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**FULFILL THE REQUIREMENTS
OF THE CURRENT STAGE**

**TASKS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY
PEASANT MOVEMENT
FOR ADVANCING IN THE 1990s**

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FULFILL THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CURRENT STAGE

The document, "Tasks of the Revolutionary Peasant Movement for Advancing in the 1990s," tries to present the essential facts in the history and status of the revolutionary peasant movement, relates this movement to other factors of the revolution and candidly refers to major problems before setting forth the tasks.

The peasant movement is of crucial importance in waging the new democratic revolution and in winning the armed revolution. In this document, we can see that there is a great deal to be done in rectifying errors and shortcomings and in further building on what has been accomplished in order to complete the current stage of the strategic defensive of the people's war.

The revolutionary organs of democratic power govern only 25 percent of the Philippine population and territory, mostly on rough terrain favorable for guerrilla warfare. At the same time, we can observe that, even here, there is gross unevenness in the development of the revolutionary forces in terms of building the Party, the people's army and the mass organizations as well as in terms of carrying out the appropriate campaigns for the benefit of the people in various fields of social activity.

It is clear that we cannot rush any or all aspects of the revolutionary struggle to a higher stage of strategic development. We must fully take into account the need to fulfill the requirements of the current strategic stage and extend revolutionary work to the areas where 75 percent of the population exist. The problems of the current stage have to be solved before there can be an advance to the next stage. These problems cannot be erased by simply aiming for or rushing to a radically higher stage, which will certainly pose bigger problems that the Party and the revolutionary movement are ill-prepared to solve.

In view of certain well-motivated but impetuous, onesided and narrow currents of thought, which are erroneous, it is absolutely necessary for the Communist Party of the Philippines as the comprehensive leader of the Philippine revolution—to assert and exercise its responsibility and obligation of defining and stressing the basic principles and the general line; marshalling and deploying its cadres and resources in such a manner as to attend to the various requirements of the revolution; filling up the gaps and expanding to the wide fields ahead; and bringing the backward to an advanced level in accordance with the current necessary stage and circumstances of the struggle.

Widening and Deepening the Mass Base

The mass base must be developed on a wider scale and in a more deepgoing way in order to be able to sustain higher guerrilla formations or higher command levels. Larger guerrilla units of the New People's Army entail the prior building of a mass base capable of sustaining them. Without popular support created by the Party's mass work, which includes mass education, mass organizing and campaigns for land reform, production, militia training, health work, cultural work and so on, the people's army cannot preserve and further strengthen itself in the dialectics of war. No sphere of work must be neglected in favor of another because the result can only be harmful to both spheres of work.

Having a wide and deepgoing mass base is what differentiates the people's army from the superficial copycatting "special operations teams" of the enemy. To neglect mass work is to go into self-constriction even before the enemy can define his general perimeter and proceed to close in with his so-called tactics of gradual constriction (blockhouse warfare). Mass work in existing guerrilla fronts and farther afield should create the wide area of maneuver (dispersal, concentration and shifting) for the people's army and put the enemy in a no-win dilemma between concentration and dispersal of his forces.

There is a close connection between grave errors like those in the anti-informer campaign and the neglect of expansion and consolidation in mass work on the one hand and the haphazard or insufficient ideological, political and organizational building of the Party, the misallocation of limited cadres and resources and the imbalances in revolutionary work on the other hand.

The minimum program of the agrarian revolution (with selective cases of confiscation and preemptive or punitive measures against despotic landlords and landgrabbers in frontier areas) must still be pursued as the general line in the antifeudal struggle. This involves rent reduction, controlling interest rates, fair

farm wages, fair pricing of products and increasing productivity in agriculture and sideline occupations. There is still a great deal to be done in order to organize the peasant masses and mobilize them in campaigns and negotiations for realizing the minimum program.

To go for the maximum program (confiscation and free redistribution of land) as the general line when it is still necessary to pursue the minimum program, is to leave certain current problems unsolved and plunge into bigger problems that the Party and the revolutionary movement cannot as yet solve. Prematurely going for the maximum program will drive the entire landlord class to unite and marshal all its forces against the revolutionary movement and defeat our united front policy of taking advantage of the split between the enlightened gentry and the despotic landlords. The maximum land reform program will also entail heavy administrative work in distributing land, creating a credit system and other requirements, which we can ill-attend to amidst escalating enemy military onslaughts. All these have the potential of tying down and exhausting the limited organization of the revolutionary forces in limited areas of the country.

While the Party is trying to overcome enemy attacks, rectify errors and shortcomings and further strengthen itself and other revolutionary forces, while it is trying to attain a correct balance between mass work and military work among other areas of work, there are suggestions for peasant uprisings to seize land and other landlord properties as well as public nursery and stock farms, raid granaries and warehouses of landlords and merchants and occupy or destroy municipal and other government buildings. At no time is the unnecessary and putschist burning of public buildings permissible. We consider these buildings as the property of the people and as the future facilities of the revolutionary government.

The big problem in urging the peasant masses to run spontaneously far ahead of the current general stage of development and current level of strength of the Party, the organized peasantry and other revolutionary forces is that false hopes are raised and frustration soon follows. And if the peasant masses do run far ahead spontaneously for a short while, the class enemy is in a position to easily suppress the anarchy and to counterattack and destroy the visible but still small peasant associations as well as the revolutionary cadres and the spontaneous activists who become identified in the course of the uprisings.

The theory of the spontaneous masses or the idea of uprisings without regard for the state of revolutionary organization crumbles in the face of a clear recognition of the current level of strength of the Party, the New People's Army, the mass organizations and organs of political power, and the need to further

strengthen them within the defined general stage of development. The demand for painstaking mass work should not be obscured and laid aside by a demand for a leap to a higher stage of development through the spontaneity of the masses.

It is fine for the peasant masses to advance boldly but they should do so in a degree and manner that allows them to make and keep definite substantial gains; and overcome the long-running obstacles and the expected retaliation of their class enemies. Through the rhythm of expansion and consolidation within the necessary stage of development, the Party should be able to exercise leadership and strengthen itself, the people's army, the peasant associations and other revolutionary forces.

The theory and practice of protracted people's war has made the Philippine revolutionary movement a unique success in the world. This movement has grown in strength and advanced, without the conditions of a global imperialist war and without large amounts of material assistance from abroad. The peasant movement in particular plays the key role in the self-reliant revolutionary struggle of the Filipino people, led by the working class.

Erroneous Currents of Thought

And yet there are erroneous currents of thought which try to ride on the achievements of protracted people's war and at the same time belittle or even undermine these under the guise of accelerating total victory by glossing over or skipping stages of development. It is worthwhile to review the failure of the Talyug, Colorum, Sakdalista and similar uprisings as well as that of the adventurist Jose Lava leadership which banked on the worsening social crisis and spontaneous energy of the masses but which overlooked the need for painstaking mass work and building the revolutionary forces in the face of an enemy seeking to destroy them.

Of more recent memory in the Philippines is the failed armed uprising led by the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in Jolo City and thereabouts in the 1970s. The armed uprising unnecessarily exposed the MNLF forces and their followers to massive enemy attack and destruction, whereas the enemy could have been at the receiving end of guerrilla warfare on a wide scale for a protracted period of time.

Our Party has had its own share of overstepping the conditions and undertaking lines of action that lack mass support or that cannot be sustained by the available mass support. We have had experiences of going for the maximum

program of land reform and of failing to cope with the unified counterattack of the landlord class (including small, medium and big as well as previously enlightened and despotic landlords) and going for larger military formations that are not sustainable by the existing mass base, that absorb a lot of the advanced cadres for staff work and are financed from above and that as a consequence decrease the scope of mass work and become isolated and visible targets of the enemy's strategic offensive or war of quick decision (involving both large-scale and small unit operations).

With particular reference to the peasant movement and land reform, the lesson is not being recognized from Chinese and Vietnamese experiences that the longer-term minimum land reform program during the anti-Japanese struggle proved to be more tenable and fruitful than the maximum land reform program of the peasant uprisings in the 1920s and 1930s before the Japanese aggressors invaded and occupied China and Vietnam. Subsequently, the maximum land reform program could be fully carried out on a nationwide scale only after the seizure of political power.

The debacle of the Indonesian revolutionary movement in the 1960s was due to a putschist and insurrectionist line. There were preparations for seizing the center of power and the main lines of communications and using a portion of the *reactionary armed forces to seize power. There were no ideological, political and organizational preparations for a protracted people's war. At the crucial moment, the communist party and the revolutionary movement could be crushed in a wave of anticommunist massacres.*

The Naxalbari movement in India in the late 1960s proved to be a disaster. A *small party with a few armed squads committed the error of ultra-Leftism when it called on the spontaneous unorganized masses to go on a rampage of confiscating land, raiding granaries, attacking police stations and killing landlords. There was a violent mass upsurge spreading like a wild fire for a while and running beyond the capacity of the aforesaid party to lead. The uprisings were subsequently suppressed within a short period of time.*

Inside and outside of the Party, there are a few elements who have been hyping and overrating the "insurrectionist" example of the Sandinista-led Nicaraguan revolution and denigrating the rich experience and achievements of the Philippine revolution and the more significant and more relevant foreign examples of the national democratic revolution of a new type, clearly led by the working class, in such countries as China and Vietnam.

The "insurrectionist" idea is being extended from urban petty-bourgeois circles to the working class and the peasant movement. First, its proponents touted the strictly urban insurrection of the Frente Sandinista de la Liberación Nacional (FSLN) in Nicaragua as the model to follow. Subsequently, they adjusted themselves by seeming to accept the fact that the Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional (FMLN) cannot duplicate in El Salvador the FSLN example of quick victory and has resorted to the countryside and to an extended armed struggle.

The Sandinistas themselves consider their seizure of power exceptional. The long-running Somoza dynasty in a plantation economy and society, with a small population of 3.5 million, prevented other reactionary families and factions to take over power and block the Sandinistas. The U.S. Carter administration, lacking in any effective reactionary alternative to the Somoza leadership, smitten by the Vietnam syndrome and not caring much about a small portion of the global production of cotton, coffee, beef and sugar, could not intervene promptly and sufficiently to stop the Sandinista seizure of political power.

As regards the peasant masses, the Sandinistas did not carry out widespread solid organizing and thoroughgoing land reform before and after coming into power. Mass mobilizations through the FSLN and sweeping propaganda were not preceded and followed by painstaking and widescale peasant organizing. Policies increasingly yielded to the interests of the landed gentry and the bourgeoisie at the expense of the workers and the peasants. Towards the end of their power, the Sandinistas were weakened by the imperialist blockade and by the Contras as well as by disaffection of the masses due to grave economic difficulties and conscription of the youth. In the end, they received their worst political defeat in the hands of the local gentry who won the *alcaldias* in the 1990 elections.

The previously dominant strain of leadership (the *Terceristas* or insurrectionists) in the FSLN at its best was petty-bourgeois radical in mentality, anti-imperialist but with social-democratic illusions. Under the slogan of mixed economy, it was not able to carry out thoroughgoing land reform and cooperativization and engage in any program of industrialization. Under the slogan of pluralism, it did not exercise people's democratic dictatorship to curtail and restrict the political and economic rights of the exploiting classes and promote the worker-peasant alliance as the foundation of democracy.

We must be critical of those who use the Sandinista revolution as the overarching paradigm for our revolution for the simple reason that the Sandinista-

led revolution was waged under conditions completely different from those obtaining in the Philippines. It would be wishful thinking for Filipino revolutionaries to imagine that the United States could soon be caught off guard in the Philippines and that the ruling classes would soon run out of political blocs to rule the country, notwithstanding the ever worsening social crisis and tendency of the system to disintegrate.

In El Salvador, the FMLN has launched two "general offensives" (1981 and 1989) to no avail within a span of ten years. It has been able to persist in struggle by undertaking guerrilla warfare and mass work among the rural people against the U.S.-supported reactionaries. The FMLN has shifted from the terminology of the "final offensive" in 1981 to "generalized and extended insurrection" (self-contradictory terms) and further on to peace negotiations on the premise of "no victors in the war," especially in view of the current international environment.

So far in history, the greatest example of armed urban insurrection by the working class and its party is not that by the Sandinistas but that by the Bolsheviks in the October Revolution of 1917. But the seizure of political power by the proletariat and the people was not completed until after an extended armed struggle in the countryside against the reactionaries

in the civil war and the war against the interventionist powers. Further on, the worker-peasant alliance had to be the foundation of socialist revolution and construction.

Closer to home, in Asia, the most successful armed uprising was led by the Vietnam Workers' Party in August 1945 when the Japanese aggressors and their puppets were in a state of rapid collapse. But it would be chopping up history (like considering the 1979 final offensive in Nicaragua in isolation), not to recognize that the Vietnamese revolutionaries had built a resistance movement based mainly in the countryside; and would have to contend bitterly with the returning French colonizers mainly in the countryside before the seizure of the cities in North Vietnam.

The semicolonial and semifeudal conditions of the Philippines (including the majority status of the peasantry on tropical terrain) require the general line of the national democratic revolution; and allow the working class and its revolutionary party to settle the central question of this revolution through protracted people's war. It has been proven during the last 22 years that it is possible to build Red political power in the countryside and develop the revolutionary mass movement in both urban and rural areas even while the reactionary state is still entrenched in the cities.

Persevere in Waging the Protracted People's War

To be able to hope for the best, the Philippine revolutionary forces must persevere in waging a protracted people's war and further accumulate strength over time, especially under current conditions when the United States can still focus on the Philippines and the anti-imperialist and socialist forces are in an extraordinary period of retreat and even disintegration in certain countries.

It is the duty of the Filipino communists to the proletariat and the people of the world to persevere in armed revolution and steadily advance, while the world crisis of capitalism (essentially the crisis of overproduction) is still to be accelerated and worsened as never before by high technology, by the curse of the debt-ridden and depressed client states in the South as well as in the East and by the competition of the capitalist powers themselves.

The Philippine revolutionary forces must accomplish the tasks of the current stage before proceeding to the next stage and must not overreach by word or by deed at anytime because overreaching can strain and exhaust hopes and resources. The tenacity of the revolutionary forces in the national democratic revolution through armed struggle is based on the Filipino people's recognition of the need to fight the relentless and intolerable oppression and exploitation by U.S. and Japanese imperialism and the local exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords. ☒

TASKS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PEASANT MOVEMENT FOR ADVANCING IN THE 1990s

*Prepared on August 1990
by the Executive Committee of the Central Committee
of the Communist Party of the Philippines
for the National Peasant Conference*

The National Situation

In the 1990s, the economic and political crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal system will become more devastating. The crisis threatens to give rise to convulsions that are bound to sap the strength of reactionary rule.

In 1972, the U.S.-Marcos clique sought to strengthen the reactionary ruling system through the imposition of a fascist dictatorial rule. Instead, this signalled the rapid disintegration of the ruling system. The fascist dictatorship, which held sway for 14 years, further weakened and bankrupted the system and, finally, resulted in deeply factionalizing the ruling reactionaries. The revolutionary movement, which the U.S.-Marcos clique sought to crush, instead multiplied its strength many times over.

The Aquino regime also seeks to arrest the political and economic crisis exacerbated by 14 years of martial rule. But, because it seeks to solve the crisis within the framework of the semicolonial and semifeudal system, the deterioration continues. The Aquino regime remains servile to U.S. imperialism and is an unmitigated instrument of big comprador-bourgeois and landlord class rule. Economic policy remains within the framework of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and in the hands of the old WB-IMF anointed clique of technocrats—the changes being simply of certain personalities or families. This clique has essentially retained the policies that have aggravated the raw-material export and finished-product import character of the economy, obstructed genuine land reform and national industrialization, conformed to the wishes of international finance and monopoly capital, nurtured the big compradors and big landlords, and

consigned the workers, peasants and urban petty bourgeoisie to worse deprivation and suffering.

The economy—after perking up briefly and partially as a result of the injection of new foreign loans and assistance, and of huge government spending—rapidly plummeted into deeper crisis. It is wracked by growing trade and balance-of-payments deficits, heavy foreign indebtedness, runaway inflation, disruptions in production and social services, deficiency in food and other prime necessities, grave unemployment and gargantuan budget deficits even as taxes have been increased to unbearable proportions. All these are indications that the economy is disintegrating and becoming increasingly counterproductive.

An important indication of the disintegration of the ruling system is the persistent and violent rifts between the reactionary factions. The leading factions struggle and maneuver against each other in the parliamentary and legal spheres as well as in the armed and illegal spheres. The very armed pillar of the semi-colonial state—the Armed Forces of the Philippines—is deeply factionalized. The threat of a coup d'état remains poised against the Aquino regime. The threat comes not only from openly anti-Aquino military factions but also from the Ramos faction.

The Aquino regime, in its desire to crush the revolutionary movement according to the dictates of U.S. imperialism, has adopted a total war policy that entails the retention of fascists within the military. Militarization in the country today exceeds in scope and magnitude that during the Marcos regime. AFP divisions and brigades continuously carry out large-scale military operations in various parts of the archipelago. As before, these campaigns are marked by forced mass evacuation, food blockade, hamletting, massacres, summary executions, arson, torture, illegal arrests and looting. In urban areas, widespread military zoning raids, checkpoints, summary execution of mass activists, assassination of progressive leaders, dispersal of strikes and demonstrations, illegal arrest and other forms of repression are perpetrated against progressive organizations.

The Aquino regime has stripped itself of all liberal pretensions, openly adopted fascist policies and intensified fascist repression. The Supreme Court decision to uphold the legality of warrantless arrests of suspected subversives and the clamor by top military officers for martial law are portents of the further intensification of fascism.

Despite all these, the unbearable situation is driving a constantly growing number of people to protest and resist. The armed revolution continues to gain broader and deeper mass support and sympathy. In facing counterrevolutionary offensives, the revolutionary forces become tempered and learn to overcome difficulties. Despite casualties suffered, the revolutionary movement has maintained its forces and speedily coped with difficulties to further strengthen itself and sustain its advance. Even high officials of the AFP admit that they cannot "crush" the revolutionary movement within their timetable.

U.S. imperialism has been maneuvering to retain its military bases and arrest the disintegration of the reactionary system it dominates. It has gone full-scale in maneuvering to obtain a treaty allowing the retention of its military bases beyond 1992. At the same time it is pushing, financing and supporting the "total war" of the Aquino regime against the revolutionary movement and the people. As the power that ultimately decides politics among the reactionaries in the Philippines, the U.S. manipulates the leading reactionary political and military factions. It is preparing to install a replacement for Aquino and have her absorb blame for worsening the crisis and incurring the people's ire.

The objective conditions are excellent for advancing the revolution to a higher strategic stage. The revolutionary movement can certainly overcome temporary difficulties by rectifying errors and shortcomings, resolutely advancing the anti-imperialist, antifeudal and antifascist movement, expanding the national united front and comprehensively strengthening the movement throughout the country.

The present situation presents an excellent opportunity for advancing the revolutionary peasant movement. The political, military and economic developments in the entire country have exacerbated the problems in the countryside. The countryside is therefore a main arena of struggle for resolving many major issues that are national in character. In attending to the situation and tasks of the revolutionary peasant movement, we must comprehend and tackle not only particular situations, issues and struggles in the localities but also all these together with, and within the context of, the entire situation, issues and struggles of the people in the entire country.

Situation of the Peasant Masses

The worst aspects of big comprador-landlord rule have emerged. The masses of peasants and other farmworkers comprising the great majority of the entire population are among the worst hit.

In the last two decades after the 1960s—after the exhaustion of public lands that could be opened up for tillage by landless or semi-owner peasants—the land problem has rapidly worsened, feudal and semifeudal exploitation further intensified, and life has become ever more miserable for the peasants. Despite increases in *palay* and other crop yields due to wider use of irrigation, fertilizers, pesticides and improved seeds, and despite the large increase of peasants who engage in nonagricultural work to augment their income, more than two-thirds of families in the countryside have become impoverished compared to a little less than one-half of all the rural families at the end of the 1960s.

Now, by the Department of Agrarian Reform's own admission, there has been an increase in the percentage of landless or semi-owner tenant-peasants. Marcos' fake land reform, which essentially limited land distribution to a small percentage of the landless peasants, barely fulfilled 3 percent of its own target. Among the "beneficiaries," many were squeezed by the rapid price increase of farm inputs and very low prices for farm produce. Thus, the limited land distribution was soon followed by reconcentration of land in the hands of landlords, merchant-usurers and rich peasants.

Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of owner-peasants were dispossessed through outright confiscation, expropriation for infrastructure projects and forced evacuation from areas of AFP military campaigns and operations. Large tracts of prime agricultural lands were grabbed or taken over by Marcos' relatives and cronies, foreign or domestic comprador-owned agrocorporations, and ranking military officers.

Aquino's so-called comprehensive agrarian reform program is another gigantic deception which, in many respects, is even worse than Marcos'. The allocation of three hectares to every heir, apart from that of five hectares to the landowner himself, increases the hectarage exempted from land reform to about three-fourths or more of all private agricultural lands. Lands within haciendas and plantations are expressly exempted by virtue of a very liberal interpretation of land reform implementation, that includes "profit-sharing" and sale of shares of stock to agricultural workers. Furthermore, land reform can be circumvented through the conversion of land to commercial or industrial use, such as the croplands covered by the National Development Corporation-Marubeni agreement.

The limited amount of land subject to redistribution are priced well beyond the means of the peasants, except the few rich and upper middle peasants. And the peasants are formally deprived of any decision in the new system of land

pricing. Land reform implementation covering vast areas of private lands has been deliberately put off to give landlords several more years within which to circumvent the law.

The only thing the regime can boast of is the hocus-pocus attending the transformation of the certificates of land transfer (CLTs) distributed under Marcos' Presidential Decree 27 into the so-called emancipation patents. The planned voluntary option to sell, supposedly intended to speed up land distribution, is merely being taken advantage of by the landlords, bureaucrats and military officers to dispose of unproductive lands at exorbitant prices and loot the funds slated for agrarian reform.

The Aquino regime's assumption to power has, in various ways, benefited landlords, especially those in the sugarcane industry to which Aquino belongs. Many landlords have recovered what they lost, especially those during Marcos' last years, and even increased their economic and political power. They have made use of the privatization program in order to recover lands embargoed due to nonpayment of debts from the government. These lands have been underpriced and the landlords given fresh loans and other accommodations to ease terms of payment. Many other forms of support and incentives have been increased, among them, production support and export incentives for commercial crops. Moreover, the AFP military campaigns have been expanded and intensified to weaken the peasant movement and wrest back its gains in the agrarian revolution.

Feudal and semifeudal exploitation take the form of exorbitant land rent, low wages, usury and price manipulation by merchant-usurers who overprice agricultural supplies and consumption goods and underprice agricultural products. The role of merchant-usurers in the process of feudal and semifeudal exploitation has grown. Their operations form a network for squeezing profit from the peasantry and other producers in the rural areas through control over the supply of loans, farm implements, farm-input and consumption commodities, as well as over the purchase and distribution of the peasant produce.

The Marcos regime's Masagana 99, or supervised program of credits under the IMF-WB "green revolution" scheme, forced the wide use and need for chemical fertilizers and pesticides, new seeds, and farm machine and equipment dumped here by multinational agribusiness corporations. The technological package that came with the new seeds pushed the peasants deeper into debt—into ever-increasing need for fertilizers and pesticides and into the tighter clutches

of the merchant-usurers—but it increased the peasants' importance as a source of profit for the compradors and multinationals.

The ultimate beneficiaries of the increases in rice, corn and other crop yields were not the peasants but the U.S. multinational corporations, the compradors and their adjuncts who reaped enormous profit from the sale and manufacture of agricultural chemicals, seeds, farm machines and equipment as well as the construction of infrastructures to facilitate their profit-extraction operations. Profit extraction went beyond the increases in agricultural production, pushing the great majority of the peasantry to the barest subsistence levels.

When at the start of the 1980s the full impact of the intense financial crisis became felt and the reactionary government's credit program crashed, what followed was the sharp decline in food crop production and the unprecedented deepening of the crisis in the countryside.

Unemployment in the rural areas has become worse than at anytime in the past. The frontier areas, to which previously land-hungry peasants found resort, have long been exhausted. And industry—backward and weak even in times of relative prosperity—can provide employment to only a fraction of the hundreds of thousands of people joining the labor force year after year. Employment abroad has slowed down as a result of the end of the economic boom in the oil-rich countries in the Middle East as well as troubles in that region.

Well beyond 40 percent of the country's labor force are unemployed or underemployed. The majority of these are in the rural areas. Among them are poor and lower middle peasants, agricultural workers, transportation workers, helpers in repair shops, peddlers, artisans and the like who find only part-time or occasional employment or, worse, who are forced to live off their relatives and friends.

As in the urban areas, there is stiff competition for employment in the countryside. This enables old and new type landlords, merchant-usurers and even rich peasants to press down wages and squeeze more profit from poor and lower middle peasants and agricultural workers. The intensification of feudal and semifeudal exploitation is thus bred by the desperation of the broad masses in the countryside.

In plantations and haciendas producing commercial and export crops, the few regular agricultural workers and the numerous nonregular agricultural workers endure subhuman practices and conditions to be able to earn and subsist. They

are made to work long hard hours for the barest-of-subsistence wages. They are not properly nourished, clothed and sheltered. And they are without protection from all sorts of natural and occupational hazards.

The crisis that hit Negros as a result of the sustained drop of sugar prices in the international market exposed the virtual enslavement of the agricultural workers as well as the greed of the landlords. Agricultural workers were left to starve. And even when international aid poured in, it was appropriated mainly by the big compradors and landlords.

The persistent backwardness and semifeudal character of agriculture and the national economy has also brought about ruthless exploitation and exhaustion of the natural resources and widespread environmental destruction. The parasitic foreign and domestic ruling classes wantonly plunder the country's natural and human resources without regard for present or future consequences. Ecological destruction is a direct result of their reliance on monopoly, manipulation, privilege, corruption and extra-economic means for extracting bigger feudal rent, usurious interests on loans and commercial profit—values beyond that of the price of labor.

Peasants and farm workers, too, are pushed by their desperation to augment their less-than-subsistence farm incomes and wages by undertaking activities destructive of the environment. They not only get blamed by the bourgeois media for ecological degradation but they become further victimized by its effects. Aside from increasing the frequency and scope of destruction and dislocation in production, natural calamities (like floods) arising from environmental destruction, pose ever graver danger to the very lives of the masses.

With the overthrow of the Marcos fascist dictatorship and the assumption to power of the Aquino clique, fascist repression and onslaughts on the peasant masses have—contrary to the expectations of many—increased and intensified. AFP offensives have not been limited to military offensives of the reactionaries in general. There are, in addition, distinct landlord counter-offensives against the peasant masses to wrest back the gains of the agrarian revolution. The fascist military, the landlords, the civil government and agencies of the U.S. government all collude in the "total war" scheme against the people to weaken and dismantle the revolutionary peasant movement and the people's army. They collude in undertaking military offensives, forming and arming the so-called Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Units (CAFGUs), launching intelligence and psywar operations—open and covert, armed and unarmed, direct and indirect.

To deprive the armed revolutionary forces of their mass base, the government carries out widespread artillery bombardment, bombings and strafing to force the evacuation of the people from mountainous areas, massacres and summary executions of peasant activists and leaders, arson on homes and crops, torture, illegal arrests and searches, forced concentration of people in town centers and big barrios, looting and confiscation of peasant properties, dismantling of peasant organizations and dispersals of mass actions, intimidation and harassment, and other forms of repression.

However, deprivation, intense exploitation and repression have only inflamed the aspirations of the peasant masses for basic social change. During the time of Marcos, the peasant masses in great numbers became organized and rose to resist the fascist dictatorship. They continue to fight and advance under the present reactionary rule of the Aquino puppet regime. The experience accumulated by the revolutionary peasant movement over the last two decades of continuous and all-sided struggles and the concomitant raising of the level of the peasants' political consciousness are without precedent in our history.

The Revolutionary Peasant Movement

The revival and advance of the revolutionary peasant movement is a high point in the overall renewed strengthening and advance of the people's democratic revolution under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines. The peasant movement has expanded and gained strength with the advance of the agrarian revolution, the armed struggle, the urban mass movement, and the national united front. Hundreds upon hundreds of peasant leaders and activists, NPA officers and fighters and Party cadres have sacrificed their lives to bring the revolutionary movement to its present level of strength and stature.

The foundation for the nationwide advance of the revolutionary peasant movement was laid in 1969 before the imposition of martial rule and up to the mid-1970s. Initial armed propaganda units (APUs) were formed in Central and Northern Luzon to conduct social investigation and set up mass organizations as well as initial formations of the organs of political power. The APUs deployed to the different regions were formed from a combination of trained peasant cadres and cadres and activists developed in the urban mass movement. With the imposition of martial rule the forces assigned to do mass work and start guerrilla warfare in the countryside were joined by a new wave of cadres and activists from the cities.

For the revolution to strike deep roots among the peasant masses, the call for agrarian revolution was propagated within the context of the people's democratic revolution. In 1971 the Central Committee formulated the "Revolutionary Guide for Land Reform" to further push the implementation of the agrarian revolution. Despite lack of experience, the revolutionary forces succeeded in clandestinely carrying out land rent reduction, setting up producers' and consumers' cooperatives, fighting exploitative practices of labor contractors (*monteros*), and promoted cooperation (*bayanihan*) in farm work, aside from suppressing criminal and other bad elements and attending to the resolution of problems in the barrios. The lands of a number of despotic landlords were confiscated and distributed to the masses or placed under the management of mass organizations.

The outstanding problems that the APUs had to confront included: lack of experience, finding the correct balance between consolidation and expansion work, danger of exposure to the enemy resulting in haphazard organizing, the tendency to excessively rely on weapons instead of on mass organizations and mass actions in the launching of antifeudal struggles, and "left" and right tendencies in dealings with well-to-do peasant and other allies or potential allies. Except for the building of the *Pagkakaisa ng mga Magbubukid ng Pilipinas* (PMP) which was bloodily suppressed and a few occasions in the early years in Tarlac and Isabela, open forms of propaganda and other activities for pushing the mass movement and resisting AFP-imposed repression and forced evacuations were not used. Setbacks were suffered because of the premature launching or intensification of military actions without due regard for enemy retaliation. The confiscation of land was prematurely carried out in Tarlac in 1972 and in Sorsogon in 1974 and resulted in a united landlord suppression of the peasant movement by military means.

In the mid-1970s, the Central Committee summed up the experiences of the early part of the formation of guerrilla fronts and the mass base in the countryside. The lessons and clarifications are discussed in "Our Urgent Tasks." This document stressed grasping the antifeudal struggle as the key to advancing the rural mass movement, implementing the minimum program of the agrarian revolution and invigorating various types of mass campaigns more consciously. In organizing work, the document called attention to the setting up of mass organizations, systematic training and development of mass leaders and activists, clandestine methods of work, and coordinated development within particular areas. At the same time, tasks were further clarified for the propagation of guerrilla warfare in the early substage of the strategic defensive.

The revolutionary peasant movement advanced more steadily because tasks were clarified according to the movement's actual capacity and level of development. Towards the end of the 1970s, there was a marked expansion and consolidation of the mass base and guerrilla fronts in strategic parts of the archipelago. Organizing groups and committees of the various mass organizations multiplied and campaigns for the clandestine land rent reduction and other objectives of the minimum program of the agrarian revolution advanced and became widespread. Guerrilla units of the people's army gained more room for maneuver and tactical offensives in the various regions gradually accelerated.

Another important advance was the closer linkage and cooperation between the peasant movement and the urban mass movement. Urban-based organizations dispatched legal teams of cadres and activists to initiate mass work and thereby prepare the setting up of guerrilla zones in selected parts of the countryside. In some areas, urban-based legal forces started organizing open peasant organizations. Rural-based forces became more daring and creative in launching open mobilizations of peasants against fascist abuses and landgrabbing, as well as on other outstanding issues involving the peasants in the localities. Open antifascist struggles of the peasant masses rapidly spread to various parts of the country. In many regions, open peasant struggles provided the basis for invigorating the open progressive movement and struggles in principal towns and cities. Open peasant organizations and alliances were formed in the various regions.

The orientation of the revolutionary peasant movement was further firmed up on the basis of further clarifications made by different parts of the Party organization, like Central Luzon, Mindanao and Negros, on the nature of the semifeudal system prevailing in the country and also on the basis of studies made of documents issued by Jose Maria Sison on this subject.

The first half of the 1980s was a period of rapid advance for the revolutionary peasant movement and rapid expansion of guerrilla warfare, along with the strengthening of the protest and mass movements in the cities. The campaigns for clandestine land rent reduction* and for increased wages were waged in contiguous barrios. In some areas, campaigns for open land rent reduction** were initiated. Legal peasant alliances and organizations proliferated and spearheaded

* *Clandestine land rent reduction entails harvesting of a part of the crop for the benefit of the tenants and without the knowledge of the landlord.*

** *Open land rent reduction entails negotiation and agreement between the landlord and the peasant association.*

open antifeudal and bulk of multisectoral alliances at various levels. Coordinated peasant mass struggles eventually reached the level of extensive open political struggles and people's strikes (*welgang bayan*) encompassing a few regions, entire regions and provinces. These played a big role in overthrowing the U.S.-Marcos fascist dictatorship.

Fullfledged mass organizations were formed in the barrios, as were clandestine peasant organizations on the municipal level, organs of political power and committees of the National Democratic Front as well as branches and sections of the Party. The mass movement and the guerrilla warfare were effectively combined in the mountainous interior, in the plains, in areas adjoining centers of population, and along principal transport routes. The particularities of the various localities were more easily comprehended, as were those of particular crop lines. Depth and stability were provided by consolidated barrios and illegal mass organizations. At the same time sufficient scope of influence and room for maneuver were provided by the expanse of deployment in the plains, by the effective use of open activities in cities and town centers and by the open peasant organizations and alliances.

The rapid expansion during the first half of the 1980s constituted a big advance. However, in many places, follow-up or corollary work necessary for consolidation was not sufficiently attended to. Consolidation could not keep pace with the rapid expansion of the mass organizations in the barrios. Education and propaganda work among the masses were neither sustained nor systematic. In many areas for instance, antifeudal campaigns were not only sporadic but also incomplete, neglecting organizational consolidation and improvement of production. In many places, there was a conspicuous decline in the quality of leadership, cadres and mass activists assigned to work in the localities as a result of gross inadequacies in the training and development of cadres and mass activists. Thus, the development of leadership and coordinative structures at the town, district and provincial levels was extremely slow.

The antifascist character of the coordinated and extensive peasant mass campaigns predominated during this period. While in itself, this constituted a big advance, the agrarian revolution could have been further advanced and strengthened by coordinated antifeudal mass campaigns, especially those pertaining to concrete and particular but broadly based issues. Of these, there were a few experiences, such as the campaign against the monopoly in the coconut industry in Southern Luzon, the campaign regarding fertilizers and pesticides in Central Luzon, and the campaign against Cellophil and Chico Dam in Northern Luzon.

Only a few of these were pursued to the extent that we could enlist the active support and participation of a big number of people and achieve significant gains. Most were not sustained for various reasons; frequently, unsustained attention, failure to find the correct forms of organization and struggle, inadequate efforts at mobilizing the masses, or shortcomings in carrying out extensive propaganda. It is a glaring fact that no widespread campaign was undertaken against merchant-usurers even as the masses were widely and intensely complaining against them.

Under the Aquino puppet regime, the peasant movement has been among those that led in calling for the continuation of the people's democratic revolution and in exposing the pretensions of this regime as well as its failure to solve the basic social problems. In the guerrilla zones, the propagation of the minimum program of the agrarian revolution has continued. So has the selective confiscation and distribution of land. In the open arena, the peasant movement has joined the parliamentary struggle to uphold land reform while carrying out the occupation of open uncultivated or government-owned lands in different parts of the country. Legal and illegal antifeudal campaigns have expanded and intensified because of the continuous deterioration of conditions in the countryside.

One major issue is the sustained expansion and strengthening of the peasant movement in the face of massive and prolonged military campaigns by the U.S.-Aquino regime. The AFP could further intensify its "counterinsurgency" campaigns and operations through unbridled military spending, increased U.S. military assistance and sizeable increases in the AFP's troop strength. The immediate priority of the AFP operations is to "weaken and crush" the mass movement and mass base of the revolution.

In times of intense enemy onslaughts, it is natural that some areas of the mass movement and guerrilla fronts are temporarily abandoned. These are usually unconsolidated areas or on terrain that can easily be accessed and controlled by the enemy. However, a sizeable expanse of guerrilla zones have been abandoned and many of these have not been recovered for a long time now as a result of errors and shortcomings by the Party and the movement, aside from the extraordinary intensity of the enemy onslaught. In areas left abandoned for a long time, especially if these are not well consolidated, the landlords have grabbed back the gains of the peasant movement. When our expansion in other areas does not compensate for losses of extensive portions of our guerrilla fronts, serious problems arise in the flow of communications and supplies as well as in the maneuverability of the guerrilla units and other full-time forces.

Most of our internal shortcomings and weaknesses have been pinpointed as early as the mid-1980s but these have not been firmly grasped and not enough attention and effort have been given to rectification. These have become further complicated by the enemy's onslaughts. In some places, there have been political and military errors causing setbacks and confusion in the ranks of cadres and activists, loss of enthusiasm or, worse, outrage on the part of the masses. The gravest of such errors were the excesses in the anti-infiltration campaigns and the military actions that caused big harm on the masses or grossly damaged the name of the people's army. There have also been cases of setbacks resulting from premature intensification and heightening of antifeudal struggles at levels beyond the capability of the mass movement and the entire movement in particular areas.

In general, the peasant movement has remained extensive and strong despite setbacks and hardships. The revolutionary movement effectively encompasses one-fourth of the total number of barrios in the country. In the last two decades, thousands of cadres and activists have been developed and tempered in the peasant movement. What only needs to be done is to strengthen the leadership and guidance being provided them, and to produce and train many more to help them shoulder their multifarious tasks. The peasant movement has accumulated rich experiences in various forms and fronts of the struggle, in various types of areas and in various crop lines, and in campaigns from the barrio to the national levels. If shortcomings, weaknesses and errors are thoroughly rectified, the revolutionary mass movement can rapidly surpass its previous scope and strength, especially in the present situation where the socioeconomic and political crisis of the ruling system is very intense.

Tasks for Advancing in the 1990s

Raise the level of the peasant revolutionary movement and struggle! Give definite form to the revolutionary peasant movement at provincial, regional and interregional levels. And link it firmly to the national struggle. This is the general task for advancing the revolutionary peasant movement in the 1990s.

At this time of rapid disintegration of the reactionary ruling system, we must resolutely advance and intensify the antifeudal struggle linked to the antifascist and anti-imperialist struggles. We must combat and frustrate the U.S.-Aquino regime's "total war" policy, comprehensively strengthen the revolutionary peasant movement, and advance the people's war to the next higher level and onward to total victory.

On the basis of the strength accumulated over the last two decades and of the position achieved by the peasant movement in the localities and in the whole country, we need further to expand severalfold and deepen the rural mass movement, extensively and systematically implement the minimum program of the agrarian revolution and at the same time intensify the campaigns aimed at the principal pillars of feudal and semifeudal rule in the provinces and regions, and expand and strengthen the people's democratic power.

There must be a further deepening of the mass base in the countryside through the vigorous implementation of the minimum program of the agrarian revolution and the formation and consolidation of the basic mass organizations and of the organs of political power in the barrios and municipalities. Corollarily, there must be an improvement in the production and incomes of the masses, the strengthening of their initiatives at improving their livelihood and solving their day-to-day problems, developing their ability to defend themselves and raising their political consciousness and their cultural levels. We must establish and strengthen democratic power and people's control over continuously expanding parts of the countryside, from mountainous areas to the plains, and vigorously prepare the conditions for the completion of the agrarian revolution.

At the same time, the widest possible scope of leadership and influence of the revolutionary peasant movement must be achieved by raising the level of coordinated antifeudal campaigns and struggles, and by advancing extensive political campaigns of an antifascist and anti-imperialist character. We must consciously invigorate the antifeudal campaigns and struggles at the provincial, regional and interregional levels and target the principal pillars of feudal and semifeudal exploitation and power. At such level of the struggle, there has to be effective and appropriate combination of illegal and legal, armed and unarmed strength and struggles of the peasant masses. There has to be tenacity in combat, the broadest mobilizable force and source of support—not only by direct but also by indirect means—and, the space sufficient for legal maneuver.

We must continually ensure the maximum broadness of the areas reached directly by mass work and by the mass organizations as well as the amplest space for the maneuver by units of the people's army. We must give particular attention to expansion in the plains and along principal transportation lines, especially because these are the object of the enemy's "gradual constriction" operations. The revolutionary mass movement must effectively encompass almost entire provinces and huge chunks of entire regions.

The development of a truly extensive and deepgoing mass base in the countryside is decisive for pushing and advancing people's war towards the maturation of the strategic defensive. This is the most important requisite for advancing extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare, developing the components of regular mobile warfare, and preparing the political, cultural, logistical requisites and reserves for the higher strategic stages and for total victory. In developing the mass movement in the countryside, which is the main mass movement in the people's democratic revolution, we form the biggest force for the all-round advance of the anti-imperialist, antifeudal and antifascist struggle and for people's uprisings in times when the ruling system is wracked by convulsions.

The revolutionary peasant movement faces major tasks and major battles in the 1990s. There is sufficient basis for it to achieve greater victories and make bigger contributions to the general advance of the people's democratic revolution. This will not be easy. This entails hard and resolute struggle, and sufficient attention to the development of various requisites. This also entails the rectification of weaknesses and errors and the solution of problems that have long been a drag on the rapid advance of the revolutionary peasant movement.

Particular Tasks for Advancing the Revolutionary Peasant Movement

1. Expands from the interior towards the concentrations of population and principal centers of feudal and semifeudal exploitation.

The present number of barrios and the terrain covered by the peasant movement provide more than enough room for flexibility and maneuver by units of the people's army. But in the last few years, there has been a considerable reduction in the number of these barrios in the plains and other low-lying areas. Today, almost 80 percent of the total number of barrios under revolutionary control or influence are in mountainous areas.

In the face of enemy sweeps and onslaughts these last few years, the mass movement in the barrios in mountainous areas could fare better, while a large number of barrios in the plains and along principal transportation routes had to be abandoned. Also, the majority of expansion and recovery of areas have been achieved in mountainous parts.

Although this is natural, internal weaknesses have had a role to play. Setbacks resulting from shortcomings in the training and development of cadres and activists deployed in mass work is most frequently or most intensely felt in the

plains. There are also cases of shortcomings such as the neglect of expansion and other work in the plains and areas beyond guerrilla fronts because leading cadres and the bulk of the forces preoccupy themselves with setting up the government machinery, implementing land reform, and consolidating the guerrilla bases at levels beyond what is generally required by the development of the guerrilla fronts. In many regions there is relatively a lag in grasping the tasks and methods of the revolutionary movement in the plains.

We must give particular attention to expansion and recovery in the plains and lowlands. Although there is sufficient room for units of the people's army to maneuver, the abandonment or excessive contraction of our areas in the plains and lowlands in some regions has also resulted in a significant diminution of the mass base, a weakening of the connections with population centers and of communications links, a narrowing of the room for political maneuver, and difficulties in the flow of communications and supplies between the guerrilla fronts and countryside and urban areas.

Effective control over plains, coasts and areas along highways—apart from the mountainous and forested areas—would increase the capacity of the mass movement for political maneuvers and, therefore, frustrate the objective of the U.S.-Aquino regime's "gradual constriction" scheme, which is to drive out the revolutionary forces from concentrations of population and into relatively unpopulated areas in order to force them into a battle in a purely military situation.

Such control also would serve to prepare the further advance of the antifeudal, antifascist and anti-imperialist struggle. The revolutionary peasant movement must reach out and link itself to the biggest number of the masses in the rural areas. And it must strengthen its position within the areas of the major pillars of feudal and semifeudal rule. The plains are essential for extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare. These are also necessary for preparing the requisites for advancing to regular mobile warfare.

Expanding towards well-populated areas of the countryside does not diminish the value of interior and forested areas as a rear base from which the revolutionary peasant movement advances. We must continually work to strengthen democratic political power, the mass movement and the armed struggle in interior and forested areas. However, we must expand to the plains in order to achieve the maximum flexibility and maneuverability offered by operating in different terrains and, thereby, comprehensively strengthen the revolutionary forces.

Expanding towards the plains will not be easy, considering the alertness of AFP regular and paramilitary forces as well as the more numerous and stronger presence of the class enemy there. But feudal and semifeudal exploitation is intense and the people are impoverished in these areas. The people's aspiration to resolve their problems cannot be quelled by the military, the reactionary government, the landlords, the big merchant-usurers and the big agrocorporations.

Expanding towards the plains, or recovering areas there, entails a combination of various methods of organizing—legal, semilegal and illegal. It entails flexibility in our methods: armed expansion teams or armed propaganda units can be used, so can urban-based legal organizations; there are instances when Party cadres in agencies of the reactionary government or offices of influential institutions can also be used. There is ample sphere for legal maneuver to be able to rapidly reach, organize and arouse the masses while ensuring the security of our forces and our work. It is best if allies of the peasant movement can provide a cover of support.

In expanding, two points can be made to converge—that from adjacent guerrilla fronts and that from distant guerrilla fronts but part of a preselected priority area. Throughout the expanse of the plains, there could be red, pink or white zones with varying levels of consolidation and varying levels and forms of people's control and initiative, with their own appropriate combination of open and clandestine, armed and unarmed organizations and activities.

While coordinately developing the mass movement, guerrilla warfare and the elements of regular mobile warfare, it is possible in different places and on different occasions to have varying balances of armed and unarmed, legal and illegal work and struggles. In a mountainous and forested terrain serving as the base and rear of relatively large formations or main guerrilla units of the people's army, military work and military offensives can go relatively fullscale and, also on this basis, building of organs of political power and systematization and development of production and livelihood of the masses under revolutionary rule. On the whole, the military situation and military work would predominate even as various mass campaigns are comprehensively developed and linkages and opportunities to join and use open and legal mass actions are maintained.

In the populous plains and lowlands, we will further develop extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare and mass movement, although from time to time, the principal units of the people's army can also launch operations there. An overall situation of intense guerrilla warfare will prevail, but for a relatively long period, there will be a complex interlapping of various forces, and there will be

intersection of various areas of operation and influence and shifting borders and extent of zones of control. We need to suit to such a situation the forms, methods and processes for sustaining democratic political power and the revolutionary mass movement while continuously strengthening the mass base and consolidating the widest area possible. Armed efforts and struggles in these areas will have to be developed on the basis and closely in the service of the tasks of expanding and deepening the mass base.

2. *Advance comprehensive agrarian struggles over more extensive areas.*

Millions of peasants already have benefited from antifeudal struggles and this is a major reason for the resolute mass support for the revolutionary movement despite fascist terrorism by the AFP and other reactionaries. But greater efforts are still needed to better sustain and raise the general level of peasant struggles.

While struggles for the minimum program of the agrarian revolution are extensive and have not ceased, it is notable that in many barrios these are not sustained and the consequent improvement of production, political and organizational consolidation, and improvement of cultural work are not undertaken. The principal reason for this is not enemy operations although it is natural for problems to arise in areas where the enemy concentrates its forces. A big part of the problem is lack of attention and planning, lack of efforts at organizing the masses, and shortcomings in training for cadres and activists in such work.

In general, the antifeudal campaigns now being undertaken are at the level of the barrio. Ordinarily, simultaneous campaigns involving contiguous barrios are undertaken, although the targets and methods of struggle are fixed on the barrio level. There is coordination beyond the barrio level but this pertains more to setting the general levels of reforms to be fought for and the timing for starting the struggle. Only in a few areas have there been antifeudal campaigns and struggles directly coordinated and advanced at a level higher than that of the barrio. And in even fewer areas have such campaigns and struggles been sustained.

Coordinated antifeudal campaigns beyond the barrio level are needed in order to start and advance important struggles aimed at solving the problems most felt and protested by the masses in many places, especially in the plains. Foremost among these is exploitation by merchant-usurers. Another is exploitation and related problems of the masses in plantations, haciendas and commercial crop lines. Added to these are the policies and programs of the reactionary government that should be resisted and combatted, and the masses' need for relief from the

intense crisis in the countryside, dislocations in production, calamities, and AFP depredations.

These struggles are also needed in order to sustain campaigns on the barrio level such as the reduction of the land rent, the raising of agricultural workers' wages and improvement of production. The reduction of the land rent and the raising of farm workers' wages are linked to the struggle for higher prices of farm products, lower prices of farm inputs and needs, sufficient credit at reasonable interest rates, government subsidy, and swift recovery in production in times of major dislocations.

There is the long-felt need to give the peasant movement a more robust form and presence in the localities, between barriowide struggles and general calls and protest actions on the national level. Social investigations and class analyses of territories, regions and provinces have been completed and used as bases for the formulation of concrete programs for peasant struggles in the localities. We have established a broad and strong mass movement. It is now possible and necessary to strengthen local peasant campaigns, make them more sustained, and with more definite direction and greater political impact, and more focus on the principal pillars of feudal and semifeudal rule.

On the whole, the peasant movement remains at the level of implementing the minimum program of the agrarian revolution. Only in select places and in select cases is it possible and judicious to implement the maximum program of land confiscation and distribution as determined by the overall strength attained by the revolutionary movement in the area. Generally, many types and forms of peasant struggles in varying scopes can be developed to create the conditions for the improvement of production and for the vigorous and comprehensive growth of the revolutionary mass movement and struggles in the countryside.

While developing and intensifying antifeudal struggles, we must be on guard against haphazard and premature advances, premature intensification of battles, and premature raising of the levels of demands. We must firmly grasp the class line of the antifeudal united front and put it within the context of the national united front.

3. Set up militant and dynamic revolutionary peasant organizations at town, district and provincial levels.

A dynamic and militant revolutionary peasant organization is the concentration of the strength of the peasant masses. It is also a vehicle for launching their various campaigns and struggles in a sustained manner.

The Pambansang Katipunan ng Magbubukid (PKM—National Union of Peasants) is the national democratic organization of the peasant masses. It also federates national democratic organizations of fishermen and agricultural workers. At present, PKM chapters exist at the barrio level, and a considerable number at the town level.

The "Guide for Solid Organizing" has enabled us to establish peasant mass organizations with a big base of membership and a core of reliable mass activists and leaders. We continue to recognize the correctness and appropriateness of this guide basically. What we must solve are shortcomings and problems arising from the implementation of this guide by cadres whose level of training in mass work is inadequate. Some of these are: deviations from the policy on classes in setting up organizations, excessive reliance on the cadre responsible for guidance, inability to develop the initiative of the mass organization, and delaying the formation of fullfledged mass organizations.

In many places, there is a noticeable tendency to maintain small clandestine groups or cells with no clear organizational identity for a long time. Usually the peasants are aware only of their membership in some organizing group (OG) or organizing committee (OC) and not the PKM. The broader structure and program of the PKM do not reach them. The peasant masses do not sense the motion and dynamism of the entire organization. Frequently, an overriding motive for this organizing style is security because of fascist onslaughts of the AFP on the revolutionary masses. Nonetheless, it is important to build the peasant association and to develop among the peasants masses the consciousness of being strong through unity in an organization.

Organizational life can be strengthened without compromising security in the face of ruthless enemy onslaughts. One way is to use open and legal cover for clandestine or illegal activities. Another is to combine activities and guidance through secret groups and secret meetings with conferences attended by the entire membership of the organization or by representatives of its parts.

The PKM's constitution and program and its newspaper must be propagated, and people should be encouraged to listen to Radio Sierra Madre wherever it exists. Barrio chapters and town councils must also formulate and implement concrete political, organizational and educational programs. Peasant mass mobilizations to which we are accustomed such as those for the basing of the New People's Army, for intelligence work, for contributions to support full-time cadres and fighters, and for periodic education sessions should be turned over to the these chapters and councils and incorporated into their programs. For the

peasant masses to have a firm grasp of this will be the basis for a dynamic relationship and cooperation among the members and leaders of the peasant organization as well as for sustained activities.

In times of intense enemy onslaughts, there can be appropriate adjustments in the structure and processes of the organization to insure that links with the members and activities are maintained while security is insured. The role and activities of small groups given a legal cover, such as, that of a production association or an organization with the reactionary government's blessings can be given more importance.

Other mass organizations such as those of women, the youth, cultural activists and others need to be developed along with the PKM. Their initiative and creativity in developing their organizations and activities should be encouraged.

The value of legal peasant movement and organizations is no longer under debate. Practice has proven that the legal peasant movement and struggles are essential and integral to the entire revolutionary peasant movement. The role of the legal peasant organizations will continue to gain importance in the expansion and consolidation of the revolutionary peasant movement and in the advancement of mass campaigns and struggles.

Boldly seize legal opportunities for peasant organizing and struggles! A national legal center of the peasant movement was established as early as the second half of the 1970s, and legal peasant organizations could be set up more extensively, but there were apprehensions that the newly established underground strength of the peasant movement would be drawn excessively towards legal activities and that these might be open targets for the enemy. After the realization that legal organizations could be established came the experience of liquidating or "freezing" previously vigorous legal mass organizations in the localities encompassed by the guerrilla fronts. Generally, legal mass organizations in the countryside can be encouraged to play a much bigger role and in a more creative way.

But we must also guard against the opposite and equally wrong tendency. There are experiences, for instance, of setting aside clandestine organizations in favor of working within existing legal organization and the idea of placing our rural mass base in only one basket, so to speak, to show the public its entire strength. Legal mass organizations must learn to engage in activities in a manner appropriate to their character, especially in the midst of intense armed struggles of the peasant masses. The closer coordination between legal and illegal forces

and struggles bring about certain difficulties for the legal organizations and struggles, but it also creates certain advantages. Generally, the correct policy is not to show the entirety of the mass base to legal mass organizations while encouraging their full participation in legal mass struggles and allowing the legal mass organizations sufficient opportunities to strengthen themselves and encourage their initiative in launching struggles.

4. Undertake larger and more sustained mobilizations of the peasant masses for the armed struggle.

The revolutionary peasant movement and the armed struggle have been closely interlinked from the very start. Their growth and development have been mutually interrelated. We advance the revolutionary peasant movement in order to arouse and mobilize the masses in the countryside for the revolutionary war. On the other hand, the armed struggle serves to ensure the realization of land reform as the main content of the democratic revolution and consolidate the revolutionary strength and political power of the peasant masses.

At the final stage of the strategic defensive, the spearhead for further development of the entire struggle in the countryside will be the combination of extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare and of sweeping and massive struggles by the masses. The components of regular mobile warfare, which are being developed, will assume an important role as we extend and strengthen the requisites for all-out advance to the next stage. In times when the ruling system is wracked by convulsions, there may be a convergence of the factors leading towards people's uprisings.

It is the task of the revolutionary peasant movement to sustain the armed struggle and ensure its broad and powerful political support. The peasant masses must be aroused and mobilized to support and participate in the armed struggle. It is the responsibility of the peasant movement to develop cadres and fighters for the people's army, attend to the material and logistical requirements of the armed struggle, participate in intelligence work, join the people's militia, support armed actions of the NPA and help care for the families of NPA fighters. Cadres of the people's army must help the mass organizations in undertaking military training, and setting up self-defense units.

If militance and combative spirit of the masses are maintained, they can actively help frustrate AFP military campaigns and operations. Mass campaigns and actions against militarization and the fascist crimes of the AFP serve not only to defend the interests of the masses but also to thwart or shorten the enemy's

military campaigns and operations. Members of the revolutionary mass organizations must be rallied also to help in propaganda and other political work among the AFP soldiers and elements of the CAFGUs.

5. Further mobilize the peasant masses in the antifascist and anti-imperialist struggles.

Developing the peasant movement comprehensively and ensure the correctness of its political orientation and tactics entails forging the closest links between the antifeudal struggle and the antifascist and anti-imperialist struggles. The peasant masses must be extensively mobilized in advancing the antifascist and anti-imperialist struggles.

It is the peasant masses who are the hardest hit by the militarization and the fascist terrorism under the U.S.-instigated counterrevolutionary "total war" policy of the U.S.-Aquino regime. They are, therefore, potentially the most interested and active in broadening and intensifying antifascist protests and struggles. Mass campaigns must be conducted against fascist abuse, militarization and total war as well as against the growing trend toward total restoration of fascist and military rule.

The anti-imperialist struggle has intensified with the approaching expiration of the military bases agreement, the socioeconomic crisis worsened by foreign debt service and other IMF-WB impositions, the continuing U.S. instigation and maintenance of the counterrevolutionary "total war" policy and the widening U.S. intervention in pursuit of controlling and profiting from the sharp divisions among the local reactionaries. The anti-imperialist struggle has gained more importance in the political and economic struggles of the peasant masses. We must exert all efforts to disseminate anti-imperialist propaganda among them; we must rally them to multisectoral campaigns against the military bases, IMF-WB impositions and U.S. meddling and we must demonstrate to them the relation and responsibility of the U.S. imperialists in feudal and semifeudal exploitation and fascist terrorism.

The scope of legal peasant mass struggles has widened with the advance of the antifascist and anti-imperialist struggles. The peasant masses have been joining anti-imperialist, antifeudal and antifascist multisectoral alliances and campaigns.

The peasant movement also take advantage of opportunities in parliamentary struggles to create the political space for defending and strengthening itself and its struggles.

6. *Establish and consolidate organs of political power on an expanding scale and develop the united front.*

The peasant movement implements the policy of the antifeudal united front in the countryside as well as that of the national united front. This is the policy of forming the broadest unity of the revolutionary classes and forces, and of using the splits among the reactionary classes and forces to isolate and target the biggest and most diehard among the enemy and then destroy them one by one.

In the antifeudal struggle, the peasant movement unites and relies mainly on the poor and lower middle peasants and farm workers, wins over the middle and upper middle peasants and neutralizes the rich peasants to fight and defeat the power of the landlord class. The peasant movement makes distinctions between the landlords who are enlightened (those who agree to land reform and follow rules of the people's government) and those who are not in order to isolate and deal the hardest blows on the ones that are big, despotic and in power.

The peasant movement consciously unites with nonpeasant classes and forces that are democratic and progressive. At the core and leadership of the movement are proletarian revolutionary cadres. By linking the antifeudal struggle to the antifascist and anti-imperialist struggles, the peasant movement and struggle links itself to the movement and struggles of the working class, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie. The cooperation between the peasants and their allied classes and forces is strengthened. Thus, the advance of the antifeudal struggle is insured in line with principles and contributes to the broadening of the national united front.

While we strengthen the revolutionary mass organizations and the organizations of the Party and of the people's army, we build the organs of political power, committees of the National Democratic Front, and clandestine groups of rich peasants, nonpeasant allies and enlightened landlords. Thus, we ensure and encourage the broadest participation and initiative of the democratic forces in advancing the struggle, uphold revolutionary power, organize production and improve livelihood in the zones of revolutionary power and control.

We must continue to expand and develop the organs of democratic political power in the guerrilla bases. We must improve the guidelines on the setting up of organs of political power by further clarifying the prerequisites and the steps in the development of their structures and processes, their powers and tasks, and their relations with other organizations. On the other hand, we must be on guard

against the tendency to set targets beyond our capability, general situation and level of development as well as against premature planning or desire to create and run separate higher structures. While developing the campaigns and projects of the organs of political power for the improvement of production, health, literacy and culture, we must avoid overambitious projects or those beyond our present capacity to manage.

NDF committees and cells can play an important role in linking the movement to the middle forces in the barrios and towns and in enlisting the widest support of the middle forces for the armed struggle and the struggles of the basic masses. While ensuring the predominance of the voice of the poor peasants and farm workers, the peasant associations recruit middle peasants as members.

Advancing antifeudal campaigns to a higher level can help to properly situate and to avoid excessively intensifying struggles with the middle and rich peasants in the raising of wages and lowering of interest rates on loans in the barrios. While combatting exploitation by merchant-usurers and changing existing relations, it is necessary also to combat "left" tendencies that result in the drying up of credit, the closure of trade and commercial channels, damage to production, and the excessive intensification of struggles with small and medium businessmen.

Dealing properly with professionals, small and middle businessmen, public and private employees in towns and cities adjoining the guerrilla fronts and actively organizing and mobilizing them are essential to the development of antifeudal struggles on the barrio, district, provincial and regional levels. The height of reformist illusions and the worship of Aquino among the middle forces in town centers is past. The exposure of Aquino's true reactionary character and the rapid worsening of the crisis are creating excellent conditions for strengthening our political work among the middle forces and the development of varying levels and scope of cooperation with them.

Aside from organizing the middle forces' own democratic and progressive struggles, multisectoral alliances and campaigns are needed in order to reach out and draw them to us. Propaganda work directed to them must be strengthened. We must continuously clarify to them the revolutionary movement's program and policies and answer whatever questions they have regarding these. The revolutionary movement's initiatives to organize the middle forces and enliven dialogues with them assume greater importance as the war intensifies and as the reactionaries and reformists scheme to confuse the middle forces, draw them away from, and even make them fight, the revolutionary movement.

Opportunities for taking advantage of the splits among the reactionaries on the national level and in the localities are rife. Since the struggle against the Marcos fascist dictatorship, the lines of divisions and splits, as well as the methods and arenas of battle, among the reactionaries especially in the localities have multiplied. Opportunities are plenty for taking advantage of splits among them, for neutralizing some so as to concentrate blows on a few, and for immediately or indirectly obtaining significant space or gain for defensive or offensive objectives of the revolutionary movement. The peasant movement must be open, observant and prompt in seizing such opportunities, without letting down guard in dealing with the reactionaries.

7. Raise the political consciousness of the peasant masses and strengthen education and propaganda work among them.

Political education and propaganda work among the peasant masses are an important requisite for building up the strength of the peasant masses and preparing them for major struggles.

Education work among the peasant masses in a large part of our mass base has not been sustained. Studies have not gone beyond short courses. Discussions in these courses are lacking in elaborations and substantiations drawn from the concrete experience of the peasant masses. There is a tendency to narrow down these courses to peasant concerns and skip discussion of the national situation and the program for national democracy. Much less lacking are studies on the elements of socialism, which are already being developed at the national-democratic stage of the struggle and the socialist perspective of the peasant masses and of the national democratic revolution.

Meanwhile, the masses are affected by erroneous analyses of the situation and by erroneous ideas about the revolutionary struggle that have spread since the Aquino clique assumed power because of some errors and shortcomings on our part and also because of aggressive propaganda by the reactionaries and the reformists.

We must ensure that the national democratic program and the agrarian revolution are firmly understood and supported by the peasant masses. Political education can be made more effective, mass-oriented and faster by maximizing the use of legal facilities and of various forms and methods of study. We must widen the use of reading materials, radio programs, mobile seminars, slide and video shows, debates and others. We must take advantage of the abundance of

materials that can be used for studies and of the institutions and organizations that can satisfy this need.

Clandestinity need not be an obstacle to legal propaganda and education among PKM leaders and members nor to keeping them informed about current affairs and issues involving the peasant movement and the entire country. The situation where only those forces operating legally are effectively reached by information on events and issues involving the peasants and the nation must be remedied.

The machinery for propaganda and cultural work in the countryside must be set up and strengthened. It is an extension of educational work and a powerful instrument for raising the political consciousness and sustaining the militance of the peasant masses. The machinery for widespread, sustained and easily comprehensible propaganda among the masses must be set up. The machinery for illegal radio broadcasts and publications must be set up at the same time that openings in the legal mass media are used.

A strong machinery for propaganda work is essential to comprehensive and firm leadership over the masses.

8. Develop a strong and deeply rooted machinery for advancing the revolutionary peasant movement.

At present, several thousands of Party cadres and advanced mass activists, and several tens of thousands of peasant activists serve as the backbone of the revolutionary peasant movement. For the peasant movement to firmly advance to a higher level and contribute tens of thousands more of personnel to the people's army and other lines of revolutionary work, we need to produce, train and develop several tens of thousands more cadres and several hundreds of thousands more peasant activists, and to mobilize a big number of activists and cadres in the urban areas for deployment to the countryside.

The present cadre force assigned to the peasant movement constitutes a sufficiently strong base for expanding and strengthening the mass movement. The cadres in the peasant movement are generally good and have been tempered in struggle. Nevertheless, there is a need to raise their theoretical level, political consciousness and leadership capabilities. Moreover, there is a need to produce and train additional cadres from the localities. Cadres from the localities are important for strengthening our links with the masses and for increasing our flexibility in confronting intense fascist onslaughts by the enemy. The assignment of large numbers of activists and cadres from the intelligentsia in combination

with local cadres from the peasantry is also important. There is a great backlog in education, training and encouragement of theoretical work; there must be determined efforts to resolve this problem. Leading Party committees at higher levels *must firmly and directly address this problem.*

There are serious shortcomings in insuring timely guidance and occasional check-up of cadres. Cadres are promoted and given bigger responsibilities, but their replacements are not given the necessary training. As a result, there is a lowering of the quality of cadres assigned to mass work as well as of leadership in the mass movement. In many places, errors and shortcomings overcome long ago have recurred, including those involving violations of basic policies in mass work and such ills as commandism, loose conduct and tailism.

A relatively sizeable reduction of our cadre force has occurred in the last few years due to casualties and loss of enthusiasm in times of difficulty. Shortcomings in the training, guidance and ideological development of cadres have a lot to do with this state of affairs. So, have the damage and confusion created by excesses in the anti-infiltration campaigns. We must hold firmly to the lessons drawn from these experiences.

While improving training and education work, we must strengthen Party committee leadership over the forces assigned to mass work. We must also propagate the system of combining old and new cadres in order to hasten our work of upgrading the quality of mass work as well as the knowledge and skill of the cadres. The leading and veteran cadres must devote enough time attending to and guiding cadres and committees at lower levels. They must also lead the campaign to improve the style of leadership and to propagate the mass line.

We must also extend and develop education work devoted to mass activists. In strengthening the initiative of the mass organizations, we expect to produce and develop mass activists in bigger numbers.

In quantitatively and qualitatively upgrading cadres and mass activists, we take on tasks that are part of, or directly connected to, Party building. We must strengthen the Party ideologically, politically and organizationally. For the peasant movement, particular attention must be given to strengthening Party groups within the mass organizations, branches in the barrios and Party committees in sections, districts, provinces and regions.

The correct balance in the disposition of our cadre force in mass work and in military work must be ensured. In some areas during the last few years, serious imbalances have occurred in favor of military work. This explains the sluggish

development of mass work in the revolutionary peasant movement and consequently the difficulty in supporting and building our armed forces in those areas.

We must effectively muster a combination of machineries operating clandestinely, legally and semilegally to be able to take on the task of comprehensively advancing the revolutionary peasant movement and adapt to different situations and needs in advancing the work. □

OPEN FORUM

In the next and other succeeding issues, *Rebolusyon* will carry **Open Forum** as a venue for discussion and debate on urgent issues in the Philippine and the international revolutionary movement.

Readers are invited to submit questions, letters and brief articles to elicit response from the pertinent organs of the Communist Party of the Philippines, the editorial board or any Party member.