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# LIBERATION

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## FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY!

For the past three years, the dictator Marcos has peddled to the Filipino people a most outrageous lie. The lie is that martial law was imposed to create a "New Society," that the people have to surrender their civil liberties in exchange for peace and prosperity, that freedom is a luxury in a developing country desiring to achieve rapid economic growth.

Three years have passed since the imposition of martial law. And within this period, unbridled inflation, shortages of prime commodities, a massive foreign debt of \$4 billion, rising criminality, growing unemployment, -- in short, an economic crisis of unprecedented proportions -- have wracked the entire nation. The people's freedom has been taken away. And they have also no prosperity, no peace, no stability, no development!

### IMPORTANT LESSONS

Yes, these three years have taught us some important and unforgettable lessons. It is lunacy to hand over control of our lives and our future to a dictatorship which has consistently shown its utter disregard for the people's welfare. The policies and actions of the Marcos regime show very clearly whom it serves.

Certainly not the people! Our workers are paid the lowest wages in Asia, a thing that the dictator points to with pride. The dams, the multi-million-peso edifices, the plantations built over the demolished homes of thousands of our people are the regime's showpieces of "economic development." Government "reform" programs are driving the peasants in the countryside into debt and penury. Nationalist business is fast being strangled by the operations of huge foreign conglomerates.

Who has benefitted from our cheap labor? And who has come in the wake of the bulldozers? The foreign multinational companies, led by US imperialism, the big landlords, the business cronies of the dictator! These few are the main benefactors of the economic policies being promoted by the fascist regime. In fact, US imperialism and the Marcos clique brazenly collude in intensifying the hardship, poverty, suffering and exploitation of the Filipino people.

### FREEDOM IS VALUABLE

Should we wonder, then, why democracy, why freedom is so valuable to the people? Freedom and democracy are the means, are the weapons with which the people achieve, defend and preserve their right to live. Without freedom, without democracy, the people's livelihood cannot be improved, their welfare cannot be enhanced.

Deprived of the right to strike, the workers are made to accept inhuman wages, subjected to terrible working conditions, constantly threatened by the loss of their jobs. Deprived of the right to air their grievances and to act to redress these grievances, the people are helpless before the rapacity of the giant oil companies. Once again, unreasonable increases in the prices of oil products are being rammed into their throats.

This is what we have learned from three years of martial law. The people must have democracy if they are to achieve true progress, true development.

Democracy means people's control over the affairs of government, people's participation in the decisions that affect their lives. The people are not fooled by the dictator's attempts to pass off his fascist dictatorship as compatible with democracy. His referendums, his "free" press, and even his latest creation, the Sangguniang Bayan, have been exposed as mockeries of democratic consultation.

Democracy means, first of all, the lifting of martial law. The first step towards democracy must be the lifting of martial law.

#### EXERCISE RIGHTS!

But will the dictator lift martial law out of the goodness of his heart? Can we convince him by the logic of a petition? No! The people must fight for their democratic rights, must fight for the lifting of martial law.

And how can we win back our rights? By exercising them!

This is a lesson drawn from the bold and militant struggles of the workers. Defying a government prohibition, they dared exercise their right to strike. Not only limiting themselves to the means allowed by the dictatorship, they used a weapon which matched the weapon used against them by the capitalists. In a few days, they won those demands which had gathered dust for many years at the labor department.

Like the workers, we must dare to struggle, we must dare to win! And we have every possibility of winning.

The dictator's brutal displays of power try to hide the fact that his regime is collapsing. It is buffeted from within by large-scale government inefficiency and corruption, by factional rivalries among the members of his ruling clique, and from without by the armed resistance in the countryside, the growing mass movement in the cities, and increasing isolation abroad.

Thus, when confronted by the militant unity of thousands of workers, urban poor, students, intellectuals and members of the clergy against Presidential Decree 823, the dictator was forced to retreat. Though the concessions he made to the workers were not really substantial, his amendment of this decree was a step backward from his initial arrogance and bluster.

#### CONDITION FOR VICTORY

It is becoming clear that the dictatorship is afraid of the people, afraid that they are capable of forging, will forge an invincible unity and an unquenchable militance.

Unity, then, is the essential condition for the people's victory - unity against tyranny, against not only one or two presidential decrees, but against the very government that issues such decrees. Our strength lies in our number. However, our overwhelming number can be turned into an irresistible force only if we work together towards a single, common goal.

Concerted, determined, uncompromising, and daring mass action -- this and only this is the key to our victory. There is nothing that we cannot do, if we have courage and daring. A courage born out of the realization that ours is the just cause that will reap the boundless support of millions. A daring nurtured by careful and meticulous planning.

Those of us who have been silent, let us break our silence! Speak out, explain, lay bare the ugly truth of the Marcosian New Society for all to see, think and act upon. And those of us who have dared to express our desire for justice, dignity and democracy, let us join our voices with those of the oppressed. Then, our voices will surely resound and not only remain voices crying in the wilderness. Let us reach out to, link arms with and march in step with our brothers, the workers and the urban poor. Not only are they the most oppressed in society, and thus the most willing to fight for meaningful change, but in the cities, they and only they in their numbers are the decisive force in the struggle against tyranny and oppression.

Enough of tyranny, of terror, of suppression, of deception, of martial law! The people have the right to live. They have the right to change the conditions of their miserable existence.

**FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY! LIFT MARTIAL LAW!**