Felix Razon:
Richard Hensman:

The Oppression of the Indigenous Peoples of the Philippines
IWGIA -- International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs -- is a non-political and non-religious organization concerned with the oppression of ethnic groups in various countries.

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THE OPPRESSION OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE PHILIPPINES

Copenhagen 1976
This IWGIA Document contains three papers on the oppression of the native peoples of the Philippines.

1. The Philippines: A Background Survey
2. Native Peoples Struggle Against U.S. Imperialism in the Philippines
3. The Filipino Muslims and their Struggle for Self-Determination

Paper No. 1 is the result of the work of a number of research writers. The final draft of the document was done by Richard Hensman, a journalist from Sri Lanka (Ceylon), BBC Commentator, author of several books on Asia, formerly active in the student Christian movement and presently residing in London.

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Copenhagen, November 1976

For the International Secretariat of IWGIA

Inese Andersen                Helge Kleivan
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1. INTRODUCTION

The course of events in the Philippines during the past year has aroused considerable interest of people in a number of countries. Unprecedented measures taken by Mr. Ferdinand Marcos, particularly the imposition of martial law on 23 September 1972 and the subsequent establishment of a dictatorship, were presented to the world by him and his supporters as statesman-like reactions to a political and economic situation which is more or less characteristic of many countries in the Third World.

The Philippines is now widely regarded, even by Mr. Marcos' foreign allies, as a country in which democracy in any form has ceased to exist. If his action is justifiable on the grounds of absolute necessity, and as the most effective and humane solution to the country's problems, then others who may follow suit in their own countries, or those who have given support in various ways, can claim to have good arguments to justify their actions. The imposition of "martial law Philippines style" and the measures taken "under its protection" have, however, been challenged and seriously criticised by responsible people (among them bishops and priests, statesmen and thinkers, jurists, journalists, scholars, liberals as well as left-wing radicals, peasants and workers) whose opinions cannot be taken lightly and whose commitment to the good of the Filipino people is beyond doubt. Some of the claims made on behalf of the new regime (including Mr. Marcos' claim that "there is calm and ever rejoicing among the people over what has happened") have been challenged on the grounds of accuracy or truth by many. If the government actions and arguments are not justifiable, what has happened in that country may provide valuable "negative" lessons, if it is properly grasped. More than that, the tendencies - and the structures and processes of the prevailing international order
which give rise to these tendencies — for those in power in underdeveloped countries to have recourse to similar actions, may at this time call for much more careful and deeper study than many well-meaning people have thought in the past.

The actions resorted to by Mr. Marcos and his colleagues, and by the military, police and special security forces whose powers they have increased enormously cannot, unless severe penalties are risked, be discussed by and among the Filipino people in the normal and traditional ways. Nevertheless, there has been open dissent of considerable weight. It is clear (for this and reasons, which will be given later) that there is not as much support for the new order as the Marcos regime claims. On one point, however, the reports and the debates show that the regime, its critics and nearly all well-informed foreign observers agree: that at the beginning of this decade social and economic conditions in the Philippines had reached a critical stage, and it would not have been possible for things to continue much longer as they had been doing for several decades. If they are correct, a survey of this kind is very belated in this case, but not too late if conditions of life in a nation of nearly 40 million are to be made more tolerable than even Mr. Marcos has said they have been.

It is of some importance therefore to establish as "objectively" as possible what the realities of the politics, society and economy of the country were, and to focus attention on those features of Filipino life which put into correct perspective the actions taken by Mr. Marcos and his supporters — actions which include the hounding and arrests and imprisonment of opponents and critics, and even worse things. Such phenomena as underdevelopment, dependence, the heavy burden of foreign debt, corruption — often spoken about — are not unique to the Philippines. It is necessary to establish, therefore, what is specifically Filipino about these, in so far as they are part of the contemporary reality. They must have been developed over a period of time, as the product of relationship and policies which are part of the Filipino history. A brief survey of the background may
appropriately indicate some of the significance of this history, help in the identification of the reality, and make clear also to what extent non-Filipinos have added to the social and moral burdens of the Filipinos.

2. THE COLONIAL BACKGROUND

The Philippines have always been important in the international politics of the Asian region. At the height of the imperialist expansion into East Asian markets and territories, possession of the islands was a clear advantage. Situated in the southwest of the Pacific Ocean, it is strategically located to provide easy access to the other parts of the East Asian region, principally China on one side and the so-called "spice islands" on the other. It is noteworthy, for example, that the Philippines was one of the terminal points of the famous Galeon Trade which, between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries, was one of the primary trade routes between Asia and the Western world. Similarly, the take-over of the Philippines from Spain by the United States in 1898 coincided with the period of American insistence for an "open door" policy in China. The Philippines was clearly seen, among other things, by the United States as a strategic trading post for what was then an opening China market.

In the current flow of Asian politics, the Philippines likewise constitute an area of great importance to the great powers of the modern world - the United States, Soviet Union, and Japan. Thus, the Philippines was fought over bitterly and violently between the United States and Japan during the Second World War for its strategic importance in the control of Southeast Asia. In the long struggle between the United States and the Indo-Chinese peoples, control of the Philippines and the role of Filipinos has been a crucial factor. Military bases in the Philippines have been the take-off points of much of the bombing attacks on Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. In the same vein, the interior of China is within striking distance from military installations in the Philippines. It is almost taken for granted that the attitude to the country is that expressed in March, 1962, by U.S.
Admiral Luther Hines, when he said to a U.S. Senate Committee: "The Far East is of increasing strategic importance to the U.S. It is rich in natural resources, rubber, tin and oil. The Philippines, with its key U.S. naval and air bases, is extremely vital to the strategic posture of the U.S."

While it is true that from early in the 16th century to the present, the people living in this archipelago (with over 800 inhabited islands) have had the course of their lives affected deeply by the wishes and plans of foreigners living many thousands of miles away, it is nevertheless wrong to view the future of the country in terms of the viewpoints and perceptions of outside powers. In the end, what is of primary importance is what happens within the country itself and what its people seek and struggle to accomplish. Here, the stereotypes of Filipinos fostered even by sympathetic journalists and fellow Asians, e.g., that the Philippines is an excessively Westernized (even Americanized) society and that the Filipinos are a lawless, trigger-happy people, have neither been helpful nor fair. The fact that the Philippines has had a peculiar history and a national identity of its own is not often mentioned; and only recently has there begun to be an appreciation of the pioneering achievements of the Filipinos in the liberation and anti-colonial struggle in the Third World. It is important to understand this point because the need to do something in the context of the Marcos coup may put pressure on people to take an "instant" view of what is happening, an approach that is easily exploitable by those who want "stability" above everything else, and avoid a broader historical perspective on the present situation. If not for anything else, such a broader view may show the way in which the Filipinos have at various times responded to what has been done to them and thus provide a clue as well to what they might do in relation to what is happening to them now. It is only when the old society is understood that it may be possible to understand why there is talk by Mr. Marcos of the new society.

The Philippines was, like Cuba, ruled by Spain until the end of the 19th century. Major parts of it were under colonial rule
for a long period, as the Spanish-Christian invasions and attempts at conquest began in the 16th century and Spanish dominance was first secured in 1565. The Spanish, not content with their empire in America, wanted to get some of the spice trade of the "Indies" for themselves. From Mexico expeditions were easy to mount, and a Spanish controlled base from which trade with China could be conducted was useful. The islands which came to be called "The Philippines" thus passed into the Spanish Empire. Among those who submitted to the rule of the Spanish Crown and the Church the process of Hispanization continued for many generations. It is a process which Latin Americans who know their colonial past will understand - aimed at the systematic destruction of the traditional culture, the modification and perpetuation of the most oppressive features of feudalism through the encomienda system and other forms of forced labour, and the exploitation of the mineral resources, soil and people in order to enrich Spain and safeguard the Spanish Empire. The land was divided up into vast estates, distributed among the conquistadores, the Church and also some local chieftain families who were useful.

While there had been no centralised kingdom of all the islands or even the tribes of any of the major islands at the time of the Spanish invasions, and only on rare occasions did people combine to try to prevent the Spanish establishing their power in the archipelago, the establishment of Spanish colonial rule was never completely accepted. Resistance to it never ceased in some parts of the islands and Spanish rule never extended to the whole of what was by proclamation and prayer annexed in the name of His Most Catholic Majesty, the King of Spain.

The people of these islands were not all meek and submissive. There were some who kept to themselves or withdrew beyond the confines of Spanish rule and civilisation where they continued to rule themselves, carry on agriculture, mining and trade, and to maintain a level of personal dignity and freedom superior to that to be found among conquered and conquerors in the colonial territories against whom they carried out attacks. The Igorots
of Luzon, for instance, maintained their independence for over 300 years though the conquistadores seized Manila in 1571 by defeating the Muslim King, Raja Soliman. The "Moros" (the racist term used by the Spaniards for the Muslims) in Mindanao, Sulu and other parts of the archipelago defended their independence and carried on resistance against the Spanish for over 300 years. Some of the many revolts which occurred within Spanish-ruled territory in the 17th and 18th Century were extensive and protracted. This spirit of resistance against oppression and aggression, which owes nothing whatever to "Westernisation", has contributed as much to the making of modern Filipino society as has the docility and self-seeking of those who adapted easily to colonial subjection. To this day there are parts of Mindanao which never fully accepted submission to the Spanish colonialists and their successors.

Even within the Hispanized Philippines, as we noted, the spirit of resistance was occasionally roused by the oppressiveness of colonial rule. The families of local chiefs and others who were educated by the Spanish rulers emerged as an elite, later called the ilustrados. With their help Spanish control was maintained. Eventually the oppressiveness of the Church bred in the Europeanized elite a strong anti-clericalism. Newer imperialisms than Spain's (especially British and American) had been expanding into East Asia. By the late 19th Century they had undermined the dominance of Spanish economic interests in their Asian territory. The ilustrados were not anti-imperialist. But the refusal of the authorities to hold their complaints pushed them to more extreme opposition. The increasingly oppressive conditions of Spanish rule, especially for the peasantry, and the growth of a revolutionary movement among educated young people, pushed the ilustrados too into joining in armed struggle against the colonial rulers and their armies. By 1898 the Spanish were defeated, and the Filipinos established an independent republic with Emilia Aguinaldo as president. It was the first time in Asia that colonial rule had been overthrown by its subjects and the first time a modern republic had been set up. The political awakening
and organization which began then have been part of the history of the making of modern Philippines.

In the meantime, the United States was looking beyond the Western hemisphere for markets and territory, and the weakening Spanish hold on its remaining colonies indicated what the most likely prizes were. Admiral Dewey was soon ordered to move into the Philippines from Hongkong, at first, ostensibly to help the nationalist forces in their struggle against Spain. The Battle of Manila Bay was no more than a minor naval skirmish. Within less than a day, the Spanish fleet was beaten and the Americans took control of the city of Manila.

The defeat of the Spaniards in Manila Bay, however, was not the beginning of Philippine independence and autonomy but of American rule over the country. Acting on orders from Washington and completely ignoring the Republic which had already been established by the Filipinos, the American forces soon began to make arrangements to take over control of the country. Confronted by the new aggression from the U.S., the people of the new republic fought hard to defend the independence which they thought they had already attained. It was a war which in the tactics and brutality of the invading American forces anticipated those of the Japanese conquest of China and the French and U.S. attempts later to subdue the newly independent peoples of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. The popular struggle to defend the Filipino Republic was one of the most important episodes in 19th century Asian colonial history. The miserable armed forces of the republic initially engaged the invaders in pitched battle. Though they fought with great courage they were no match in this kind of battle with the U.S. expeditionary forces. They then took to guerilla warfare in which almost the entire population joined. The Americans, who thought they had completely defeated another batch of "savages", were drawn into a war in which it was clear the entire Filipino people regarded them as enemies. They realized, in the words of General Shafter, that "it may be necessary to kill half the Filipinos in order that the remaining half of the population may be advanced to a higher plane of life than their present semi-barbarous state affords".
The 70,000 U.S. troops began their civilising mission by killing non-combatants, not taking prisoners, wiping out entire villages and using torture. The resistance continued for years, but the courage of the masses could not make up for the mistakes of the revolutionary leaders. The U.S. campaign of extermination and pacification finally established US rule in the Philippines. It is US economic, political and military power which since the destruction of the first Asian republic has determined the course of development of the Philippines leading to the period of Japanese conquest and rule and Filipino incorporation (in spite of the resistance against this third imperialist invader) and into the Greater Co-Prosperity Sphere with only an interlude of four years' duration in the process.

3. FORCED AMERICANIZATION

There is another side to this history. The perspective of liberation (struggle for freedom and resistance to tyranny) is not the only one in which Filipino history can be viewed. Just as there were those who happily submitted to Spanish colonial rule and even fought to defend it there were those who welcomed the U.S. conquest and collaborated with it, or, like Aguinaldo, just surrendered. But whereas such people formed a class whose role was prominent in the colonial history of many Asian countries, the oppressed tribes and classes whose resistance and guerilla struggles and anti-imperialist traditions are so much part of the history of an Asian people's resistance to colonial subjection cannot be taken for granted. It must seem to a non-Filipino observer an admirable Filipino characteristic that a people who want to be free and independent and overthrow tyranny must be prepared to fight for what they want. Filipino revolutionaries, in other words, have inspiration and lessons in their own history.

The ferocious cruelty by which the invading American forces tried to terrorize the Filipino patriots into submission was based on a recognition of their courage and their determination to be free. So was the decision of the rising U.S. imperialism to destroy their independence in order to "teach" the Filipinos "de-
mocratic self-government". That lesson has gone on for a long time. The "Americanization" which followed the "Hispanization" of the people of those islands has demanded a political, economic and spiritual submission of the Philippines to the dominant interests of the U.S.A. It did not terminate with the ending of direct, old-style colonial rule in 1946. As a result of the kind of society developed under direct U.S. rule even some Filipinos who fought against Japanese rule in the Second World War did so not for national independence but, in the words of a leading Filipino writer, as "little brown Americans".

The U.S. policy of rehabilitating the collaborators and handing over the administration to Filipinos was designed to have Filipino "elites" in power who would loyally serve foreign interests. They were put there to serve U.S. superpower which since the Second World War has seen its dominance in Southeast Asia as vital. As the leading military and economic power of the capitalist world the U.S. sees socialism and even economic nationalism as a threat to the freedom of its financial and business interests. It is increasingly confronted with a growing socialist enemy (in the political and economic sense) in Asia which it has been unable to subvert, destroy or isolate. In an age when the rising tide of anti-imperialist people's struggles (it is irrelevant for our understanding of the Filipino situation whether we feel threatened by this tide or not) threatens to sweep away the foundations of the system on which American exploitation of the Philippine resources depend, it is to be expected that Washington did not decide to let the grossly impoverished, long exploited Filipino people be truly free and independent in 1946.

The colonial development of the land and people of the Philippines had made their economy and society a dependent one. Even before the overthrow of Spanish rule the plantation economy created under it had become dependent on the market in the U.S. and Western Europe for what is produced for export, mainly sugar, hemp and later coconuts. The Filipino landlord class, who had opened the door to the Americans, played an important role in de-
veloping their country as a U.S. colony. Producing sugar, hemp and later coconuts for exports, the Philippines was opened to a flood of U.S. manufactures against which local industry could not compete. The small class of landlords, money-lenders and merchants continued to grow in wealth while the lot of the poor continued to get even worse. In the countryside where the overwhelming majority of the population lived there was hardly any improvement in the economic situation of the people during the whole period of direct U.S. rule. The marked contrast with how well the Filipino "oligarchy" had done under U.S. rule has been so frequently and widely noted as to make the observation of the vast gap between the rich and the poor almost a commonplace.

What this has meant in terms of the labouring people in the countryside is difficult to imagine. A Filipino writer on the situation wrote: "In 1900, 19% of the farms were operated by sharecroppers; in 1918 22% of the peasants were sharecroppers; in 1930, 36%; in 1946, 40%; and in the 1960's it climbed to over 60%. At present, more than 9 million Filipino, more than one-fourth of the population, are oppressed and exploited sharecroppers. In Central Luzon (Bulacan, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Pangasinan) 65.8% of all farms are operated by tenants; in Pampanga 85%. All in all, 68% tenancy has prevailed with 89% in Nueva Ecija. In Pampanga 90% of the land is owned by a little over 5% of the people there. Over 60% of all Filipino farmers are tenants on the lands of the big landlords; average rents run to as high as 75% of their harvests - that is, for every four cavanes of rice harvested three go to the landlord.

In 1969, 92% of all Central Luzon tenants were bound by life-long usury. Filipino tenants, already at the lowest income level, are drained of 500 million pesos per year by usurious interest rates - from 25 to 300% - paid to landlords and rural moneylenders. Another 500 million pesos are lost to greedy middlemen ... (Juan Verdod: The Philippine Crisis)

It is in the context of the kind of oppressive and outdated feudalism which these facts indicate that the "democratic"
institutions given by the U.S. including the competition among factions for the spoils of office must be understood to work. "Independence" in 1946 did not mean that the Filipino people became free to take over and use for their welfare and progress the human and material resources which in the course of colonial underdevelopment or anti-development were jointly exploited by the Spanish and American rulers and their local partners. As in other countries where the old colonial power was almost eager to give sham independence the patriots continued to struggle for true independence.

4. PARITY FOR AMERICAN BUSINESS

One consequence of the arrangements made by the U.S. government for the post-independence period was an ordinance in the Philippine Constitution (operative until the Marcos coup) which reads:

"The disposition, exploitation, development and utilization of our natural resources, and the operations of public utilities shall (if open to any person) be open to citizens of the United States. This privilege is also granted to all business enterprises owned or controlled, directly or indirectly, by American citizens. The life of this provision shall not extend beyond July 3, 1974."

What lay behind this was the Bell Trade Act which the U.S. government forced the Filipinos to accept giving U.S. citizens "parity" with Filipinos. The account of what happened, as given in the report of the National Committee for the Restoration of Civil Liberties in the Philippines, indicates how much the rehabilitated members of the oligarchy wanted to achieve economic independence.

American bombing in the effort to retake the Philippines left Manila the third most ravaged city in the world after Hiroshima and Warsaw. The U.S. deigned to assist its badly battered colony in the form of the Philippine Rehabilitation Act of April 30, 1946, which offered dollar aid to people whose properties and businesses had been damaged. However, the enjoyment of the
act’s full benefits was made contingent on the passage of the Bell Trade Act referred to above. The Bell Trade Act stipulated that American citizens and corporations be given equal rights as Filipino nationals to exploit the natural resources of the country and operate public utilities after Independence. (The Trade Act was later updated and renamed the Laurel-Langley Agreement of 1954 to expand American rights to include all economic activities.) This stipulation clearly violated the Philippine Constitution (Article XIII, Section 1; Article XIV, Section 8).

When an amendment was proposed to a Philippine government faced with the economic havoc resulting from a war not of its own making it had no choice but to accept the American terms.

The granting of parity rights to American nationals in the Philippines was not to be the last time the U.S. executive branch would exploit its position of superiority vis-a-vis the Philippine government on behalf of American business interests. In 1954, the Philippine Congress passed the Philippine Retail Trade Nationalization Law which would take effect in 1964 to give aliens sufficient time to adjust. This law provides that only corporations or business firms wholly owned by Filipino nationals can engage in retail trade. When the law took effect on June 19, 1964, American businessmen branded it anti-American and proceeded to frustrate its implementation, going to the extent of demanding that President Johnson pressure the Philippine government. In a Joint Communique of Presidents Johnson and Macapagal, President Johnson pointed out "that United States economic relations with the Philippines would be seriously impaired if an enforcement of the Philippine Retail Trade Nationalization Law were to prejudge the position of long-established American firms." This undoubtedly contributed a great deal to the notoriously slow and extremely selective implementation of the law.

From the point of view of the Filipino people the unfortunate economic consequence of U.S.-Philippine relations was that the country’s economy was more than ever before dominated and exploited by U.S. capital. It was nothing other than a neo-colonial dependence which those Filipino who monopolized wealth
and power were unwilling and unable to end. Assets of the large oil companies such as Caltex, Mobil, Esso, Gulf and Getty, increased to over US $ 400 million. Other American multinational corporations took control in the fields of fertilizer production, heavy machinery, mining, marketing, banking, etc. In spite of the considerable profits "repatriated" their assets were believed to be 80 per cent of total foreign investments and to be with over US $ 2 billion in book value - an enormous sum for an underdeveloped country. 24 of the 50 biggest enterprises are US owned and it has been estimated that between 1956 and 1965 U.S. investment was US $ 412 million (84% of that raised in the Philippines) while profit remitted was US $ 380 million.

5. MILITARY BASES

In addition to the retention and development of the former colony for U.S. economic exploitation, the U.S. government has also retained its bases in the country. These have been used in the war against Indochina. To quote again:

"Militarily, the U.S. operates 23 military bases on 180,000 acres of land leased for 99 years but pays no rent. (Some rough estimates place the probable annual rent at several million dollars.) There are about 20,000 U.S. servicemen now on these bases. Clark Air Base, north of Manila, is one of the largest air bases in the world servicing F-4 Phantom bombers and B-57 squadrons. Subic Bay Naval Base, farther north of Manila, is the largest naval base in Asia with nuclear submarine facilities. It is the headquarters and supply base of the Pacific 7th Fleet and aircraft carriers Kitty Hawk, Saratoga, and Coral Sea."

With these military bases in mind, the U.S. commitment in the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1951 is stated best in the words of President Johnson in a 1964 communique: "... any armed attack against the Philippines would be regarded as an attack against the U.S. forces stationed there and against the U.S. and would instantly be repelled".

During the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee hearings of September 30 - October 3, 1969, "the (Mutual Defense) Board
considers the principal threat to the Philippines to be Communist China with possible assistance from internal dissident groups".

With further questioning by Senator Symington, Admiral Kauffman agreed that "today there is no threat to the Philippines except an internal threat". There is thus a possibility, remote though it may be, that the U.S. commitment to this Mutual Defense Treaty may be interpreted to include armed attacks by Filipino nationals and "would instantly be repelled".

In fact, the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG) which was formed under the terms of the Military Assistance Agreement of 1947 placed U.S. military advisers at high levels of the Philippine Military hierarchy to aid the Philippine Command in the planning and implementing of military operations. One of the main tasks of JUSMAG is "to assist in creating a Philippine internal security capability". One of the many exercises conducted by JUSMAG was specifically designed to train both American and Filipino troops participating in the exercise in the conduct of counter-insurgency activities. This exercise, "Operation Eagle's Nest" and later re-named "Operation Carabao's Trail", was an unconventional warfare exercise series with a guerilla counter-insurgency setting.

Through joint exercises like this, through provision of American arms, ammunition and other military supplies to the Philippine Military, and even through some direct participation by American Military personnel in counter-insurgency activities, "U.S. military assistance contributed significantly to the success of the Philippine Armed Forces in suppressing the HUK (Filipino guerilla) rebellion in the 1950's".

A country in which a "foreign" government exercises extra-territorial rights, is the second biggest employer and represents the interests of its nationals who are the richest and economically dominant group has obviously had a distorted political and social development as much as it has had a distorted economic development. Filipinos themselves have pointed this out again and again. In a country in which the spirit of resistance has
always been strong and in which the struggle for independence has been revived again and again it is not strange that subjection to the military and economic interests of U.S. imperialism (which has had the consequences for the Filipino it has had in terms of agricultural and industrial development, employment opportunities, relations with other countries and much else) should not rouse the spirit of resistance.

What this resistance means in actual terms and whether the forms it has taken in various contexts should be admired or condemned one can only judge after taking adequate note of the realities of life for those who make up the Filipino nation.

6. LAND TENURE

The Philippines has been widely published as a country with a high level of literacy and in which there is rule by the people. Most of the population live in the rural areas and presumably have to work, go to school, enjoy their leisure and exercise their democratic powers in the rural areas. What are their conditions of life? Reference was made earlier to the high and rising percentage of sharecroppers who have to give the landlord 50% or more of the crop derived from small holdings. For all but the big landlords development in the countryside has been of the wrong kind. Between the wars while population increased by 60% the number of farms decreased by 16%. According to data from the census of agriculture in 1948 and 1960, the percentage of share tenancy increased by 67% between those years. A government document itself (The Four-Year Economic Program) stated in the mid 1960’s that "about half the farms in the country are under share tenancy; in Central Luzon the proportion is about 60%. The wide extent of this system has done a great deal to inhibit agricultural productivity".

The concentration of landownership has also increased. According to a study (published in 1955) made of landed estates in the country and based on statistics collected in 1953 there were 13,859 landowners who held more than 50 hectares each. Together they owned 2,410,000 hectares or about 42 per cent of the
total farm land. Of these 11,770 landlords owned 50 to 200 hectares; 1,455 owned 201 to 500 hectares; 423 owned 501 to 1,000 hectares. The top 221 owned more than 1,000 hectares each, and their share of the Filipino earth amounted to half a million hectares, nearly one-tenth of the country’s total farm area.

In 1968 there were, according to government assessments, just 10,764 landlords owning from 50 hectares to more than 1,000 hectares. Their total holdings, around 3,000,000 hectares, was estimated to be about half of the total agricultural area on which the whole population depended for food and commercial cultivation and living space for the rural population. In between these dates, 1953 and 1968, there were the Land Reform Act of of 1955 and the Agricultural Land Reform Code of 1963. The earlier act was hardly ever implemented. It could not be, since the majority of tenants had to petition for subdivision of large estates, and the high prices demanded were beyond the means of peasants. A 1952 survey had shown that in Central Luzon 89 per cent of all households and 92 per cent of tenants’ households were in debt. While the maximum "legal" rate of interest was 14 per cent, as much as 98 per cent was actually being charged, according to a 1955 survey.

Solution, whether "peaceful" or not peaceful, to the problem of how the mass of the people are to survive at more than subhuman level and grow are, obviously, possible only at the expense of the power and wealth of the feudal, big landowners - only by destruction of the system which produces and sanctifies the ruling class. The intolerable conditions drove the peasantry to rebellion in 1950. As the politically very moderate Gunnar Myrdal wrote in Asian Drama: "It took nearly a decade and American assistance to suppress this rebellion. A successful policy of land resettlement played an important role in putting down the Huks, but all moves, including those backed by the United States, looking toward more general agrarian reform have been blocked or blunted by a Congress dominated by powerful landed interests. The latter control the rural vote, especially in remote areas, and often the police and the courts as well. The vote is in any
event restricted by a literacy qualification to not much more than half the adult population. The Catholic Church is a considerable power on the side of the landlords. Acceptance by the Catholic hierarchy can be an important avenue to office and non-acceptance of the death knell of political ambition. Even the small beginnings of trade unions and peasant organizations are very much under the control of wealthy landowners and churchmen. In sum, it is the almost baronial power wielded by the landed interests that largely explains why, despite its comparative prosperity, the Philippines has experienced so little industrial progress, agrarian reform, and democratization of its society in depth" (pp. 388-389). One must add that Myrdal's own liberal goals, like those of the "green Revolution", are not those of the oppressed rural masses who seek a more authentic liberation.

7. ECONOMIC ANTI-DEVELOPMENT

It might seem that focusing attention on the power of the big landlords and the feudal and semi-feudal character of Philippine society minimizes unduly what other members of the "elite" can do and have done. In Europe, it was the emergence to power of a class composed of merchants, businessmen, manufacturers and financiers together with the intellectuals who served them which broke the bonds of feudalism and made economic and technological progress possible. The backwardness of dependence of Filipino society has not, however, been ended. In the 1950's there were reports of rapid growth in the manufacturing sector. Under Filipino pressure, the U.S. Government had in 1949 allowed some concessions, including the right of the Manila Government to impose exchange control. The power of the Filipino oligarchy to decide what imports should be allowed and for what purposes, and to control profit remittances abroad, appeared at first to be used to good effect. There were statistics showing tremendous surge of Filipino (and Filipino-Chinese) investment in industry, and a decline in American investment, for a whole decade. But how genuine was this industrialization?

Genuine industrialization would have to depend on the ascen-
dancy of whatever nationalist elements there were in the oligar-
chy over those elements ("the compradors") which were allied with,
and saw their interests as inseparable from those of U.S. capi-
talists. The former in fact proved incapable of the historic task
they are faced with. The "industrial investment" was not genuine,
in that it was largely confined to import substitution. Foreign
exchange was not saved. As in other countries, the policy of
substituting for goods which could not be imported fully finished
the assembling or bottling of components invented, patented and
manufactured abroad only increased dependence. The peso re-
mained tied to the dollar and the peso economy to the dollar
economy. The social revolution, which would have broken the feu-
dal fetters on development, as well as provided the economic and
political base from which imperialism could be challenged the
nationalists did not dare to undertake. With U.S. help they had
crushed the poorly led revolution in the countryside rather than
solve the problems of the countryside. The determination to
prevent at any cost the changes which would lead to the libera-
tion of the vast resource of the country has remained as much
under Mr. Marcos (1966 onwards) as before.

In 1962 Macapagal was elected President. He yielded to U.S.
demands by ending exchange control and letting the peso float.
In the next six years U.S. $ 1.9 billion was "repatriated"
to the U.S. as capital transfers and profits. Among the
many consequences of his policies and those of his successors
was the ruin of new local industries, the taking over of enter-
prises by foreign capital, a foreign exchange shortage, rapid in-
flation and a steep increase in the foreign debt. From US $ 275
million in 1962 the external debt had risen to US $ 1,880 mil-
lion at the end of Marcos' first term as President. By early
1972 it was US $ 2,100 million - 45 per cent owed to the U.S.,
21 to Japan, 12.5 to IBRD, IMF & ADB and 6 to West Germany. Under
the supervision of foreign creditors and especially subject to
the reactionary control of the IMF, the Filipino people could
not, without repudiating the debt for which their ruling class
in collaborating with foreign masters was responsible, have the
conditions for independent and self-reliant development. The acceleration of neocolonial development in the 1960's has intensified the poverty and suffering of the vast majority.

The get-rich-quickly mentality and the lack of even an elementary patriotism among the members of the oligarchy as a whole could hardly promote the economic development of the country. They showed little or no sense of social responsibility, even of the most conservative kind. The floating of the peso in 1970 drastically reduced the living standard, already low, of most of the people. The massive campaign of liberty conducted by Marcos himself in trying to get reelected not only subverted the "democratic" process but worsened the inflation. The extent of the corruption may not have exceeded that in the United States, but with so little productive activity being permitted by the ruling class to the rest of the population the robber barons were acting with cynical disregard for even the capitalist future of the country when they joined with foreigners in looting the resources of the Philippines. Some Filipinos from privileged backgrounds have been angered by the policies which are ruining their country. They have pointed, for example, to the irresponsible behaviour of the rich racketeers who contracted with the Japanese and others to supply timber. (1969 figures show that a high proportion of permitted investment was in "forest products"). The slaughtering of the hardwood forest had serious ecological consequence for those who lived in the areas subject to the rapacity of the "developers".

In Luzon as well as Mindanao the effects were disastrous. Floods of unprecedented proportions were caused and conditions for agriculture were badly affected.

The heavy investment in extractive industries like logging and mining - all for export - indicates how little Mr. Marcos and his associates were concerned for the development of the national economy. According to an ADB sponsored report "some 3,000 financial institutions, including 40 commercial banks, 429 rural banks, 32 private development banks and numerous insurance and financing companies were registered in 1969". But these sta-
tistics are almost comic when contrasted with the development of indigenous industrial enterprises. They explain the case with which a few people, including the Marcos family (one of the richest in Asia) built up their personal fortunes. They were clearly engaged in serving not the poor in their country, but the rich in the exploiting countries. For example, the rich copper deposits of Cebu are exploited by a U.S. mining corporation at rates of profits which have permitted dividends of 20%. The copper is shipped in Japanese vessels to Japan. It is in these terms that we must understand the fact that Japanese capitalists have over 40% of Philippine external trade and take 85% of the copper.

The growth of the Japanese stake in the control and exploitation of land and labour in the Philippines has not been unwelcome either to the oligarchy or U.S. business interests and government. In 1968, 93% of Japan's imports from the Philippines were raw materials; nearly all Japan's exports were manufactured goods. Japanese investment is increasing, even though Japanese have so far in practice shown that foreign investment is an enemy to the development of an independent industrial base. The economic development of the Philippines ensures a high level of unemployment and under-employment. That these are shown to be high, especially among the young and the educated is not surprising. A government publication (Journal of Philippine Statistics) in 1969 indicated that there were the equivalent of 2 million fully unemployed (i.e. over one-sixth of the labour force). Others consider the figure and the percentage to be higher, even as high as a quarter. 400,000 college graduates are without jobs and there would be more if in order to survive some of the trained men and women had not emigrated out of the ghetto of anti-development in which the foreign corporations (Japanese, American, British, and others) and their local collaborators had kept them.

In October 1972, in view of the widespread opposition to U.S. imperialist domination, Mr. Marcos declared that "foreign capital will be protected. There will be no confiscation while I am
President. Such things as the amortization of investment, retirement of capital and transmittal of profits are guaranteed".

8. MOUNTING UNREST

The period of the Marcos presidency which had been due to expire at the end of 1973 has seen an increase and intensification of protest. The mounting turmoil, however meaningful it may have been, must have been a serious problem to Mr. Marcos. To satisfy one's foreign creditors, to seek to continue in power and to prevent criticism becoming lethal, one has to be in control of what is said and done. Yet, the threats, harassment, imprisonment and assassination of dissenters by the government's agencies were helping to create a united opposition. Not only protesting intellectuals were becoming better organized. The Communist Party had been reorganized on Marxist-Leninist lines in December 1968 and under it a New People's Army had come into being in March, 1969. Members of the armed forces had protested against what they regarded as unpatriotic and reactionary policies and started going over to join revolutionary groups with arms they had seized. And in Mindanao armed revolt had broken out and spread as a result of the crooked activities of the "Christians". Though the Muslim areas were terrorized by the Philippine Constabulary and people were killed the revolt could not be suppressed. The Mindanao Independence Movement was only one of the Muslim "secessionist" groups.

On 17 August, 1972, the Philippine Supreme Court gave its decision on a case which involved the rights of American citizens. It ruled that the preferential rights enjoyed by U.S. citizens under the "parity" arrangement were unconstitutional. Land acquired by Americans under it (that would be about US $ 75 millions' worth) would therefore be illegally possessed and could therefore be confiscated or subject to forced sale by 1974. It affected, according to one report, not only "all land acquired 1946 but terminated timber licenses, petroleum leases, public service franchises and other contracts with validity beyond 1974". There had been other Supreme Court decisions show-
ing the practices of oil companies to be illegal, and in effect curtailing special U.S. privileges in oil exploitation and so on. Such judicial decisions, challenging the illegal activities and acquisitions of US corporations, were widely acclaimed by nationalist and anti-imperialist forces in the country. It was a sign of the changing times that from conservative quarters there had come a challenge to the Philippine state to reveal its true functions. Even in the neocolonial situations there was a choice between observing the law of the land and enabling foreign interests to defy it. With his second term as president coming to an end in 1973, Marcos would have to get re-elected if he was to be constitutionally in power in 1974. Given the mood of the country, the bipartisan support for US interests in the factions of the ruling class could not be counted upon to ensure that whoever was elected the status quo would be maintained.

There were reports that Mr. Marcos conferred with U.S. ambassador Broyade on September 21, 1972, the day on which he signed the martial law order. Certainly, whether or not the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Manila had demanded the suspension of the now unreliable constitution and the courts, it openly rejoiced at martial law. Officially the Churches gave their approval. But the evidence available suggests that, venal though some of the elite were, Mr. Marcos' attempt to continue indefinitely in absolute power with military support would never have succeeded if he had not adapted the methods he did to inaugurate his "New Society". For wherever in the country there was a conscientious concern among Christians and others for the poor and for justice the Marcos "reforms" have been seen as a spurious cover for further oppression and reaction.

The way the decrees have been implemented has been commented on. One observer, Bishop Claver, openly declared on February 7th, 1973, that "concern for the real good of the people on the part of those who have the obligation of implementing the decrees ... (was) not very much in evidence. Often it is totally absent. We can speak with sure knowledge only of what is happening here in Bukidnon: Tenant farmers have been ejected forcibly from land
society in which they lived - the wide divergence in social opportuni-
ties, the limited economic base, the rich reward of success-
ful self-seeking activity, and so on - many Filipinos, like
others in Third World countries, had the difficult choice be-
tween making safe and successful careers and a practical commit-
ment to improving the lot of their people as a whole. A moral
choice affecting the community as a whole is inevitably a polit-
ical choice; and there was, therefore, a choice between two
kinds of "politics".

Great importance is usually attached in the international
community to politicians and businessmen who by their skills
rise to the top to enjoy power and perhaps to make vast personal
fortunes. This applied in the case of the Philippines. Some-
times the stigma of corrupt practices was attached to this or
that politician or businessman, but there has been, and is, a
good deal of tolerance on this score. The really important is-
sue, in regard to the alternative, is one of which the "world
community" has been rather evasive. It has to do with those who
have renounced the opportunities to be rich and powerful offered
by their education, family background or native abilities, and
chosen instead to build up what is lacking for the community as
a whole or even to join with the poorest and most oppressed to
transform their society into a just one, in which exploitation
and oppression cease to be practised. Is personal dedication of
this kind to advancing the good of the whole nation not some-
thing to be commended? Sometimes the few among the privileged
classes who have parted company with their fellows may find them-
selves in the course of protecting and helping the weakest and
most disadvantaged obstructing their former associates and even
their own families. Interests are in conflict. What issues are
raised by this kind of situation? A concern for justice is al-
most always likely to be subversive of the freedom of the very
people whose activities, practices and even regulations give rise
to this concern. If what is "subversive" is bad, what can be
said to all the people both in the Philippines and elsewhere who
seriously believe that to tolerate further - even in dependence
to the demands of prevailing "law and order" - what they know to
be the real causes of gross underdevelopment is morally and politi-
cally wrong.

How valid are the claims of such people in the Philippines, especially during the past year? To be concerned for the victim of underdevelopment, the exploited and oppressed, not only as individual persons but even more significantly as families, racial and cultural groups and nations is to persuade people to do something effectively to correct what is wrong with the distribution of productive resources and power. For that inequality or mal-distribution forces people into certain kinds of social relationship which in turn produces the growing gap between the rich and the poor and perpetuates the racist world order. Can people who are subject to this system of relationship do anything to eliminate the corrupt use of power and material resources by the rich, to achieve independent and humane growth in the economy and to free for the use of all the resources wasted and trapped by underdevelopment?

Related to this is the issue of whether those in the rich countries who profess a concern for the poor and oppressed are willing to do what needs to be done by them. The very poverty about which "development" experts in international organizations are writing and holding conferences is being made worse all the time by the well-fed, well-groomed and suave Americans, Japanese, Germans, British and others who are promoting "development" programmes and organizations. The U.S. government provides the means for preventing the ending of poverty and oppression even while piously advocating "development". It should be asked to get out of the land of the Filipinos lock, stock and barrel removing all the bases and military apparatus and officials it is using and going to use to add to the suffering of a grievously oppressed people. The Japanese capitalists, by their greed for profits, are doing very much what they did in the Philippines thirty years ago. It is not possible to defer to them and at the same time try to support those who are trying to stop the ruinous exploitation of the Philippines.

The arrogance of Christians in dealing with Muslims derives
partly from the racism of the West, partly from the heritage of missionary work. The treatment of the Muslims in the Philippines has its roots in Spanish colonialism. But it is a contemporary problem. In a country where 90 per cent or more of the people are oppressed, the Muslims have identified themselves as among the oppressed because they have never completely submitted to the colonising process and because they have had the spirit to fight in spite of the materials supplied to the police and military forces by the U.S. The problem is not an interfaith one. The worsening of Christian-Muslim relations can be prevented only by the liberation of the Philippines from neocolonial and other forms of oppression. What alternative is there?

R. Hensman

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NATIVE PEOPLES STRUGGLE AGAINST U.S. IMPERIALISM
IN THE PHILIPPINES

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INTRODUCTION

Since September 1972, the Philippines and its citizens have suffered the brutal repression of the Marcos dictatorship with its 250,000-man army supported by the U.S. government and its 800 multinational corporations in the country. Of the 42 million Filipinos, 4 million Muslims long oppressed and exploited by the neocolonial regime of feudal landlords, bureaucrat capitalists and compradors, have fiercely resisted the U.S.-backed martial law regime. This has been well publicized internationally.

Of late, however, the spearhead of the national liberation struggle in the Philippines has shifted to the resistance of the Igorots, one of the original inhabitants of the archipelago. Like the American Indians and native peoples of Latin and Central America, the ethnic or national minorities in the Philippines are rising up against neocolonial aggression.

WHO ARE THE IGOROTS?

The Igorots, numbering more than 500,000, comprise several tribes concentrated in four mountain provinces of the Philippines: Mountain Province, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga-Apayao. Originally lowland farmers, they were forced into the mountains and forested interiors by later settlers immigrating from Southeast Asia, and by foreign invaders. The four biggest groups among them are the Bontok (130,000), Ifugao (120,000), Kankanai (100,000) and Kalinga (90,000).

Life among the Igorots is based on subsistence agriculture
centered on rice terraces built out of the rocky mountain sides. They cherish and practice a long tradition of rice-growing culture antedating the Spanish conquest in 1565. Land utilization is based on the concept of common ownership of land. This means that the whole community shares the land’s resources. The whole community is the legitimate natural owner of the land. The ritualized organization of social labor derives from the value of the land given by one’s ancestors whose spirits still pervade the community. Together with agricultural techniques and skills (for example, the sophisticated knowledge of engineering hydraulics and irrigation), various religious rituals during harvest and planting season, the superstitions, prayers, legends, etc. form an integral part of the rice-growing culture which the Marcos dictatorship bluntly considers "anathema to their continued survival, progress and happiness."

Except for inter-tribal warfare among the groups, the Igorots have flourished peacefully and have never been dislocated from their homes - until the United States colonized the Philippines from 1899 to the present. U.S. mining, logging, real estate, and plantation interests, with their unscrupulous Filipino junior partners, have begun large-scale expropriation of the Igorots’ land. From the start the American regime established reservations (patterned after the native peoples in the U.S.) subsequently acquired by outsiders, speculators, investors, church groups, etc. Just as in Latin America and Africa, these interests were and are being aided by missionaries, anthropologists, government compradors like the notorious Elizalde, secretary of the Presidential Assistant for National Minorities (PANAMIN) which has forced the Tasaday and other tribes into reservations, Peace Corps, U.S.-AID, and now the U.S. Special Forces (green Berets). Vietnam is being replayed in the Philippines with the forced relocation of inhabitants for the sake of profit and the American empire.

**THE STORM GATHERS**

Benguet Province, home of the Benguet tribe, is the leading
producer of gold as well as other minerals (the Philippines is the largest gold producer in Asia). Of the 17 largest mining firms, the leading companies - like Atlas Consolidated and Marcel copper Mining Corporation - are largely owned by Americans, Canadians and Japanese citizens. Directly plundering the gold and mineral resources of the Igorots is the Benguet Consolidated Inc. 97% of whose stocks are owned by U.S. citizens and foreign nationals (see IDOC, The Philippines: American Corporations, Martial Law, and Underdevelopment, CIC, New York, 1973, p. 76). When Marcos decreed in 1975 that only the mining companies can sell gold, Igorots were thus prohibited from panning for gold to support their meager farm income. Their privations are compounded by the 50% inflation and at least 35% unemployment which afflicts the whole country. The minorities suffer two or three times more than the Christian majority - 96% of Filipinos.

Because of the rising world price of gold, the Marcos regime has once more prostituted itself to the foreign gold mining firms and copper companies by establishing a free gold market in Manila and extending various privileges, prompting these speculators to reopen old mines found unprofitable before.

In January 1974, Bontok peasants in the mountains of Mainit rose to defend their lands against the interests of Benguet Consolidated Inc., one of the biggest gold miners. They protested the eventual pollution of their rivers, the destruction of their virgin forests, the killing of all fish and other food resources, and the loss of irrigation for their rice fields. They cited the lesson of how a copper mine in Baguio destroyed the surrounding flora and fauna as far as the adjoining provinces hundreds of miles away, despite "anti-pollution" devices. They presented their grievance to the whole community: "When the mines have been exhausted of their gold, we shall have lost our land and our fields shall have been wasted. What will happen to us and our children?" Unheeded by government officials, they set up walls and barricades on the roads to block the mining personnel. Then, after several rebuffs, they attacked the company's camp, with the women taking the initiative, driving the
speculators off their lands - at least for the time being.

In November 1975, eight big mining corporations, among them Benguet Consolidated and Lepanto Consolidated, urged the government to prohibit the Igorots' gold panning activities. The Igorots were accused of "stealing" minerals from the lands of the mining companies. Marcos immediately complied, thus depriving at least 20,000 families of their main source of livelihood. The Igorots, of course, had practised gold panning in their ancestral lands even before the arrival of the Spaniards. Enraged, they vigorously protested in mass actions, forcing Marcos to temporarily rescind his decree penalizing them.

Like their Muslim brothers and sisters in the South, the Igorots are now threatened with massive expropriation schemes. The Marcos dictatorship plans to construct several dams along the Chico and Agno Rivers which flow through the Kalinga-Apayao territory, home of the Bontok and Kalinga tribes. This will set the stage for further commercial development of the area by plantation, mining, manufacturing and other capitalist interests.

With the increased price of imported oil (97% of Philippine energy requirements depend on oil supplied by the Arab nations), and the policy to convert the country into assembly/ packaging centers for Ford, Chrysler, etc., Marcos and his technocrats have decided to develop hydro-electric power to offset the annual 2 700 million expense for imported oil. The National Power Corporation (NPC), the governmental instrument for dispossessing the native peoples, has been instructed to build the first concrete dam (the biggest in Asia) financed for one billion dollars by the U.S.-controlled World Bank. The Chico River Basin dam is chiefly designed to benefit the multinational corporations: electricity would accelerate the extraction of mineral resources by mining corporations, and irrigation would offer profitable prospects for agribusiness investment in the adjacent Cagayan Valley where vast areas have been liberated by the New People's Army (NPA), the Communist-led peasant guerrillas.

Erecting these dams would mean the destruction of the homes
of at least 15,000 families (about 90,000 persons) of Bontoks and Kalingas - one dam alone would wash out the homes of 500 families (about 3,000 persons). It would mean the flooding of 16 settlements along the river, including ricefields and graveyards, and the transfer of families from their ancestral homes. "It would mean the destruction of farmlands now yielding $2 million in fruits, grains and vegetables annually - the livelihood of the Igorots there." On both material and spiritual grounds, the tribespeople are vehemently opposed to this electrification project. A Catholic Bishop of Bontok descent, the Jesuit Francisco Claver voiced the dominant principle underlying the protest: "Ricefields among the Bontoks are heirlooms, more prized than any earthly goods, passed on from parents to children in a continuity that is like life itself. It is life, and to brake the continuity means only one thing: death." Because their traditions revolve around ancestor worship, these tribes will fight to the death to prevent the flooding of ancestral graves, the submerging of rice terraces and fields on which they base their social, economic and religious system - a whole integrated way of life sustaining the manifold links between past, present and future.

FROM TRIBAL TO NATIONAL STRUGGLE

Opposition began in 1974 and gradually intensified in various forms. On one occasion, a government team was confronted by 200 Igorots armed with their traditional spears, shields and bolo knives. To persuade the Igorots, Marcos at first attempted blandishments and spurious appeals to patriotism. But the people have learned the truth from the past: in 1956 and 1960, two dams built in Benguet territory uprooted 30,000 Benguet people who, though promised resettlement, were forced out and their lands given to army veterans. Experiences in other dammed areas confirm this havoc of dispossession by force and deceit.

Today the Igorots know that Marcos' brand of capitalist development really serves the greedy profit-making interests of U.S. and other foreign corporations.
In May 1975, 150 Bontok and Kalinga leaders met and signed a peace pact in Manila, uniting themselves in formal opposition to the Chico River Basin Development Project. This unprecedented agreement surmounts the inter-tribal conflicts fostered by Spanish and American colonizers, compelling the tribes to unite against a common enemy: the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship. They vowed to prohibit their people from taking jobs with the NPC and to absolve anyone killing a member of the community found aiding the government. They slaughtered a pig in accordance with tribal custom to read the omen that "the struggle will be a protracted one but the people will triumph in the end."

For a while Marcos ordered the Dept. of Public Information to conduct propaganda with pamphlets in the Bontok language depicting how, without mentioning the dams, life can be improved by electricity. Added to this is the publicity of resettlement projects in strife-torn Mindanao where, besides the Muslims, other minorities like the Manobos, Bilaans, etc. are driven from their lands, massacred, imprisoned, and subjected to barbarous treatment. The Marcos regime predicts the acquiescence of the Igorots within six months.

In August 1975, the Bontoks and Kalingas celebrated their achievement with a prayer to the spirits: "Bless this soil which is the source of our livelihood. Never allow it to be under water, but grace it that it may produce abundantly."

Solidarity with the Igorots have come from numerous groups and sectors, especially from the Catholic clergy and religious orders (like the Association of Major Religious Superiors, etc.); critics of martial law and civil libertarians; organizations like the National Council of Churches and the Anthropological Society of the University of the Philippines whose members attest to the vital socio-cultural significance of the ricefields, burial grounds, and sacred groves to the inhabitants of Kalinga-Apayao Province. (Two anthropologists, Miraflor Parpan and Steve Mangano, who militantly defended the rights of the natives to self-determination, were subsequently arrested.) In a short period, the tribespeople have acquired an anti-fascist and anti-imperia-
list consciousness. They recognize that the U.S.-supported Marcos regime will sacrifice their spiritual and material well-being, commit any kind of repression and injustice, to satisfy the greed of U.S. corporations. They now understand that their resistance to the neocolonial puppet government has a radical basis: it shares the fundamental purposes and goals of native peoples all over the world struggling for the defense of their communal lands, for the enjoyment of basic democratic and human rights. A former Filipino senator, Lorenzo Tañada, inquired: "Does the government have the right of eminent domain over the lives, religion and culture of entire tribes of people?" And to repudiate the capitalist chauvinism of the government, Bishop Claver asserted: "The Igorot people seem to have a far richer and more comprehensive notion of human development than that espoused in practice by the government. They value material development ... but they value things of the spirit even more. Hence their concern for peoplehood, tradition, justice, loyalty, trust, freedom." To preserve these values, they are prepared to take up the gun and wage unrelenting revolutionary combat.

THE EXPLOSION

After a temporary suspension of its activities, the regime resorted to outright deception and intimidation, threats, bribery, and eventually State violence. These outrageous tactics to remove the people have been perpetrated by various agencies, notably the NPC (The National Power Corporation), Army Task Forces, Civilian Home Defense Units, PANAMIN, Department of Social Welfare, etc. Given this escalation of coercive means by the Marcos dictatorship, and after exhausting all legal and peaceful channels to prevent the deliberate annihilation of their lives, the Igorots had no alternative but armed resistance.

The New York Times of March 13, 1976 reported the ambush of two Civic Action Units, 13 of whose members were killed and four wounded by the tribespeople. Earlier the Philippine Constabulary chief, several governors and Major Roger Brown, the U.S. Base Commander of Camp John Hay (significantly, all mili-
tary operations against insurgents in the Philippines testify to the presence of U.S. military personnel actively involved in internal security matters) narrowly escaped death when the lead vehicle of their convoy was ambushed by the New People's Army predominantly composed of Igorots in Buguias, Benguet. Five soldiers were killed and several wounded.

The Mountain Provinces, about 400 miles north of the capital city Manila, have now been cordoned off by the government since the outbreak of fighting between the government troopers and the combined forces of Kalinga-Bontok tribesmen and the New People's Army. The NPA with two battalions of 300 men each and the Kalinga-Bontok militiamen (about 600) have been compelled to wage armed struggle when Marcos directed last January 1976 the arrest of anyone interfering with the hydro-electric project. Faced with the grave threat to their survival, the Bontoks and Kalingas signed a peace pact and vowed to fight to the death to protect their homes. The tribespeople have a distinct advantage over their enemy because they are on home terrain, the densely forested and rugged mountains that serve as ideal sanctuary for guerilla operations. Unsubjugated for centuries, the heroic and brave Igorots are highly conscious, well organized, and firmly determined to defend their ancestral lands and their collective existence as a people.

The anti-fascist revolt of the militant Igorots has inflicted severe punishment on the Marcos dictatorship. As early as October 25, 1972, a month after martial law was declared, three soldiers of a local PC command in Bontok were killed and two wounded by Igorots using home-made rifles and indigenous weapons like spears, head-axes and bolos. The ambush was in retaliation for their harassment and humiliation of Igorot women, against the chauvinism and racism of the soldiers. Numerous village heads appointed by the government to act as informers have been executed by the organized peasant masses of Danawe, Ifugao, and other provinces.

During the month of February 1973, government helicopters and jets strafed and bombed the woodcarvers' camps in Mt. Polis
and Mt. Amuyao in Ifugao, believing them guerilla bivouacs. This indiscriminate bombing stirred the revolutionary consciousness of the Igorots, revealing to them the cowardice of the military to face the guerillas on the ground. In November and December 1973, the government transformed the common border of the Igorot provinces of Bontok, Benguet and Ifugao into a "free-fire zone", Vietnam style, as it waged an encirclement campaign against suspected units of the New People's Army. This seriously disrupted the livelihood of the Igorots who had to flee to lowland areas hundreds of miles away.

Despite hardships and sacrifices, the Igorots are determined to remain faithful to their tradition of revolt. In a letter to Marcos dated 25 April 1975, the Catholic bishop Francisco Claver (of Bontoc descent) captured the essence of the Igorots' defiant spirit. He said the Igorots "cannot, will not accept the government's decree." In their thoughts ran "an overpowering sense of purpose and determination that was almost frightening." Earlier the Igorots had responded to the government project thus: "Development for whom? Others will be developed, but we - we are expected to go up to the mountains and eat grass. We are men, not animals ... We are not going to allow the destruction of our homes and fields as long as the breath of life is still in us."

The Igorots' challenge to the Chico dam is a challenge hurled defiantly at the martial law policy of the Marcos dictatorship, its idea of development and progress at the expense of the Filipino people and in the service of U.S. multinational corporations. It is also a resolute challenge to the U.S. monopoly-capitalists, whose ruling class directly benefits from prevailing dictatorships abroad and police repression at home. All native and Third World peoples, conducting their fight on various fronts, should unite against the common enemy and link all their various struggles to make one fist in order to win.
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INTRODUCTION

On May 19, 1976, guerilla fighters of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and its military arm, the Bangsa Moro Army (BMA), ambushed and destroyed a platoon of the 32nd infantry battalion of the Philippine army. These mercenary troops were engaged in a brutal indiscriminate killing of civilians in the town of Patikul, Jolo island, even as the Marcos dictatorship has boasted repeatedly that it had crushed the Muslim rebellion. A recent report described the raid of six towns in Mindanao (600 miles from Manila, the capital) by MNLF insurgents. Three-fourths of Marcos's army of 250,000, about 50 field battalions, are deployed in Mindanao and Sulu islands.

WHO ARE THE FILIPINO MUSLIMS?

Four million Muslims inhabit the islands of Mindanao and Sulu. They have historically maintained their independence from all colonizers, thwarting the designs of the Spanish, American, and Japanese invaders. This fierce and united resistance of the Muslim community forms part of over 500 years of autonomous existence, manifesting their high level of political consciousness in affirming their right to self-determination. In their fight for existence as an integral community, they have persevered in defending their ancestral territory and their cultural institutions. The Muslims were never entirely pacified during the three centuries of Spanish domination and the 76 years of American hegemony despite several vicious massacres inflicted upon them.

The well-known intractability of the Muslim freedom fighters dates back to their victorious struggle against Spanish colo-
nialism (1565-1898) and its Christian ideology. The Spanish authorities and expeditionary forces failed to subdue the closely knit and self-supporting Muslim communities of the Lake Lanao region and the Cotabato River area until 1914, when the Americans who replaced the Spaniards tried by brute force and bribery to win over a few chieftains.

In the early decades of the century, the U.S. conducted punitive expeditions and committed barbarous massacres. Typical of these were the battle of Bud Dajo in March 1906 and the Battle of Mt. Bagsak near Jolo in June 1913 in which about one thousand Muslim men, women and children were ruthlessly slaughtered by a mailed-fist policy implemented by the American administration. The main tactic of the Americans, following their predecessors, was a combination of "the carrot and stick." The Americans, however, laid emphasis on the use of Christian Filipinos in a systematic attempt to isolate and exterminate the Muslims. They also bribed sultans or datus, the Muslim leaders, to function as intermediaries between the Muslims and the colonial power. Religious intolerance served to foment divisions. The pretense of liberal concessions also served to co-opt the local hierarchy into acquiescence or active cooperation.

FROM DISCRIMINATION TO GENOCIDE

By the neocolonial period following sham independence in 1946, the tactics changed from one of using Christian Filipinos to point guns at their brother Muslims into one of arming the former with legal documents to infiltrate Muslim lands. Many of these settlers were the tenants of powerful absentee landlords who lived in Manila, or of political wheeler-dealers. Within 25 years this calculated encirclement of Muslim lands by outsiders with vested patrons was successfully enforced by land surveyors, Bureau of Land officials, and judges of the Court of Agrarian Relations - all institutions and representatives serving the monopoly interests of feudal landlords, bureaucrat capitalists, and compradors from the dominant Christian majority. This invasion transformed Mindanao: in 1914, it was 98% Muslim, today
it is only 40% Muslim. In the last ten years alone, the popula-
tion of Mindanao has been inflated by three-and-a-half mil-
lion Christian settlers, so that the entire population of Min-
danao and Sulu, which in 1948 was only 2.5 million has expanded
to its present 8.7 million, four million of whom are Muslims.

Of the five million odd Christian settlers, except for
2,171 landlords who wield power in Mindanao, and an almost so-
olidly Christian bureaucracy and professional services sector,
the majority are peasants. The credit for this change in the
demographic situation partly belongs to the CIA agent Ramon Mag-
saysay who implemented through the EDCOR program the transplan-
tation of wretched landless tenants in strife-torn Central Luzon.

The Huks, or peasant insurgents, in the Fifties and Sixties
surrendered to the government only to discover that the govern-
ment had no intention of making fundamental changes in their
lives. These peasants were made to infiltrate what was left of
the virgin lands, making it easier for U.S. and other foreign
corporate interests to increase their agro-industrial empires and
for the non-Muslim landowners to consolidate their hegemony.

For more than twenty years, the homesteaders were trans-
ported to Mindanao. But their deeds to a piece of uncleared
land or forest did not change their basic poverty, it only made
them more amenable victims of the unscrupulous merchants and
greedy speculators as soon as personal and environmental cala-
mities like the plague of rats, typhoons or malaria overwhelmed
them, forcing them to sell out their rights and hire themselves
out as wage slaves to the big landowners or the agro-industrial
consortiums that were already then beginning to slice up the
abundant resources of the islands.

Before martial law was imposed in 1972, massive landgrab-
bbing occurred under the Marcos administration, exacerbating the
mistrust of the Muslims for the central government, sharpening
the class struggle, and intensifying the Muslims' resolve to
combat their exploitation.
SKETCH OF CLASS RELATIONS

Over 30% of the Muslims are landless farmers or tenants. They are mercilessly exploited by a combination of the traditional feudal landlords and the more modern merchant or entrepreneurial class tied to foreign trans-national companies. These compradors (middlemen of foreign corporations) and landlords connive with the corrupt government officials and military officers in manipulating the political and legal institutions to oppress the Muslims. The remaining Muslims are rural and urban workers, craftsmen or artisans, petty professionals like clerks and salesmen, etc. They are subjected heavily to skyrocketing prices of basic commodities and other necessities (medical care, for example) due to rapid inflation (50% this year), degrading working conditions, unfair taxation, unemployment (over 35% throughout the country), and discrimination in all forms by chauvinist elements in the Christian-controlled bureaucracy - a few families associated with the ruling clique.

We should note here that the oppression of the majority by U.S. imperialism and its lackeys has often been mediated by the traditional aristocracy of sultans and datus who resemble medieval despots, lavishing king’s ransom on the marriage of their daughters and using their control over the Muslim community to beg for concessions from the central government. Many of these traitors (the Tamanos, Sinsuats, Pendatuns, etc.) have renounced the struggle of their people by actively supporting the fascist regime, while they see their own century-old feudal privileges threatened by the new class consciousness of the working people. The Muslim freedom fighter today will oppose anyone, whether Christian or Muslim, who denies his fundamental rights to justice, freedom and independence.

U.S. IMPERIALISM - THE MAIN ENEMY

While the fascist Marcos regime and the reactionary classes (with a handful of Muslim renegades) it represents is the immediate enemy, the principal long-range enemy of the Muslims and
other national minorities in the Philippines is U.S. imperialism. The two must be dynamically inter-related in every concrete situation, adjusting the tactical resistance to the local agent with the strategic struggle against U.S. intervention, in order to fight for democracy and national liberation.

Mindanao and Sulu islands comprise one of the richest sources of raw materials for the trans-national corporations, principally U.S. For Muslim peasants and workers, who provide cheap labor, U.S. imperialism is not an abstract concept. It is clearly visible in the rapacious operations of U.S. agribusiness (together with Japanese and other aliens) that profit from the regime's blanket repression of Muslims, Christians, and other tribal groups. Among these firms are United Fruit Co. (Del Monte), Dole (fruits), Weyerheuser (lumber), Firestone, Goodrich, Goodyear (rubber) and other companies engaged in mining, light industry, and commerce. With the aid of their Filipino Muslim and Christian junior partners, these corporations have tremendously maximized their profits, taking advantage of the tax-free incentives, 100% free repatriation of profits and capital, and other privileges granted by the regime. Japanese corporations have joined the pack, competing with American business in dispossessing the Muslims of their ancestral homes, trampling on their farms and cultural institutions, plundering their natural resources.

Since 1962, Dole (a subsidiary of Hawaii-based Castle and Cook) has leased for 25 years over 19,200 acres in Mindanao for gigantic pineapple and coffee plantations, cannery, port facilities, warehouses, etc. Dole pays only $4.50 per year to the govt. for each acre leased. One-third of Dole's output (250,000 tons a year) is grown in Mindanao. Dole's labor-intensive cannery employs some 5,000 workers and pays 11-12¢ an hour for an eleven-hour day. Field workers are paid nine cents an hour. The other fruit enterprise, Del Monte, (operating as Philippine Packing Corporation) controls over 17,429 acres of cannery and plantation in Bukidnon and elsewhere.

By entering into "management contracts" with local feudal
or semi-feudal landowners, and through sheer buying of government officials, these corporations have evaded the legal ownership ceiling of 2,252.8 acres. An example of their collusion with the regime is the fact that Defense Secretary Enrile, who is in overall charge of the military suppression campaign against the Muslims, is Dole's corporation lawyer and director. Directly subordinate to the U.S. Military Advisory Group which supervises the Philippine Armed forces, Enrile commands a whole army to back up his legal arguments and his client's thefts. Thanks to Marcos' subservience, Dole's profits have risen and their operations have expanded - until they were cut short by Muslim resistance.

Since 1970, the Philippines has become the major supplier of bananas to Japan. The large producers in Mindanao are the Tagum Development Company (a subsidiary of United Fruit Co.) and Del Monte. These companies, notorious for their pillage of Latin America, reap profits averaging at best 71,000 pesos ($9,700) for each hectare every year. Yet they lease the lands from the small farmers, often under government pressure, for only 250-500 pesos per hectare each year. Standard Fruit Company, another Castle and Cook holding, also participates in this rip-off, converting farmers into low-wage workers on their own lands or into impoverished tenants.

Other industries also occupy land in the contested regions of Mindanao. Four U.S. timber companies with extensive logging operations control 13% of all lands held in long-term concessions. Most of the timber is shipped to Japan and the U.S. The forest destruction rate inflicted by these companies has been conservatively estimated to be nine times the reforestation rate. With the Muslims controlling roads and traffic, logging, canning and other commercial activities have been halted or considerably reduced.

In rubber, B.F. Goodrich, Goodyear and Firestone, each with more than 10,000 hectares, received 97% of all rubber income in the Philippines by the early Seventies. These companies received an average return on equity of 38.3 per cent in 1970.
These U.S.-controlled plantations have driven the small farmers, Muslims and Christians alike, and pagan inhabitants of the forests, from their ancestral lands. They have reduced these people to working for subsistence wages (if at all), producing commodities like canned pineapples that most Filipinos cannot afford - 80% of the pineapple crop goes to the U.S., Japan, and Europe. As more land is turned over for export crops, the acreage for production of food crops diminishes, making the country dependent on expensive food imports.

With the recent discovery of oil in the Sulu Seas by a consortium of oil companies (among them Standard Oil, Texaco, Mobil), Mindanao will become a more turbulent area disputed by foreign investors and the millions of working people living there.

UNITED FRONT OF NATIONAL MINORITIES AND CHRISTIAN PEASANTS

Besides the Muslims, there are other equally or more oppressed groups struggling for fundamental democratic rights. These are the Bilaans, Manobos, Bukidnons, Bagobos, Tirurays, and Tasadays (the last recently colonized by PANAMIN director Elizalde and safely deposited in reservations), all of whom constitute about 5% of the diverse population of Mindanao.

Like the Igorots of Northern Luzon, these minorities have a long history of heroic resistance to political and cultural colonizers, including today's dictatorship. Because of their skill in jungle fighting even with their crude weapons, and their allegiance to the New People's Army, the Communist-led guerilla outfit, the minorities have become the first targets of U.S. Special Forces (Green Berets) who have tried to win them away from the "rebels" and back into the fold of the exploitative system. Now that the Muslims and these other aboriginal groups have recognized that they have a common enemy - U.S. imperialism and its agents - they have begun to unite.

Fifty-five per cent of the settlers in Mindanao are Christians many of whom are poor and wretched as the Muslims whose lands they used to encircle. But as the martial law regime con-
 Continues to aggravate their living conditions and subject them to various forms of injustice and persecution, they have begun to join the New People's Army (NPA). They have begun to realize that the alleged contradiction between Muslim and Christian is a totally false one contrived by their rulers to keep the oppressed from uniting together to repudiate their collective slavery. They now understand how religious differences have been manipulated to cunningly divide and oppress the downtrodden.

From Basilan to Davao Province, the NPA and the MNLF are forging close ties in a national democratic united front, something unforeseen by the fascist government which had counted on the old religious suspicions to permanently drive a wedge between them. In April 1973, the government admitted that among the 16,000 to 22,000 armed partisans, Christians from the north fight side by side with Muslims, Bilaans, and other ethnic groups, all of them inflamed by the demand for land, liberty and justice. For the second time in Philippine history - the first occurred in 1896 against the Spaniards - exploited Christian farmers are fighting side by side with Muslims, Igorots, and other minorities, outwitting the U.S.-supported enemy.

The Muslims, it is true, fight with passion and determination because their hope is for an autonomous region in those parts of Mindanao and Sulu which are 85% Muslim, a hope which the progressive forces respect and endorse. The position of the NPA-MNLF coalition is very precise in denouncing the tendency to see the struggle as a religious war, or even predominantly a secessionist one - though the right to secession is affirmed as part of the fundamental right to self-determination. The April 1973 manifesto underscores this principle in its demand that the government's violation of human rights of Muslims and non-Muslims alike must cease. Of the 19 demands presented to the government, we quote the following (published by Free Philippines News Service, 24 April 1973, and reprinted in IDOC DOCUMENT No. 5, An Asian Theology of Liberation: The Philippines (1973), pp. 63-64:

Withdrawal of all government troops in all troubled areas; they are the cause of these troubles.
Disbandment of the BSDU (Barrio Self-Defense Units) and LSDF (Local Self-Defense Forces); they are only made tools to fight the Moros.

Stop planting hatred between the Moros and the Christians; this is not a religious war.

Arrest and prosecute all the culprits in the recent killings of innocent Moro civilians.

Return all lands taken from the Moros.

Stop burning, plundering and pillaging Moro barrios, orchards and other valuable properties.

Stop govt. troopers from abusing our places of worship.

Stop govt. troopers from abusing our women.

Allow us to practice the Islamic laws and our customs and traditions in our localities, and without restriction and curtailment.

In all future military operations, we challenge the military authorities to direct their guns at us, the Moro fighters and not at innocent civilians; above all, observe all civilized laws of war, especially the Geneva Agreement.

We want freedom, justice, equality and peaceful co-existence.

At the time of this manifesto, the Muslims claimed an "unprecedented stronghold" in 17 provinces in Mindanao. Subsequently, at a conference on 17 April 1975, held in Zamboanga, between the government and Muslim representatives, Moro commanders presented Marcos the following demands:

1. Creation of an autonomous outer Muslim province in Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan within the framework of the Constitution of the Philippine Republic;

2. Recognition and implementation of the Agama Law in all the Muslim provinces;

3. Return of all ancestral lands and evacuees;

4. Withdrawal of all aggressive forces of the Armed Forces of the Philippines from all Muslim ancestral lands.

In a statement published in the Far Eastern Economic Review (27 June 1975), Abul Khayr Alonto, vice-chairman of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) reiterated the above demands and summed them all up: "We are not seceding. All we want is an autonomous federal state ... Complete independence for our people and our homeland was our point of departure when we reached the stage of revolution .... It's a fact that our people still want freedom and complete independence."
UPSURGE OF THE RESISTANCE

Contrary to the dictatorship's charge that the Muslim rebellion is instigated by foreign powers, the fact is that this resistance springs from the discontent and anger of the people who have been discriminated for a long time, repressed, and evicted from their lands. The MNLF enjoys broad support not just from the Muslim population but also from the Chinese and Christians who (as many journalists have testified) freely offer their homes, food and use of their vehicles and boats. This cooperation is absent in the contacts between the fascist troops and the community which despises the government for its abuses, atrocities, and massacres of innocent men, women, and children.

Proof of the people's collaboration with the insurgents, and of the formidable political strength of the MNLF, is their liberation for three days of the center of Muslim culture, Jolo City, in February 1974. This was achieved with the active cooperation of the city's inhabitants, including the city mayor and his police force. In retaliation, Marcos ordered the city destroyed, killing 2,000 people, mostly civilians, and leaving homeless about 80,000 people.

Since then the regime has continued to pursue its wanton genocidal campaign against the Muslims, indiscriminately bombing and strafing suspected rebel-controlled areas. The government also employs napalm and chemical weapons. After the recent tidal wave and earthquake which killed about 8,000 people in Mindanao, Marcos was quoted in the Western press saying that the disaster happily will put an end to the Muslim rebellion. Such a callous and barbaric attitude corresponds to the actual deeds of the regime. A secret report of a government fact-finding team recorded that in the month of November 1974 alone, 20,000 Muslims were killed by the army in the Muslim area of Sultan Kudarat, North Cotabato. About 40,000 Muslims have been killed to date, at least 1.7 million refugees created, and still the genocide continues.

Periodically, because of its defeats and the adverse international opinion (particularly from the Islamic nations which,
in June 1974, through the Islamic Conference, condemned Marcos' genocidal policy toward the Muslims), the Marcos regime has announced ceasefire after ceasefire and the occasional surrender of Muslim rebels. But the truth is that the government continues to keep 50 of 57 field battalions in Mindanao, and to rearm the Christian settlers in counter-insurgency schemes like the Civilian Home Defense Forces advised by U.S.-AID and the CIA. More than one thousand U.S. Special Forces (Civic Action Teams) have been deployed in Mindanao and Sulu.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

After martial law was declared in 1972, the national and ethnic minorities actively fighting the dictatorship began to unite with an exchange of views.

In a letter of July 10, 1973, (reported by the Free Philippines News Service), the Cordillera Revolutionary Council in the highlands of Central Luzon (Igorots and other tribes) denounced the Marcos regime's tactic of "divide-and-rule" in which minority groups are pitted against each other. As in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, the Council said, the regime is trying to win over several minority groups to its side because it "would like us to fight and die for their economic and political interests." The highlanders' message was in reply to a letter dated June 12, 1973, addressed to "the peoples of the mountain provinces" by the propaganda committee of the Muslim freedom fighters.

In their letter, the Muslims revealed a plan of the martial law regime to send big numbers of Igorots to Mindanao for combat operations. "We... are suffering injustices, discrimination and facing... the extinction of our identity, the annihilation of the Muslim populace. Soon, if they (Marcos and the U.S.) succeed, you, our brother minorities, will be the next," the Muslims said. The Muslims appealed to the Igorots to resist being sent to the anti-Muslim campaign, for "you don't have anything against us, as we have nothing against you."

In response, the Cordillera Revolutionary Council praised the unity of the Muslim Filipinos and their willingness to
struggle for their basic rights. The highlanders pointed out: "We understand the nature of your struggle. Like you, our people are in the clutches of the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship. Our rich mineral and forest wealth is controlled by the American, Japanese and Kuomintang Chinese capitalists. We too have landlords. Slowly, our people are being forced to live a reservation type of life, for they are being pushed into pockets in order to give way to the expansion program of the imperialists. Laws were made which worked against us. Thus, by a stroke of the pen, our ancestral lands were taken away from us, our mineral and forest wealth were plundered and we were made slave-workers. In total disregard of our future, our lands were classified as wildlife parks, national parks and forest reserves." Just as there are "opportunist Igorots" who collaborate with the dictatorship against the mountain people, so there are reactionary Muslim soldiers in the mountain provinces, in Isabela and elsewhere fighting the revolutionary forces, according to the CRC. "But slowly the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship is being isolated and encircled... Therefore, we are hopeful that a time will soon come when we the revolutionary fighters from the national cultural minorities will join all the revolutionary masses to deal a crushing death blow to the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship."

THE PROSPECT AHEAD

Today, people's war - an anti-fascist and anti-imperialist struggle - rages all over the islands. The Moro National Liberation Front representing 4 million Muslims is leading the democratic struggle against U.S. corporations and its agents. It has liberated foreign-owned plantations and strategic towns, posing the most dangerous threat to the unpopular and isolated Marcos regime. The revolutionary commitment of the Muslims is not individual but collective, for they are fighting for their existence as a people with their own traditions and aspirations.

It is an oversimplification to see the struggle in Mindanao as primarily a Muslim struggle, for the fact is that like the alliance of Igorots and the New People's Army in the north, the
Muslims and the NPA have begun to work together in coordinating mass bases and undertaking intensive political work. Other national minorities have joined the alliance.

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Felix Razon

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Shaded parts of the map indicate areas with consistent guerilla activities.
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