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backs out of plebiscite** page 3



editorial ●

## **"Citizens' Assemblies" - A BIG FRAUD**

THE creation of the "citizens' assemblies" will go down in history as one of the biggest frauds of the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship together with such other frauds as the pro-landlord land reform program and the fascist and pro-imperialist "new constitution".

What distinguishes the "citizens' assemblies" from the other frauds is

that it deceives the people in the most direct manner. While the Marcos-controlled media boasts that "more than half of the country's 40 million population" participated in the "assemblies", people from all over the country know only too well that merely a few samplings of the "36,000 assemblies" were actually held in their midst.

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## editorial (cont'd)

What irks the people more is that the actual results of the voting in the "assemblies" have been tampered with and distorted. A typical illustration is the case of the few "assemblies" held in Tondo and other urban poor communities in the Greater Manila area. Those who participated in these "assemblies" tell of their overwhelming rejection of the Marcos dictatorial rule and yet it was reported in the media that they overwhelmingly approve of Marcos' rule.

The evil purpose of the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship in putting up the "citizens' assemblies" is to create a facade of democracy for its fascist rule.

After destroying all semblance of freedom and democracy upon the setting up of martial rule and unleashing mass repression of the people and all forces opposing it, the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship rammed through the reactionary constitutional convention a "new constitution" designed to legitimize the dictatorship. This "new constitution" was supposed to be ratified in a plebiscite deodorized by a proclamation of "free discussion and debate".

Everything in the sham plebiscite was supposed to be running smoothly until the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship was confronted with the certainty of an overwhelming rejection by the people of the "new constitution". The fascist dictator Marcos immediately revoked the proclamation on "free discussion and debate" and made as his excuse the increasing activity of the "communists" and "enemies of change" in the vote NO campaign. Thinking that he can sidestep the effects of the growing hatred of the people for his tyrannical rule on the issue of the "new constitution", he called for a "referendum" through the "citizens' assemblies".

What followed was just as expected: the daily rantings of the Marcos media on the "overwhelming support" of the people to all the evil acts and designs of the dictator Marcos: 1) "support" for Marcos' dictatorial rule by favoring the continuation of martial law and its bogus reform programme; 2) "approval" of the fascist and pro-imperialist "new constitution" minus the provision on the interim assembly; 3) "approval" of the

suspension of elections for about seven years; and 4) "demand" to exercise more repressive acts against all forces opposed to the dictatorship and to put up a "revolutionary government".

The fabricated support for the continuation of martial law and the Marcos reform programme was most needed by the tyrannical regime that is daily being isolated from the people. The dictatorship has to gain popular support by mass deception. This it knows too well because it is fully aware that all its acts are evil and against the interests of the people. Any dictatorship or any oppressive regime knows and uses only a combination of means with which to rule: force and deception.

The "approval" of the "new constitution" is a convenient way of doing away with the plebiscite in which the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship had seen the certainty of rejection by the people. For the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship, the "citizens' assemblies" was far easier to manipulate than the plebiscite. With the "citizens' assemblies", all it had to do was call on the barrio, municipal and city officials to hurriedly organize such assemblies and ask the people to support the dictatorship. (The teachers and others who participated in determining the results of the voting in the "assemblies" which were actually convened are witnesses to the manipulation of the results.) The Marcos mass media had a principal role in this big fraud by reporting "overwhelming participation" in the assemblies and "overwhelming support" to the dictatorship.

The "rejection" of the interim assembly was a dirty maneuver of the dictatorship to shift the ire of the people to "old line politicians" while maintaining dictator Marcos, arch representative of the corrupt

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"Bear in mind that the cause of our sacrifices is the realization of the dreamed-of liberty of our native land which will give us freedom and will vindicate the honor that, through tyranny, has been interred in the grave of incomparable oppression..."

Proclamation of January, 1987

- Andres Bonifacio

# Marcos scared, backs out of plebiscite

Terrified of facing a certain and overwhelming NO vote, dictator Marcos had frantically set up "citizens' assemblies" controlled by his henchmen in order to fabricate a "ratification" of his "new constitution" while at the same time suppressing the will of the people by refusing to hold the plebiscite as provided for in the 1935 Constitution.

Carapali and Sobra na 'yang pasia-lang si Marcos! were the most common comments heard in Manila when the plot of the Marcos dictatorship to substitute the rigged "citizens' assemblies" for the scheduled plebiscite became clear to everyone.

In a series of maneuvers during the first half of January, dictator Marcos revoked his "free and untrammelled discussion" decree, mounted a massive campaign to slander and harass the vote-NO partisans, hurriedly set up his demagogic "citizens' assemblies", and announced through the Marcos media the "ratification" of the infamous constitution which he hopes will provide a cloak of legality for his outrightly fascist dictatorship.

Dictator Marcos finally decided to back out of a confrontation with the people in a plebiscite when he realized that the condemnation of his constitution and tyrannical dictatorship is widespread and overwhelming, and that this would certainly come out in the scheduled plebiscite.

Student councils and various mass organizations which conducted poll surveys and mock elections from the last week of December 1972 to the first weeks of the new year reported a nationwide 5 to 1 ratio in favor of the NO position, not counting the significant number of those who decided on a boycott as the way to express their rejection of the Marcos constitution and the sham plebiscite. In the schools and in some urban poor communities in the greater Manila area (as polled in nearby churches), the ratio in favor of rejection was as high as 20 to 1.

Reliable sources also reported that a Princeton poll commissioned by Malacanang showed that 80% of all qualified voters were opposed to the Marcos constitution.

No wonder dictator Marcos, trembling with fear, backed out of the scheduled plebiscite. ■



Foreign News Comment

## RP Nightmare

The most telling evidence of dissatisfaction with the present regime in Manila can be found in President Marcos' own recent decision to defer a scheduled January 15 plebiscite on his new constitution and to suppress public debate on the proposed charter, which would permit an indefinite extension of martial law.

Instead, Marcos is submitting loaded questions about the country's political future to government-organized "citizens' assemblies" which he can obviously manipulate. If his reforms have been as successful and popular as he has claimed them to be, why is Marcos afraid to face open criticism and a secret vote? -- NEW YORK TIMES (January 12, 1973) ■

# The people's answers!

Expressing the true and militant reply of the people, the people's movement came up with the popular answers to the 5 first and 6 additional questions that the Marcos dictatorship posed to its set-up "citizens' assemblies".

Condemning these "citizens' assemblies" as but mere concoctions of the Marcos dictatorship, the people gave their harsh rejection of the oppressive "new society" under martial law and the constitution a la Malacanang.

These "citizens' assemblies", they said, had been "hurriedly set up...to give a semblance of democracy to his tyrannical rule under martial law." As for the "new constitution", they saw through it an evil scheme of this dictatorship to give legitimacy to its regime. As such, it has to be resoundingly rejected.

In response to the question of whether they approved of the "new society", the people resoundingly said NO. They said: "We cannot approve of an undemocratic society ruled over by a fascist dictatorship." In the same light, they condemned martial law and demanded its immediate lifting, pointing out that it is "illegal, hateful and totally undemocratic."

The people also made known their desire for the holding of a free plebiscite, immediately after the lifting of martial law, wherein they can officially register their NO votes against the dictatorship and the "new constitution".

Asked of their opinion of the "re-

forms" under martial law, the people laughed these off as a "big trick to cover up the Marcos dictatorship's monopoly of all political power and wealth."

Contrary to the reports dished out by the Marcos propaganda machinery, the people would want Congress to convene as provided for in the 1935 Constitution. They prodded the Senators and Congressmen to "insist on the convening of Congress...to show the dictator Marcos that there is still a legislative branch of government and that it is completely illegal for him to arrogate unto himself the power to make laws in the form of "presidential decrees", "general orders" and other such sinister pronouncements."

Similarly, they insisted that a national election be held in November, 1973 as provided for in the 1935 Constitution.

Finally, the people gave their indictment of the way Marcos is running the government. They recognized the imposition of martial law plus the use of deception as one of the most heinous crimes ever perpetrated against the Filipino people. The people haunt him with their warning: *May araw ka rin!*

## **Dictatorship Intensifies Repression of Democratic Groups and Individuals**

In the face of a mounting anti-fascist people's protest movement as expressed dramatically in the popular campaign to reject the Marcos dictatorship's "new constitution", dictator Marcos continues to intensify repression of all groups and individuals opposed to his one-man rule.

In the past half-month the Marcos dictatorship arrested more students, workers and young professionals, slandered and harassed various well-known democratic personalities, and revoked his demagogic decree calling for "free and untrammelled discussion" preparatory to the plebiscite.

While pretending to offer "free discussion and debate" with one hand, dictator Marcos, in typical fascist

fashion, struck with the iron fist of his other hand to repress and seriously disrupt the work of the National Organization of Concerned Citizens (NO-cc), which was leading the campaign for the rejection of the "new constitution".

All groups and individuals merely suspected of participating in the

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## People's Voice of Protest Heard

### Even in Rigged Fascist "Assemblies"

Reliable informants residing in various communities in metropolitan Manila reported that the Marcos dictatorship's latest gimmick, the so-called "citizens' assemblies", were a dismal failure and a sheer piece of deception that the people in the communities easily saw through.

It also became clear that the Marcos media's claim of 36,000 "citizens' assemblies" in which 20 million people participated was a ridiculous, barefaced lie. Our informants reported that even in Metropolitan Manila, where it was claimed that at least 1,000 barangays assembled only a dozen or so "assemblies" actually met.

In Tondo, where the urban poor masses' anger is still smoldering at the kempetal-like zones and the cruel eviction of the estero dwellers, the assembly which met became an embarrassment for the dictatorship's henchmen, despite the tight policing of the meeting by PC troopers and plainclothes agents.

The Tondo residents overwhelmingly expressed their opposition to martial law and the "new constitution", and courageously denounced the Marcos dictatorship.

The real results from Tondo were tampered with and grossly distorted in city hall or Malacanang before these were reported in the Marcos media.

Our various informants narrated that the same happened in urban poor communities in San Andres, in Sampaloc, and in Caloocan city. Despite the menacing presence of the dictatorship's henchmen, the people voiced their protest against martial law and the dictatorial rule of Marcos.

In Makati, the results from which were accurately reported in the media as a gimmick to create the impression that the rich of this city are opposed to the "democratic" reforms of dictator Marcos, Mayor Yabut had to scold the residents of Nagallanes and to apologize to his boss for the people's vote of protest.

Even in the "citizens' assemblies" which the dictatorship concocted and hoped to completely control, the people's insistent protest managed to seep through, which goes to show that dictator Marcos may sometimes manage

to fool some of the people some of the time, but he cannot, despite martial rule, fool all of the people all of the time. ■

## Dictatorship intensifies...

vote-NO campaign immediately became the objects of the dictatorship's campaign of slander and harassment.

The office of Charito Planas was twice "visited" by a contingent of Metrocom soldiers while she was away on business, scaring her office workers and disrupting their work.

Chino Roces and Teodoro Locsin (publishers, respectively, of the suppressed Manila Times and the Free Press) were both placed under close surveillance. Even their children, suspected of campaigning for a NO vote, were harassed and shadowed by intelligence goons.

More than a dozen students from UP, PCC, La Salle and other schools were arrested and clamped in jail for distributing mimeographed copies of Delegate Jesus Barrera's and Soc Rodrigo's anti-dictatorship speeches.

Several militant union leaders campaigning for a NO vote were also arrested at their homes and imprisoned.

But despite the most malicious slander and the most violent harassment from the Marcos fascist dictatorship, the magnificent will of the people to resist and to fight for freedom remains shining and undefeated.

The intensified repression unleashed by the Marcos fascist dictatorship has not stifled the people's democratic resistance movement. It has only forced the movement to go underground in the towns and cities. The people cannot be defeated. They will continue to resist and fight back until the dictatorship is overthrown and national freedom and genuine democracy are attained. ■

politicians, as the ruler extraordinary, above corruption and selfishness! Certainly, dictator Marcos wants to sustain his mock war against the oligarchs of which he is the chief and main defender. At the same time, it is a double-cross to the members of the Congress and the Con-Con who rendered their services to Marcos in the hope of sharing in the loot by becoming members of the interim assembly.

The "approval" of the suspension of elections for about seven years indicates only that Marcos wants to be given a "mandate" of seven years more to consolidate his rule as a dictator for life. This means that Marcos does not want his rule to be "undermined" by the legal oppositionists for the next seven years.

The "demand" to the dictator Marcos to exercise more repressive acts against all forces opposed to the dictatorship and put up a "revolutionary government" is at the least a warning to all anti-fascist forces and factions of the ruling classes opposed to Marcos. At the most, it clearly shows that the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship is prepared to do its worst -- rule by brute force and decrees without the blessings of the present and the "new" constitution. By "revolutionary government", of

course, the dictatorship means a military junta.

The big hoax that is the "citizens' assemblies" is calculated to take the place of the "elitist Congress of old line politicians". It can provide a convenient tool for Marcos to show popular support for his evil acts and designs whenever he wants to.

What dictator Marcos and his U.S. imperialist masters do not know is that the creation of the bogus "citizens' assemblies" and the subsequent fake results of the "referendum" have pushed them nearer to their grave. By this big fraud, they have only aggravated their isolation from the broad masses of the people who are now more determined to overthrow their oppressors. Even factions of reactionaries outmaneuvered by dictator Marcos are now more determined to deal blows on him.

If dictator Marcos thinks he has the whole situation under control, he is completely mistaken. He knows only too well of the annihilation of an increasing number of his fascist troops in the countryside, particularly in Northern Luzon and Mindanao. Let him further know that he cannot evade the people's wrath by running away from the plebiscite. His debacle in the aborted plebiscite foreshadows his coming bigger defeats in the hands of the aroused and revolutionary Filipino masses! ■

## They Condemn Dictatorship:

Sen. Jose W. Diokno

"Perhaps, the new Constitution can best be described as a classic example of double think and double speak. It guarantees liberty by ratifying repression; preaches integrity by practicing immorality; advocates economic nationalism by sanctioning foreign domination; creates a new society by retaining all the old faces; and achieves democracy by creating dictatorship."

Del. Bonifacio Gillego

"The people, betrayed by their delegates who sold out to Marcos and his imperialist masters, have no other recourse but to retaliate and to continue in their struggle for national democracy and genuine emancipation."

Sen. Benigno Aquino, Jr.

"A YES vote will mean: a vote to validate Mr. Marcos' power grab, legalize his dictatorship-for-life...to the Marcos tyranny, to the injustices of the Marcos martial rule."

Justice Jesus Barrera

"It [draft article] unwittingly establishes a dictatorship and a dictatorship that is more or less permanent, and what is worse, institutionalized in the fundamental law of the land."

Francisco "Soc" Rodrigo

"History attests that no country that fell under a dictatorship was ever able to return to democracy through peaceful means." ■