

BRIEF REVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE PHILIPPINES

On the Occasion of the 20th Anniversary of its Reestablishment

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Introduction

This brief review of the history of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) seeks to outline the background, the twenty-year development and prospects of the Communist Party of the Philippines reestablished on December 26, 1968.

I. THE OLD CPP AND THE CPP-SPP MERGER PARTY

The Communist Party of the Philippines was established for the first time in Manila on November 7, 1930, by Crisanto Evangelista, the most outstanding leader of the Philippine trade union movement in his time.

The establishment of the Party marked the initial attempt to integrate the theory of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete conditions of the Philippines; and draw the most advanced activists of the worker and peasant movement into the vanguard party of the Philippine revolution. The leadership and membership came mainly from the workers' ranks.

A few months afterwards, on May 1, 1931, a workers' rally organized by the Party in Manila was disrupted by the armed agents of the US colonial and local reactionary authorities. The CPP leaders were arrested and hailed to court on the charge of sedition. In 1932, they were convicted and sentenced to internal exile; and the Party was declared illegal by the Supreme Court of the US colonial regime.

Despite illegalization and difficulties in working underground, the Party continued to exist and work among the workers and peasants in limited areas in the country. In 1932, the Socialist Party of the Philippines (SPP) was organized independently of the CPP by Comrade Pedro Abad

Santos and was able to develop the peasant movement on a scale larger than the CPP could in Central Luzon, a region adjoining Manila.

In 1937, the CPP was legalized by the Commonwealth government as a result of the mounting popular demand for social justice amidst worldwide depression and for a broad popular front against fascism. In 1938, the CPP and SPP merged into one party.

The CPP-SPP merger party was an excellent development insofar as the large worker following of the CPP in Manila and the large peasant following of the SPP in Central Luzon came under one party leadership. But underneath this development was the penetration of the Party by unremoulded petty-bourgeois elements headed by the Lava brothers in Manila and by the Taruc brothers in Central Luzon.

In 1942, after the outbreak of World War II, the principal leaders of the merger party were arrested and murdered by the Japanese occupation authorities. The Party leadership had not been able to clarify the national democratic character of the Philippine revolution in a comprehensive and profound way. Party leaders had been preoccupied with practical actions and utopian agitation about a communist paradise to come through the class struggle between the proletariat and an undifferentiated bourgeoisie. The second-echelon leaders, like the Lava and Taruc brothers, became the principal leaders of the merger party.

At any rate, the merger party established the People's Army Against Japan (Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon-Hukbalahap, in short) on March 29, 1942; and was compelled by circumstances of war to exert more efforts to organize the peasant masses in Central Luzon.

There was no clear program of anti-imperialist and antifeudal struggle going beyond the antifascist struggle against Japan and no plan to expand the revolutionary forces beyond Manila and Central Luzon. The line of the people's struggle was narrowed to armed resistance against the Japanese occupation forces and their Filipino collaborators.

Even with regards to armed struggle, the leadership of the merger party with Vicente Lava as general secretary adopted the line of "retreat for defense," a policy of reducing guerrilla units into impotent teams of three to five persons and avoiding armed combat with the enemy. This line was proclaimed after the Japanese fascist troops attacked the main base of the Hukbalahap at the foot of a small vulnerable mountain, Mount Arayat in the middle of the Central Luzon plains.

However, the people's army made significant strides in armed struggle mainly because several platoon-size and company-size units disregarded the policy and spontaneously fought the enemy; and because finally in September 1944 a Party conference declared the "retreat for defense" policy erroneous. But soon after, the US military forces landed to reoccupy the Philippines and arm their puppets.

In the same conference, Vicente Lava was demoted from his position as general secretary. But he remained in the Political Bureau and pushed the line of welcoming the US invasionary forces and seeking the open and legal participation of the merger party in the semicolonial and

semifeudal political framework and liquidating the people's army and converting it into a veterans' organization.

The US and the local reactionary forces of the comprador big bourgeoisie and landlord class had none of the illusions of the leadership of the CPP-SPP merger party. They proceeded to suppress the revolutionary forces; reimpose their authority on the people in the city and the countryside; and impose a series of unequal treaties, agreements and arrangements binding the Philippines to the status of a neocolonial appendage to the United States.

In the years immediately following the end of World War II, the Lava and Taruc brothers begged for general amnesty for the people's actions against the Japanese fascists and their collaborators, concentrated efforts on getting positions in the pro-US semicolonial government and allowed one cadre after another to briefly assume the position of Party general secretary and pursue a Right opportunist line. Despite all these, Jesus Lava, Luis Taruc and other elected candidates of the Democratic Alliance were booted out of the Lower House of the Philippine Congress.

In 1948, Jose Lava seized political initiative within the merger party by advocating armed struggle without, however, proposing a clear strategy and tactics for its conduct. At the same time, the commander-in-chief of the people's army Luis Taruc was allowed to seek general amnesty from the neocolonial regime under terms violative of the revolutionary cause and principles.

When the Party leadership with Jose Lava as general secretary declared "all-out armed struggle" in 1950, it was an adventurist line of seeking quick military victory in two years' time in complete disregard of the limited strength of the revolutionary forces and of the need for painstaking mass work and expanding on a nationwide scale over a long period of time. The mass base then was no more than 300,000 people and the rifle strength of the people's army, no more than 3,000. Both were concentrated in Central Luzon.

The people's army launched the March and August 1950 offensives mainly from unpopulated mountain bases far from its mass base in Central Luzon. The enemy could effectively make counter-attacks against the overextended units of the people's army. In late 1950 the main units of the people's army had been destroyed or rendered impotent and the so-called Politburo-In headed by Jose Lava was arrested by the enemy in Manila.

As general secretary of the Politburo-Out, Jesus Lava assumed party leadership upon the capture of his brother Jose. He preoccupied himself with factional strife with the Taruc brothers, Luis and Peregrino, over issues peripheral to the main issue of adventurism.

He failed to solve the problems of the revolutionary movement. After a few years of trying to solve these from a purely military viewpoint, he issued a series of Right opportunist policies which proved to be even more fatal to the revolutionary movement.

In 1955, he issued the directive to liquidate the people's army under the guise of converting it into organizational brigades. In 1957, after having been forced by the enemy to hide himself in Manila as an individual divorced from the masses and without any party collective, he issued the

"single-file" policy which liquidated basic units, territorial organizations and leading organs of the merger party.

At the onset of the 1960's, the CPP-SPP merger party was practically nonexistent. The general secretary had been reduced to issuing occasional "political transmissions" on the basis of newspaper clippings and without the benefit of collective discussion. Remnants of the people's army persisted in spontaneous defense against the enemy and in disobedience to the 1955 directive of Jesus Lava.

However, in the early 1960's, advanced elements of the youth and trade union movements led by Jose Maria Sison emerged to carry forward the anti-imperialist and antifeudal line among the masses. Independently of the CPP-SPP merger party, they had begun since the late 1950's to study the theory of Marxism-Leninism, the Philippine conditions and the revolutionary experience of the Filipino people.

Encouraged by the reemergence of the revolutionary mass movement among the youth, workers and peasants, Jesus Lava first invited Amado Guerrero in late 1962 and then a trade union leader in early 1963 to join the Executive Committee that he formed to function as the highest executive organ of the CPP-SPP merger party.

But Lava packed this five-person committee with two Lava nephews, Vicente, Jr. and Francisco, Jr. and one close friend of the latter. These three had neither revolutionary experience nor connection with the mass movement.

Before Jesus Lava surrendered to the reactionary government in 1964, he appointed four secretaries of the CPP-SPP merger party: Pedro Taruc, for peasants; the trade union leader, for workers; Amado Guerrero, for youth; and one Lava nephew, for professionals.

Confusion ensued. Pedro Taruc had no prior understanding with Jesus Lava and was a mere figurehead leader of the gravely deteriorating people's army under the actual leadership of Commander Sumulong or Faustino del Mundo. Under the direction of Sumulong, Taruc refused to recognize the three other secretaries.

The two Lava nephews quarrelled over trivial intrafamily matters and from 1965 onward one refused to attend the same meeting where the other would be present. At the same time, the Lava nephew secretary for professionals provoked a row with the secretary for workers by high-handedly issuing orders to him in the name of a "higher organ"

As early as 1964, Amado Guerrero proposed a summing up of the experience of the Party since 1930. By decision of the Executive Committee, he was assigned to write a general report, which he promptly submitted in 1966. This report included among others an analysis of Philippine and international conditions, a criticism of errors of the series of Party leaderships and a definition of revolutionary tasks.

The report was suppressed upon the motion of the Lava nephew secretary for professionals. He demanded that it be considered a mere memorandum and that he would submit his own draft. He never submitted one. Instead, he proceeded to sow intrigues against Amado Guerrero.

However, cadres led by Amado Guerrero conducted theoretical studies, promoted the line of national democratic revolution, formed secret party units in localities and mass organizations and stepped up the building of the legal mass organizations.

Jose Maria Sison meanwhile wrote comprehensively and definitively on the struggle for national democracy and played a key role in the youth and trade union movements, the legal party of the workers and the broad united front. He promoted work among the masses of workers and peasants.

The mass movement of the working people and the youth surged forward despite the confusion in the Executive Committee and among the secretaries of the CPP-SPP merger party. The proletarian revolutionary cadres at the core of the mass movement increasingly considered the Executive Committee as a useless vestige of the past. Upon their advocacy of the resumption of the revolutionary struggle, they differentiated themselves from those who followed the Lavaite line.

In April 1967 the Lava nephew secretary for professionals convoked a group of seven persons, mostly obsequious to him and opposed to the line of resuming the armed struggle, to declare themselves the provisional Political Bureau and have himself "elected" general secretary of the CPP-SPP merger party.

The proletarian revolutionary cadres, including veterans since the 1930's, objected to the usurpation of authority, the wrong line of the Lavaite group and the baseless ambition of the Lava scion to become the fourth general secretary from the same family. They condemned the practice of dynasticism as a sure mark of the complete degeneration of the remnants of the CPP-SPP merger party.

Within the same month of April 1967, the proletarian revolutionary cadres who were effectively at the core of the growing mass movement of workers, peasants and youth decided to prepare for the reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

The Lavaite remnants of the CPP-SPP merger party became utterly isolated from the masses, further degenerated and eventually in 1974 capitulated to and collaborated openly with the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique. The Taruc-Sumulong gangster clique in the old people's army disintegrated in 1971 upon the capture of Commander Sumulong and his betrayal of Pedro Taruc.

II. REESTABLISHMENT AND GROWTH OF THE CPP

On December 26, 1968, the proletarian revolutionary cadres led by Amado Guerrero reestablished the Communist Party of the Philippines under the guidance of the theory of Marxism-Leninism and along the general line of national democratic revolution.

The reestablishment of the Party was exceedingly timely. The chronic crisis of the ruling system was rapidly worsening. The socio-economic crisis aggravated and the political crisis was increasingly characterized by violence among the reactionary factions.

National industrialization was blocked; even the repackaging and reassembly plants could no longer be tolerated by the United States. At the same time, there was exhaustion of the land frontier for spontaneous peasant resettlement as the principal way out for the ever increasing surplus labor.

Violent strife was incipient among the reactionary political factions as they competed to gain influence in the Armed Forces of the Philippines and to form small private armies. The Marcos ruling clique was determined to hold on to power by taking the initiative in using counterrevolutionary violence under the guise of anticommunism. The tendency toward fascism was on the rise.

The subjective forces were resurgent and had steadily grown in strength in the preceding decade through the emergence of fresh proletarian cadres, painstaking mass work and comprehensive and militant legal mass movement. Such pseudorevolutionaries as the Lavas and Tarucs were obstacles to the growth of the revolutionary mass movement. But their negative examples became the target of criticism, were repudiated and served to firm up the resolve of the proletarian cadres and the broad mass movement to take the correct revolutionary path.

The causes and factors for the reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines were mainly and essentially internal to the Philippines. However, under the aegis of proletarian internationalism, the Party took the firm and militant stand of uniting with all forces participating in or supporting armed movements for national liberation and democracy in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The main achievement of the Party in the course of its reestablishment was the criticism and repudiation of the erroneous lines of the Lavas and Tarucs; and, positively and more importantly, the critique of Philippine history and society, the clarification of the national democratic revolution, its class line, tasks and methods.

In this regard, the founding congress of the Party issued such basic documents as "Rectify Errors and Rebuild the Party," a new Party Constitution and the Program for a People's Democratic Revolution. Comrade Amado Guerrero, who had been elected chairman of the Central Committee, subsequently wrote and issued *Philippine Society and Revolution* in 1969.

The reestablished Party regarded itself as the genuine continuation of the Communist Party established in 1930; and also as one at a new and higher level of ideological and political development.

As never before, the CPP laid bare the semicolonial and semifeudal character of Philippine society and firmly put forward the general line of national democratic revolution against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

The basic tasks of the revolution are to achieve national liberation by ridding the nation of US domination in the political, economic, military, cultural and other fields; and to realize democracy not only by fighting the growing repressiveness of the enemy but more substantively by emancipating the peasant masses and the entire people from feudal and semifeudal conditions.

The motive forces of the revolution are the working class, peasantry, urban petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie. These are also the positive forces within the national united front for national liberation and democracy.

The working class, comprising only 15 percent of the Philippine population, is the leading class because it is the most progressive political and productive force. The Communist Party of the Philippines is its advanced detachment, enabling it to concentrate its ideological, political and organizational strength and win victory against the class enemy.

To augment its strength immediately in carrying out the revolution, the working class must unite with the peasantry, which comprises 75 percent of the population. These two most oppressed and exploited classes, embracing more than ninety percent of the people, form the basic alliance serving as the foundation of the united front.

The CPP deploys and develops its proletarian cadres among the peasant masses in order to build the basic alliance of the workers and peasants. In doing revolutionary work among the peasant masses, the antifeudal line has to be pursued within the framework of the national democratic revolution. The line involves relying mainly on the poor peasants and farm workers; winning over the middle peasants; neutralizing the rich peasants; and differentiating the enlightened and evil gentry in order to isolate and destroy the power of the latter and, in effect, the entire landlord class.

The Communist Party of the Philippines has pursued this line in building the New People's Army, peasant movement and the organs of political power in the countryside; and thereby realizing the basic worker-peasant alliance under the leadership of the working class.

In carrying out the revolutionary struggle in the countryside, the Party has integrated armed struggle, land reform and mass base building. The Party has always rejected all forms of thinking and activities that separate armed struggle from the all-round mobilization of the people.

The armed struggle hews to the strategic line of encircling the cities from the countryside over a protracted period of time, until sufficient forces are accumulated in the countryside to smash the final holdouts of the enemy forces in the cities.

The Party has also solved in theoretical and practical terms the problem of conducting armed struggle in an archipelagic country like the Philippines. In 1974, Comrade Amado Guerrero would elaborate on the specific characteristics of people's war in the Philippines and explain how the initial disadvantage of fighting in an archipelago could be turned into a long-term advantage compatible with the advantage of encircling the cities from the countryside.

Land reform is carried out to the extent made possible by the strength of the people's army and the peasant movement. It is the principal method for building the socio-economic and political strength of the peasant masses and ensuring their deepgoing and substantial support for the people's army and the entire process of the national democratic revolution.

Mass base building involves the comprehensive building of all major types of mass organizations, such as those for the workers, peasants, youth, women, cultural activists and other sectors; and the building of organs of political power (committees of people's self-government) assisted by working committees on mass organizations, education, land reform, livelihood, finance, health, defense, arbitration, cultural affairs and other functions.

Though the working class and peasantry comprise the overwhelming majority of the people, their strength needs to be further augmented by the urban petty bourgeoisie, consisting of small entrepreneurs and traders and the general run of professionals and technicians and comprising some eight percent of the population.

The urban petty bourgeoisie is a small but knowledgeable, skillful and influential part of society. If it remains a passive though exploited adjunct of the exploiting classes, it delays the flow of the revolutionary movement. If it joins the revolutionary movement, then it hastens that flow nationwide. The urban petty bourgeoisie is a basic force of the revolution.

Notwithstanding its dual characteristics, its progressive and reactionary tendencies, the middle bourgeoisie (national bourgeoisie) is on the whole a positive though nonbasic force of the revolution. The CPP encourages its anti-imperialist and antifeudal interests and aspirations while exercising vigilance against its antipeople tendency.

The working class, peasantry, urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie are the positive forces in the broad national united front. But the revolutionary movement must also derive advantages from the contradictions among the contending factions of the exploiting classes.

At certain times, it is good policy to have some cooperation with one reactionary faction against another. At other times, it suffices to let the reactionary factions fight and destroy each other.

The broadest range of forces can be mustered at every given time against the reactionary faction which seeks to prevail by being the worst of the reactionary factions and the most subservient to US imperialism.

The CPP is acutely cognizant of the oppression and exploitation of the national minorities, upholds their right to national self-determination and seeks to integrate their struggle into the national democratic revolution. Their right to self-determination extends from the right to regional autonomy under the people's democratic state to the right to secede from an oppressive state.

The CPP has consistently sought unity, cooperation and coordination with the MNLF as well as with other forces of the Moro people even as the Party criticized their acceptance of regional autonomy within the framework of an oppressive state as provided in the Tripoli Agreement.

Since the 1960's there has been a heavy exodus of Filipino professionals, technicians and workers from the Philippines because they cannot be absorbed by the economy. Overseas Filipinos, especially migrant workers, can be aroused, organized and mobilized in line with the national democratic revolution. They can also develop relations of mutual support and cooperation with the progressive forces in their host countries and in the worldwide anti-imperialist movement.

The CPP wages and coordinates all forms of struggle: armed struggle and united front; legal and illegal; and aboveground and underground. Because the central question in any genuine revolutionary movement is the seizure of political power and because conditions in the Philippines make the armed revolution possible and necessary, the Party since its reestablishment has consistently taken the road of armed struggle and considers armed struggle the main form of revolutionary struggle. But the armed struggle cannot advance if the legal forms of struggle are not developed.

The Party envisions two stages in the Philippine revolution: the national democratic and socialist. The national democratic revolution is now being carried out. Upon basic completion of this through the seizure of political power, the socialist revolution can commence. The national revolution has a socialist perspective; and prepares the requisites for the start of the socialist revolution.

The CPP is determined to lead the Filipino people to victory in the revolutionary struggle for national and social liberation while upholding the principle of independence and utmost self-reliance. Nevertheless, the Party seeks from abroad whatever amount of moral and material support is possible, without becoming dependent on it. The Party maintains its independence and at the same time upholds proletarian internationalism. It is conscious of the fact that while foreign support from abroad is needed, the revolutionary struggle of the Filipino people in turn supports all anti-imperialist and progressive forces abroad.

At its reestablishment in 1968, the CPP was able to consolidate the proletarian revolutionary cadres as well as the revolutionary mass movement by upholding Marxism-Leninism and the program of national democratic revolution and by repudiating and rectifying the dogmatist and empiricist and "Left" and Right opportunist errors of the Lavas and Tarucs.

At the beginning, the CPP had only a few scores of members. These surpassed in number the few remnants of the CPP-SPP merger party who joined the Lava group. But, more importantly, they were the effective leaders of the mass movement. Party membership increased to several hundreds in 1970 and 1971 due to the outbreak of the First Quarter Storm of 1970 and the workers' and student strike movement in the cities; and the expansion and intensification of revolutionary work in the countryside.

Before the US-Marcos dictatorship could impose fascist dictatorship on the people, the Party had increased its membership to a few thousands and had deployed cadres to form seven regional committees (Northern Luzon, Central Luzon, Manila-Rizal, Southern Luzon, Western Visayas, Eastern Visayas and Mindanao) covering the entire country.

It was possible for the Party to go nationwide and strike deep roots among the people because the proletarian cadres had organized the urban-based legal mass organizations of the working people and the youth and created the guerrilla zones at selected strategic areas in the archipelago.

On March 29, 1969, only a few months after the reestablishment of the CPP, the New People's Army was established. The people's army's reestablishment was facilitated by the conjoining of the proletarian cadres from the urban areas and the Red fighters of the old people's army, who together repudiated the Taruc-Sumulong gangster clique.

The New People's Army started with sixty fighters, armed with nine automatic rifles and twenty-six single-shot rifles and handguns in the second district of Tarlac province. The peasant mass base there was about 80,000, mainly organized through a legal peasant association and administered by barrio organizing committees.

By carrying out tactical offensives, the NPA was able to accumulate some 200 rifles in 1969 and 1970. But since the latter half of 1969, the enemy had concentrated the division-size Task Force Lawin and organized the "barrio self-defense units" (BSDU) to operate against the NPA. In December 1970, the enemy was proclaiming the elimination of the NPA and the peasant movement because some NPA units had been destroyed and scores of peasant leaders had been murdered.

The enemy was scarcely aware of the fact that since early 1969 CPP cadres had been sent to build the NPA, peasant and other mass organizations in the rural areas of Isabela, a province in Northern Luzon. A far bigger mass base reaching up to 300,000 in 1972 was built there. Most of the seed cadres deployed to various regions in the country were trained here. They were joined by Party cadres and members as well as mass activists developed by the nationwide urban-based mass movement in proceeding to the countryside.

From 1969 to 1971 a substantial number of cadres from the worker and youth mass organizations were able to either get politico-military training for armed revolution or team up with cadres and fighters already tempered by revolutionary work in the countryside. The First Quarter Storm of 1970 and the mass movement up to 1972 interacted with the armed offensives in Tarlac to encourage the proletarian revolutionaries and the broad masses of the people to carry out the national democratic revolution.

Upon the declaration of martial law in 1972, the urban-based legal democratic mass organizations under the broad alliance banner of the Movement for a Democratic Philippines were outlawed and forced underground. Party cadres and mass activists had to be absorbed by the urban underground and by the revolutionary movement in the countryside.

On April 24, 1973 the National Democratic Front was organized to embrace the underground mass organizations, base itself in principle on organs of political power built at the village level and facilitate the formation of united front committees and secret cells at higher levels.

To the satisfaction of US imperialism, the Marcos dictatorship at first appeared to have succeeded in quelling the revolutionary mass movement, especially in the urban areas. But in fact, the massive repression and aggravation of the social crisis, despite the heavy inflow of foreign loans, served as stimulus to revolutionary work on a nationwide scale.

Despite the arrests of CPP Central Committee members in 1973, 1974, 1976 and 1977, the erstwhile skeletal regional Party organizations gained flesh and muscle from the growth of the armed revolutionary movement and the urban underground. As early as late 1974, all regional Party committees--then numbering nine--became basically self-reliant, no longer receiving any significant amount of subsidy from the Central Committee.

A large number of cadres from the bureaus of the Party General Secretariat were also deployed to reinforce the regional Party Committees of Northwest Luzon, Northeast Luzon, Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog, Bicol, Eastern Visayas, Western Visayas and Mindanao.

From October 1975 to January 1976 workers in 300 enterprises nationwide went on strike despite the strike ban and the generally intense repression. Political demonstrations by the broad masses also emerged in Manila and other cities. It was also in 1976 that the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines issued "Our Urgent Tasks" in order to promote the antifascist, anti-imperialist and antifeudal line and raise higher all forms of revolutionary struggle.

On April 6, 1978, on the eve of the electoral farce, the entire Metro Manila reverberated with the sound of protest from almost every house and street. This should have been the signal for a sustained nationwide mass protest movement. But differences between the Central Committee and the Manila-Rizal Regional Party Committee regarding the 1978 elections and political tactics, problems caused by the latter's violations of organizational discipline, and the internal debates which preoccupied leading cadres and gave way to other adverse results, disabled the Party from effecting a strong mass protest movement in Manila-Rizal and other cities in the country.

However, the Party and other revolutionary forces kept on advancing and growing in strength nationwide, especially under the guidance of "Our Urgent Tasks" and "Specific Characteristics of our People's War"

In the 1980s, the urban mass protest movement advanced even more vigorously. Progressive trade unions grew tremendously, seized overall leadership away from the yellow trade unions and led the workers in sustained militant economic and political struggles. The student youth expanded and intensified their democratic reform struggle and their antifascist, antifeudal and anti-imperialist propaganda. The peasant masses also became more active in urban protest actions.

The militant struggles, waged largely by the basic masses, prepared the way for the unprecedentedly large mass actions from 1983 to 1986 which involved the repeated direct participation of 500,000 to two million people and eventually caused the downfall of Marcos on February 22-25, 1986.

Up to 1977, the NPA had only 1000 highpowered rifles, although the mass base in both urban and rural areas reached a million people. It may be said that from 1969 to 1979, the typical or most widespread unit of the New People's Army was the armed propaganda team, which devoted more than 95 percent of its time to mass work in the countryside.

But in 1979, platoon-size tactical offensives became frequent and widespread, especially in Samar island. By 1981, company-size tactical offensives emerged in several regions, especially in Mindanao. By 1983, company-size tactical offensives had become widespread and the NPA had amassed nearly 5000 highpowered rifles.

The growth in armed strength has been cumulative. Currently, the number of highpowered rifles is around 10,000, excluding 7,000 inferior firearms. The units of the NPA operate in at least 60 guerrilla fronts covering 12,000 villages or significant portions of 800 municipalities and 63 provinces of the Philippines.

In most guerilla fronts, company-size main guerilla units have been formed to serve as centers of gravity of the smaller and weaker, but more widespread units of local guerillas, armed propagandists and people's militia. The development of company-size guerilla units has led to a more effective use and combination of main and secondary guerilla units, in enhanced direct and indirect coordination among different guerilla fronts and regions, and in greater capacity to disperse enemy troops, thus creating more and better opportunities for our tactical offensives and defensive maneuvers as well.

The general level of land reform being carried out by the revolutionary movement still involves rent reduction, elimination of usury, fair wages for farm workers, fair prices for farm products and higher productivity through elementary forms of cooperation. But in increasing areas, the land of despotic landlords and landgrabbers has been confiscated or taken back and distributed to the tillers or managed by them collectively through their peasant associations.

The mass base in the countryside is seven million people. They are administered by the organs of political power; and are partially enlisted in mass organizations with the Party at the core through Party groups and local Party branches. The urban and rural mass base totals ten million people.

The Party has increased its membership to 35,000 through the urban and rural revolutionary mass movement. They are in central organizations and in fourteen regional Party organizations. Out of the total membership, 5,000 members are of cadre quality and are capable of leading at least a committee or a squad.

The Party can lead ten million people because its members are surrounded and assisted by several tens of thousands more of mass activists from whose ranks the most advanced elements are drawn to become Party members.

In twenty years of existence, the Communist Party of the Philippines has consistently proven itself to be the vanguard party of the Filipino proletariat and the Filipino people, because it has been guided by Marxism-Leninism, creatively applied it in the concrete practice of the Philippine revolution and aroused, organized and mobilized the people in their millions; and conducted criticism and self-criticism on the basis of facts and with the aim of firming up unity and heightening the revolutionary struggle.

The Party remains at the center of the national political stage no matter how the United States and its reactionary agents try to marginalize it through violence and deception. It is because the Party relies on the all-round participation and support of the people; and employs the magic weapons of armed struggle and the national united front against the enemy.

So long as no grave errors of ideological subjectivism, political opportunism and organizational sectarianism or laxity are committed, the Party and the revolutionary people has no other way but to advance and grow in strength because the all-round crisis of the ruling system continues to deepen and aggravate.

The ruling system continues to deteriorate and decline towards its destruction. The socio-economic crisis is insoluble and worsening. The fundamental problems that brought about the Marcos despotism have remained unsolved. The reactionary factions are increasingly involved in violent strife at an unprecedented level.

The United States itself which manipulates them is in the irreversible process of global decline and is finding the effectiveness of its interventions diminishing. There is no way the United States can defeat a resolute protracted people's war in the Philippines.

III. ONWARD TO VICTORY

It is reasonable for the Communist Party of the Philippines to aim for total victory in the national democratic revolution within the next ten years. The disintegration process of the ruling system is irreversible. The process of resistance and revolution induces the contradictions within the system to aggravate; and guarantees the strengthening of all positive forces against the enemy.

The ideological, political and organizational strength that the Party has accumulated since 1968 provides a basis for advancing at a cumulative rate toward the maturation of the strategic defensive, further on toward the strategic stalemate and finally toward the strategic offensive in the armed revolution. The insoluble and ever worsening economic and political crisis of the ruling system provides fertile ground for the growth and advance of the Party and all other revolutionary forces.

It is all up to the Party to further strengthen itself ideologically, politically and organizationally in preparation for total victory. The process of strengthening the Party, however, is not easy. It involves sacrifices, hard work and struggle. The enemy also seeks to destroy the Party frontally and otherwise.

In the course of revolutionary struggle, the Party must consciously avoid errors of subjectivism and opportunism; and must always take into account the actual balance of forces as it tries to defeat the enemy in the most efficient way.

It is in the nature of life, especially in revolutionary struggle, to be confronted with problems. By their mastery of the law of contradiction, Marxist-Leninists thrive on confronting and solving these problems and raising the level of development of the revolutionary struggle.

Errors of subjectivism and opportunism of the "Left" and Right varieties have occurred because of the inability to handle contradictory aspects of a thing or process. Sometimes, the principal and secondary aspects are correctly posed; but the secondary aspect is underestimated, sometimes given a weight of zero, or is regarded as static. At other times, the distinction of principal and secondary aspects is blurred; and the two aspects are blended into an unwarranted compromise.

To strengthen themselves ideologically, all Party cadres and members must study the theory of Marxism-Leninism and grasp the proletarian revolutionary stand, viewpoint and method. Whenever an issue arises, all sides and all facts pertaining to them must be taken into account and then the proletarian revolutionary stand and the national democratic line can be firmly taken and flexible tactics can be worked out.

Ideological building among Party cadres and members will always be uneven. But the Party leadership, together with the organs responsible for education and propaganda, must ensure a general level of understanding of the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and the program of national democratic revolution.

To win total victory, the Party needs thousands of Party cadres with a comprehensive and profound knowledge of dialectical and historical materialism, the critique of capitalism and modern imperialism, revolutionary strategy and tactics, and the principles of scientific socialism; tens of thousands of Party cadres who have read and studied at least articles by the great communist leaders selected by the Party for their relevance to the Philippine revolution and who can issue propaganda at least on issues within their sphere of work; and hundreds of thousands of Party members who have studied the Party documents integrating the Marxist-Leninist theory with the concrete conditions of the Philippines and who can conduct agitation in their specific areas.

These large numbers can be attained only by proceeding from hundreds to thousands; from thousands to tens of thousands; and from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands. The growth in ideological strength of the Party is inseparable from its growth in political strength.

The key to total victory within the next ten years is the militant all-sided participation and support of the broad masses of the people in their tens of millions and through organizations whose membership run into millions. All political, economic, military and cultural requirements must be fulfilled.

The balance of strength between the revolutionary and counterrevolutionary forces as well as the domestic and international environment must always be taken into account in considering the prospect of winning total victory. But to win total victory the Party and other revolutionary forces must rely on themselves rather than depend on external forces and conditions.

Come what may, in terms of foreign assistance or favorable external developments, all revolutionary forces and the people in general must wage revolutionary struggle, gain strength and win victory. The CPP exerts all efforts to gain international support but this can only be as effective as the revolutionary movement can absorb it.

Efforts to advance must be planned on the basis of the given strength of the revolutionary movement, a clear knowledge of enemy strength, a grasp of the law of motion and a realistic estimate of what is achievable within the time scope of the plan.

At the moment, the revolutionary movement has enough armed strength to reach the maturation of the strategic defensive and pass on to the stage of strategic stalemate within a few years' time.

The cumulative trend in the growth of the New People's Army over the last twenty years can give us a fair idea of what is achievable.

So long as all the political, economic and cultural requirements are fulfilled in the course of the revolutionary mass movement, the strategic stalemate and strategic offensive will be far shorter stages than the strategic defensive. The politico-military capabilities of US imperialism and the local reactionaries to delay the advance of the already protracted but ever cumulative people's war is predictable and calculable; and can be prepared against domestically and internationally.

The CPP and the Filipino people must be prepared to thwart every escalation of US intervention; and shift from the current civil war to a national war in case of an outright US war of aggression. The vicious attacks instigated by the United States against the revolutionaries and the people must be countered with utmost determination. The revolutionary movement must act against US military installations and business enterprises.

Reactionary politicians who actively work for the prolongation of the US military bases must be denounced as traitors. They are the worst accomplices of the United States in the oppression of the Filipino people.

The current number of Red fighters armed with highpowered rifles should not give rise to the purely military viewpoint, commandism, arrogance and impetuosity. The vertical growth of military formations and firepower should not be made at the cost of neglecting such civil organizations as the Party, the mass organizations and the organs of political power.

To keep on enlarging military formations while neglecting the development of the civil organizations absolutely necessary to sustain the people's army and the people's war is to enter into a purely military situation where the superior military forces and paramilitary formations of the enemy can win. That is the reason why the enemy is trying to do everything to destroy the

political infrastructure of the revolutionary movement in the so-called "total war" or "low-intensity" conflict.

The growth of the main guerilla formations must always be kept in proper balance with the maintenance and development of small but effective and widespread units of the people's army. Given the current level of the armed struggle, we need to develop the optimum combination of company-size main units in every front, guerilla platoons as secondary units deployed in as many towns and districts, and squads of people's militia in every barrio, to achieve a high degree of initiative and flexibility.

The Party must wage a widespread and intensive people's war through guerrilla warfare with ever increasing organized mass support. The horizontal growth of the armed movement which is indissolubly connected with the continuous deepening of the mass base and the strengthening of revolutionary political power in the different localities, forms the solid basis for the vertical growth of military formations, the development of command ability at higher levels and coordination of larger forces (either organic or separate) for tactical offensives and offensive campaigns.

Guerrilla warfare with the enthusiastic support of the masses must be extensively and intensively employed to wipe out and disarm the enemy, destroy his antipeople facilities and drain him of his strength politically, militarily, economically and morally.

On a nationwide scale, the principal form of revolutionary struggle is the armed struggle fought mainly in the countryside until conditions are ripe for the strategic offensive. Before this final stage in the people's war, the principal form of struggle in the urban areas is legal and defensive.

The armed reactionary factions themselves use the cities as the main arena for their violent strife and the ruling faction is thereby compelled to retain sufficient anticoup and counter-revolutionary forces here. The operations of armed city partisans should run at a rate and in a style not overshadowing the violent internal strife of the reactionaries and not prejudicial to the legal democratic mass movement.

The revolutionary struggle cannot be brought to total victory by armed struggle alone although this is the main weapon for smashing the enemy state and securing the people's democratic state. This must be carried out within the framework of national democratic revolution, combined with the development of the anti-imperialist and antifeudal united front and linked to the advances of the people in revolutionary consciousness, organization and mobilization in every major field of social activity.

The Party should maintain the general level of land reform being carried out until such time that enough strength has been accumulated by the people's army and the peasant movement to effect a higher level characterized by land confiscation. The current level of land reform being undertaken by the revolutionary movement is genuinely beneficial to the peasant masses in contraposition to the bogus land reform programs dished out by one reactionary regime after another.

The mass organization of workers, peasants, fishermen, youth, women and other patriotic and progressive people must be formed both in urban and rural areas. Multisectoral and sectoral alliances must be fostered. The united front can be ever expanding so long as the revolutionary or progressive forces can retain their integrity, independence and initiative through consensual and consultative arrangements.

There is need to broaden the united front wherever possible in order to arouse, organize and mobilize a greater number of people for national liberation and democracy and defend the progressive forces against the enemy scheme to isolate and destroy them.

The organs of political power must continue to be built at the village level and from the village level upward along the line of the united front. The National Democratic Front should be chiefly instrumental in paving the way for the formation of organs of political power from the municipal level to the national level until the People's Revolutionary Government can be proclaimed.

The National Democratic Front can study, assist in and administer certain functions of the emerging people's government. The Party can continue to lead even as the NDF and the existing organs of political power take on more responsibilities.

The Party should see to it that the National Democratic Front keeps on enlarging and strengthening itself, without diluting its national democratic line and composition. But the NDF must always be open to the broadening of the national united front through formal and informal arrangements with other forces, eventually towards the formation of a people's consultative council and finally the people's democratic government.

In the future, the NDF will play the major role in negotiations, leading to the recognition of its status of belligerency or the recognition of the provisional revolutionary government. We must therefore learn lessons from the ceasefire agreement of December 10, 1986. There should be no more negotiations leading to an agreement expressly stipulating that the NDF is not invested with the status of belligerency. Furthermore, the venue of the negotiations should not be subject to enemy surveillance and exposure of Party cadres and allies should be guarded against.

The Party should never allow itself to be preoccupied with and divided over the question of boycott or participation in any voting exercises initiated and staged by the reactionary state. This is even more so in situations like the 1978 and 1986 elections, when being engrossed with the question of boycott or participation resulted in the failure to correctly appraise the upsurge in mass political activity.

It suffices for the Party, which in the first place is excluded from the voting exercise, to expose the farcical character of the exercise and propagate the line of national democratic revolution.

At the same time, the Party can counter the enemy's counterrevolutionary dual tactics of conjuring the illusion of democracy through the voting exercise by using revolutionary dual tactics and encouraging the legal progressive parties to expose the limits of the voting exercise and at the same time use it to gain certain advantages for the people.

Progressive mass organizations and alliances can stand above the voting exercise of the reactionary government by exposing its farcical character or its limits and declaring the criteria and objectives of a truly democratic exercise. They should avoid becoming minor objects or players in reactionary electioneering. Instead, they should concentrate on the fundamental issues.

Regarding secret Party units and members assigned to work inside reactionary parties, trade unions and other mass organizations, bourgeois institutions, churches, and the civil bureaucracy and the military of the enemy, they must be encouraged and allowed to adopt the appropriate methods and style of doing their work effectively and must not be burdened with demands that would negate their role.

To win total victory, the organizational strength of the Party must increase by several folds from its current level. The few hundreds of thousands of Party members necessary for winning total victory must be drawn from militated organized masses running into millions.

The increase in Party membership can be planned and carried out in stages. The plan can be based on the current membership; and directions of growth can be seen in the light of territorial and functional needs.

There must be so many Party members able to lead work and handle functions in 42,000 villages, 1,500 municipalities and cities, 73 provinces and in central offices of the future people's democratic state. This is the maximum goal towards which the Party membership must grow in stages.

The line is to boldly increase the membership of the Party on the basis of the mass movement, without letting in a single enemy agent. All requirements for enrolling, verifying and developing candidate-members and full members must be strictly and promptly followed.

The guarantee for the effectiveness as well as the security of the Party is the principle and exercise of democratic centralism; and the vigilance and militance of Party cadres and members with a mature sense of judgment and tested in the crucible of revolutionary struggle.

The overwhelming majority of Party members are good communists at every given time. Neither suspiciousness nor intrigues of the enemy can divide or reduce the unity and strength of the Party. The weaknesses and errors of Party members are overcome through criticism and self-criticism. Any enemy agent can be sifted out through the correct methods of observation, tests, evaluations, investigation, trial and judgment.

Higher organs must be sufficiently representative of the Party organizations they encompass, must issue timely guidelines and directives, and must put into full play the dedication, energy, creativity and resourcefulness of the lower organs, organizations and their members.

The system of political officers, who are not integrated into the units they supervise and who practically comprise another layer of authority, should be set aside. The problem of bureaucratism has been exaggerated by the system of political officers which tends to breed

authoritarianism, make lower collectives dependent on individuals who either do not show up promptly or are hyperactive to the point of stifling initiative in the lower organs.

The decision from a higher organ may be correct and prompt. But should it encounter any objection or resistance, the persuasive style based on facts and correct arguments rather than invocation of authority and threats of disciplinary action must be used. The particular conditions of the lower organs and organizations and their political environment must be taken into account.

In the Communist Party of the Philippines, the principle of collective responsibility is principal to individual responsibility but should not be used to stifle the latter. Party cadres must be able to exercise executive functions and Party members must be able to take initiative in accordance with provisions of the Party constitution, standing policies and the accumulation of decisions.

Study and work meetings are necessary to make for collective life. But these should not be unnecessarily frequent or prolonged to the point of robbing the Party cadres and members of the time and energy to implement the decisions.

Certain leading organs and staffs must be streamlined in order to release more cadres to the field. There must be prompt decisions by leading organs on major problems and issues at their own levels to avoid the hardening and anarchy of contradictory positions among lower organs and units.

It is bad not to have any record of any kind and depend solely on an oral tradition. Major decisions and guidelines have to be put on record as the result of collective decision-making. But excessive recording of detailed information and raw minutes of meetings can be equally bad or even worse when the enemy gets hold of the data.

The advantages and disadvantages of modern technical equipment like computers and radio have to be fully understood. While they could enhance the recording, filing and sharing of information necessary for decision-making and coordination, they can also be used to excess or handled carelessly leading to the loss of sensitive and tactical information to the enemy.

The use of radio equipment other than for tactical offensives and mobile broadcasts can also be dangerous. Frequent and prolonged communications through transceivers between fixed points are easily traced by the enemy. Strict rules must be observed to limit the use of radio communications to the truly necessary and to ensure the security of all transmissions.

The regular structure of the Party must be continuously developed. There must be a fluid interaction between higher and lower organs and organizations; and between coordinated organs and organizations under a higher organ. Just as there is a structure and division of responsibilities vertically and horizontally, there should be a correspondent structure and division of detailed information which need not be overconcentrated on the impetus of modern technical equipment so as to prevent the enemy from getting undue knowledge of the revolutionary movement.

So long as it resolutely, militantly and thoroughly carries out its ideological, political and organizational building, the Communist Party of the Philippines is certain to lead the broad

masses of the Filipino people of various nationalities and ethno-linguistic communities to total victory in the national democratic revolution against US imperialism and the local reactionaries; and bring about the start of the socialist revolution.

Long live the Communist Party of the Philippines!

Long live the Filipino proletariat and people!

Onward to total victory!

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