

ON THE POSSIBILITY OF RESTORING DEMOCRACY

This is an outline offered to all patriotic and progressive classes, organizations and individuals for study and discussion towards a comprehensive understanding of the situation and possibility of advancing the struggle for national independence and democracy after the August 21-31 events.

I. The Desperate and Moribund Fascist Regime

A. Economic Situation

1. The economic crisis is daily worsening and is not going to cease in years to come due to the accumulated and continuing effects of subservience to U.S. economic dictates, the unbridled corruption of the Marcos fascist regime, and deep-going crisis of the world capitalist system.

2. Foreign loans have been used to aggravate the backward, agrarian and semifeudal character of the economy. These have been used overwhelmingly for nonproductive and anti-industrial programs and projects, leaving the country ever more dependent on raw-material exports which are faring badly in the world capitalist market. Slightly processed reexports are a drain on foreign exchange rather than a dollar earner.

3. Lacking in heavy and basic industries, the Philippine economy is also heavily dependent on the importation of manufactures for consumption as well as on semimanufactures and raw materials for local light manufacturing. The rapidly growing trade deficit and balance of payments problem are gravely affecting the undeveloped economy. The foreign debt burden has soared from \$2.0 billion in 1972 to \$18 billion.

4. Foreign debt service has become the No. 1 budgetary burden at P11.7 billion or 19.7 per cent (one fifth) of the 1984 budget. Military expenditures (defense and PC-INP) run second at P8.8 billion or 14.9 per cent. With 34.6 per cent earmarked for debt service and military expenditures, the budget reflects an ugly government and economic situation.

5. Massive unemployment, low incomes, soaring inflation, drastic devaluation, heavier tax burden and higher government fees have reduced the broad masses of the people to a life of extreme misery and want. The economic disaster is suffered most by the toiling masses of workers and peasants as well as by the urban petty bourgeoisie. The national bourgeoisie is also pressed down by import liberalization.

6. Both civil and military personnel of the fascist regime are discontented, together with the rest of the people. They too receive starvation wages. Only the high officials are satisfied with their salaries.

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7. The U.S. and other multinational corporations and the big comprador fascist elite continue to accelerate bloodsucking operations on an already impoverished population. After riding high on foreign-loan supported operations, Marcos and his cronies continue to grab the lion's share in foreign exchange and muscle in on the operations of other big compradors.

8. Foreign loans are now more difficult to secure and the terms are extremely onerous. Thus Marcos considers as being the precious to be reduced, delayed or rearranged the \$900 million (in connection with the U.S. military bases) and other financial accommodations expected from the United States; and has been maidened by efforts in the U.S. Congress to attach to these certain considerations as his human rights record, the operations of his crony corporations and the demand for democratic reforms. However, he cannot turn to the Soviet Union because this superpower is plagued by its own economic problems and is not willing to gamble on a sinking boat even if Marcos occasionally bluffs about seeking Soviet support.

B. Political Situation

1. The fascist regime is more than ever subservient to U.S. imperialism. The Reagan administration takes advantage of the desperate economic and financial situation of the puppet regime by exacting more privileges for U.S. political, economic and military interests and does not show any pretense of concern for human rights or democratic reforms.

2. The fascist regime is escalating its threats and acts of terror against the people. The naked use of power in the assassination of Aquino is Marcos reminder to everyone in the Philippines and even in the U.S. Congress that he is willing to use all available force to eliminate any threat to his own autocratic powers. Short of a revolutionary upheaval, however, the U.S. remains the only force that can remove or ease out its own puppet. But the Reagan administration endorses the anticommunist rationale of Marcos' tyranny.

3. The fascist dictatorship is precisely the stimulant for the growth of the revolutionary mass movement. The combination of despotism and economic disaster are impelling the broad masses of the people to join or support the armed resistance. The assassination of Aquino demonstrates to the middle forces and the still unorganized common people that there is no way to dismantle the fascist dictatorship but to wage armed struggle.

4. The political desperation of the Marcos regime is manifested in the Aquino murder (or double murder, including the patsy) is the outcome of critical social and economic conditions. But it also underscores the longstanding murderous character trait of Marcos (from the Malundasan case to the many massacres and assassinations under his prefascist and fascist regime) exacerbated by the poor state of his physical and mental health, which is affecting his sense of political judgment. The danger about

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Marcos' health is not that he would die soon and that there would be a mad scramble for power; but that he would live longer than expected and with his paranoia hold on to his absolute powers.

5. Marcos is so obsessed with fighting off every threat to his absolute power that he has issued the most absurd death decrees. He has depended more and more on his military minions who ingratiate themselves to him by playing on his fear of being overthrown and punished and by inventing reports of assassination plots against him. Aquino's murder was plotted by Marcos, his wife, Eduardo Cojuangco, General Fabian Ver, General Mejia, General Olivas and General Custodio on the malicious ground that Aquino's arrival was part of a coup plan, according to a high-ranking AFP officer.

6. There is now a hairline between Marcos being a "strong-man" and being a total captive of his closest security officers, especially General Ver who is AFP chief of staff and whose son is directly in charge of Marcos' security. He is becoming the manipulated, instead of being the manipulator. He has taken all precautions against the erosion of his autocratic powers by any civilian entity. But the process, he has made himself vulnerable to his own military protectors who may in due time grab his autocratic powers under the initial guise of martial law administration.

7. Unexpected by the fascist assassins, the Aquino murder only exacerbated their political isolation and roused the broad masses of the people to hold the largest ever urban collective action against tyranny in the entire history of the Philippines. The democratic mass organizations, the legal opposition parties, the religious organizations and the spontaneous masses came out to the streets in millions to demonstrate their sentiments not only against the murder of a prominent political leader who had been treacherously killed but also against the oppression that they have long suffered. All over the country, the people in their tens of millions have been agitated by the Aquino murder.

8. All the democratic forces are bound to transform the Aquino martyrdom and all other national democratic issues into an organized mass strength. The Catholic Church is determined to call for national reconciliation based on justice although this institution tends to obscure the issue of justice with a desire for peace even under the fascist dictatorship and sometimes tends to forget that it is this fascist dictatorship and no other that is consistently using violence and terror to quell the people's aspirations for justice and peace. The Aquino murder and the resultant rising of the people are also bound to strengthen the trend within the U.S. ruling circles to reconsider the U.S. administration position vis-a-vis Marcos and his regime.

9. No less than the resignation of Marcos and his top sub-alterns and the dismantling of the fascist dictatorship are being demanded by the people. On his part, Marcos believes that the public uproar would pass away. He continues to think that he can drag his feet even on such previous lesser public demands as the general amnesty

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(of which Aquino could have been a beneficiary) of alleged political offenders, the restoration of the writ of habeas corpus and the right to bail, the abolition of nonjudicial warrants of search and seizure, repeal of the Anti-Subversion Law and other such oppressive laws, a clean and honest system of elections and so on.

10. Marcos is hellbent on retaining his autocratic powers at whatever cost. He laughs off as fantasia or wishful thinking any serious democratic demand. He is challenging the people to show their strength through gigantic mass actions and the growth of the armed resistance.

C. Military Situation

1. The people's just hatred for the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has accumulated upon so many atrocities and abuses and has peaked with the brazen Aquino murder in the hands of the military custodians. Under Operation Katatagan, Aquino-type assassinations are on the rise. People who are merely suspected and being NPA supporters are being brutally tortured and murdered and then misrepresented as NPA victims or NPA combat casualties. Also, people of entire villages suspected of being a mass base of the NPA are subjected to plunder or reconcentration and then misrepresented as mass surrenderees.

2. The violation of democratic rights extends to religious personnel, independent journalists, teachers, other professionals, labor leaders, students and legal opposition leaders in urban areas. Soon after the murder of Aquino, the fascist dictatorship made another unprecedented act by raiding the residence of a Catholic bishop on suspicion of harboring a communist. This act is obviously a retaliation against Church sympathy for Ninoy Aquino.

3. The AFP is practically destroying itself by its depredations on the people. It has an antipeople orientation. And it has many more internal weaknesses. The troops receive starvation wages and are even cheated of their rations and allowances by their officers. Hazing is also a widespread practice. Most military funds go into the purchase of overpriced equipment and other supplies as well as fanciful intelligence projects that allow the corrupt officials to enrich themselves rapidly. Officers also engage in criminal activities, including smuggling, illegal logging, robbery and holdup, extortion, drug pushing, etc. Nepotism, regionalism, favoritism are rampant from top to bottom.

4. There are three sections of the AFP officers. The first consists of a few who are Marcos loyalists and are the most corrupt. The second consists of the majority who follow their superiors only as a matter of discipline. The third consists of those who are already fed up with the Marcos loyalists.

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5. The fascist dictator is overprotected. An overly large force is under the Presidential Security Command and is tied down to the Metro Manila Area. Beyond that, the AFP is already spread thinly all over the country, with relative concentrations in areas categorized as trouble spots. Since 1972, it has been clearly proven that it cannot quell the armed resistance. On the other hand, the NPA has grown in strength all over the country and the Bangsa Moro Army has persisted in the Moro areas.

6. The NPA has achieved such a level of strength as to be able to frequently launch tactical offensives all over the country at the same time. This revolutionary army perseveres in people's war. It advances wave upon wave. It becomes well rooted at every step because it combines armed struggle with mass base building and genuine land reform. When it raids or ambushes the enemy, it musters superior military strength in order to ensure victory. Thus, the enemy is being defeated part by part.

7. The NPA has demonstrated that it can grow self-reliantly, even without importing arms, by seizing those from the enemy who does the importing from the United States. If the united front of democratic forces were to acquire arms from abroad, the U.S.-Marcos regime would be in a far more desperate and moribund situation. Such imported arms can fill to some extent the wide gap between the large mass base consisting of millions and the relatively limited number of full-time guerrilla riflemen running only into several thousands.

BASIC DATA:

Location: 600 miles southeast of coast of mainland Asia

Land Area: 115,800 sq. miles (two-thirds the size of California)

Geography: archipelago consisting of 7114 islands with 11,000 miles of coastline

Main Island Groups: Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao

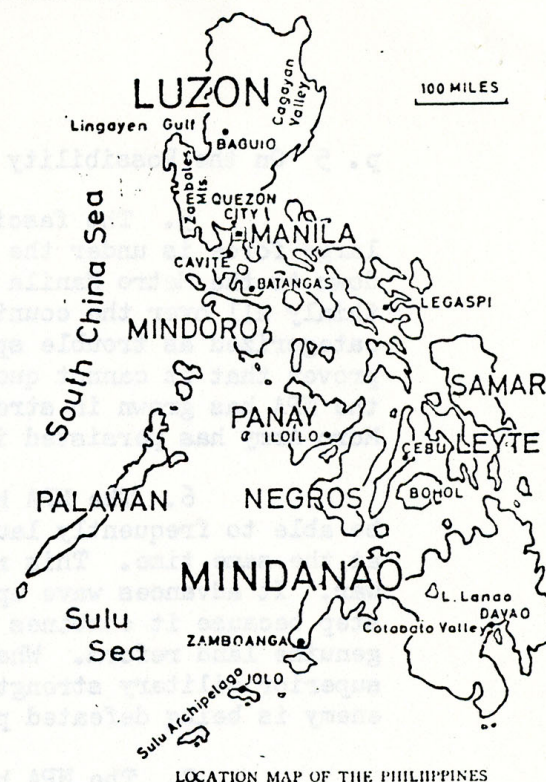
Capital: Manila (on island of Luzon)

Population: 48 million (twice California's)

Pop. Growth Rate: 2.8 percent a year

Pop. Distribution: 70% live in rural areas
30% live in cities
43% are fifteen years old or younger

Religions: 85% of Filipinos are Roman Catholic
7% other Christians
5-7% Muslim
1-3% Buddhist and other

ECONOMIC INDICATORS: (1979 unless stated)

Gross National Product: US\$28.4 billion

GNP per capita: US\$630

Output by Sector: Agriculture--24.2%
Industry--34.5%
Services--40.6%

Employment by Sector: Agriculture--48%
Industry--16%
Services--36%

Principal Exports (share in total):
Coconut products--22.4%
Sugar products--5.2%
Forest products--10.6%
Copper concentrates--9.6%
Garments--8.8%
Electronic components--8.6%

Trade Deficit: US\$1.5 billion

External Debt (1980): US\$12.2 billion

Service Payments on Debt (1980): US\$1.3 bil.

Inflation Rate (1980): 24%

U.S. Investments: approx. US\$2.5 billion--
more than half of total foreign invest.

Phil. Exports to U.S.: 30% of all exports

Phil. Imports from U.S.: 23% of all imports

Return on U.S. Investments (1946-1976):
for every dollar invested, net
profit came to \$3.58, \$2.00 of
which was repatriated to U.S.

SOCIAL WELFARE INDICATORS:

Infant Mortality Rate: 65 per 1000

Life Expectancy: 60 yrs.

Avg. Calorie Intake: 88% of sufficiency

Malnutrition: 80% among pre-schoolers
46% first-degree
27% second-degree
7% third-degree

Access to Safe Drinking Water: 40%
of population

Top Causes of Mortality:
Pneumonia--16% of deaths
Tuberculosis--11% of
deaths; highest rate
of TB in W. Pacific
Gastro-enteritis and
Colitis--6% of
infant deaths

Population per physician:
In Manila--660
In Rural Areas--5000

Population per Hospital Bed:
In Manila--626
In Rural Areas--1400

Filipino Doctors Abroad--9,500

Filipino Doctors in Phils.--15,000

Deaths without Medical Attention--60%

Adult Literacy Rate: 87%



II. Peaceful Restoration of Democracy

A. A Consensus of Proposals

1. Marcos, the entire cabinet, the executive committee, the AFP chief of staff, the commanding generals of all major services and all overstaying generals must resign in order to give way to a democratic transition government headed by a committee of retired chief justices and associate justices of the Supreme Court and other outstanding individuals who are of proven integrity and are acceptable to all political parties and people's organizations.

2. The democratic transition government must declare as null and void the Marcos constitution, especially the autocratic provisions; restore democracy and proclaim generally amnesty to all so-called political offenders; and conduct general elections (from the presidency downwards) either under the 1935 Constitution and/or rules adopted by said transition government.

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3. To facilitate the resignation of the top officials of the Marcos regime and the assumption of office by a democratic transition government, a national reconciliation council as proposed by Cardinal Sin may be formed with representatives of the Catholic Church and other religious organizations as active proponents for the purpose of bringing together all the forces who are willing to work for the restoration of democracy and the attainment of justice and peace in a dialogue.

4. A Congress for the Restoration of Democracy (CORD) must be held as soon as possible to prepare for a powerful mass movement for the same purpose, consolidate the sentiments of the people in the form of a declaration and other instruments of unity. All religious organizations, political parties and democratic mass organizations of workers, peasants, students, teachers, other professionals and businessmen that have participated in the Aquino funeral services and processions must be represented.

5. Any accommodation offered to the legal opposition by the U.S. and/or Marcos, whether these be accommodations in the executive committee, the 1984 elections and/or the Batasang Pambansa, subordinate to and under the mercy of the autocratic powers of the fascist dictator must be outrightly rejected. The supreme executive, legislative and judicial powers concentrated on a single person must be eradicated. There can be no compromise with fascist dictatorship. There can be reconciliation only on the grounds of national independence and democracy.

6. The peaceful restoration of democracy can become a serious prospect only if a powerful mass movement for it is carried out. The movement is decidedly peaceful and legal but there should be no gratuitous overstressing of "peace" above the question of independence, "peace" under the violent rule of Marcos is better than anything else. Marcos should even be made to feel that if he does not yield to the demand for democracy, he is responsible for the consequences.

B. The Movement for the Restoration of Democracy

1. The broad united front of religious organizations and legal opposition parties that succeeded in mobilizing millions of people in the wake of the Aquino assassination must further mobilize the people for the dismantling of the fascist dictatorship and restoration of democracy. There must be sustained, militant and peaceful campaigns of mass education and mass actions indoors and outdoors.

2. The largest and strongest mass actions for democracy may follow this pattern in every city, provincial capital or town: widespread rallies and marches leading to a convergence in a gigantic rally at daytime and then again dispersing into widespread rallies and sound barrage or sound-off at nighttime on designated days of protest. To escalate the demand for democracy, the days of protest can be increased and the civil disobedience becomes more telling. The churches and churchyards, factories, schools and plazas become the rallying points.

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3. Being the most insistent on reconciliation, dialogue and peace, the leadership and faithful of the Catholic Church must consistently and vigorously call for the restoration of democracy and upholding of justice. They must make it clear that they are asking the fascist dictatorship to abandon its evil character and desist from evil acts and in the true Christian spirit of reconciliation come into communion with the people. The Catholic Church must recognize that with its moral influence and its solid but widespread organization it can play a decisive role in persuading the fascist dictator to yield to the people's sovereign will.

4. The legal opposition parties and democratic mass organizations must rapidly arouse, organize and mobilize the people. Each of these entities have their special interests but all of them must always be ready to come together in campaigns for the dismantling of the fascist dictatorship and restoration of democracy.

5. On a people-to-people basis, the religious, legal opposition and democratic mass organizations and their leaders must appeal to their counterpart organizations and leaders in the United States to support their movement for the restoration of democracy in the Philippines and to ask their own government; (their President and the U.S. Congress) to desist from propping up the tyrannical Marcos regime. with the money of the American people and to yield to the Filipino people's sovereign will. Condemning and stopping U.S. support to the Marcos regime is a key point in the battle for democracy.

6. The moral and material support of other peoples the world over must also be sought. The peoples in other capitalist countries can ask their respective governments and their leaders to use their votes or influence in the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as well as their private banks to persuade the U.S. and Marcos to yield to the Filipino people's demand for the restoration of democracy. The peoples in the third world and socialist countries can restrain their respective governments from giving the Marcos regime any assistance that helps it to repress the Filipino people.

7. The U.S. and Marcos regime must be compelled to yield to the government for the restoration of democracy. If it does not, the Filipino people will have to topple it in a revolutionary upheaval. There can be no compromise with injustice and tyranny. The people must put an end to fascist violence.

III. Preparedness for Self-Defense

1. Efforts must be exerted by those who have relatives and friends in the Armed Forces of the Philippines to let them understand and sympathize or side with the movement for the restoration of democracy. These AFP personnel must also be encouraged to spread the ideas of the movement within the Armed Forces of the Philippines and link these ideas with the worsening conditions of the troops and junior officers. The point is to deprive the fascist dictatorship or the dictator himself of his main support. Without the misplaced loyalty of the military, the fascist dictatorship cannot last a single day.

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2. The people must conduct as part of the mass movement a continuous countersurveillance on the military and police agents of the fascist regime so as to distinguish the diehard antipeople and fascist elements from the good and honest elements and so as to make possible the arrest and disarming of the bad elements in their homes, in the streets and even in their barracks at the appropriate time.

3. The people in urban areas must be conscious that if the fascist dictatorship persists and even becomes more brutal there will have a time to come for them to rise up in arms. There will be battle-tested armed detachments to assault or defend strategic points but on a wide scale armed city partisans and people's defense committees will have to arrest and disarm enemy elements in a precise manner.

4. The varied democratic forces must build their armed strength and may acquire arms in every possible way locally and/or abroad. It is best that these arms are passed on to those who are in active armed struggle in the countryside.

5. The enemy appears to be arrogant because it thinks the NPA does not yet have enough armed strength to move into major cities and seize power. But if the mass actions becomes large and widespread, the NPA is in a position to wipe out enemy units rapidly in the countryside and, like the Shah of Iran, Marcos would find himself swept out of power sooner than expected.

6. The fascist dictatorship should respect the legal and non-violent character of democratic mass actions in the urban areas. If it should unleash violence against the unarmed democratic movement, the fascist monster will only accelerate its own downfall. It should learn a lesson from the murder of Aquino. Millions of people came out to condemn the tyranny. It would be foolhardy of the fascists to attack this magnitude of people.

7. People engaged in the peaceful movement for democracy should also remember that they can achieve a measure of success only when the enemy realizes that the people are prepared to sue armed force against counterrevolutionary violence. We must never forget that Marcos murdered an unarmed Ninoy who had reconciliation in his heart but who at any rate had made clear that there is no compromise with tyranny and that freedom is taken and not granted. Justice cannot be won by trusting and pleading with the fascist.

The Christians under imperial Rome ceased to be massacred every fifty years only when they got the sword of Constantine. Rizal would not be honored today as a hero and martyr had the Filipino people not achieved success in the Philippine revolution. Even Gandhi merely represented a complement to the readiness of the Indian people to wage armed revolution against the British. The Holy Scriptures is one with Marxism-Leninism in upholding the principle of just war against tyranny,

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Those who wish to disarm the people or toequate the modest and just people's army with the gigantic an unjust army of Marcos actually endorse the violence of the fascist dictatorship as well as the rising violence of daily exploitation and oppression. Without the people's army, the people have nothing. The violence and greed of the fascists would never cease to reign supreme over the people, especially as Marcos actually aspires to generate a dynasty of fascists. Must we disarm David as he confronts Goliath or dondemn him because he used a slingshot?

The legal democratic mass movement has its own importance. So has the armed struggle. One complements the other. And this complementation should drive some sense into the heads of the U.S. imperialists and the Marcos puppet regime.

-- BAYANI C. AQUINO

