

Outline for Presentation on Filipino National Question

I. Introduction

Filipino experience in the U.S., theoretically the "Filipino Question", is an integral part of the larger social/political phenomena of Asian immigration to the U.S., in particular to the west coast and Hawaii, beginning in the 1800's up until the present. Various Asian nationalities have and continue to make up substantial portions of the agricultural proletariat and are concentrated as well as in the service and manufacturing sectors. The continuous flow of immigrants from various countries in Asia will continue to impose on the communist movement the need for a more precise analysis about their relationship to U.S. revolution. Also, many of these sectors are associated with countries in Asia where national liberation from U.S. imperialism has already taken place, or is on the agenda. In addition, the Filipino question is a particularization of an even larger category of immigrant national minorities who also experience racial oppression in the U.S. -- this would include the experiences of the various nationalities from Latin America, the West Indies, etc.

II. Addressing the "Filipino" question in particular

Although the Filipino community itself is relatively small (less than 1 million in the U.S.), its characteristics and historical situation provide a good picture of the "type" of question we are studying.

- its early colonial relationship to U.S. imperialism sets the framework for the "push-pull" factors of emigration from the Philippines to the U.S.
- There has been continuous immigration, more or less, for over 60 years, with no end in sight.
- The Filipino community has stabilized in certain identifiable geographic areas, and within certain job categories
- Forces within our trend have had considerable practice within the Filipino community for several years.

III. Dominant theses on these "Asian Questions" in the U.S. communist Movement

There have been two erroneous tendencies: 1) to assert that these immigrant communities are fundamentally national minorities (implicitly, oppressed as nations) with vague rights for "self determination". Racism as a formative dynamic in the reproduction of the distinct community is explicitly rejected as bourgeois & non-Marxist. 2) to collapse distinctions between the various nationalities from Asia into the category "Asian" and then attempting to invest this racial category (in contest of U.S. society) with a "national" character.

IV. Analysis of the U.S. Filipino community

The analysis will include some study of U.S.-Philippines relationship and the immigration dynamic which has been established to the U.S., and also to address the question of Philippine national identity. We will also examine the proletarianization and naturalization processes of the immigrant community; the forms of national oppression and racial oppression.

A. Historical relationship between the Philippines and U.S. imperialism

1. Philippines prior to U.S. colonization
 - political and economic effects of 300 years of Spanish colonization;
 - cultural impact
 - impact on class/national formation
2. U.S. colonization (1900-s)
 - political and economic changes
 - effects of cultural imperialism
3. U.S. imperialism's neo-colonial relations (1946 +)

4. U.S. imperialism and the Marcos period (1965 +)
- B. Filipino immigration to the U.S.
 1. First wave--1920's-1934
 - push/pull factors; characteristics; proletarianization; forms of oppression; exclusion
 2. Second wave--World War II period
 - transformation of first wave; conditions of military service; war bride phenomena, development of second generation and more stable community; impact of colonial mentality in community
 3. Third wave--1965+
 - varying political/economic impetus for the immigration of this wave; distinction between initial period or immigrants (professionals) and succeeding immigrants to present period; characteristics; impact on whole Filipino community
 4. Composite analysis of community today; effects of continued immigration; political issues in the community; proletarianization; naturalization impact.
- V. Filipino as a racial/national minority community
- A. Filipinos constitute a national minority in the U.S.
 1. The relationship of U.S. imperialism to the Philippines as a neo-colony, sets groundwork for the emigration from the Philippines to the U.S., and the subsequent development of a national minority community.
 2. Filipino immigrants actually tend to naturalize rapidly following the first wave.
 - a sizeable, stable community exists
 - U.S. cultural imperialism has already created a "colonial mentality" as well as a familiarization with American language, culture
 - rapid proletarianization contributes to all-sided integration
 - second, third generations do not qualitatively retain nor develop Philippine national identity-characteristics, material basis for this objective process does not exist.
 3. Despite materialization, national minority character of community continues to emerge with the pattern of recurrent immigration.
 - questions of equal rights to language, immigration, culture, etc. remain on community's agenda
 - these questions are not reproduced with each new generation, but are brought by the most recent immigrants
 - as long as relationship between U.S. imperialism and Philippine as neo-colony and subsequent immigration to U.S. remains the condition for national minority oppression of U.S. Filipinos will continue
 - In this sense, national oppression of Filipino community in the U.S. is resolved through the National Democratic revolution in the Philippines -- transforming the present relations to the U.S.
- B. Filipinos are also part of a racial minority
 1. U.S. relations produce the basis for Filipinos to also constitute part of the racial (non-white) minority in the U.S.
 2. Filipino become identified as "orientals" or "Asians"
 - this characterization historically, socially defined. The Asian category actually made-up of people with very distinct historical, national and cultural backgrounds.
 3. All Filipinos--regardless of degree of naturalization or citizenship, are subjected to racism.
 - fully naturalized or American born continue to be oppressed stigmatized as racial minorities
 - the racial distinctiveness contributes to the development and perpetua-

tion of "Filipino" communities of immigrants and American born, in both a geographic sense, and with a particular set of internal politics.

4. Racism as a social relation in U.S. society will require a revolutionary solution

C. The intersection of racial/national minority oppression.

1. Despite the fact that only the most recent immigrant objectively retains the basis for national oppression and discrimination such as language culture, etc., whole Filipino community faces national minority oppression because of the subjective extension to all Filipinos through the intersection with racism.
 - also, among Filipinos, recent immigrants (since 1965) numerically, politically, dominate community
 - immigrants immediately have extensive ties, with other Filipinos through family unification, neighborhoods, organizations

IV. Political implications for organizing Filipinos

A. Objectively, Filipino immigration to the U.S. and subsequent integration into U.S. relations of production is part of the dispersal of nations caused by imperialism

-Philippine nationals have been dispersed from the Philippine nation to all parts of the world, particularly to the U.S.; Filipinos in the U.S. are thus part of the overseas Filipino community

-the constant flow of Philippine nationals into the U.S. through immigration contrives to renew strong national identification and ties with the Philippines

-at the same time, the naturalization/proleterianization process is rapid and is the dominant objective factor affecting immigrants

B. An incorrect analysis of the national identity and naturalization/proletarianization dialectic can lead to incorrect lines for organizing Filipinos.

-in particular we want to avoid taking extreme positions of political questions concerning the relationship to the Philippine revolution and to working class struggles

1. We recognize that national identity, even as subjectively reinforced by racial/national discrimination, produces a "special" interest among U.S. Filipinos

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-this national identity is a social process and should not be collapsed with "nationalization", a political process.

2. We should also distinguish between narrow, bourgeois nationalism, and "progressive" nationalism

-national identity can be mistaken to imply a progressive nationalism and support for the national democratic revolution in the Philippines

-a heightening of national identity/nationalism can erroneously be asserted as the principal process to politicize the U.S. Filipino community; nationalism, and support for Philippine liberation may be advanced as directly leading to the resolution to racial/national minority oppression.

-a heightening of Philippine nationalism as the principal political orientation for proletarianized, U.S. Filipinos is a negative concession to the petty-bourgeois strata of the Filipino community, to narrow reactionary nationalism.

-narrow nationalism is contrary to the need for Filipinos in the U.S. to unite with the rest of the working class against all forms of oppression.

- a heightening of Philippine nationalism as the principal political orientation for proletarianized, U.S. Filipinos is a negative concession to narrow, reactionary nationalism.
 - narrow nationalism is contrary to the need for Filipinos in the U.S. to unite with the rest of the working class against all forms of oppression.
 - while the national democratic revolution in the Philippines has an anti-imperialist content, from the point of view of Filipinos in the U.S., that anti-imperialism is not necessarily explicit in a "nationalist" perspective.
 - it is contrary to international proletarian interests to undermine the potential heightening of proletarian consciousness to appeal to nationalism, were the objective conditions already exist to raise working class consciousness.
3. Communists will also have to weigh the overseas community character and naturalization/proleterianization process in determining the correct line for questions of repatriation.
- one line may be to swing to one side, negating national identity and the overseas character altogether and assert there is no basis for repatriation.
 - on the other hand, another extreme would be to overestimate the national identity question, and assert that the communist task is to prepare the Filipino community for mass repatriation.
 - objectively, repatriation will probably occur after the Philippine revolution among those who still maintain a strong national identity, particularly the most recent immigrants. Mass repatriation is probably not viable however due to the powerful dynamic of naturalization and proletarianization.
4. At a certain juncture in the Philippine revolution, communists may quantitatively emphasize Philippine support work in the Filipino community as the principal political task at that time. This would require raising the anti-imperialist perspective.
5. The basic tasks remain to organize U.S. Filipinos as part of the work-class and for socialist revolution.
- whether or not the particular political work is around conditions facing the U.S. working class or in support of Philippine revolution, it must be approached from the fundamental standpoint of promoting proletarian internationalism.