mussolini or Franco. Marx defined bonapartism as a regime of military repression which balances between the classes in order to rise above society. Marcos' regime was a classic example: a regime of emergency rule, martial law, raining down terror from above, using the police, army, death squads and torturers to intimidate the masses but lacking the power to crush all resistance or atomise the working class. Such a regime reflects a profound and stubborn crisis in society. It is the normal mode of rule today by the bourgeoisie in the colonial world. Compared to the even more bloodthirsty bonapartist regimes of Pinochet in Chile or Suharto in Indonesia, Marcos' martial-law regime was relatively unstable. The relentless growth of the NPA was a barometer and index of the limitations of his power.

Certain traditional patriarchs of the ruling class had been angered at Marcos' audacity in manipulating events to perpetuate his Presidency by proclaiming martial law in 1972. But the real split in the bourgeoisie resulted mainly from the Marcos regime's inability to curb the NPA. As a result of the cronies' policy of shameless plunder of state resources, the Army was in a shambles. Three out of four lorries were out of service; troops lacked boots and ammunition. The Marcos/Ver clique could not fight back against the NPA as their predecessors, together with the Americans, had done against the Huks. The state apparatus was rotting and the advance of the NPA was the spectre at

the cronies' banquet. The unity of the ruling class was undermined by its alarm at the reverses suffered at the hands of the NPA, and to some extent also by the rise in the workers' combativity.

Those factions excluded by the dominant clique articulated the fears of the ruling class over their future. Revolution starts at the top: the most intelligent representatives of the ruling class are the first to sense that their society is hurtling towards the abyss. They search frantically for scapegoats and panaceas. The differences between rival factions of the Philippine ruling class widened into a deadly vendetta.

The Aquino faction resented their state being plundered by the dominant clique; but this would have been a tolerable expense if it were not increasingly clear that the greed and incompetence of the regime was leading to catastrophe. The cronies were filching foreign aid, misappropriating military allocations, pocketing taxes, robbing the intelligence budget, repressing rival factions of the bourgeoisie. They were putting the survival of their system in jeopardy.

Pressure mounted accordingly from impeccably respectable organisations like the Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Makati Business Club. Aquino returned from the USA as US imperialism began gently to pressurise Marcos. Apart from its strategic interests, American imperialism of course has huge assets at stake in its own right in the Philippines. Aquino's assassination amounted to a declaration of war against the bourgeois opposition.

It was the rising tide of struggle in town and country which had led to divisions within the bourgeoisie. But the opening up of these splits at the top in their turn inevitably further emboldened the masses, who moved into action on a bigger scale. The NPA widened its control over more and more barangays throughout the archipelago. Massive demonstrations were held in the cities reminiscent of the year or two before martial law. This growing confidence of the masses panicked the ruling class, provoking a rapid flight of capital. For the first time since 1946 there was an absolute fall in production. This led to bankruptcies and layoffs which inflamed the anger of the workers...and so the vicious cycle spiralled upwards. Increasingly isolated, the Marcos regime lurched from vicious repression to half-hearted concessions. Each new attack further enraged the opposition; each feeble reform aroused it to more confident assertion of its demands. Thus Philippine society became locked into a profound political and economic crisis.

This crisis was focussed most sharply of all within the Armed Forces, which was split at all levels right up to the general staff. Military discipline had begun to collapse. The apparatus was on the verge of disintegration. Two guerrilla risings were running rings around them. Troops were deserting. The Chief of Staff was on trial for murder. And now came an insolent and public challenge from RAM, the new military opposition. The pressure of the bourgeoisie was transmitted through the medium of career officers disgruntled that their promotions had been blocked. Enrile was of course one of the principal millionaire cronies of Marcos, his snout deep in the trough of state plunder, especially of US military aid; he had been Marcos' principal accomplice in the series of frame-ups which provided the excuse for martial law, including the staging of a mock ambush on himself, and the massacre of opposition leaders at a party rally. Ramos was himself a third cousin of Marcos, a veteran of the Korea and Vietnam wars, a constabulary chief responsible for massacres of striking

workers. They resented the arrogance of Marcos' chief minder Ver and his 'Lady Macbeth', Imelda. Marcos and Ver were compelled to tread very carefully with RAM, which gained a de facto legality and organised openly.

The political aspirations of RAM were for a Greek-style colonels' coup (Operation Prometheus). Enrile saw the opportunity to exploit the confusion within the state apparatus and the split in the bourgeoisie to establish a new bonapartist dictatorship. He planned to interpose himself as the "supreme arbiter" and "national saviour" who could rescue the country from chaos. The shadowy band of accomplices around Enrile from the Defence Ministry Security Group, led by Honasan and Kapunan, was behind several subsequent coups, and crimes like the murders of Olalia. Accidentally it turned out that the decisive and audacious methods of these ultra-reactionaries became the occasion for the transfer of power to the weak-kneed liberals who still trembled at the thought of arousing the dark forces of the masses behind them. Even the limited steps taken by the liberals would have been unthinkable had it not been for the preoccupation of the CPP with the guerrilla war. This gave them a certain freedom of manoeuvre.

Marcos was forced by the growing clamour on the streets to concede snap elections — a move which incidentally pre-empted a planned coup by Enrile. He hoped that this would ensure, with the CPP's abstentionist policy, that the revolutionary upsurge was contained within safe electoral channels — i.e. within the orbit of bourgeois politics. He could also gamble on successfully rigging the results.

The elections brought up to two million people — including masses of workers — on to the streets. In the absence of any participation by the CPP, however, it became a middle-class fiesta. Volunteers in NAMFREL supervised the count, COMELEC tabulators walked out in protest at the rigging, RAM launched the KAMALAYAN 86 campaign to resist Ver's tricks, etc. At the rally held after the fraudulent proclamation of Marcos as the victor, two million people endorsed Cory's appeal for a campaign of civil disobedience.

The decisive step came only with the defection of Enrile and Ramos following the leaking of Enrile's coup conspiracy. The plotters scattered to escape arrest and Enrile and Ramos dug in at their respective headquarters, Camps Aguinaldo and Crame. The broadcasts of Cardinal Sin, representing the interests of the bourgeoisie which feared the consequences of a consolidation of Marcos' rule, resulted in the formation of the 'human barricade' at EDSA in which maybe hundreds of thousands — the hard core being workers — blocked the path of the tanks and fraternised with the troops.

It was a paradoxical situation. Counter-revolutionary Generals with dictatorial ambitions found themselves sheltered behind huge crowds of their intended victims. The irony was that they were not only protected but also besieged by the workers of Manila. They were their prisoners! They had even less chance than Marcos and Ver of dispersing that crowd. They had no option but to hand over power to the candidate invested with the masses' confidence.

These peculiar events constituted, not a "miracle" at all, but the conjunctural coincidence of the interests of the bourgeoisie, the ambitions of certain Generals, the illusions of the workers and the default of the CPP.

Marcos finally resolved to order an attack on the crowd. Five times the order was given to General Olivas. Not until the small hours of 25th February did Olivas brace himself to give the dictator some bad news: "Sir, the crowd is beyond the capability of my men to disperse." Orders to bomb Radio Veritas were ignored. Malacanang was strafed. And Marcos received the final sentence pronounced by Laxalt in the now legendary phrase: "Cut, and cut cleanly. The time has come."

The decisive factor, according to the testimony of countless participants, was the effect of the appeals of the workers, youth, housewives, students, slum-dwellers, intellectuals, unemployed, nuns and priests, on the rank-and-file soldiers that brought about the final collapse of Marcos' rule. The Generals were under the pressure of the junior officers, the NCOs under that of the troops, the troops under that of the masses.

If the commanders had obeyed the order to deploy the troops against the crowd, then sections of the troops would have undoubtedly come over to the side of the people, as in Iran in 1979. Arms would have been distributed, a militia come into being, revolutionary committees would have been established. It would then have resembled February 1917. As it was, by a hair's breadth the state machine was allowed to remain intact, due to the timely and desperate efforts of US imperialism, the bourgeoisie, the Cardinals, and, accidentally, of a section of the generals. As a result, far from the state machine disintegrating, the prestige of the officer caste was actually, if anything, temporarily reinforced by these events.

A Revolution?

After the Marcos departure, there was almost a carnival atmosphere of fraternisation between the soldiers and the masses. The EDSA 'revolution' has had an effect on the psychology of the masses: especially the Manila workers felt jubilant at their role in overthrowing a hated regime through their sheer determination and unyielding will. This will remain in their consciousness as a part of their heritage.

Nevertheless, revolution means more than the replacement of one individual by another. Aquino has replaced Marcos; but the Marcos machine remains in place. The liberal Aquino sits perched uncomfortably on top of the old unreconstructed Marcos military juggernaut. Certainly it would be a mistake to dismiss EDSA merely as a carnival of liberal/clerical protest. Revolutions are measured in years. Which revolution in history has led overnight to a transfer directly from the old epoch to the new without passing through a transition in which the ghosts of the past mingle, collide and clash with harbingers of the future? Periods of leaps in the consciousness of the masses, transition, turmoil, chaos, confusion, setbacks and even major defeats, before reaching the decisive confrontation? Even the February revolution in Russia, which was not consciously planned by the Bolsheviks, left the power initially in the hands of a clique of aristocrats, bankers, capitalists and landlords, adorned by the presence of a few radical lawyers and "friends of the workers".

However, in the Philippines we see in an acutely pronounced form the situation described by Lenin in

Russia at that time: "The proletariat is not organised and class-conscious enough. Material strength is in the hands of the proletariat but the bourgeoisie turned out to be prepared and class-conscious."

Whether the Philippine revolution is to be carried forward to a conclusion depends on one question alone: the subjective factor. The crucial difference between the Russian Revolution which ended with the establishment of a workers' and peasants' government, and the objectively revolutionary upheavals which have rocked Portugal, Greece, Spain, Iran, the Philippines and many other countries in the last few years, is that there existed in Russia a mass revolutionary party with a conscious Marxist perspective, and solid roots in the proletariat. History had bequeathed the Russian workers the Bolshevik party, steered by years of Marxist training and proletarian struggle, and in particular the Marxist giants Lenin and Trotsky who were capable of rearming the party and steering it towards its decisive tasks.

It is at crucial tests like this that there is revealed the necessity of a farsighted Marxist leadership with a clear perspective. Courage and endurance are essential qualities for a revolutionary leadership; but without the compass of Marxist theory they are not enough. The workers in general are the most dynamic, progressive and revolutionary class in modern society. The Filipino workers as much as 90 years ago gave one of the earliest manifestations of independent proletarian activity in the colonial world. But today, due to the CPP leaders' mistake regarding the respective roles of the proletariat and the peasantry, they were left unprepared for a historic revolutionary opportunity. The CPP, which should have been at the forefront of events, played no role. It found itself bypassed. Of course the CPP leaders were right that the election would be rigged, and that an Aquino government could solve none of the real problems of the masses. But they were insensitive to the popular mood. They should have anticipated the masses' determination to rebel against a fraudulent election result and discriminated between the opportunities offered by the different factions of the bourgeoisie. They should have called, not for a vote for Cory, certainly, but for a vote **against Marcos**. We are not advocating illusions in liberalism. But we prefer a liberal democratic regime to a military-bonapartist regime, for the very good reason that it is easier to overthrow it. The opportunities afforded to proletarian revolutionaries by open mass work are a thousand times better than the difficult conditions of illegal clandestine work.

Guerrilla War?

The tragedy of the lost opportunity of 1986 is rooted in the fundamental mistake made by the founders of the CPP in 1968. Having started from the false premise that the peasantry and not the proletariat is the leading force in the revolution, they naturally went on to base their strategy on peasant methods of struggle: on guerrilla war, rather than proletarian struggles culminating in the general strike and the mass insurrection. The CPP made a fetish of 'armed struggle'. Naturally

Marxists are not pacifists, and it is clear that especially in the Philippines today with its vast counter-revolutionary apparatus, the revolution will be unable to dispense with the need for a strong military arm. But the first pre-requisite for a revolution is a revolutionary consciousness on the part of the working masses. Marxism has always based itself on the idea that "the emancipation of the working class is the task of the working class itself". It has consequently always begun with the development of proletarian cadres, and the raising of the political level of the proletarian vanguard, as the first step towards the winning of the proletariat and through it the non-proletarian toiling masses of town and country. On the basis of years of education by the Bolsheviks, and of the correct slogans, tactics and perspectives of Bolshevism, the October revolution in Russia cost hardly a drop of bloodshed. It was only with the counter-revolutionary intervention of the imperialist powers that civil war began. On the other hand, it was the misplaced emphasis of both the PKP and especially the CPP leaders on guerrilla struggle as a matter of policy that enabled the ruling class to arm the counter-revolution. In consequence, the Philippine revolution will have to face a powerful Armed Forces, the 260 private armies of the Civil Home Defence Force, and the even more sinister vigilante forces that have been springing up under the patronage of the new Government.

The CPP leaders completely neglected the education of proletarian cadres and even transplanted militant young workers out of the cities and into the hills. The rising tide of the class struggle nevertheless gave an impetus to the development of workers' organisations like the KMU, and the new legal party allied to the CPP, the Partido ng Bayan. These represented important landmarks in the revolutionary reawakening of the proletariat. However, the CPP leaders still recognise these organisations only as auxiliaries to the guerrilla war.

Jo.Ma. Sison, who founded the CPP and is now a leader of the PnB, replied to a question about the relationship of the PnB to the CPP and NPA: "How would you...compare the legal form of struggle with the armed form? You would of course put the armed struggle in the first place. It is principal to the legal struggle, isn't it?...The PnB plays a role that is secondary...."

This statement is confused. Lenin pointed out that the enormous political authority required to ensure the revolutionary discipline needed to carry the Russian workers and peasants through the October revolution and the civil war was earned by the flexible tactics of the Bolsheviks, who had a rich and varied experience both of legal and illegal forms of struggle over the brief period between the 1903 RSDLP Congress, through the 1905 revolution, the "black years" of reaction, the rising strike movement, the world war, the February revolution, the repression following the July Days, the mobilisation to repulse Kornilov, and the October revolution itself. Nobody appreciated better than them the enormous advantages of open work over underground work: the access to thousands of workers through legal newspapers and mass meetings, rather than the difficult and exhausting work of secret discussions with selected individuals.

In Comrade Sison's statement is reflected a Maoist disdain for workers' struggles that is natural to guerrilla fighters. The same mistake was made in Nicaragua. After years of guerrilla struggle, it was the workers' insurrection in Managua in 1979 which proved decisive in overthrowing Somoza. Ortega has admitted that "we underestimated the masses". Similarly, the general strikes which shook San Salvador in March and June 1980 after the murder of Archbishop Romero were wrongly dismissed by the guerrillas as mere protest strikes, secondary and auxiliary to the guerrilla war. As a result the opportunity was lost and the initiative passed back to the military. And isn't that exactly the same mistake as was made by the CPP leadership after the murder of Ninoy Aquino in 1983? As huge crowds of workers took to the streets of Manila, the CPP leaders stood aside, dismissed Aquino as a CIA agent (which was irrelevant) and adopted a sectarian attitude to the growing mass campaign for the resignation of Marcos.

Lenin certainly defended the role of guerrilla warfare: but always stressing that it must be only an auxiliary to the proletarian movement. Writing during the 1905 revolution, he warned that "**the party of the proletariat can never regard guerrilla warfare as the only, or even as the chief, method of struggle....**This method must be subordinated to other methods....it must be commensurate with the chief methods of warfare, and must be ennobled by the enlightening and organising influence of socialism." (Collected Works, Moscow, 1972, Vol. 11, p. 221. Our emphasis.)

It is generally recognised that the CPP found itself badly isolated from the mass movement against Marcos. The policy of 'abstention' during the February 1986 presidential election and neutrality throughout the subsequent upheavals is correctly discredited now. But this tactical mistake was not accidental. It was an expression of the underlying false strategy of the CPP leadership, above all the substitution of the military policy for a theoretical analysis of perspectives – the lifeblood of Marxism – which could have enabled the party to anticipate events and plan accordingly, rather than react empirically with ill-considered reflex responses. That was the theoretical basis for the historic neglect of the crucial task: the building of a conscious proletarian leadership. That is how it came about that, although it was the Manila proletariat that played the main role in the February days which finally removed Marcos from power, it played this role without a consciousness of its independent class identity. The bourgeois liberals were enabled to claim all the glory for a victory in which they actually played a very unheroic role. The CPP's sectarianism at this time, and its false class orientation, further discredited the 'left' among the masses and lent an unjustified credibility not only to Cory Aquino but even initially to the reactionary bonapartist Enrile. The workers' own organisations, including the trade unions and even the KMU, took no independent position. No revolutionary institutions were set up. There were no Soviets. The workers participated not as a class, but as voluntary individuals, spontaneously, without a summons from their leaders – we must admit, more under the impact of the appeals of Cardinal Sin over Radio Veritas. This is a shameful stain on the reputation of the CPP, and the effect not merely of sectarianism but of a strategic failure to base

itself on the real traditions of the proletariat, to steep new generations in these traditions, to educate the workers even in the basics of Socialism.

If the CPP had begun with a proletarian perspective it could have mobilised the workers on an independent platform. It would have taken the lead in the struggle against Marcos, and exposed the bankruptcy of the liberals. As it was, the liberals only took those timid faltering steps that they did against the Marcos regime because they felt secure in the knowledge that the workers were disoriented and that the only 'revolutionary party' was immersed in guerrilla struggles far away in the hills.

The proletariat has still not found its own voice. Only sporadically and empirically has it mobilised under its own banners, for instance under the impact of the shock of the murder of Olalia, at whose funeral procession half a million workers turned out. Otherwise it has remained muted. Even after the Mendiola massacre, which should have been answered with a massive general strike, the turnout on the protest demonstration was modest. Other provocations such as the murder of striking workers at Bataan; the massacre of villagers at Lupao; the activities of the Alsa Masa, NAKASAKA, and other vigilante armies; the initial refusal to register the PnB by COMELEC and its subsequent police harassment; have been allowed to pass with hardly a protest on the part of the workers' organisations.

If there had been a politically independent proletarian movement, then it could have mobilised a massive campaign for a real break with the horrors of the Marcos dictatorship. It would have demanded a purge of the Marcos/Enrile executioners and torturers from the Armed Forces, and disbandment of the private armies and "salvaging" squads. It would have built upon the foundations of the incipient fraternisation that was beginning to develop between the soldiers and the workers. It would have armed the workers and formed soldiers' committees as a defence against counter-revolutionary coups. It would have insisted on the election of a revolutionary Constituent Assembly. The entire course of events would have been transformed.

If the workers were to harness once again the same power that they deployed in February 1986, but this time with confidence in their independent role as workers and a clear programme, then nothing could stand in their way. The objective conditions have still not completely been lost to carry the revolution forward to victory. But the task is to prepare the working class vanguard by patient explanation of the real perspectives.

At the same time agitation should be waged in the trade unions and other workers' organisations on a programme of defence of the revolution. The trade unions must build their own defence organisations, against goons on the picket-lines and the threat of a new coup. They must organise the workers-and peasants-in-uniform who make up the rank-and-file of the Armed Forces. They must launch a vigorous campaign of strikes and demonstrations for such demands as: work or full pay for all; workers' control of production; a living wage; expropriation of all plantations and big estates; land to the peasants; nationalisation at least of all "crony", imperialist-owned and

monopoly companies for a start; a workers' and peasants' government. By means of such transitional demands, the workers' and peasants' consciousness could be raised to the horizons of the socialist revolution.

If the CPP had had a clear perspective it could have warned that the liberals could do nothing to solve the problems of Philippine society from 1983 onwards, while still demanding elections and a "vote against Marcos", the better precisely to expose the real motives and interests of the liberals. Still now, while opposing the Government, like the Bolsheviks at the time of the Kornilov revolt it could still when necessary offer a united front against the threat of a loyalist coup. That way the unwillingness of the Government to act against the counter-revolutionary officers would be better exposed.

The Cory Government

Mistakes, as Lenin once observed, are necessary to the development of any individual or any party — provided the correct lessons are learned from them. But if a mistake is persisted in over a long period, "it ceases to be a mistake and becomes a tendency". Since the fall of Marcos, the CPP leadership has desperately tried to rectify its earlier error in boycotting the election. But it is necessary to sit down and draw the real underlying conclusions from this mistake. The CPP has not arrived at a clear analysis of the new Government. It has veered haphazardly from a naive credulity in the pretty pseudo-democratic phrases of Cory and some elements in her government, to an equally misplaced outrage that these unjustifiable illusions have been betrayed.

Some groupings on the left have reacted by expressing support for the Cory government on the grounds of "realism". Dodong Nemenzo of BISIG wrote in *Business Day*: "The liberal democratic system has certain parameters. Reforms are of course possible although as a Socialist I believe that the sort of reforms that can be undertaken within the framework of liberal democracy cannot fully root out the problems the people are facing. I think that a certain kind of agrarian reform is possible within that framework. The recovery programme if it is carried out can create jobs....I believe that the sort of reforms that are possible within the framework of liberal democracy will alleviate the problems of the people but will not remove them completely....I support Cory's government. It's not a socialist government; it's a liberal democratic government, but it's the best we can have in the present situation....And so I support this regime and I hope it will succeed." Alex Magno, also of BISIG; wrote in an earlier issue: "People, as one adage goes, always deserve the government that they get. For all its shortcomings, the present political arrangement is probably the best alternative to the Marcos dictatorship that we could manage at the present historical conjuncture."

It should be pointed out that BISIG correctly argues theoretically in favour of the socialist tasks of the revolution. But when should these socialist policies be

campaigns for, if not at a time of revolution? This attitude to the current situation is based on a false assessment of what liberalism can offer in the present situation. It is what Trotsky called the "worship of the accomplished fact". For Marxists, politics is not the "art of the possible" but the **science of perspectives**. There are no **objective** reasons for the apparent lack of a socialist alternative to the present Government. It is a result, precisely, of the failures of the leaders of the left organisations to **build** an alternative, usually on grounds of "realism"! Irrespective of the current (and fast-fading) illusions in the liberals — the responsibility of the leaders of the left organisations who failed over the years to address themselves to the formulation of an independent socialist alternative — in fact the liberal programme is completely unrealistic and is actually a fraud.

The function of a revolutionary leadership is not to pander to the lowest common denominator, the illusions of the politically untutored masses; but to raise their level of understanding by means of slogans, demands, agitation, questions, warnings, and thus over a period to earn the confidence of the most politically aware workers, and through them eventually the masses as a whole.

The situation in the Philippines is in no way the same as that in Russia after the February revolution. Assertions to the contrary, by some elements on the left, are completely unfounded, the product of the euphoria of February 1986. That was a full-scale revolutionary collapse of an age-old state machine of oppression. But even if it were similar, it is necessary to learn from Lenin's attitude in 1917. After the local leaders' initial confusion, the principled attitude taken by the Bolsheviks against the stream of popular illusions, in warning of the true nature of the liberals and of their shadows within the Labour Movement, was the key to the victory of the October revolution. They conceded to them not a trace of credibility but warned of their treachery and of the dangers ahead. From the very first hours of the February revolution, Lenin insisted that no concessions be made to the immediate mood of jubilation and euphoria. His first telegram to the local Bolshevik leaders read:

"Our tactic absolute lack of confidence; no support to the new government; suspect Kerensky especially; arming of the proletariat the sole guarantee; immediate elections to the Petrograd Duma; no rapprochement with other parties."

On arrival back in Russia in April, Lenin sharply denounced the fact that "even our Bolsheviks show some trust in the government. This can be explained only by the intoxication of the revolution. It is the death of socialism. You comrades have a trusting attitude to the government. If that is so our paths diverge. I prefer to remain in a minority." He threatened to split from the party rather than compromise on this issue.

These quotations speak very clearly for themselves. Nothing needs to be added in explanation. Even if the Cory Government could be compared to the February regime in Russia, even if there were a Kerensky near the helm of power, the position of a Marxist would still have to be unquestionably one of implacable opposition to the new government. This would not preclude a united front in conditions of a threat of counter-

revolution by Enrile and Co. The Bolsheviks implacably opposed the Kerensky regime. But when General Kornilov threatened Petrograd in August, it was the united front concluded by the Bolsheviks with their jailer Kerensky and the heroic defence of Petrograd by armed Bolshevik worker detachments, which finally won over the wavering workers and soldiers and enabled the Bolsheviks to lead them to power in October.

It is not of course a question of quoting Lenin as an oracle or prophet. But the historical record lends Lenin an unassailable authority on this question, in contrast to those who expressed their fears that such a policy would only "frighten people off" from the Bolsheviks. Obviously, to refute widespread illusions, to tell the harsh truth, is not often immediately popular. But leadership and political authority are earned precisely by proving oneself to be more farsighted than the politically untutored masses. The fact is that within six months of Lenin's arrival in Russia in April, on the basis of these principled methods he had led the workers and peasants to power in the world's first successful socialist revolution.

We will not deny that it is necessary to take into account the current state of public opinion and level of consciousness of the masses and that ones ideas must be carefully formulated. But it is **those ideas** and none other which must be expressed. Above all, tactfully of course, but it is necessary to tell the truth. Otherwise why take up revolutionary activity in the first place? The beginning must be what is, not what it might seem to others. Therefore we must begin by a ruthless analysis of the real nature of the government before worrying about whatever false perceptions might exist about it.

In a period like this, workers can learn very rapidly. The fever of discussion gripping the people and especially the workers' organisations over the last year, as reflected even in such trivial data as the high turnout for the plebiscite, indicates that a bold campaign by a genuinely revolutionary Marxist tendency could build very rapidly.

Are Reforms Possible?

The perspectives for the period begun by the "EDSA revolution" depend, not on our evaluation of the kind intentions of Cory or the few remaining liberally inclined gentlemen in the Government, nor on the extent of CIA pressure, nor on the current balance of forces between the "Council of Trent" and Joker Arroyo. If peace and stability could be bought, can we doubt that the entire ruling class would willingly pay the price, no matter at what cost? They are fighting for the survival of their rule.

There is now a trend on the left to deplore a "shift to the Right" and even a "betrayal" on the part of Cory. This only confirms the illusions that existed previously and further confuses the issue. We cannot expect a government of landlords and capitalists, standing at the head of the traditional state machine of repression created by the landlords and capitalists, to act other-

wise than in the **interests** of the landlords and capitalists. Nothing was "betrayed" because nothing was **promised** – other than meaningless abstractions like "people's power".

It shows similar confusion to bemoan the dismissal of those few Ministers who had ever actually fought against the Marcos regime – Sanchez, Pimentel, and soon (according to a special pledge by Cory) Arroyo too. It is necessary to understand why this must be so. It is not primarily a question of conspiracies, blackmail, imperialist pressure, but of the hard reality of economic facts. The original Government consisted of rats who had at one time or another deserted Marcos' sinking ship – Enrile, Ramos, Laurel – with a sprinkling of ornamental and impotent liberals: 'human rights lawyers' and 'friends of the workers'. Balancing and juggling between them, a symbolic and weightless fulcrum, was Cory. Capitalism on a world scale today, and in the Philippines especially, cannot afford to grant serious reforms.

The more liberal elements in the Government have lost the battle because they have no coherent alternative programme. That is why they find themselves outmanoeuvred and displaced. They were merely extras who found themselves on the stage by accident.

Even if this Government consisted of workers' leaders with a socialist programme, it would be incapable of carrying it through using the state machine inherited from Marcos. Even the "Popular Unity" Government in Chile, which enacted spectacular reforms, including the distribution of food to the poor in the shanty-towns, and the nationalisation of the key copper mines, paid the price for its illusions on this score. Allende had agreed, in negotiations with the bourgeois Christian Democratic party to secure its support for his election, to fatal conditions, to a promise of no "interference" with their state machine: to appoint officers only from the military academies, to rule out the formation of a workers' militia, to respect the 'independence' of the judiciary, to leave a free hand to the millionaire press and media, etc. This guaranteed the right of the ruling class to avenge the reforms and overthrow the Government once it felt the conditions were favourable. This mistake led to the murder of tens of thousands of worker militants and the enslavement of the entire working population.

Obviously nobody will claim that this Government has such a programme of reforms. Mrs Aquino does not distribute food. Not a grain of rice, not a hectare of land, has been transferred from rich to poor. All she can offer is pretty words: a Constitution containing references to "love", "people's power" and "divine providence". But you can't eat Constitutions. The Government's economic policy is actually if anything to the **right** of that of Marcos. It is a programme of wholesale **denationalisation**. The Philippine National Bank and a number of other public enterprises are being auctioned off and privatised.

In the USA last September, Cory assured the Stanford Research Institute and Pacific Basin Economic Council: "The Philippines now has a government that sees private enterprise as the engine of the economy. Private initiative" – (she was too polite to say: American aid) – "helped to effect the country's immediate recovery from the Second World War, and

placed it second to Japan in economic growth. Under the last administration, it experienced a local variant of state capitalism, called crony capitalism. It was 90% theft and 10% ineptitude."

To the Philippine/American Chamber of Commerce and New York Economics Club she said: "I invite you to join us... There also remain pioneer and export-oriented sectors where we give an equally warm welcome to 100% foreign ownership.... The government's programme is based on a labour-oriented and rural-based growth strategy that will in the long run enable us to pay all of our legitimate debt." There could not be imagined a more slavishly pro-imperialist economic policy.

Finance Minister Ongpin put it even more clearly: "I think government should get out of business completely. Privatise everything." His programme of social welfare is equally trenchant: "A new period of austerity will be required to mop up all that inflationary credit." Far from Allende, this is closer to a Pinochet programme! How can reforms be given within this framework?

The only real previous policy difference between the rival factions of the bourgeoisie has now in practice narrowed down to vanishing-point. Cory came to power talking of peace. Military means alone were no solution to the insurgency. It was necessary to tackle the underlying problems of the masses – principally "jobs and justice, food and freedom", in the words of Jose Diokno, the most consistent of the liberals. Only thus could the basis of the NPA be undermined. It was clear that the military machine of the AFP – which had expanded from 60,000 to 300,000 during the years of martial law – had failed abjectly to halt the advances of the NPA. Any guerrilla army depends upon the sympathy of a mass peasant base. Was it not possible to erode this foundation of support among the peasantry for the NPA, just as the Huk rebellion was undermined in the 1950s?

Under the presidency of Magsaysay, with enormous assistance from US imperialism, the ruling class combined military repression with a big programme of investment, economic aid, bribes to Huk defectors, demagogic gestures and promises of reform, etc. Ninoy Aquino had personally initiated the negotiations with Taruc that led to the capitulation of the Huks. Cory's programme was based on the hope that a similar policy might work again. Hence her appeals to US imperialism.

But this is a different epoch in terms of the position of US imperialism. Those were the 'golden years' of the Pax Americana, when the USA accounted for a majority of world production and two-thirds of the world's gold was stored in Fort Knox. Those were the years of Marshall Aid to Europe, and similar aid to Japan, which restored the stability of a ruined world capitalist system, when America could police the world on the basis of its preponderant economic power. The situation today is quite different. The USA faces a huge trade deficit and a huge budget deficit. The dollar, all-powerful in the 25 years following the Bretton Woods agreement, has collapsed in terms of gold prices and of its parity with other currencies. It has become the world's biggest debtor nation. Its economic position in relation to Japan, Germany and other imperialist rivals has slipped back disastrously. It has its hands full

trying to grapple with the nightmare problems of the Middle East, with its key oil reserves, and Central America on its own back yard.

There is no question of a new direct military intervention. It was the disastrous commitment to save their system in Vietnam which marked the turning-point in the political and economic power of US imperialism. And the Philippines is not a Vietnam but a country of 55 million population spread over 7,000 islands.

Of course the USA is still the major economic and military capitalist power, and the major source of overseas aid to its client states. US aid, investment, loans, military assistance, active co-operation in a policy of "low-intensity conflict", etc., will obviously continue to be the major factor in the survival of the system over the next few years in the Philippines. But there is no possibility that this will be sufficient to end the war. It cannot provide the kind of lavish aid and investment that saved Philippine landlordism and capitalism in the 1950s. Even then it succeeded only by a hair's breadth: the Huks at one point were on the verge of over-running Manila.

Hopes that US imperialism will play the same role again are based on ignorance of the current situation. The outgoing US ambassador, Bosworth, has given a blunt warning: "The Philippine Government should become less dependent on the USA in the future and begin looking to other nations for aid and trade markets.... Both we and the Philippines will be better off in the future if the Philippines is able to broaden somewhat its focus on the rest of the world.... We are not, by ourselves, going to be able to provide the Philippines everything it needs, nor should we even try." Cory at the same time has complained: "I have asked our military ally for the hardware to achieve these objectives, but they have given advice instead."

This is also a different epoch in terms of the world economy. The 1950s was a period of enormous growth in world trade. Philippine exports of sugar, coconut, rubber, fruit and other commodities were assured of a market – though they suffered unfair terms of trade with the developed capitalist nations.

The situation was coolly summed up in the *New York Times*, which described the problem facing the Philippines after Cory's visit to the USA soliciting aid: "She failed to achieve her chief objective – enlisting American investors to put their capital to work in rebuilding her nations' ravaged economy. US government assistance and trade agreements cannot make up for the lack of private capital.... (Investors) want answers to several big questions that cannot be glossed over by Mrs Aquino's democratic zeal.... Unfortunately no-one expects these questions to be answered to the satisfaction of the private sector any time soon.... (Aid) goes largely towards maintaining the status quo. There is virtually nothing left over for the steps that are required to prepare the country for a significant economic growth. And as a result, Mrs Aquino is finding it increasingly difficult to pursue the strategy she thinks would be most effective to eradicate the economic injustices that fuel the rebel movement.... Mrs Aquino requires significant international

aid to satisfy the nationalists' demands and remove the threat of more radical opposition. Her most urgent priorities are land reform and the creation of jobs."

Economic Crisis

The prospects for the Philippine economy will not be determined by the policies of the Philippine government, but by the health of the world economy. Despite the current upturn, the underlying economic situation in the Philippines today is catastrophic. The gross domestic product fell by 5% in 1984, by 3% in 1985, and by 1.3% in 1986. This compared unfavourably with the other ASEAN countries, which all grew in 1986 by rates varying between 1.3% (Indonesia) and 3.8% (Thailand). In the second quarter of 1986 — the period of the dawn of peace hopes under the new government — the GNP was down by 5.2%, manufacturing industry by 10.5%, construction by 60%. There had been a fall in manufacturing industry for six consecutive quarters. The economy as a whole had shrunk by nearly 12% in two years. The slight upturn in production in recent months comes nowhere near to redressing the collapse of the previous period. The flight of capital since 1983 amounted to somewhere between \$15 and \$25 billion. The influx of foreign capital dried up, crippling industry, which is now operating at below 50% of capacity.

According to a survey made by the Congressional Research Service of the USA a few months ago, "the Philippines today is facing the most serious economic crisis in its modern history...Philippine recovery is likely to be slow at best, given the magnitude of its problems....It is doubtful that the Philippines will make an economic recovery in the near term."

The magnitude of the resulting problems is such that it is inconceivable that any landlord/capitalist government could hope to tackle the root causes of discontent. 70% of the population are living below the official poverty line. The rate of infant mortality is 59.3 per 1000 live births. 86% of urban families live in slums. 53% of the rural population have no safe drinking water. Many more such horrifying statistics could be given. What can the new Government offer to end this nightmare facing the majority of the population? How can any landlord/capitalist Government redistribute land ownership, rehabilitate the millions of peasants dispossessed by the plantation corporations, provide jobs for the millions of unemployed and under-employed, provide education, housing, drinking water, medicine, etc.?

The decline in international prices for all major primary products since 1979 has sent sugar, coconut and other commodity prices plummeting. The terms of trade for Philippine exports fell by one third between 1980 and 1983. The price of sugar on the world market has fallen from 65 cents per pound to below 3 cents today — about one fifth of its production cost. Production has fallen from 3.5 million tonnes in the early 1980s to around one million this year, mainly for domestic needs. The plantation owners have been forced to borrow money at interest rates of 48%, and

their debts exceed their total assets. 200,000 sugar workers have been laid off. A similar situation faces the producers of other raw materials. Foreign exchange revenue has been slashed.

The foreign debt has reached more than \$28 billion. The debt service ratio (debt as a ratio of foreign exchange earnings) has soared to 41.9%. Ongpin was unjustifiably proud of the "good deal" he had negotiated with the creditor banks on debt repayments. But *Business Day* commented that it "would require from us a total payment of \$3.44 billion this year. There is certainly no way that we can make such a payment....It can only result in a disorientation of our economic activity." (3rd April 1987).

The Philippines has already received more standby credit facilities from the IMF than any other country in the world, except Haiti! In October 1986 it was granted its twentieth, on the basis of a commitment to reduce the budget deficit and remove tariffs (measures that will strike new blows against revival of the economy). Ongpin has since boasted to the IMF that he achieved every single target of the IMF, bar one, and that he had reduced the living standards of the masses to the levels of 1975! This is hardly the basis for a programme of reforms in the lives of the masses.

The conditions needed to restore the health of the economy cannot be attained in present circumstances. A substantial influx of foreign capital is inconceivable, in conditions of economic recession. (It is significant that the foreign creditor banks have shown little interest in Ongpin's offer of generous interest rates on outstanding loans in the form of investment notes. This speaks volumes about their confidence in the economy.) Access to major export markets is threatened by the trend towards protectionism and even trade war. Recession is imminent in the major export markets of America, Japan and Europe. And a significant growth of the domestic market is impossible in the absence of the other factors. Finally, the political stability which would be another essential precondition for investment is impossible without a resolution of the guerrilla war — which begs the whole question.

Not one of these factors is realisable in the present global context of falling commodity prices, stagnant markets, falling investment. The state of the world economy will not permit a significant growth of exports nor a sufficient rise in prices. A significant growth of the domestic market depends on a rise in living standards — on the provision of land, jobs, decent wages and welfare expenditure. Even if there were the chance of a rapid influx of foreign investment, it would require precisely the guarantee of a cheap and docile labour force. But neither "labour discipline" nor "political stability" can be assured without drastic repression. That is why the reform programme is utopian.

Actually it is no longer in question whether this is a viable programme. **Cory herself has in effect abandoned it.** In her latest speeches she has made herself the direct mouthpiece of the military: "The answer to the terrorism of the left and the right..." (the Right is mentioned out of a sense of aesthetic balance: not one step has been taken against it) "...is not social and economic reform but police and military action...I want a string of honourable military victories to follow up my proclamation of war." This is not a 'betrayal' but a

recognition that capitalism today cannot make sufficient reforms to end the insurgency.

The bankruptcy of liberalism was most clearly revealed by Joker Arroyo. He blamed the Mendiola massacre, not on the military murderers but on the peasant victims. More significant still were his comments on the demands of the marchers. The KMP had demanded "confiscation of Marcos and crony-owned land proven to have been acquired from peasants by means of deceit, intimidation and violence, and their free distribution to the tillers." Arroyo rejected this demand as "socialistic", and added: "For so long as we live under a capitalist system, nothing can be taken without just compensation." Arroyo — the most 'liberal' member of the Administration! — thus explicitly put the interests of the crony gangsters for 'compensation' before the needs of the peasants for land to feed their families.

The irony is that this demand is of course not "socialistic" at all: it is the **fundamental task of the bourgeois-democratic revolution**. The confession by Arroyo that it cannot be fulfilled under capitalism is the best possible confirmation of the arguments put forward in this document.

In fact the Mendiola incident was the first real test of the 'democratic' pretensions of the new regime. Anatole France once pointed out that bourgeois law with majestic impartiality judges alike all those who steal bread for their children — whether rich or poor. The report of the Mendiola inquiry proved him right. Despite the abundant evidence in the form of eyewitness accounts, videos, photographs and gunpowder tests, the commission was unable to identify who had fired the shots which killed 20 peasants and wounded another 100: so it recommended no prosecutions on these charges. However, apparently it takes two sides to make a massacre. The marines were at fault because they fired their guns; the peasants were also at fault because they were there. Looking at the question from every angle, the commission therefore recommended the prosecution of the peasants' leader Tadeo for sedition!

Civilian and Military Power

Every party in the history of the Philippine Republic has had a programme of land reform; jobs; curbs on corruption; and disbandment of the private armies! What reason is there to expect this Government to act differently from all its predecessors? Magsaysay was a more plausible demagogue, who used to dress up as a peasant and visit the villages, posing in front of the cameras with a spade. Marcos justified his assumption of martial law with promises of land reform. If Cory has refused to use the formally absolute powers she has enjoyed for the last fourteen months under the so-called "revolutionary constitution" to solve a problem over which lives are being lost every day; if she has not even been prepared to make a token gesture towards reform in her own vast estate Hacienda Luisita; then what basis is there to expect serious land reforms to be introduced by the new landlord-dominated Congress which will decide the issue?

The landlords will not voluntarily give up a hectare of land. In fact the Constitution has already pre-empted the issue by sanctifying the "rights of private property". Land is to be **bought** for the peasants. Who will bear the cost of "compensating" the landlords? Partly, it seems the money is to come from taxes. But the Congress will confirm the refusal of the rich to pay. A little is expected to come from the sale of state assets. But Ongpin complains that this will only raise P20 billion over twenty years. "It is still a drop in the bucket," he said. The rest will come from...additional loans.

P36.6 billion are required even to carry through, over a 20-year period, the distribution of vacant, sequestered and common land! In principle this is the same reform programme enacted by Marcos in 1972! It will not begin to tackle the problems of more than a handful of peasants even if it is achieved, and the new military offensive against the NPA proves that nobody even hopes any longer that it can halt the advance of the NPA.

Of this sum, P20 billion is earmarked for the purchase of land. A loan of at least P10 billion (\$500 million) is required. The USA is presently considering the payment of further aid amounting to \$260 million, for **military and economic aid**. This is the equivalent to \$5 per capita. The land reform loans would need to come from the World Bank or further commercial banking sources, thus further encumbering the economy.

The other key question is jobs. The real unemployment figure is calculated at more than 20% while under-employment approaches 50% of the remaining workforce. The idea of compensating the landlords in investment bonds will be as popular with the Filipino landlords as it was with the foreign bankers. Ongpin admits that he is "not terribly excited" with the idea because of "the bad reputation of the Land Bank bonds under the old (Marcos) land reform programme.... The Land Bank bonds did nothing to really distribute lands to tenant-farmers." The landlords will dictate the terms which they find acceptable. No Government in the world has found a way to force the rich to invest where they don't want to.

But if "food and jobs" are unfortunately not at present in stock, then what happens to "justice and freedom"? The short answer is that without the material base such words are hollow abstractions. Without the necessities of life, all the pretty phrases in the world will not prevent social convulsions.

This government cannot solve the land question, expel foreign capital, or create new jobs. The NPA cannot capitulate without securing these objectives. Therefore the continuation of the war is inevitable. That is why the peace talks were a fiasco. They did not even manage to agree upon an agenda. In the end they broke up in confusion, on the grounds that the government panel could not even guarantee its **own** safety, let alone that of the NDF negotiators! Jose Diokno as his last act completely repudiated Cory's Government. The Constitution, which was rushed through without democratic consultations, by an appointed commission of bourgeois, had ruled out a real solution in advance. It sanctified private property, liberalised foreign investment, and even fudged the issue of allowing nuclear weapons on the American

bases.

Without land and jobs, the masses will be discontented. In the NPA they will find the promise of salvation. The war will continue and intensify. A civil war requires a military machine of repression. It requires a policy of terrorisation of the peasants and workers. The brutalities of the Marcos state juggernaut were not caused by mere sadism. They are the inevitable realities of a civil war.

Both Ramos and the Pentagon have complained of the naivety of some elements in the Cory administration in tackling the insurgency. Ramos said: "Some government authorities argue that 'people's power' would solve the problem.... This is a dangerous half-truth which sets within it the seeds of our own destruction." He called for a comprehensive strategy of "social, economic, political and military measures fused into one integrated political weapon." Ramos has reacted with irritation to protests over massacres like those in Mendiola, Lupao, Bataan, etc. From a capitalist point of view he is right. A guerrilla army is based among a sympathetic civilian peasantry. To crush a guerrilla army - which is calculated to need a preponderance of ten regular soldiers to one guerrilla - means to terrorise and demoralise that base of support. One can have civil war. Or one can have "human rights". One cannot have both.

The military reacted impatiently to Cory's expressions of regret even over the Lupao massacre, where 17 villagers, including old people and children, were shot down in cold blood. Ileta commented: "you can't stand there and ask who is the enemy while bullets are raining down on you." *Business Day* remarked that "the villagers... would be foes of the armed forces because military intelligence has classified them as a 'mass base' of the NPA." It quotes an officer: "This is not a conventional but a guerrilla war. The enemy is largely unseen, moves soundlessly, hits us when we least expect it, and then vanishes into the populace even before we can say boo."

Another officer explained: "We are now poised to be embroiled in a dirty, messy insurgency war.... Preventing civilians from being killed in cross-fire? Hell, who can quarrel with that? The thing is, when you're out there in some godforsaken barrio... and an unseen enemy is taking pot shots at you and your friends, don't tell me you're going to climb up the nearest tree stump and shout time out, who's the NPA and who's the civilian so I can get a clear shot?"

This explains why there will be many more massacres, many more opportunities for Presidential tears, many more inconclusive inquiries, a growing resentment by the peasants towards the military, and further advances for the NPA. It is precisely a civil war, a war between classes and not a war between armies. There will be an inevitable trend towards demoralisation within the AFP. To quote Ileta again: "During the 1950s Huk campaign we'd go to the mountains and disappear for about a month.... That's the way to conduct and eventually win a counter-insurgency war. Not like now where our troops only mount two-day or four-day operations. That simply doesn't work.... As a commander I would hesitate to lead some of the Armed Forces to battle because we'll surely lose."

Hence the whole gamut of military repression sur-

ives intact. A Canadian inter-church report stated that even during the first six months of the Cory government - i.e. before the breakdown of peace talks, the expiry of the cease-fire, and the intensification of the war - there were 238 reported cases of torture, 43 disappearances, 38 cases of salvaging and 58 massacres resulting in 160 deaths and 78 wounded, 34 mass evacuations involving tens of thousands of people and seven incidents of hamletting including a total population of 32 villages. This horrific situation has become incomparably worse in the last few months.

The most tangible effect of the new government is the springing up of sinister new private armies. Cory Aquino's administration is bringing to the Philippines, not reforms and "reconciliation", but the transition from scattered guerrilla conflicts to a full-scale civil war. So much for "liberal-democratic" government!

In the CHDF and other forces there were already a total of around 260 private armies. Now Davao has witnessed the rise of the Fascist Alsa Masa, with 7000 armed men, under the patronage of the police chief Calida. In addition there is the even bigger army NAKASAKA. These sadistic terrorist movements recruit thousands of 'volunteers' by coercion, and extort 'taxes' from the population. NAKASAKA is hypocritically called an "unarmed" volunteer force, because so far, unlike Alsa Masa, it does not carry firearms. Actually its members carry bolos, spears and knives, and are really a front for the dreaded Tadtad (chop), a cult of religious fanatics who chop their victims with machetes. Among their recent pastimes were to force one NPA prisoner to eat his own severed ear, and to decapitate another and drink his blood. And yet this outfit has been officially promoted by Local Government Minister Jaime Ferrer and enjoys the personal patronage of Cory herself, who regards it as a manifestation of "people's power"! Again, so much for liberalism! The talk of disbanding these armies "when appropriate" is sheer cant.

Calida has boasted: "There are almost no Communists left in Davao City today, just the priests and nuns, and we'll go after them next." Pala, spokesman for Alsa Masa, warns: "If Malacanang causes the disbandment of the Alsa Masa, you tell Malacanang that we will revolt." These gentlemen are touring Negros Occidental, Iloilo and Bicol urging the foundation of similar outfits. Others that already exist include SIKAD (Davao Oriental) and KOMUT (S. Cotabato). In Negros sugar planters have formed the El Tigre, and in Nueva Ecija local businessmen have formed another vigilante army. In Cagayan and Kalinga-Apayao there are the Anti-NPA Guerrilla Unit (bandits posing as NPA); Special Anti-Terrorist Group (Enrile supporters); Kilusan Laban sa Komunismo (organised by the fugitive Colonel Cabauatan); Counter-Insurgency Command; and four others. In addition, the Government has attempted to use the Cordillera People's Liberation Army which defected from the NPA, and factions of the Moro National Liberation Front, as auxiliaries in the fight against the NPA.

Cory has promised that "undesirable and misguided elements in the military will be removed". The problem is that, in conditions of civil war, the reactionary bonapartist officer caste are not only not "undesir-

able", but are actually indispensable. Liberal prejudices have again inevitably deferred to reality. That accounts for Cory's almost ridiculous impotence in dealing with the military conspirators. The first of the many attempted coups — the Manila Hotel putsch — was punished with the draconic sentence of...30 push-ups! The November coup led to the dismissal of Enrile — but he was immediately honoured with a medal by his successor Ileta.

After the January 27 coup, Cory went on television to make ever such terrible threats as to what she was going to do....and nothing happened. The leaders were allowed to escape. The pro-Government forces surrounding the occupied Channel 7 headquarters adopted a very different tone to the hail of bullets with which a few days earlier they had greeted the Mendiola marchers: "The Filipino people are asking you to please think this over thoroughly so we can solve this problem. We beseech you to come out." Isleta explained, no doubt to general surprise: "The Armed Forces as a matter of policy hate to use force."

Cory publicly ordered Ramos to attack the occupied Channel 7 building...and Honasan and his cohorts, still in operational positions, threatened a new rebellion and blackmailed Ramos in effect to mutiny against these clear orders from the nominal "commander-in-chief". A RAM officer sneered: "Ramos knuckled under. He did not want to have a civil war on his hands." The rebels were feted as heroes. Even Trade and Industry Minister Concepcion grovelled: "I could feel the pain, the sorrow, the wounds of the officers....I who have been critical of the military saw another face in the military — I saw the face of Christ."

The real tactical differences between the military factions were clarified in an interesting exchange over the radio between their leaders. Canlas shouted: "We want to save the country from Communism, and express our feelings about the threat of Communism and how everything has been ruined since Cory Aquino took office and began negotiating." Ramos replied: "Combat alone will not solve the insurgency. Before we can fight the Communists we must first be together. With this rebellion you are speeding up the process of communist takeover."

It is ironic that, meanwhile, Salas (Kumander Bilog) of the NPA — who was arrested seven months after the amnesty for political prisoners — is facing a probable death sentence for his conspiracy to overthrow...the Marcos government! He was charged, under the Cory 'revolutionary' government, with "rising publicly and taking up arms since 1969 for the purpose of overthrowing the present (sic) government." Nothing could more poignantly express where the real power still lies. Death sentences for those who tried to overthrow the old Marcos government. Impunity for those army officers who try to overthrow the present 'revolutionary' government.

This is the logic of the situation. It is useless to cling to lingering hopes in the more 'liberal' of Cory's past and present associates. Bobbit Sanchez, the former workers' advocate who as Labour Minister made free use of the anti-strike decrees of Marcos and Ople, is now prepared to sit on Senate benches alongside Marcos' 'trade union' gangster Herrera, and claims "I am not anti-business". Arroyo, asked by *Asiaweek* whether he is "left-leaning", answers elegantly: "That's

a lot of crap. You know me better than that." It is purely for personal and historical reasons that the military dislike him.

Every party and every government reflects the interest of a particular class. If an individual leader is too squeamish or sentimental to carry out the needs of that class he will be either forced to change his line or be jettisoned.

Aquino herself is an ornamental figurehead and nothing more. It suits the bourgeoisie very well to have a president that after every successive massacre goes on television and cries. It is an irritation and an affront to the military, hence the repeated coups, the 70% support for the Guardians' Brotherhood, in addition to membership of other fraternities like RAM, the Demons, etc. But the Makati businessmen are well satisfied. They voted solidly Yes in the plebiscite. It is good for temporarily disorienting the peasants, and it helps to reassure investors, creditors, aid fund chiefs, and all. This is not to say that Cory is necessarily insincere. As Lenin used to say, we have no instrument with which to measure a politician's sincerity. We can only judge their deeds. The needs of the ruling class will in any case prevail over her psychological partialities. The old Marcos machine is carrying on business as usual.

Prospects

That is the objective reality. And inevitably the subjective appreciation of it will overcome the timelag and catch up. The Cory euphoria — fast shrinking now that the plebiscite is out of the way and the Marcos nightmare fades in the memory of the masses — will evaporate very rapidly in the absence of tangible gains. That is when the political formations of the future will be determined. A workers' leadership that had been steadfast, shown its capacity to swim against the stream, warned boldly and unambiguously, would reap enormous gains in its political authority. A leadership that has merely been content to jump on Cory's bandwagon and only mutter apologetically about its misgivings, would pay the price of its opportunism by being dismissed along with the liberals themselves as useless windbags.

In any case, the objective problems facing the masses will become more acute, more intolerable, in conditions of world recession and a further collapse of the Philippine economy which would inevitably result. In sheer desperation, the peasants and unemployed youth would turn in increasing numbers to the only force that would appear to offer a real way out: the NPA. It would be fatal to underestimate this factor or write it off, merely due to a succession of tactical mistakes and a process of defections and disorientation during this strange and confusing period. Enrile and the Pentagon have pointed to the "alarming" growth of the NPA. Enrile has warned: "The battle could run far into the future and it will be long and hard. And if we do not wage this battle decisively now, it could well erupt into a total war that would give us neither a moment of calm nor a moment of respite, but greater misery and death for many of our countrymen."

This is not mere alarmism. The NPA is operating more substantial and audacious attacks in every area. AFP intelligence sources estimate that 18.5% of the country's barangays are controlled by the NPA. The Pentagon estimates a 9% growth in NPA forces during 1986, to nearly 24,430. 68% of encounters are now initiated by NPA. Since the end of the cease-fire, every day there are on average twelve battles, with deaths running at ten per day. The AFP is getting a battering. In two recent encounters 37 military were lost with no NPA casualties. The massacre at Lupao was a reflection of the desperation and rage of the military.

The key question for Marxists is: what will be the consequences of the failure of the Cory regime to change the conditions of the masses? After the hopes aroused by the overthrow of Marcos, the record of Cory's government will rapidly disillusion the workers and peasants, whose last relics of trust will be sapped by rising prices, mass unemployment, layoffs, military and police massacres, rampant corruption, the growth of the death squads, etc.

One effect of this will be a weakening of the political defences of the civilian administration against increasingly insolent insubordination by the military. The Enriles, Honasans, and Cabauatans have been given a free hand to organise future and more effective conspiracies. The Guardians and the other right-wing military fraternities control the big majority of the Armed Forces. The failure of the left to win influence among the Armed Forces, composed overwhelmingly of young peasants — who are demoralised at the military failures and the arrogance and corruption of the officer caste, and showed great sympathy with the anti-Marcos crowds at EDSA — is itself a serious indictment of the CPP's concentration on the 'armed struggle' to the neglect of general political propaganda work. It is precisely the soldiers' potentially revolutionary discontent which, by default of the left, is being tragically channelled into counter-revolutionary rebellions. This serious mistake will make the struggle to overthrow landlordism and capitalism incomparably more bloody and protracted than would otherwise have been the case.

The difference between the coup conspirators and the dominant faction of Ramos and Heito, is over tactics. The latter are more astute and reliable watchdogs over the interests of the ruling class than the ambitious Enrile. The bourgeoisie is satisfied with the democratic facade provided by the present regime. The fading echoes of the rhetoric of "people's power" and "reconciliation" may grate in the ears of the officer caste, but at this stage this is the best government the ruling class could wish for — especially once a solidly millionaire-based Congress is in place. The government's economic policies are unexceptionable; corruption is back at a slightly more acceptable level than under Marcos; and the aura of 'democracy' is useful when appealing for foreign aid and investment.

But the officer caste has been brutalised by its experience of repression of the Huks and NPA and by its murderous role under Marcos. It will demand ever greater concessions. Civil wars cannot be conducted for long under the banner of liberalism. That was proved in Russia and Greece.

In Russia in 1917, two factors accelerated the process of the revolution: the existence of a mass revolutionary

party, and the pressure of the world war. The Philippines offers a mirror-image: the speed of reaction is due to the impatience and frustration of the officer caste under the pressure of the guerrilla war; meanwhile, weighed against this pressure, on the other scale the working class remains politically muted and incoherent, due to the CPP's emphasis on the peasantry. That is the explanation for the rapid movement to the Right.

Capitalism will be unable to stabilise itself. It will stagger from one coup attempt or government crisis to the next, with the guerrilla war looming larger and larger, as in the dying years of South Vietnam or the current deadlock in El Salvador. There is no prospect of an enduring, stable regime re-establishing itself. If the threat of an outright military coup seems to have receded for the moment, it is because the civilian government has capitulated on all the immediate issues. Ramos has publicly expressed contempt for the Ministers who seem to imagine that the insurgency can be defeated purely by the "symbolism" (read: empty prattle) about "people's power". He has already demanded military representation in the Cabinet, on the basis of the "lack of talent and experience" among civilian politicians. That is a demand which will be pressed home and will probably be conceded in time. It is part of the logic of civil war.

The military today are smarting under criticisms over outrages such as the massacres at Mendiola, Lupao, etc., and the whole Marcos / Ver heritage, the "salvaging squads", etc. They will demand greater responsibility and will sooner or later gain all that they demand: ministerial portfolios, emergency powers, social privileges, etc. The concentration of power into military hands need not necessarily mean an immediate replacement of Cory. The Indonesian coup of 1965, which led to the massacre of around a million Communists, at first left Sukarno with the formal trappings of power. Since in fact already these are all the powers that Cory has in effect assumed, the generals may be happy for a time to maintain the facade of continuity with the ideals of EDSA, etc. But the reality will nonetheless be a military government and a rapid erosion of what very limited democratic rights exist today.

The Indonesian junta remains in power today, 22 years later — one of the most repressive regimes in the world. But the crucial difference with the Philippines is the fact of the NPA guerrilla war, which rules out the possibility of such a drastic defeat. The foundations of any new reactionary regime — no matter how murderous — will be undermined by the guerrilla war, which it cannot win. As in Vietnam, the Armed Forces will become increasingly prey to desertions, demoralisation and defections. There will be setbacks and even major and bloody defeats for the workers and peasants, but these will be followed by new political and social convulsions. There is no lasting way out of the crisis within the confines of landlordism and capitalism.

False Strategies

Neither the PKP nor the CPP have based themselves on the real historical experience of the international

working class, or even the Philippine working class. Unfortunately they were poisoned with Stalinist or Maoist distortions. They have been blind to the mission of the proletariat to lead the toiling masses of town and country in a revolution combining the democratic and socialist tasks.

The Stalinist bureaucracy which came to power in Russia in the early 1920s subordinated the interests of the workers and peasants of the world to its own clique interests. Every national section of the Comintern was obliged to put the narrow national interests of the Russian bureaucracy before the needs of the revolution. During the Second World War, soon after Hitler's violation of the Hitler/Stalin pact, Stalin concluded an alliance with Roosevelt and Churchill, which was justified by references to the relatively 'progressive' character of the 'democracies' (USA and Britain). The consequence of this policy in the Philippines was that the PKP dutifully submitted a memorandum to the US Ambassador pledging "loyalty to the Government of the Philippines and the United States".

Huk leader Luis Taruc later wrote in his autobiography: "Throughout the war we had nothing but praise for the Americans....We had always referred to the Americans as our allies and had sincerely believed that under the leadership of Roosevelt the American nation would help usher in a new era of world peace and democracy....We had neglected to point out that imperialism was the same whether Japanese, American, British or Dutch." The price that was paid for this mistake was the massacre of the Huks by American imperialism over eight years of civil war. Its reconquest of the islands required the same policy as in 1898: the massacre of the real revolutionary force.

The PKP was corrupted by Stalinist bureaucratic distortions of Marxism, artificially dividing the revolution into watertight 'stages', belittling the role of the proletariat in the interests of a "broad popular front" with the "democratic national bourgeoisie". But the task of liberating society from feudalism and imperialism cannot be separated from the overthrow of capitalism. The quest for the elusive "national bourgeoisie" landed the PKP in the humiliating position of actually supporting Marcos throughout the martial law period. This showed a naive gullibility in Marcos' demagogic pretensions. The PKP leaders even met Marcos in Malacanang. PKP General Secretary Macapagal greeted him: "Your Excellency, you have called for national unity and we are here today in response to your call. We do so with an offer of patriotic and socially conscious participation in nation-building which has long been denied us."

It is not surprising that party activists' disgust at this servile capitulation led to a major split in the party. Tragically, however, the new CPP was incapable of offering a Marxist alternative. Seduced by Maoist delusions, they took at face value and even fossilised still further the artificial division of the revolution into 'stages' and reduced the role of the proletariat still further. They grossly aggravated the existing confusion.

Jo.Ma. Sison, the founder of the CPP, drew false conclusions from the failures of the PKP. Instead of emphasising the mission of the proletariat to lead the urban and rural masses, he condemned the last vestiges of lip-service that the PKP had continued to play

towards the class struggle. In his critique he wrote: "The leadership failed all the time to stress that the main contradiction within Philippine society then was between US imperialism and feudalism, on the one hand, and the Filipino people on the other.... While all workers, Marxist or not, demanded Philippine independence from US imperialism, the matter of national liberation was obscured by the slogans of the class struggle between the capitalist class and the working class." (Our emphasis.)

For Marxists the class struggle is the force which impels all historical progress. The CPP pushed it aside. It reduced the tasks of the revolution to a simple military question. This proved the fatal weakness of the CPP. For all the courage and self-sacrifice invested in it by tens of thousands of fighters, it has become depoliticised, devoid of theory. It began its activity with a contempt for theory. Existence determines consciousness, and two decades of experience in guerrilla war has reinforced this attitude. What need is there for theory, perspective, or even a clear programme, when you have an army? But recent history teaches timely lessons on the dangers of this attitude. The CPP fought bravely and at enormous human cost for 17 years to overthrow the Marcos regime. Its successes in the field did indirectly lead to his downfall. But when the final and decisive steps were taken on the streets of Manila, the CPP played no role.

That is the ironic fate of those who are impatient for "quick results". The CPP leaders tried to reduce the movement of history to the scale of military technicalities, and preoccupied themselves with the tactics of guerrilla warfare to the exclusion of even the most fundamental strategic principles of Marxism. 150 years of international experience have confirmed the historical lessons and conclusions reached by Marx and Engels on such questions as the leading role of the proletariat in modern revolutions; the strategy of mass struggle as opposed to individual terror; the class nature of the state; etc. They immersed themselves in the practical technicalities of accumulating arms, to become completely divorced from the working class. But as Trotsky explained: "The revolution is not a simple aggregate of mechanical means. The revolution can arise only out of the sharpening of the class struggle, and it can find a guarantee of victory only in the social functions of the proletariat. The mass political strike, the armed insurrection, the conquest of state power...."

We have already dealt with the question of the limitations of peasant struggle. However, we have to acknowledge that since the victory of Mao in the Chinese Revolution — which for all its distortions represents the **second greatest event in human history**, second only to the Russian revolution — there have been many peasant movements throughout the continents of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, guerrilla struggles, which have conquered state power and gone on to put an end to landlordism and capitalism, creating new states in the image of Moscow and Beijing, based upon state ownership, the monopoly of foreign trade, and a plan. We should add that we have no doubt that following a victory of the NPA, the kind of state that would then finally emerge would be similar to those existing at present in China, Vietnam, Cuba, Angola, etc. As we will show, however, this does not refute the

arguments advanced above.

The CPP fights for correct demands: land to the tillers, expropriation of bureaucrat and imperialist capital, expulsion of imperialist military bases. But it has not thought this programme through to a conclusion. This will inevitably and inexorably lead to the expropriation of **all capitalist property**. Why do we therefore criticise the haziness and ambiguities of the present CPP programme, if we accept that the logic of events will force it empirically to carry through such a sweeping programme? Because a socialist revolution requires a conscious leadership prepared with a clear perspective if it is not to lead to gross distortions – such bureaucratic distortions as exist in every one of the cases named above.

However the CPP shrouds its goals behind a hazy concept of “national democracy”. This has no scientific definition or historical precedent. It is a fudge, a formula which flies in the face of everything that Lenin wrote on democracy. “If we are not to mock at common sense or history,” he wrote in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, “it is obvious that we cannot speak of ‘pure democracy’ so long as different classes exist; we can only speak of class democracy.... ‘Pure democracy’ is the mendacious phrase of a liberal who wants to fool the workers.... Bourgeois democracy ...under capitalism cannot but remain restricted, truncated, false and hypocritical, a paradise for the rich and a snare and deception for the exploited, the poor.... Proletarian democracy is a million times more democratic than any bourgeois democracy.”

A good example of this theoretical fuzziness – a crude attempt to hoodwink the bourgeois – was given in a speech by Comrade Horacio ‘Boy’ Morales to the ‘Bishops’/Businessmen’s Conference Breakfast Dialogue’ (!) at the Makati Sports Club in April 1986. Morales began by telling his audience that “in current Philippine politics, to be ‘left’ is to be a) anti-fascist, b) anti-feudal, c) anti-bureaucrat capital, and d) anti-foreign monopoly capital, or anti-imperialist”. Having flattered his audience that on this basis “we might be sharing more leftist ideas than you or I suspect”, he continued by emphasising that “this broad definition of the left is **not opposed to capitalism as a whole**: only to bureaucrat capital and foreign monopoly capital.... At the current stage of development of Philippine society, **one need not be socialist** in order to be classified with the left.” He went on to spell out the programme of the “left”: “What then does the left advocate, positively? The answer might come as a surprise, because it is relatively tame. In politics, a popular democracy. In economics, a mixed economy.... Of course, I refer to what the left advocates as a realistic and realisable alternative at this historical conjuncture.... Less mature leftists tend to dwell almost exclusively on impossible dreams.”

Comrade Morales’ argument is the classic one of reformism throughout the decades: that socialism is a dream and that socialists are therefore unrealistic and immature. On the contrary, socialism is the only realistic programme. It is precisely a dream to hope for a democratic and independent Philippines which remains on a capitalist basis. In the epoch of imperialism, only under a programme of rooting out capitalism along with landlordism and imperialist domination, can

even the elementary tasks of the democratic revolution be begun. The historical record is irrefutable. Comrade Morales would be unable to quote a single example of a colonial country in the twentieth century which has broken free of the shackles of imperialism and landlordism without also nationalising all capitalist property.

“Poltroons, gas-bags, vainglorious Narcissuses and petty Hamlets”! That was Lenin’s attitude to the petty-bourgeois democrats in Russia in 1917. “They brandished their wooden swords – but did not even destroy the monarchy! We cleansed out all that monarchist muck as nobody has ever done before.... The petty-bourgeois democrats ‘compromised’ with the landowners for eight months, while we completely swept the landowners and all their traditions from Russian soil in a few weeks.”

The clarity and frankness of Lenin contrasts refreshingly with the sycophantic tone of Comrade Morales to his illustrious audience. The joke is that all these contorted efforts to fool the Makati businessmen and bishops are futile. They may appreciate the sight of a prominent Communist crawling to them, but Comrade Morales’ allies in the NPA have no illusions that the issues can be decided over breakfast in the Makati Sports Club: they know that even to achieve these uninspiring goals they are obliged to fight a bitter war. And the capitalists, for their part, have no reason to trust Comrade Morales’ assurances that a state resting on the armed NPA guerrillas will feel the slightest obligation to honour his promises to them once they come to power.

What Kind of State?

In spite of the narrow limits of its current programme, once the issue is put to the test in practice the CPP/NPA will have no alternative but to press on to the expropriation of all capitalist as well as feudal property. This is because to stop at a halfway stage will be impossible. As in Nicaragua today, the choice is: either a continued compromise with domestic capitalism, which poses the constant threat of counter-revolution, with the overt or covert assistance of the USA; or the carrying through of the nationalisation programme to its logical conclusion, as was finally opted for by Cuba in similar circumstances. Since the Russian Revolution, in not a single country where landlordism and capitalism have been overthrown, did the leaders begin with a conscious programme of “socialism”. With the bureaucratic degeneration of the Russian revolution, the Russian bureaucracy under Stalin abandoned the programme of the world revolution as early as 1924, with the policy imposed on the Communist International of “socialism in one country”. The world’s Communist Parties were transformed from the vanguard of the world proletariat to the frontier-guard of the Soviet state. Later the Comintern was even formally closed down.

Even in the countries of Eastern Europe, occupied by the Russian Red Army at the end of the Second World War, with the flight of the bourgeois collaborators and their armies, Stalin’s policy was the

nationalisation of the property of the pro-German collaborators, but full licence for the so-called "national capitalists" to operate privately. The emerging workers' councils were ruthlessly crushed, and workers' appeals for nationalisation of their respective industries were refused. Only when the postwar situation had stabilised and the Marshall Plan was beginning to rebuild the foundations of Western European capitalism, did the bourgeoisie in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary and the other countries recover confidence. Once they felt the initiative beginning to pass back into their hands, a new crisis developed and the state machine, dominated by the Russian military occupation, moved to crush the "national bourgeoisie" which posed the threat of capitalist restoration and counter-revolution.

Any revolution carried through bureaucratically, over the heads of the proletariat, is bound to be subject to distortions. When Mao's peasant Red Army surrounded the cities at the end of the civil war, having smashed the bourgeois/landlord armies of Chiang, his original programme was for "one hundred years of national capitalism". The workers' movement was repressed. Deals were made with the "national capitalists" in spite of the workers' protests. But it was impossible to freeze the revolution midway. Within the confines of capitalism, society was trapped in an impasse. The accumulating economic and political contradictions forced Mao to stumble empirically into a full-scale programme of nationalisation. But at no point were the creative talents and revolutionary energies of the proletariat allowed free expression. All the distortions of the Chinese leadership – the personality cults, the endless clique battles, the sharp lurches in policy – arise from the fact that a privileged bureaucratic caste of "red mandarins" rules society. The Chinese workers' state was deformed from birth. On the bayonets of a peasant army invading the cities and led by a military hierarchy, the proletariat, with its rich revolutionary traditions of the workers' revolution of 1925–7, was forced to remain passive.

The same pattern was seen in Cuba. Castro had not even talked about "socialism" before 1961, two years after he came to power. His manifesto ('History Will Absolve Me!') had put forward a programme of bourgeois democracy. It is littered with quotations, not from Marx, Lenin or even Mao, but from Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln. On coming to power at the head of a guerrilla army in 1959, Batista's army having collapsed, he emphasised that "this is not a red revolution but an olive-green revolution, and there will be no other." He specifically ruled out nationalisation even of the United Fruit Company, the US monopoly which owned the bulk of the Cuban economy. His reforms went no further than the imposition of modest taxes on business. Only after the USA cut off its sugar quota and blockaded the island, did Castro carry the process through to the nationalisation of UFC and the rest of the economy, the conclusion of trade agreements with the USSR, and – as an afterthought – his declaration that he was a "Marxist-Leninist".

The war between the Philippine state and the NPA is really a continuation of the war declared by US imperialism and the local landlords and capitalists against the Huks in 1946-54. Let us remember Taruc's admission that the Huks had fought against the

Japanese with the ideal of American democracy on their banners, and that they had been shocked by the Americans' offensive against them when the USA reoccupied the Philippines. But the Americans were not deluded by the Huks' fervent pro-American propaganda. They were fighting a worldwide counter-revolution. The Yalta and Potsdam agreements had divided Europe into 'spheres of influence'. The USSR was allowed a free hand in Eastern Europe, in return for the US and British domination of Western Europe, while the anti-Nazi underground movements in Western Europe, all under Communist Party leadership and influence – including the French Resistance and the Italian partisans – voluntarily disarmed and submitted to American military domination, and the CP leaders joined "Popular Front" governments.

Where it was impossible to avoid a clash between the two contradictory world systems, bloody civil war resulted – notably in Greece, and in several Asian countries, including China, Malaya, Korea, Vietnam...and the Philippines. Formally speaking, neither side stood for the abolition of capitalism. The issues were disguised under ambiguous formulations. In Eastern Europe the Soviet government had created so-called "people's democracies"; in China, the label was "new democracy". EAM/ELAS in Greece, the NLF in Vietnam, FRELIMO in Mozambique, etc., like the NPA in the Philippines today...all stood for "national democracy".

But the imperialists knew that these movements would be unable to stick to this ambiguous programme. History would relentlessly crush it between its millstones. The historic decay of capitalism and landlordism, and the unequal balance of forces in the Philippines following the military defeat of Japanese imperialism, for instance, would inevitably push the Huks if they came to power – standing at the head of a victorious military power impervious to the influence of the capitalists and landlords – towards the establishment of a military bonapartist regime resting upon the passive support of the peasantry: towards the expropriation of capitalist property.

It is the same issue which is at stake today in the war with the NPA. Irrespective of the programme of the NDF/CPP, the survival of landlordism/capitalism as a whole are at stake. The attitude of the NPA, like their forebears Mao, Castro, etc., is: let's take power first and decide our programme later! They know that they cannot be restricted to the programme that Boy Morales spelt out in Makati. There is no such social phenomenon as "national democracy": Never in history has there been a neutral state shared by different classes.

Once the NPA were to conquer power and enter the cities, they would undoubtedly begin by training their guns against the "immature leftists" among the working class whose socialist aspirations they would denounce, not merely as "unrealistic dreams", but as a provocation and sabotage against their alliance with the "national bourgeoisie". They would take over the plantations and the big estates. They would nationalise "bureaucrat capital" and imperialist property.... And just as with the nationalisation of imperialist holdings plus the property of Batista's "cronies" in Cuba, or Somoza's "cronies" in Nicaragua, left practically nothing in private hands, so too in Philippines the

government would find there was very little capitalist property left. If the new government insisted on appeasing the relics of the bourgeoisie out of deference to a false dogma, the shadow would begin to regain substance: the "national capitalists" would gradually regain confidence, the balance would swing to the right, world imperialism would attempt a rescue operation, as in Cuba and Nicaragua, and the initiative would pass back into the hands of reaction. In those circumstances the CPP would be forced to lurch back to the left, and take drastic action to stamp out the threat of counter-revolution by sweeping away the surviving relics of capitalism. Despite its present programme, the CPP/NPA would find itself forced to establish "socialism". The accurate Marxist term for that form of society is a "deformed workers' state", a regime of **proletarian bonapartism**. Such a state would bear the same relationship to a healthy workers' state as a bourgeois military dictatorship to a bourgeois democracy. It would rest on the same basic economic foundations – state ownership, state monopoly of foreign trade, and a plan of production – but it would be ruled bureaucratically by a privileged elite. Politically the workers would remain disenfranchised.

The NPA guerrillas are courageous and dedicated peasant youth who have undertaken a long, hard, bloody war, trained in the harsh conditions of military discipline. In these circumstances they would descend on the cities with the outlook of an occupying army. In these conditions it is natural that they would have little respect for the workers' aspirations for democratic workers' management and control. The rich revolutionary traditions of the Chinese proletariat, even the long Trotskyist tradition within the Vietnamese proletariat, were steamrollered by the peasant armies of Mao and Ho Chi Minh. Any guerrilla movement is subject to a tendency towards banditry. The NPA too is not immune to this. The legitimate need for a guerrilla army to exact taxation and enforce harsh punishments can easily decay into extortion and terror. The killing of hundreds of NPA members in internal feuds demonstrates this inevitable trend. In fact, such excesses have been partly responsible for the dangerous counter-revolutionary reaction against the NPA in Davao and elsewhere.

Proletarian Democracy

There are two alternatives: if the workers do not build a mass revolutionary party based upon workers' democracy and establish a workers' and peasants' government, capitalism faces instead a lingering death agony as its lifeblood is drained by a protracted guerrilla war, ending with the NPA besieging what it wrongly regards as the "enemy-controlled cities" and marching into Manila at the head of a conquering peasant army.

With the defeat of the landlord/capitalist state machine, the way would be cleared for state ownership and a plan of production, which would at last begin to tackle the age-old problems of backwardness, imperialist domination, starvation and unemployment. At the

same time, on the basis of a military conquest by a peasant army, with a confused programme of "national democracy", rather than a revolutionary uprising of the workers rallying the peasants and the poor of town and country under a socialist banner, the new state would be marred from the outset with bureaucratic totalitarian deformations, with all that that must mean in terms of corruption, mismanagement and repression.

Such a state would rest not upon the conscious collective will of the toiling masses, like a healthy workers' state such as the Paris Commune or the early years of the Russian revolution, but on the structures of military discipline and the passive support of the peasants. However sincere its leaders, they would be unable to withstand the inevitable cancer of corruption, nepotism, bureaucratic wastage, such as exist in every one of the Stalinist states today.

Marxists will of course give wholehearted and unqualified support to every step taken by the CPP/NPA to put an end to landlordism and capitalism. But genuine Marxism stands for the programme of workers' democracy.

Writing on the experience of the Paris Commune, Engels concluded: "In order not to lose again its only just won supremacy...the working class must...safeguard itself against its own deputies and officials by declaring them all, without exception, subject to recall at any moment." In order to ensure that the organs of the state, he reported, would not be transformed "from servants of society to masters of society – an inevitable transformation in all previous states – the Commune used two infallible means. In the first place, it filled all posts – administrative, judicial and educational – by election on the basis of universal suffrage of all concerned, subject to the right of recall at any time by the electors. And in the second place, it paid all officials, high or low, only the wages received by other workers....In this way an effective barrier to place-hunting and careerism was set up, even apart from binding mandates to delegates to representative bodies which were added besides." (*Civil War in France*, our emphasis).

This was the basis of the programme of workers' democracy outlined by Lenin in his book *State and Revolution* and enacted by the Bolsheviks in 1917. In the barbarous conditions facing Russia at the end of the civil war, with the revolution defeated or betrayed in the more advanced countries of Europe, the revolutionary generation of October, and with it the heritage of workers' democracy, were wiped out by the Stalinist political counter-revolution, which cleared the way for unlimited bureaucratic privilege. This was also the programme with which Trotsky and the Left Opposition held out against the rise of the bureaucracy. Under an NPA-dominated state it would also become the programme of the growing Philippine proletariat:—

No standing army but the armed people!

Rotation of administrative duties among the working people!

No official to receive a wage higher than that of the average skilled worker!

Rule through Soviets, councils of workers' and peasants' deputies elected from the workplaces and subject to immediate recall!

On such a basis, the energies of the workers and

peasants would be harnessed around a clear conscious Socialist and internationalist programme.

If the proletariat does not succeed in taking its rightful place at the head of the toiling masses in the struggle against imperialism, landlordism and capitalism, then after a protracted and bloody war the NPA will inevitably come to power, and albeit in a halting, spasmodic, zig-zag, bureaucratic fashion, landlordism and capitalism will be brought to an end. The age-old problems of landlessness, unemployment, and starvation will gradually be overcome on the basis of a plan of production. With the development of the economy and industry, the proletariat too will grow...and inevitably at a future date it will have to rise against the crystallised bureaucratic elite – as the workers of East Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania and Yugoslavia have all at various times begun – for workers' democracy. It will take a new revolution – a political revolution this time, which would not need to uproot the whole existing social and economic structure but would sweep aside the parasitic bureaucracy – to establish workers' democracy, leading smoothly to the withering away of the state and a harmonious communist society.

If however the proletariat can rise to its historic mission today – and that takes only the establishment of a genuine Marxist tendency which can rapidly in these conditions train workers' cadres – then the

present chapter of the Philippine revolution can end not in a distorted and bureaucratized abortion, but in a conscious mass uprising on the programme of workers' democracy, and the worldwide socialist revolution, appealing in the first place to the workers of the South-East Asian and Pacific region, and above all the workers of Indonesia, Japan, China and Australia, to take power and link up with the Philippine workers and peasants to establish a Socialist Federation.

The task of genuine revolutionaries today is the development of worker cadres. This can only be achieved by the creation of a tendency which would promote discussion of these ideas within the existing workers' and left organisations, above all within the organisations around the CPP. The objectives of this tendency would be regular theoretical discussion on the issues of the Philippine and world revolution; organised propaganda among workers for the programme of workers' democracy, differentiating it from the bogus 'democracy' of the Cory government and the bureaucratic deviations of the CPP official policy; the establishment of the closest possible links with the struggles of workers throughout the world, and the international Marxist movement.

These are the urgent tasks of the day in the Philippines.

8th April 1987.
