

General Review Of Important Events And Decisions (1980-1991)

Supplement to "Reaffirm Our Basic Principles and Rectify Errors"

Central Committee Communist Party of the Philippines

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- I. General Review of the Past
- II. 1980-1983
- III. From the Aquino Assassination, 1983 to the Edsa Uprising, 1986
- IV. 1986-1987
- V. 1988-1991

During the 1980s, the Party and the revolutionary movement had made unprecedented advances and victories but these were not sustained. Eventually, there was a loss of momentum and an increasing loss of initiative, which finally led to unprecedented setbacks.

The analysis of the roots and circumstances of the entire course of the revolution during the past more than one decade in order to draw lessons and clarify the path for the restrengthening and continuous and all-sided advance is the main objective of any comprehensive summing up of experiences during this period.

This paper is a chronology of the most important events and decisions in the practice of the Party during the past more than one decade. This has been made on the basis of the discussions of the 10th Plenum of the Central Committee. Its aims to provide cadres and members of the Party with a comprehensive understanding of the general flow of revolutionary practice during the previous decade and to unify the view of the entire Party on this.

This chronology supplements the main summing-up and rectification document, "Reaffirm Our Basic Principles and Rectify the Errors" and, as such, is still raw material relative to the higher level of synthesis and elevation of our practice to theory as has been achieved by the main rectification document. Nevertheless, this chronology also contains an evaluation of important events and decisions from the point of view of principles and the practical movement.

Because of the long period that the Party failed to make a comprehensive summing-up of its experiences and the pileup of errors, shortcomings and weaknesses, which have not yet been thoroughly and correctly summed up, a short summing-up document and a short chronology of crucial events and decisions will not suffice.

Some events and issues in the past which might have had a direct bearing on an incident, a line of work or an area may be discovered as not having been considered here. It is expected that these will be taken up in the summings-up of particular lines of work or areas, or else in a new edition of the main document of summing-up and chronology if necessary.

1. General Review of the Past

The crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal system deepened during the past decade. The socioeconomic crisis and the factional strife of the reactionaries reached a new level of intensity and gravity. The masses in the countryside and cities became very receptive to revolutionary propaganda and organizing, participated in large numbers in economic and political struggles, and enthusiastically supported the armed revolution.

In the first three years of the decade the revolutionary movement rapidly expanded and became stronger. The momentum in 1980-1983 was achieved within the general framework of expanding the guerrilla fronts throughout the entire archipelago; intensifying the war through more widespread and more frequent tactical offensives; rigorous balancing of the armed struggle, mass base building, agrarian revolution, and Party building; relying mainly on the squads and the platoons, which took charge of both military work and mass work and which were ordinarily dispersed but were concentrated when the need arose; the movement in the city wholeheartedly supporting the expansion efforts in the countryside; and comprehensively developing the movement in the various areas of the struggle.

By 1983, we had gone beyond the early substage of national expansion in the guerrilla warfare which had started from almost nothing. The guerrilla fronts and the open and underground movements in the cities, which had surged forward in various parts of the archipelago, had been established in almost all the regions. We had moved towards the more advanced substage of the strategic defensive. In addition, after the Aquino assassination, the U.S.-Marcos fascist dictatorship had become extremely isolated and the masses had been aroused to an extraordinary degree of participation in political struggles.

But under such a situation, we got excessively carried away by the initial successes and opportunities opened up by the extraordinarily favorable objective conditions. The people's war had just moved beyond the early substage of the strategic defensive but we immediately preoccupied ourselves with issues concerning the leap to the higher strategic stage and to the strategic victory. Our obsession with these issues grew to the extent that we neglected the fact that the forces of reaction, despite their serious crisis were still on the strategic offensive.

In fact, the real concern should have been on efforts at accumulating more strength through more widespread and more intensive guerrilla warfare; and further expansion of the guerrilla fronts and simultaneously creating within these fronts wider bastions of the revolution from the existing small guerrilla bases and consolidated areas; the painstaking work of transforming our broad influence and linkages with the masses into solid, intensive and all-round organized strength; and the continuous strengthening of leadership over the broad masses -- while steadily weakening the forces of reaction and resolutely taking advantage of splits among the reactionaries.

Instead, what evolved were concepts of advancing characterized by undue haste, deviations from the line and strategy of the people's democratic revolution and setting targets well beyond our actual capacity and level of development. There was a loosening of our grasp of the concept of all-round advance and painstaking mass work. Our understanding and measure of achievement were extremely narrowed (one-sided) and drawn towards heightening the struggles; influencing the entire population; and speculating on the factional strife of the reactionaries.

The central leadership of the Party conceived of the program of the strategic counteroffensive (SCO) strongly influenced by a desire to quickly achieve a leap to the higher strategic stage and gave impetus to the hasty and premature "regularization" and to ideas of toying with insurrection, even if there was continued adherence to the strategic stages of development and to the essential balancing of the armed struggle, agrarian revolution and mass base building.

In Mindanao, from the desire for an insurrection to achieve a big leap or victory, the insurrectionist "Red area-White area" (RA-WA) schema was developed and this promoted the line of all-out intensification of the struggle through a combination of army "regularization" in the countryside and "politico-military struggles" in the cities for the purpose of rapidly bringing about an explosion into an insurrection.

After the 9th CC Plenum, the SCO program emerged in the form of an intertwining of the correct and the wrong lines. Under this program, premature "regularization", all-out armed partisan warfare, the obsession with "general paralyzing actions", a reckless concept of peasant uprisings

and a shifty insurrectionist concept of “seizing opportunities” gained ground.

In the main, the movement continued to expand and the struggles intensified up to 1987. In fact -- while the enemy was caught still unprepared and preoccupied with adjusting to the new situation -- harder and more resounding blows could be inflicted on the enemy forces.

However, as quickly as the struggle intensified, so did the imbalances in the deployment of the forces and tasks, the erosion of our forces and mass support, and the increasing vulnerability of the revolutionary forces, especially the mass base. Our bitter experience has demonstrated that such a course for advancing could not be sustained, that the successes had been merely temporary and, had eventually, led to loss of initiative and finally to grave setbacks.

From 1988, there has been a drastic decline of the revolutionary forces throughout the country. In the face of massive, widespread and continuous enemy offensives in the countryside and the cities, the deficiency and weaknesses of our forces and our mass base, which had been concealed for a number of years by dramatic military actions, “general paralyzing actions”, broad propaganda and the clashes among the reactionaries, became exposed.

Nevertheless, we are still far from the danger of being totally defeated by the enemy. Although the losses have been serious, the errors and deviations have not continued to do damage; the premature strategically decisive battle did not occur. Despite the disorientation, the overreaching and the reckless offensives, firm adherence to basic principles has prevailed among the majority of cadres and members.

Even in Mindanao, the insurrectionist line had not been fully consolidated. Only a few leading cadres carried the full insurrectionist line. Its worst effect on others has been the insurrectionist disorientation arising from the desire for quick victory and from the wrong concept of “seizing opportunities”. Moreover, the majority of cadres, especially in the regions, continue to adhere firmly to the principle of protracted people’s war and to the lessons drawn during the period of building the guerrilla fronts and the guerrilla forces. The insurrectionist line had been rendered ineffective by the impact of the damage caused by the hysteria of the anti-infiltration campaign (the Aho campaign) and the change in the political situation.

Throughout the country, the Party’s leading committees and cadres in the regions, who could closely monitor the forces and the work among the masses, stood as the biggest obstacle to the implementation of the line of premature regularization and to insurrectionist illusions even when the tendency to rush and overreach was at its height in 1987 and 1988. They were the first and the strongest to object to the excessive targets and to lead in making adjustments to save the forces and the mass base. When the Politburo reversed the entire plan and the priorities in 1989 and started to undertake the rectification, the Party committees in the majority of the regions quickly responded.

The existence and propagation of big errors and deviations in about one decade is traceable to and reflects the main weaknesses and shortcomings in building the Party ideologically, politically and organizationally. Within the Party, the comprehension and distinction of what is right and wrong on many issues regarding the theory, principles, history and practice of the movement have loosened, blurred and dimmed for more than a decade.

The mixing of right and wrong did not only lead to setbacks in the practical movement; it also wrought damage to the Party’s ideological and political integrity and, recently, even to its organizational integrity. The liberalism, muddle and confusion with regard to the basic principles should be thoroughly overcome in order for the Party to strengthen itself and to undertake its tasks of leading the revolution firmly and correctly.

Because of the duration and extent of the confusion and deviations, the task of rectifying and repudiating them will not be easy. The rust that has eaten into the mind and body of the Party has

thickened and an intense internal ideological struggle and a thoroughgoing rectification movement are necessary in order to strip it off and revitalize the Party.

At present the overall strength of the Party, the people's army and the mass movement in the countryside and city is more or less at the level of 1983 and 1984. Our armed forces and our mass base are sizable; the movement is extensive and possesses a certain level of consolidation and strength all over the country.

The accurate summing-up of experiences especially during the decade of the 80s and the repudiation of the errors and deviations are a big leap in the Party's knowledge, in its understanding of Marxism-Leninism and correct application of theory on concrete practice. If we put ourselves on the correct course again, the strength we have built and continue to wield until now, is sufficient for us to proceed from the level of development that had been interrupted and derailed by 1983, and we now have the opportunity to do so in an all-sided, solid and sustained manner.

In the following sections we pursue the most significant events and decisions from 1980. The discussion is divided into four sections: 1980-1983; the Aquino Assassination in 1983 - EDSA Uprising in 1986; 1986-1987; and 1988-1991.

II. 1980-1983

At the beginning of the 1980s, the economy declined and further intensified the people's deprivations. Protests and mass struggles in the countryside and the cities became widespread. The weaknesses of the fascist camp became exposed and the support it enjoyed from the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class weakened. The US- Marcos fascist dictatorship became more vulnerable to challenges and attacks from various flanks.

Meanwhile, the revolutionary movement had been well positioned for a big advance. Under the guidance of "Our Urgent Tasks" (OUT), there was a clear understanding of the correct antifascist, antifeudal and anti-imperialist line against the U.S.-Marcos fascist dictatorship as well as of the tasks of building guerrilla fronts and guerrilla units, and of the policy of advancing step by step, comprehensively and continuously. By relying on the masses and on itself, the Party had succeeded in setting up the organizations of the Party, the people's army and the mass movement in the various regions and these had been vigorously growing in strength. Tactical offensives of the people's army had increased and become widespread all over the archipelago.

During the 8th CC plenum in 1980, the experiences in building the first guerrilla fronts were summed up and the stress was laid on continuing to expand boldly while preparing the requisites for intensifying guerrilla warfare. The Party was able to grasp the exceedingly favorable conditions and the importance of seizing the political initiative. It focused the hardest blows on the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship in order to hit US imperialism and its principal puppet directly.

The guerrilla fronts vigorously expanded and grew in strength and many more were built rapidly. The advanced guerrilla fronts served to mother many more by becoming the source of advanced experiences and of seed elements and arms and by assisting in the setting up and strengthening of other fronts. Up to 1981, significant numbers of cadres and mass activists went to the countryside from the cities. In addition, there was direct legal organizing in the countryside undertaken by selected city-based units.

From 1980 to 1982, the number of barrios covered had yearly increases of more than 1,200 and the mass organizations' membership, of more than 50,000. Hundreds of thousands of peasants were mobilized and benefited from the open and underground implementation of the minimum program of the agrarian revolution whose level of implementation reached up to district or interdistrict levels. The open peasant mass actions against fascist abuse and in connection with

agricultural issues such as the coconut monopoly and the land disputes in Sta. Isabel and San Antonio increased.

In 1982 and 1983, guerrilla fronts effectively covered almost entire provinces and big chunks of regions in all parts of the country. The guerrilla fronts in Mindanao, Samar, Negros and Bicol covered from two-thirds to three-fourths of the total land area and number of barrios. The guerrilla fronts extended to well populated areas, including environs of town centers, along highways, seashore and plains. These provided the guerrilla forces with wide areas in which to swim, with numerous lines of communications and supply, and more importantly, strengthened our direct political work and influence in entire municipalities and provinces.

The guerrilla fronts achieved a certain level of consolidation and strength through step-by-step organizing, implementation of the minimum program of land reform, political education, the building of basic Party units, the building of the people's militia units, mass mobilizations to support the army and the launching of various types of mass campaigns. Organs of democratic power and popular control could cover three to five contiguous barrios and, in some places, the area covered by entire sections. Party organizations and structures were built at the front, district and section levels.

In 1981, we correctly made the call for an intensification of the guerrilla warfare through more widespread and more frequent tactical offensives. It was appropriate to the general political situation and to the extent and strength of the guerrilla fronts. Tactical offensives were launched in more guerrilla fronts and at a more frequent rate in each guerrilla front.

Guerrilla units increasingly focused on military work were formed. From 1982 guerrilla platoons were formed in the most advanced fronts and soon reached the number of 34 for the entire country. The squads, which numbered more than 200, were definitely more numerous and widespread. The training of guerrilla units was systematized and improved.

Mass work had been the main emphasis of the army, but some 800 to 900 high powered rifles were confiscated from the enemy every year by the squads and the platoons which simultaneously attended to both mass work and military work. Small ambushes and arms confiscations were conducted extensively and from time to time big ambushes and raids were also conducted by bringing together separate units.

In the cities, the democratic mass movement further expanded; the protest movement grew and became more militant. Spurred by the upsurge of the mass movement in Manila-Rizal and the formation or strengthening of Party units in the cities, open and underground mass organizations, sectoral and multisectoral alliances were organized and grew almost from scratch in the major cities of the different regions. We had overcome our earlier satisfaction with having only narrow secret cells and contacts in many major cities and we boldly expanded the open mass movement.

The Party-led trade unions were determinedly expanded, a progressive union center was formed and the strike movement gained momentum until the fall of the dictatorship and even after. By persevering in revolutionary propaganda and organizing and in resolute struggle, we broke through the cloud of fascist terror and the long-standing dominance of the yellow trade union movement.

The students repeatedly launched boycotts and protest actions against tuition fee increases and for democratic reforms. In 1981, these peaked in the form of nationally coordinated campaigns. Increasing numbers from the urban petty-bourgeois sectors were aroused and mobilized in sectoral organizations and struggles, in political protests, and in supporting the struggle of the working classes and the political prisoners.

Up to 1982, what stood out in the urban mass movement were the sectoral and economic struggles of the workers and the students. Nevertheless, a few coordinated multisectoral

campaigns had already started such as the campaign during the Pope's visit and the 1981 presidential election boycott. The revolutionary forces led the massive open political mobilizations with the participation of a broad range of antifascist forces, including peasants from the countryside.

From 1981, alliance and relations work with different progressive and antifascist political forces was further expanded. The main priority was given to the setting up of the National Democratic Front, the broad legal alliances, the sectoral alliances, and the issue-based alliances and tactical cooperation with the broadest range of antifascist forces.

By attending to the different levels of alliances and contacts, the basic revolutionary forces (Party, army, revolutionary mass organizations) continuously expanded and grew in strength, together with the rapid expansion of our political leadership and influence over the people in general and our active exploitation of the factional strife among the reactionaries. The Party's links with all the sectors at various levels -- municipal, provincial, regional and national -- expanded.

There were efforts to build the NDF provisional standing committee, with the participation of some allies. The NDF secretariat was formed. It strengthened propaganda work and broadened direct and secret contacts and discussions with various political forces and personalities.

Work among the national minorities expanded and developed. The struggle of the minorities against the Chico Dam became stronger and this accelerated the growth and consolidation of the revolutionary movement in the Cordilleras. The Cordillera Peoples Democratic Front (CPDF) was built as the revolutionary united front organization of the people in the Cordilleras. In Mindanao, the orientation of independent political work in combination with alliance work was expounded.

Overseas, the role of the NDF spokesperson, who was designated in 1976, and the Party units were strengthened in order to expand the work of propaganda, relating with potential friends and organizing overseas Filipinos.

With the rapid advance in the different fields and areas of work, the party organization developed and expanded throughout the country. The Party went beyond being a cadre party and assumed a broad mass character. From 1980 to 1983, Party membership expanded at an annual average of almost 4,000. The basic Party units in many barrios, factories, schools and communities were set up.

The Party machinery was able to cover the whole country more effectively. The regional Party organizations acquired substance: committees of the Party were set up at different territorial levels -- front, district and section -- as well as within the army. The national Party organs were strengthened through the promotion of cadres from the regions and the setting up of staff organs.

Within the general framework of advancing the people's war, leading Party committees strove to deepen and enrich their understanding of the particular direction of advancing the revolutionary struggle. Various summings-up were conducted at different levels under the guidance of the policies enunciated in "Our Urgent Tasks" and researches into the conditions and social investigations at the level of the regions were undertaken.

A campaign to study the basic Party course was undertaken. This provided a comprehensive and systematic, albeit initial, comprehension of the basic principles of the Party and the history of Philippine society and revolution.

On the other hand, in the face of the exceedingly favorable conditions and the rapid advance of the revolution, the tendency towards haphazardness and haste grew strong. Ideas that promoted overreaching and concepts giving way to sharp deviations from the line of protracted people's war and to grievous tactical errors in later years at the height of the antifascist struggle arose.

The problems of remedying gaps and weaknesses, as well as of gaining the skills to handle new and more complicated tasks in building the Party, the army and the mass base that had been identified in 1980 were not given sufficient and consistent attention. In succeeding years, these were increasingly neglected and the problems worsened. In Party work, there were deficiencies in education and training, building and consolidating the basic units, consistent expansion and all-round consolidation ideologically, politically and organizationally. In mass work, there were the longstanding problems of the extremely small number of the masses being organized relative to the extent of our influence, the tendency to stagnate at a low level of mass organizing, the haphazard education and propaganda work, and the deficiencies in sustaining mass campaigns. In army building, there were the problems of ideological, political and organizational consolidation in addition to those of logistics, finance, medical work and technique.

The 1981 Politburo meeting asserted that there had been a turn in the antidictatorship struggle during the year. The Politburo asserted that what stood out to characterize such a turn was the extreme isolation of the fascist dictatorship, when the armed struggle entered the advanced substage of the strategic defensive and the revolutionary movement attained general leadership of the antidictatorship struggle although a sizeable block of the anti-Marcos reactionaries still existed. In line with such an assertion, the three-year program drawn up by the 8th CC Plenum was revised.

The general task set for the advanced substage was the intensification of guerrilla warfare and the preparation of the requisites for advancing into the strategic counteroffensive (SCO), which was identified as the third substage of the strategic defensive. The following essential tasks for the advanced substage were set:

- a. Uniting the revolutionary forces; drawing in one section of the reformist bloc;
- b. Sufficient preparation for the people to directly participate in the war; the full development of the revolutionary mass organizations and the broad legal organizations; mass actions and growing support for guerrilla warfare;
- c. Demoralization of a large part of the enemy troops; neutralization of the police forces; infliction of effective blows on the enemy and active defeat of his military operations;
- d. Extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare; formation of many full-time guerrilla units and militia units; expansion of partisan warfare; building of the commands and necessary units; building the mass base and the guerrilla zones; and
- e. Development of relations with foreign friends and allies for international recognition and support.

The SCO concept revolved around the coordination of regular warfare, guerrilla warfare, mass uprisings and mass actions, with the objective of achieving a leap in the war from the strategic defensive towards the strategic stalemate, and probably even up to a decisive victory, should U.S. imperialism and the local reactionaries be forced to yield to a political compromise. The essential tasks for the SCO were set as follows:

- a. General polarization of the political forces; extreme isolation of the diehards; decisive elimination of the bourgeois reformists as a political force;
- b. Actual and active participation of the people in the war. ("The proletarian leadership, through the Party, over the people and the war in the countryside and the cities will become more apparent.");

c. Regular warfare in combination with guerrilla warfare, insurrections and mass actions ("Regular warfare at its height will play the leading role in the decisive battles. The military requirements for building the base areas will be achieved and the enemy will be forced to radically change the disposition of its forces and concentrate these in strategic locations.");

d. Crashing, dismantling or paralyzing the bureaucracy; and

e. Frustrating direct U.S. aggression.

The proposal to categorize Philippine society as semicolonial, semifeudal and semicapitalist on the basis of a supposed change in the class structure according to the census of the reactionary government was presented to, but was rejected by, the Political Bureau. The proposition that the strategy of surrounding the cities from the countryside implied having base areas and big regular formations from the start of the people's war and was thus particular only to China and not applicable to the Philippines was similarly rejected. Nevertheless, the impression was created that we had opened the strategic line of people's war to a fundamental review.

Another proposal was also presented regarding the three strategic coordinations as a guiding concept in strategy. According to this concept, the coordination of the cities and the countryside, of the political and the armed struggles and of the domestic and international struggles was central to the strategy. Within the concept of rural-urban coordination were the formula of a 60/40 rural/urban work balance, the concept of the working class-peasantry combination as main force of the revolution, and the concept of political struggle with emphasis on a broad urban-centered political movement.

The proposed idea went against the correct policy of all-round advance and use of various forms of organization and struggle: legal and illegal, open and secret, armed and non-armed. In it was a tendency to exaggerate the weight of, if not altogether focus on, the urban struggle in undertaking the broad political preparation of the people for a higher stage of the war. It encouraged the drift away from the line that it is in the countryside where the main strength of the revolution is accumulated, not only militarily but also politically. Thus, was the door opened to overemphasizing the role of urban struggle as well as to views that pushed for the separation of military work from political work in the countryside.

The Politburo set the proposal aside for further study. Albeit, in the clarification of the tasks under the advanced substage and the SCO and even of the revisions on the program, the emphasis on a broad urban-centered political movement and struggle was already incorporated.

Contrary to the decision and without the knowledge of the Politburo, the concept was propagated as a policy in Mindanao. One glaring result, particularly of the concept of urban armed and political struggles, was the development of armed partisan warfare in Davao City. Arms-confiscation operations were accelerated and, in 1981, armed partisans began to be formed. Armed partisan operation increased and "politico-military organizing" in the communities gained momentum. A large number of rifles were confiscated and many people were recruited into the revolutionary organizations. However, the partisan operations frequently committed the mistake of targeting those who were not supposed to be targeted; there was an overemphasis of military actions in the city and the "partisan bases" thus became open targets for enemy military attacks.

The 1981 Politburo meeting nurtured the illusion of an anticipated decisive victory of the revolution in the immediate future and drew up the corresponding tactics. The anti-Marcos reactionaries were renamed "bourgeois reformists" which were to be dismantled as a political block by drawing to our side the "Left wing" and isolating the Right wing. Thus, we hoped to stop the emergence of the Third Force and to create the general political polarization between the revolution, including the democratic forces, on one side, and the U.S.-Marcos fascist dictatorship, including the diehard reactionaries, on the other.

With the belief that the basic alliance was already strong while work among the middle forces and on the broad united front was lagging very much behind, city-centered alliance work and political movement were made the priority. The central leadership based itself in the city, focused on the city-centered political movement and alliance work, and built and strengthened the city-based staff organs.

The building of the NDF was programmed within the frame of the struggle for the decisive victory of the revolution against the U.S.- Marcos dictatorship and carried a program for a broad revolutionary coalition designed to attract even the legal progressive forces and the "Left wing" of the anti-Marcos reactionaries and to neutralize, in the event, the threat of U.S. imperialist aggression and attack.

A new draft was made of the program of the NDF, with the intention of renaming it Katipunan, upon the suggestion of an ally. The draft was withdrawn due to widespread objections of Party units and cadres to the proposed compromises on the maximum program. Nonetheless, the door was opened to the view that there was a need to restrict or conceal the leadership of the Party if the intention were to build and strengthen the NDF as a broad coalition.

The multiplication of draft documents on strategy, policies and orientations, whose contents though not finalized were broadcast through various means, started to emerge as a problem during these years. It also became widespread for leading territorial and regional Party committees -- on their own and without central guidance -- to "particularize" the revolutionary strategy and tactics for their own areas of responsibility.

Outside of the Party, parallel to the surge of different political forces and groups, various theories and lines opposed to Marxism- Leninism and the line of protracted people's war -- such as dependent capitalism, Eurocommunism, social democracy, and various types of the line of insurrection or urban terrorism-- also proliferated. These theories and lines were not promptly examined and criticized but were instead allowed to gain influence and cause confusion even inside the Party.

The Education and Propaganda Commission and the National Instructions Bureau were dismantled in 1982. Education work at the basic and intermediate levels was passed on to the territorial commissions and the regional committees while the Executive Committee of the Central Committee assumed that of the advanced course and the publication of a theoretical journal.

However, due to the weakening of what was then only a rudimentary machinery for Party education, the task of drawing up additional regular and special courses as well as that of translating and publishing the numerous materials needed by Party cadres and members were neglected. Worse, the impetus to study the basic course waned and attention on the finished translations was interrupted.

The machinery for education was weakened at a time that more active ideological work became highly necessary. Outside of the Party, the theoretical challenges to the Party's principles and line became stronger. Inside the Party, the need for more education and training became greater. There was the large-scale promotion of cadres necessitated by the extensive building or strengthening of the Party committees at the regional, front and district levels as well as of the staff organs at various levels. Thus, from then on, the gap increased between the need for and the attention given to education and training.

At the 1983 Politburo meeting, the discovery and destruction of a wide network of infiltrators in one part of the guerrilla front around Bicol-Quezon boundary was reported. After the short report and without further examination of important details and data of the event, the conclusions of the report were approved; and other regions were alerted to the danger of a massive enemy infiltration.

By 1983 the tasks for the nationwide expansion of the guerrilla warfare had in the main been accomplished. In all the regions, with the exception of Manila-Rizal, the regional Party and army organizations were already in place. The majority of the regions had two to three big and relatively stable guerrilla fronts. The tactical offensives in various parts of the archipelago echoed each other and the mass campaigns and struggles in the countryside and the cities were vigorously advancing.

The rapid expansion and advance of the people's army pushed the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in 1981 and 1982 to start the massive redeployment of their forces from areas of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) to our own areas. Units of the civilian home defense forces (CHDF) and anticommunist vigilantes were extensively organized. Population-control operations in the countryside as well as kidnapping and extrajudicial killing ("salvaging") operations in the cities were intensified.

Furthermore, the AFP started to review and discard the pattern of its counterrevolutionary war centering on "search and destroy" operations. More comprehensive counter guerrilla operations such as "Cadena de Amor" in Northern Luzon were tested. At the same time, the CIA increased intelligence operations all over the country. And the AFP started its largescale and longterm intelligence operations focusing on strategic analysis of the revolutionary movement and the identification of leaders, cadres and mass activists at various levels and areas.

III. From the Aquino Assassination, 1983 to the Edsa Uprising, 1986

The peak in the antifascist struggle was reached in the aftermath of the Aquino assassination up to the fall of the dictatorship. The ruling Marcos clique lost the political initiative to the antidictatorship forces. The entire country was rocked by gigantic mass protests. The support for the Marcos fascist clique dwindled and became limited to the comprador big bourgeoisie and the big-landlord class. US imperialism made preparations to boot Marcos out in order to avoid bigger damage. A political polarization occurred and a situation leading to a decisive confrontation between the fascist dictatorship and the antifascist forces developed.

The Party and revolutionary movement put itself at the center of the huge antifascist struggles, touching and mobilizing millions and millions of people. Many progressive mass organizations were set up; various types of antifascist organizations from various sectors in society proliferated. The multisectoral alliances became centers of political struggles of the broad masses at different levels and scope.

All-out effort was exerted to heighten the struggles in the countryside and the cities. Urban-centered and nationally-coordinated mass campaigns were repeatedly launched. From 1984 coordinated workers' strikes were launched, and in Mindanao and in other regions, people's strikes were launched in coordination with big rallies and marches in the streets of Manila-Rizal and other cities. The role of the workers in the open political actions was outstanding and so was their strikes in heightening the struggle.

The armed revolution in the countryside continued to expand and strengthen itself rapidly. More or less 1000 rifles were confiscated from the enemy every year. Big and concentrated guerrilla operations in various parts of the country accelerated. And as a result, the people's seized high-powered weapons such as machine guns and mortars, annihilated bigger numbers of enemy troops, killed or captured high-ranking officers and inflicted powerful blows on the fascist dictatorship. The use of radio communications and explosives in tactical offensives begun and was developed.

The rapid and huge advances of the movement in Mindanao resounded during these years. From

1981 Mindanao led in boldly expanding and intensifying the guerrilla warfare. Also notable were its contributions to advancing the urban mass movement and the protest movement. The movement in the island advanced even more after the Aquino assassination. Up to the early part of 1985 a big bulk of the total number of high powered rifles, Party members and members of the rural and urban secret and open mass organizations were to be found in Mindanao.

These advances and victories in the island were based on the broad spread of the revolutionary forces in the countryside and the cities. Island-wide and interregional planning, coordination and cooperation; bold tasking and promotion of cadres; the experiences summed up in the implementation of "Our Urgent Tasks" and support from cadres from outside were effectively used in Mindanao in order to rapidly expand and achieve the majority of the targets in terms of provinces and towns. The exceedingly favorable conditions in the country and in the island, such as relative weakness of the local reactionary groups, the concentration of the AFP on the Moro areas, intense socioeconomic crisis and favorable terrain, were effectively exploited.

In 1983 on the basis of the analysis that in the main the task of expanding and positioning our forces on the strategic parts of the island had been accomplished and in accord with the Politburo decision, the companies were formed and increased rapidly (five companies were immediately formed in 1983, increased to 13 by 1984 and to 15 by 1985). The intensification of the armed struggle by raising the level of war was started. The companies repeatedly launched tactical offensives, inflicting hard blows on the surprised enemy.

In November 1983 the Mindanao Commission reached the conclusion that a "revolutionary high tide" existed in the island and in the country and they decided to redirect their work towards preparations for an anticipated antifascist uprising. The overall relation and direction of the main lines of the struggle were radically changed according to the wish of seizing upon a rare opportunity. The supposition -- and the impression given to the forces -- was that these were merely improvements or refinements on the line of people's war, although these were in fact deviations from it.

The disposition and coordination of the tasks and struggle in the island based on the new orientation was set and systematized according to the Red area-White area schema focusing on creating the conditions for an explosion into a general insurrection. In this connection, the cadres were encouraged to earnestly study and adopt insurrection as a form of struggle.

The "three strategic coordinations" was made into "three strategic combinations" and central to this is the "politico-military combination or struggle" concept. From the former view of its being a method of organizing, the "politico-military combination" came to be regarded as a form of struggle to be applied not only in the urban areas (the people's strikes-armed partisan combination), but also in the entire conduct of the war in the island (Red area/military struggle - White area/political struggle/insurrection).

Such was the form taken by the systematization of the idea of hastening victory, betting on an exaggerated expectation of a great upsurge arising from the urban mass struggles and the intense political crisis of the reactionaries.

In the "politico-military struggle" scheme, the importance of people's strikes was emphasized. These were regarded as "a process leading to popular uprisings" and were supposed to hasten political polarization, to expose the ineffectuality of the government, to train the masses and to bring about an explosion of the whole situation. All-out partisan warfare was combined directly with "general paralyzing actions" and the combination was viewed as a way of quickly bringing about the ripening of the insurrectionary situation.

The line of rapid regularization of the people's army and intensification of the war by raising its level was also incorporated into the Red area-White area framework. The Commission in the island decided to concentrate at the regional level all the guerrilla combat units, which then held

half of all the high powered rifles. The intention was to maximize the strike forces in the intensification of the war, commit them fulltime to fighting, separate them from work in the localities and ensure their maximum flexibility in military work. The guerrilla units in the guerrilla districts and fronts were concentrated and integrated into the main regional guerrilla units (MRGU) and the subregional guerrilla units (SRGU), although some SRGUs were put under the command of the guerrilla front committees because they could not be handled at the region level.

Initially, the fascist dictatorship and the AFP were caught by surprise and suffered the full impact of our blows. The military successes, the intensification of the mass struggle and expansion of the revolutionary movement's influence throughout the island were unprecedented.

But it did not take long (1984) before the big bulk of the AFP combat troops were poured into the guerrilla fronts and urban areas of Mindanao, brigade-size military operations were intensified, and fascist paramilitary units and fanatic sects were set up in great numbers. In urban areas, the armed partisan bases in the communities were militarized, known leaders and allies were killed one after the other, and the legal mass organizations and alliances were suppressed.

Immediately, the problems with regard to the overextension and attrition of the forces and the limitations and difficulties of sustaining the new level of the war were felt and aggravated. The guerrilla fronts became extremely vulnerable because the political and military capabilities of the local units were extremely limited. It was only in 1984 and 1985 that there were efforts to catch up in the setting up the section committees and that there was a recognition of the need to improve the arms and military capability of local forces. While the intensification of struggle and the advance towards the decisive battle was being pushed, the problems of stabilizing the Party leadership at island and regional levels, of the depletion of the cadres in the countryside, and of the worsening security situation in the urban underground also continued to intensify. The movement in the urban and the rural areas suffered increasing setbacks, which eventually led to widespread destruction and paralyzation upon the impact of anti-infiltration hysteria (the Ahos Campaign) in 1985-1986.

The Ahos Campaign was a widespread anti-infiltration campaign, launched starting July 1985, formalized in the enlarged meeting of the caretaker committee of the Mindanao Commission in September 1985, and stopped by the Mindanao Commission in December 1985 but continued and even ran wild in one region up to March 1986. Hundreds and hundreds of cadres, fighters, activists and ordinary peasants were arrested, interrogated and punished without sufficient and strong basis.

The Ahos Campaign perpetrated grievous violations of the individual rights of the suspects, the standards of due process and the rules of scientific examination and weighing of evidence. The cases were formulated, investigated, judged and concluded through methods and processes that were extremely subjectivist, haphazard, arbitrary and defective. Torture was extensively used on the fallacious ground that the victims were enemy spies, under a situation that the suspects were presumed guilty even if the suspicions usually stood on the flimsiest ground.

The Ahos Campaign was spurred by panic from unproven apprehensions regarding an extensive and longrunning infiltration by the enemy. Such apprehensions were buttressed when worries mounted over growing security problems and losses in the countryside and cities, and at the same time, there had been the previous warning from the central leadership against a wide network of infiltration, there was an enemy campaign of intrigue regarding enemy operatives within the movement and there were reports about so much internal information known to the enemy. The belief hardened that there was an extensive infiltration network and the leadership in the island was seized by panic when the report and the doubt of one former political detainee reinforced the doubts of the leading cadres themselves in the white area of one region, leading to arrests, self-confessions and accusations drawn through torture. The belief finally turned into hysteria when the arrests, torture, confessions and subjectivist judgment led to an ever widening scale and ever rising level, fueled each other, eroded mutual trust, ran over the integrity and the

organizational processes of the Party and shook entire organizations of the Party.

The Apos Campaign occurred under conditions of intense life-and-death struggle with the reactionary enemy. It was undertaken under the mistaken belief of defending the Party and the revolution against enemy infiltrators.

We have principles and rules that should guide us in running after and eliminating informers and infiltrators and we have exerted efforts to remind Party units not to violate these. However, these were not sufficiently studied, disseminated and impressed in thought and practice; there has been a history of carelessness and immaturity in the handling of the matter within the Party.

The damage created by the Apos Campaign is extensive and sizeable. Many Party and army cadres up to the regional and front levels were arrested and punished. Many more left or fled because they came under suspicion, became confused or demoralized. Demoralization, confusion and mutual suspicion spread among the forces at all levels. Organs assigned to white area work, united front and the NDF were paralyzed or fell apart. NPA units collapsed or contracted; NPA personnel were sent home. Mass actions and tactical offensives almost disappeared or stopped. The enemy took advantage of the confusion to sow intrigues, encourage splits and attack wide areas of the guerrilla fronts that had fallen into disarray or had been left unattended by Party or army units.

Meanwhile within the central leadership, the view emerged that the political crisis was rapidly ripening into a revolutionary crisis. Furthermore, the crisis was imagined as most probably leading to the decisive victory of the revolution within a few years through the leap to the strategic counteroffensive, regular mobile warfare combined with guerrilla warfare and extensive people's uprisings.

In the 1984 National Military Conference and the 9th CC Plenum in 1985, the central leadership rejected the Red area-White area schema of the Mindanao Commission. But the SCO framework upheld by the central leadership also advocated a rush to shift to regular mobile warfare and the notion of toying with insurrection. There was a strong tendency to set tasks and objectives beyond the actual capacity and level of development of the revolution.

The Mindanao insurrectionist frame was criticized but its key elements, such as the rapid increase of the companies, raising the level of the war, all-out urban partisan warfare, and wishing for widespread and general uprisings, were approved and endorsed. These factors were incorporated into the program and struggle for the SCO which prevailed until 1990.

Before the 1984 Military Conference and according to the 1983 Politburo decision, the formation of companies in the Visayas proceeded. After the conference, the formation of companies in Luzon followed.

The 9th CC Plenum recognized the gravity of the problem of the reactionaries in connection with the socioeconomic crisis, the extreme isolation of the fascist dictatorship, the serious splits and rifts among the reactionaries, and the rapid advance of the revolution. But there was an underestimation of the capacity of reactionary armed strength to increase and of the U.S. and local reactionaries to maneuver politically.

There was a strong tendency to overestimate the capacity of the Party and the revolution. There was the view that we had gone beyond the stage of deploying our forces all over the country, that we had built a strong force, and that the most important issue was the maximization of the forces in the extraordinary situation in order to achieve an advance equivalent to a decisive victory or something close to it. Because of the unusual extent of spontaneous mass participation in the urban political mobilizations, there was a strong tendency also to overestimate the level of the people's consciousness.

The problems and limitations of the revolutionary movement, the gaps and deficiencies in amplitude, solidity and capability of the Party, the army and the mass base for an accelerated and more intense battles in the countryside, and especially for leaping to a higher stage of the war, were underestimated. The attention of the Plenum was focused on the issue of more intense struggles, wider sweep of revolutionary influence, the wish immediately to achieve general leadership over the people, and the polarization of the situation between the revolutionary forces and the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship.

The view prevailed that the line of protracted people's war should be upheld and that the building of the people's army and the mass base in the countryside should be pursued. This played a significant role in preventing the insurrectionist influence to grow much stronger in the following years. But the view upheld by the Plenum, included a strong desire to hasten the leap to a higher stage of the war: extremely high targets were set for different areas of work, with the assumption that these could be accomplished simultaneously.

The Plenum firmed up the decision that the company would be the principal formation of the people's army and military work, already the principal task of the army. The company was identified as the principal vehicle for the tactical offensives and was to absorb a big bulk of the army personnel.

The three-year program that focused on fulfilling the requirements for advancing to the SCO was drawn up. The principal content of the program of "regularization" was the formation of many more companies (regular and guerrilla) and even battalions; the building of the command structure at various levels and areas; and the development of military training and discipline.

The following general conclusions were reached: first, the extent and solidity of the guerrilla fronts were sufficient for a sustained intensification of the war, and second, guerrilla warfare should be intensified by raising its level. Thus, the solution of the problems with regard to the further consolidation and accumulation of strength and the mass base was relegated to a secondary position and the erroneous estimate of having fulfilled the political requisites for accelerated verticalization and regularization was reinforced. While intensifying and raising the level of the war was set as a target, attention to work at the basic level and the localities slackened.

As part of the program for the SCO, the preparation for and launching of people's uprisings up to town centers, except in the national capital region, was set as a task. A wild concept of uprisings and insurrections that was slack on the strategic requirements, muddled in its understanding of the dangers and probable costs, and extremely expansive in lining up the objectives -- from simple trial, training the masses, strengthening the army, weakening the reactionary state or its local branches, up to the actual seizure of power. For the first year of the SCO, the creation of the conditions for an explosion into a general uprising simultaneous to a general offensive of the army was set as a target.

The extensive development of partisan warfare all over the country was programed. The orientation for it was determined as an all-out and special form of warfare, complementary to the guerrilla warfare in the countryside, supportive of the urban mass movement, and a principal requisite in preparing for urban uprisings.

Another general objective in the three-year program was the struggle to achieve a decisive victory of the revolution over the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship. The polarization between the revolution and the U.S.- Marcos dictatorship, the seizure of the overall leadership of the antidictatorship front and the transformation of the entire antidictatorship struggle into a full revolutionary struggle targeted.

It was assumed that the revolution had accumulated enough strength for it to be able grow continuously, draw the so-called liberal democrats and destroy the anti-Marcos reactionaries as a bloc. There was an excessive overestimation of the revolutionary potential of the so-called liberal

democrats and “Left wing” of the anti-Marcos reactionaries. On the other hand, there was a strong tendency to belittle the capacity of the entire bloc of the anti-Marcos reactionaries to assert their leadership over the antidictatorship struggle.

It was estimated that the grave crisis would lead to a polarization and massive confrontation of the political forces. But, given the strategic balance of the forces and the level of development, the targets desired -- the general polarization between the revolution and the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship and the decisive confrontation with the fascist dictatorship, with one block of the anti-Marcos reactionaries not playing any role -- were unattainable.

By muddling the class character of the anti-Marcos reactionaries, with the use of the term “bourgeois reformists” for them, and their division into blocs of the Right and Left wings, one reactionary bloc was erroneously regarded as belonging to the middle forces between revolution and reaction. The confusion led, on the one hand, to the “Left” tendency to exaggerate the issue of combating reformism within the open antifascist alliance and to the boycott error in the snap elections; and, on the other hand, to the Rightist tendency -- in the building of the NDF -- to make anticipatory compromises on the maximum program and seek the inclusion of those assumed to be liberal democrats but who are still steeped in reformism and parliamentarism and also the so-called “Left bourgeois reformists”.

Simultaneous to the attempt at “neutralizing” the anti-Marcos reactionaries, more emphasis was put on the importance of building the NDF and of drawing into it the other revolutionary and progressive forces, on raising the political content of the mass actions and on strengthening the revolutionary leadership over the antifascist front.

The formal establishment of the NDF was pursued. The NDF was to be constituted at the outset by the Party and the forces led by the Party but eventually to be joined by other forces. The NDF was designed according to the framework of the broad national revolutionary united front against the fascist dictatorship and carried the program for the decisive (incomplete) victory of the revolution over the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship. Its political program is a coalition program seeking to encompass the liberal democrats and the “Left wing” of the anti-Marcos reactionaries and in the event, neutralize U.S. imperialist counteraction and aggression.

Proceeding from the target of destroying the bloc of the anti-Marcos reactionaries, there emerged the tendency to counterpose the task of building the national revolutionary united front to that of building the broad antidictatorship front. Within the broad legal antidictatorship front, there was a tendency to exaggerate some issues with regard to slogans and form of struggle (in connection with the struggle against reformism and to prevent the consolidation of the anti-Marcos reactionaries) in a way that limited our relations, influence and maneuvers (Oust/Resign, Boycott/Participation in election).

The same tendency was reflected by the view that from 1983, the level of consciousness of the broad masses had been antifascist and the revolutionary task was to raise it by raising the political content of their struggle.

In 1984, the boycott campaign launched during the elections for the national legislature had a positive effect. The masses in large numbers were mobilized in militant street actions such as the “Lakbayan” or the long march and many legal progressive forces and a sizeable part of the anti-Marcos reactionaries were drawn to our side. However, there was an exaggeration of the contradiction between boycott and participation and also an overemphasis on the election issue. In handling the issue, the task emphasized was that of fighting the elections as an attempt, on the one hand, by the fascist dictatorship to overcome a politically defensive position and, on the other, by the anti-Marcos reactionaries to draw the masses to reformism.

The desire to immediately gain revolutionary leadership over the majority of the people, the middle forces and the legal progressive forces -- the so-called liberal democrats -- disregarded

the level of the development of these forces. The desire to draw the “Left wing” of the anti-Marcos reactionaries to the side of the revolution did not only disregard the level of development, but also deviated from the correct analysis of the class character of the anti-Marcos reactionaries.

The call for snap elections in the latter part of 1985 ran counter to the Party’s expectations. The central leadership, in line with the tactics of decisive victory, insisted on an active boycott of the snap elections despite the widespread objections of cadres and members and the demand of some Politburo members to decide the issue in a meeting.

During the electoral campaign period, millions and millions of people were drawn to and mobilized in the antifascist struggle; the conditions ripened for a decisive confrontation and for the ousting of the fascist dictatorship. Because of the boycott tactics, the legal progressive forces at such juncture was divided, their links with the broad antifascist struggle of the masses weakened, and the Party’s political maneuver limited.

After the elections, the Party rapidly regained initiative by calling for and launching protest actions. Party units and the mass organizations led by the Party actively participated in the EDSA uprising. But U.S. imperialism, the anti-Marcos reactionaries and the petty bourgeois reformist groups took advantage of the Party’s boycott error by making it appear that the Party and the revolutionary movement were not at the scene when Marcos was toppled.

The need to hold a new Party congress was recognized during the 8th and the 9th CC Plenums. But such important preparations for the congress as the theoretical studies, the review of reports and documents, the correct presentation of important issues in our past and current practice, developing the framework for a correct and comprehensive understanding of the major theoretical and practical issues, and reaching a unified understanding by the Party of such issues were neglected.

The larger part of the time and efforts of the central leadership, including the majority of the leading cadres at the national and regional levels, was devoted to day-to-day administration, leadership over the political struggles or tactical leadership over the people’s army.

The Party membership expanded by almost four times from 1980 to 1985. A great number of tried and tested advanced elements arose from the intense struggles in the countryside and the urban centers and the most earnest and dedicated among them were recruited into the Party.

But a large percentage of the old and new recruits were not given adequate ideological and political training and education. Such neglect worsened even more at the height of the antifascist struggle. The studies and tasks undertaken by Party cadres and members revolved around the day-to-day demands of the struggle. They were not sufficiently armed with the theory of Marxism-Leninism nor even with the knowledge of the history of the Party and the Philippine revolution. The continuous ideological remoulding of many recruits, particularly from the intelligentsia and the peasantry, was neglected.

The central leadership and many other leading committees were excessively drawn to base themselves and attend to tasks in the city. As the central leadership got immersed in details, including those regarding mass actions in Manila-Rizal, supervision over and prompt attention to such larger and much more complicated matters as army- building, the general course of the war, mass base building and Party- building in the countryside got neglected. An already weak system of reporting was further weakened and written reports came to be substituted by consultations in the city and oral reports made during meetings.

In the desire to expand the leadership role of the Political Bureau, the 9th CC Plenum decided to reduce the power/authority of the Executive Committee of the Central Committee. The Executive Committee was stripped of the power to make policy decisions in between meetings of the Politburo, except in emergency situations. Meanwhile, the territorial and national commissions

were given more powers. While the continuous authority of central leadership was weakened, the authority of the staff organs for assisting the central leadership was strengthened. This issue would recur and come to be more controversial in the following years as bureaucratism worsened and the internal struggle on line and tactics heightened.

The city-based staff organs multiplied and grew; legal institutions and programs proliferated. The deployment of cadres and activists to the countryside almost stopped. The number of cadres concentrated in the cities multiplied, particularly because it was there that the political actions were most impressive, and also there that the means and facilities for communications, administration and coordination could be found. The deployment of cadres and activists to the countryside stopped and a reverse current started: the flow to the cities of cadres previously deployed in the countryside.

While attending the 9th CC Plenum, the leading cadres of the Mindanao Commission received a status report on Apos Campaign and on the unusual extent of the problem. They did not in their turn report it to the Plenum. It was only after the Plenum that they made a report to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee formed an investigating body. It was easy enough to investigate and decide on abolishing the "joint command" set up by the Manila-Rizal-based organs to arrest "infiltrators" in Manila-Rizal on the basis of "findings" of Apos Campaign. But gathering the data on the events and the situation in Mindanao proved to be difficult for the Executive Committee and it could not proceed. So this task was passed on to the Mindanao Commission in December. The Mindanao Commission was given the task of continuing the investigation and formulating the necessary guidelines and measures. The examination and analysis of what transpired got overtaken by the tasks and the issues related to the snap elections and the EDSA uprising. However, central authority should have been exercised to immediately order a stop to Apos Campaign and to exert all necessary efforts to promptly get at the facts and understand them. The central leadership should have given the highest priority to the matter. This should have been the sharper and wiser handling of the issue at the national level.

The Party's leadership, relations with and influence over the workers, peasants, youth and students, women and the other sections of the intelligentsia broadened. The Party took active positions on issues and took the lead in the mass actions on tactical issues. Support for the national democratic program continued.

However, the neglect of internal ideological work was reflected in the overall weakening and decline in the quality of propaganda work. Propaganda work weakened on issues involving the theory, strategy and the basic principles of the Party. No active theoretical struggle was undertaken against the various growing petty-bourgeois currents. It reached a point that other political groups surpassed us and took the initiative in presenting and explaining the basic issues from their own point of view, and were able to sow confusion even within the Party.

Although there was a surge in expansion of the mass organizations after the Aquino assassination, the task of following-up, maintaining the connections, raising the political consciousness and organizing a large part of the masses aroused and mobilized in the protest actions was not pursued. One reason was that in the Manila-Rizal region, the Party territorial organization had been dismantled. But the bigger reason was the weak and the low quality of the educational and organizational work at the basic level. The majority of the cadres were excessively drawn by tasks related to day-to-day administration, sweeping propaganda and mobilization in the mass campaigns.

From 1984 the Party-led organized forces among the student masses began to dwindle and weaken although the broad influence of the revolutionary movement continued through positions held by activists in student councils, campus publications and inter-school organizations.

Overseas, after a period of being limited to relatively minor non- ruling parties and organizations, our relations expanded at the party-to-party level, so did those of the NDF with other liberation movements and governments, and those of other Party-led organizations at the people-to-people level. The initiatives of the national military staff helped to accomplish this although in the beginning their entry into this arena had been done without the knowledge of the Executive Committee. In organizing overseas Filipinos, not much progress was made; instead, there were some setbacks.

At the 9th CC Plenum, the importance of our efforts to expand and strengthen international support was stressed. The major objectives for targeting such support were to neutralize the threat of U.S. aggression and to acquire heavy weaponry needed for advancing to the SCO. A diplomatic campaign was programmed. A related proposal to regard the Soviet Union as socialist was presented. The Plenum, however, decided to subject the proposal to further study.

IV. 1986-1987

When Marcos fell, the broad antifascist front fell into disarray and the alignment of political forces changed. The vacillations of the middle forces increased; they were easily swayed by reformist promises and potential of the Aquino regime. And as it should have been anticipated, there was a relative cooling off of political struggles and a relative ebb in mass participation in protest actions.

The euphoria over the downfall of the Marcos fascist dictatorship quickly turned into anxiety over the unresolved basic national and social problems and the continued worsening of the socioeconomic crisis. There was a short-lived surge in trade and commerce due to the injection of new foreign loans and a big amount of dollars earned by overseas workers, and also due to the loosening of IMF-WB controls on imports and government spending. But only a small number of the comprador big bourgeoisie, big landlords and big bureaucrats who took power profited from these; only a small number among the petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie received fleeting trickles of relief from the intense lashes of the crisis.

While still consolidating its hold on power, the newly-installed Aquino regime implemented a few meaningful democratic reforms and measures, made use of the advantage of Aquino's personal popularity, encouraged reformist illusions and pushed for a ceasefire. Simultaneously, the fascist military and bureaucratic machinery were maintained and proposals for essential changes in the economic, military, political and foreign policy, which continued to be in effect even after the fall of the dictatorship, were blocked. Behind the bourgeois constitutional processes, militarization was intensified and the fascist repression of the basic masses and the progressive forces continued to be widespread.

The reactionary ruling system was able to overcome its lack of initiative and the other problems brought about by the extreme isolation of the former ruling dictatorial regime. However, the divisions and the rifts among the reactionary political and military factions further deepened and heightened.

Although preoccupied with internal reorganization, the AFP General Command continued to prepare for renewed big offensives against the revolutionary movement. More combat battalions were formed and deployed in NPA guerrillas fronts, apart from those redeployed from the MNLF and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) areas and from Metro Manila. Territorial commands were reorganized and the divisions and brigades were redeployed. U.S. military support was increased. Additional units of the CHDF, anticommunist vigilantes and religious fanatics were formed.

In Northeast and Western Mindanao, brigade-size operations which started as early as 1984 continued. Brigade-size operations also started in Negros and Cagayan-Apayao and in many other regions in 1987. In urban areas, militarization was intensified in Davao and Cebu. From the second half of 1986, assassination of progressive leaders and the "salvaging" (extrajudicial

execution), abduction and threats to progressive forces started and would become more widespread and heighten in 1987.

Under the new situation, the Party held on to the national democratic line. The emphasis was put on advancing the struggle for basic national and social interests, pursuing the armed revolution, continuing to strengthen the basic revolutionary forces while striving to maintain the broadest link and cooperation with other progressive and democratic forces.

The legal progressive movement in the cities remained as a powerful force for promoting the national democratic struggle. The progressive workers' movement further expanded; its leadership and initiatives in the trade union movement grew stronger. The open peasant movement became the main partner of the workers' movement in the legal struggle on issues affecting the basic masses and fundamental changes in the country and society. The progressive movement of indigenous peoples, women, teachers and, from almost nothing, the government employees, advanced vigorously.

From the second half of 1985, the revolutionary movement in Mindanao declined suddenly when the setbacks caused by enemy attacks were aggravated several times over by the ravages of the Apos Campaign hysteria. In 1986 only two of the 15 companies in 1985 could be maintained at company strength; the number would rise to five in 1987. The others dwindled as a result of attrition or were dismantled and redeployed by decision of the responsible regional committees to give priority to the work in the localities. Tactical offensives and the weapons seized from the enemy dwindled; incidents of units hit by enemy operations increased; and the total number of high-powered rifles declined. Worse, big chunks of the guerrilla fronts and mass base were lost.

Nevertheless, the intensity of the tactical offensives in Luzon and the Visayas continued; in these areas, this was still the period of impetus for the company formations and operations. The use of radio for communications, the use of explosives and advanced military training became widespread. After the ceasefire in 1987, there was the coordinated intensification of big and small military actions, of annihilation and attrition throughout the country. Despite a slight decrease, a sizeable number of high-powered rifles continued to be seized from the enemy.

The expansion of guerrilla fronts in the regions of Luzon continued. In the Visayas, the total number of barrios reached was more or less maintained; there were losses in some parts and slight expansion or recovery in others. More importantly, some tens of thousand were added to the membership of the mass organizations in the Visayas.

During the 1986 meeting of the Politburo, the boycott of the snap election was criticized as a major tactical error. But the review made of past practice was fragmented and piecemeal. Other errors and bigger deviations since 1983 from the line of protracted people's war were not examined. The Apos Campaign was put in the agenda but was neither reported nor discussed. The conspicuous growth inside the Party of the current of populism and compromise and, outside the Party, of the aggressive parliamentarist and reformist currents among legal progressive groups were not identified, criticized nor combated.

The drastic changes in the political situation demanded correct, firm and decisive adjustment in the tasks and priorities of the movement. But internally, the previous weaknesses and shortcomings, the disorientation and the deviation from the line and the strong tendency to overreach continued to plague the vanguard Party and even worsened.

The overall result -- despite the continued impressive military actions, the overall expansion in the countryside, the growth in the total membership of the open and underground mass organizations and the active positioning on national issues -- was an increasing loss of momentum and initiative, the more frequent miscalculations in the tactical offensives, and the worsening imbalances and vulnerability in the disposition of forces and tasks. Under conditions of a relative slowdown of the pace in the advance of the revolution, the obsession with intensifying military

actions and bringing about an explosion of the situation caused further complications, difficulties and delays on efforts to recover and increase our initiative for an all-sided and solid advance.

A significant number of cadres and units of the Party in the urban areas and even in some parts of the countryside were confused and misled by illusions regarding the new regime. There were those who held the view that the Aquino regime was a centrist, if not a progressive, government because of the erroneous assumption that those who were regarded as “liberal democrats” and “Left bourgeois reformists” constituted a strong block and could prevail within the government. Initially, even the Politburo had vacillated on this so much so that in determining the principal target, the U.S. and the ultra-Right, i.e., the “Enrile-Ramos faction” and the remnants of Marcos fascist faction, were the ones identified.

The Politburo recognized the essentially reactionary character of the Aquino regime. It was clarified that the regime neither had the will nor the capability to solve the fundamental national and social problems. But in the analysis some conjuncturalist influence and views were also accepted. Among them was the speculation that as a result of the EDSA uprising, the people got a share of state power, so that the reactionary state itself had also become an arena of struggle for power between reaction and the people.

Among the tasks set by the Politburo was “Expand the reach of people’s power inside and outside the government. Combine political and armed struggles in order to develop the organs of political power (from armed up to non-armed prototypes).”

The confusion over distinguishing real friends from enemies under the new situation was exploited by a few factionalist and defeatist elements in Negros in order to peddle class collaboration, parliamentarism and splittism inside the Party. In the Cordillera, the same was used as additional ammunition by the Conrado Balweg faction to push its splittist campaign when the Party rejected the faction’s narrow localist line and vigorously asserted the national democratic line and the correct application of the line of national self-determination.

At the 1987 meeting of the Politburo, the internal debate regarding the reactionary, puppet and antipeople character of the Aquino regime was firmly resolved. The conjuncturalist approach with regard to the question of the state, the one-sided and excessive emphasis on the particularities of Aquino’s personality as projected by the bourgeois mass media, and the notion that the puppet state had become fragmented as a result of the EDSA uprising were all criticized.

In utter disregard of actual conditions, the rhetorics of big political struggles, of rapidly reaching the majority of the people, and of anticipating and preparing for a new gigantic explosion prevailed within the Party. Thus, the rhetorics continued to encourage the previous overestimation and insurrectionist speculations and illusions. The insurrectionism carried by the SCO program, which the central leadership maintained, combined with the confusion over the character of the new regime, the insurrectionist misinterpretation of the EDSA uprising and the constantly changing concept of “seizing the opportunity”.

With regard to the tasks approved by the Politburo, the direct adoption of an insurrectionary line was again rejected, but other insurrectionist views were allowed. There was the formulation that it is necessary “to recognize the probability that the urban political struggle would bring about an insurrection”, which clearly indicated something more than an EDSA-type upheaval. Thus, while people’s war was being advanced in the countryside, it was stressed that we should also “take cognizance of the possibility of urban insurrection”. Another formulation stated was that it is necessary “to consider insurrection as a practical possibility and consciously to develop the requisites for it”.

The Southern Luzon Commission formally presented a proposal to the central leadership (which was immediately rejected and criticized) regarding a “fast track/slow track” plan to achieve victory in a few years through insurrection. In the Southern Tagalog region, the Party organization in the

urban areas was dismantled and reorganized according to the three machineries (legal, partisan and territory) such as in Mindanao. Armed organizing teams were formed to establish partisan bases and fronts, using the "politico-military method" of organizing in the plains and alongside highways in the provinces near Metro Manila. As a result, the mass movement was neglected and weakened and the links between the Party and the masses further narrowed. The armed organizing teams became highly vulnerable to exposure and destruction and most of their time were spent making arrangements for their security, basing and maneuver.

In Metro Manila and other cities, the wish for a "second round" of uprising spread. Thus, the possibility of a new and higher form of uprising and the sociopolitical and historic significance of the EDSA uprising were exaggerated. The illusion prevailed that a new polarization and the conditions for an uprising could be rapidly induced.

In 1986 the more conspicuous result of such illusion was the idea which grossly inflated the potential of the democratic space and the work within the government and its processes in order to bring about a renewed intensification of mass protests on the basic national and social issues, rapidly draw entire sections of the middle forces towards the revolution, and split the new regime between the progressives (possibly including Aquino) and the reactionaries.

In the following years however, what predominated was the rush to heat up the situation, bring about an explosion of general paralyzations and intensify partisan warfare. In 1987, the Politburo set the task of developing the capacity for general paralyzations and of expanding partisan warfare in the cities.

The decision to enter into a ceasefire was finalized towards the end of 1986 despite the absence of an agreement or of any meaningful advance or hope for talks on the major issues, the arrest of a member of the Executive Committee, the Olalia assassination and the big enemy military operations in different regions. And finally, the assertion of NDF status of belligerency, revolutionary power in the guerrilla bases and zones, and the right of the NPA to bear arms, was dropped altogether.

What prevailed was the desire for a grand demonstration of goodwill giving in to what was merely a perceived strong sentiment for peace among the people, specifically of some sections of the middle forces, even if it meant having to undermine the political framework of the armed struggle and having to present the reactionaries with a big advantage and allowance.

As soon as the Aquino regime got the ceasefire it lost interest in continuing the talks on the major issues. Making public announcements became the major activity of the panel and spokesperson of the NDF, something that the government propagandists took head on by getting a far greater space and time in the bourgeois mass media.

The AFP took advantage of the ceasefire to prepare their general offensives against the revolutionary forces. During the period, the AFP boosted their intelligence stock of information on the revolutionary movement, formed anticommunist vigilante groups and fanatic sects and intensified operations in the plains and the vicinity of major transportation lines and population centers. Some NPA units were disarmed by the AFP. Had the ceasefire period been prolonged, the Aquino regime and the AFP would have wrought greater damage and confusion by taking advantage of the fundamental defects of the ceasefire agreement and the monitoring system which they controlled. After the ceasefire, during the graduation of the PMA in February 1987, Aquino drew the "sword of war" and declared her total war to finish off the armed revolution within her term.

Based on the lessons derived from the boycott error, the Party agreed to the creation of an electoral party of legal progressive forces and their participation in the 1987 elections. While continuously clarifying to the masses the line of armed struggle in order to resolve the fundamental problems of the country, we also demonstrate to them the correctness of legal

progressive forces participating in elections in order to develop further links with a broader number of the people and use the electoral arena to strengthen ourselves and allow us to maneuver against attacks by the reactionaries.

Nonetheless, because of widespread terrorism and cheating by the reactionaries, shortcomings in coalition tactics, weaknesses in maintaining maximum flexibility in handling local issues and in projecting the progressive platform, and lack of knowledge and experience in mobilizing the masses to cast their votes, the benefits gained from participating in the elections were limited. The original target was beyond our capacity and fell far short of the potential.

During the first plebiscite on the Aquino constitution in 1987, an intense struggle still developed in some parts of the Party organization and in some legal alliances primarily as a sequel to the struggle on boycott in 1986 and the strong illusions about the Aquino regime. The issue was not boycott or participation but support or rejection of the 1987 constitution and therefore, of the Aquino regime.

To avoid divisions and focus attention on more important struggles then, such as the ceasefire, formal peace talks and the mass campaigns on basic issues, the Party correctly launched political activities beyond the plebiscite issue on which progressive forces could cooperate despite their differences with regard to the plebiscite. On the plebiscite issue itself, the most important was the propaganda and education campaign to clarify the real character of the constitution and the Aquino regime.

In 1987 partisan warfare was intensified in Manila-Rizal. Normal and special partisan operations in Manila-Rizal were accelerated and drummed up. Because the targets had been arbitrary and the operations heightened at a time that there were strong reformist illusions about the Aquino regime, the partisan operations generated a strong backlash of criticism from the middle forces, further added to the difficulties of the legal progressive forces in political positioning and maneuvering, and provoked intense police retaliation on the communities. It would only be in 1988 that there would be an order to stop the so-called normal operations and a strict control even on special operations.

For the first time, a general transport strike was launched in Manila-Rizal in August 1987 and, afterwards, a general workers' strike in October. The Aquino regime was surprised by these two broad coordinated strikes. It was caught unprepared to stop and sabotage these strikes and was forced to respond to the demands of the workers. The workers also gained the broad support of other sectors.

However, as a result of these experiences, the obsession for "general paralyzing actions" grew stronger. There was a tendency to make a threat of a general paralyzation or a call for it on every big issue even when the masses were not sufficiently prepared. In the succeeding people's strikes and general strikes, the Aquino regime would no longer be surprised and would be able to use carrot and stick measures and diversionary and dividing tactics. Because the organized strength of the workers and the people was not yet sufficient, such reactionary tactics were relatively successful.

There was also a big failure in gathering and mobilizing the workers in street demonstrations, which should have been seen as important in mobilizing the worker masses in activities beyond work stoppages in factories and more effectively impress upon the public consciousness the breadth and strength of the workers' organized struggle. But the struggle had been excessively focused on "paralyzation" and in the end, the Aquino regime would use doctored statistics, mass media manipulation and the image of normalcy in prominent places to make it appear that the "paralyzations" were failures.

The program for "regularization" and intensification of the war towards the SCO formulated by the 9th CC Plenum was continued. The 1987 Politburo meeting emphasized the formation of more

companies and the development of the annihilative capability of the people's army. Simultaneous to this was the identification of peasant uprisings as a goal for advancing the peasant movement within a two-year program.

After the 1987 ceasefire, tactical offensives were intensified throughout the archipelago. It was followed by a coordinated campaign against the "low intensity conflict" scheme in July - September 1987 as part of a special project. In July and August, more than 600 big and small guerrillas operations were launched by the NPA nationwide.

But with the intensification of guerrilla warfare through coordinated campaigns, the regional forces with limited logistics became overextended at a time that the enemy was gearing itself for a general offensive. The national military staff was compelled to provide huge amounts for subsidizing the military operations in the regions. Frictions arose in the relations between the army commands and the territorial Party committees because of the direct top-to-bottom flow of the army command.

We discovered that the capability of our guerrilla army and its system of communication and command were still extremely inadequate for supervising, coordinating and commanding a national military campaign. We did not yet have the capability at the national level to quickly know, concentrate, process, make decisions and act on the information about drastic changes in the situation below; and neither to quickly dispatch tactical decisions and orders to the appropriate territories, levels and units.

Even when there had been a decision to stop the campaign, a member of the Executive Committee and the national military staff issued an order -- beyond his authority -- for a continuation of the military campaign when a coup attempt materialized in August 1987 supposedly in order to "seize the opportunity". Some succeeding military actions in response to the order were unnecessary, inappropriate to the prevailing situation in their area of occurrence, extremely overdue and further caused big political problems. Because of the primitive condition of our communication system, succeeding actions could not be stopped, despite the loud public outcry on previous actions. Worse, no formal directive was ever issued to stop the campaign.

However, in the assessment of the anti-LIC campaign made by the Military Commission towards the end of 1987 and of the Politburo in 1988, there was a one-sided emphasis on intensification of the tactical offensives and the supposed achievement of a higher level of coordination. The assessment claims that coordinated military campaigns at the national, territorial and regional levels were an important factor for raising the level and sustaining the advance of the war. Greater coordination and campaigns at a higher level became a rationale for the transformation of the national military staff into the General Command of the NPA.

In Southern Luzon the guerrilla units were almost totally concentrated under the command of the territorial commission during the anti-LIC campaign. For months and months, guerrilla fronts in Southern Tagalog area were deprived of armed forces at a time that the enemy forces in the region had been beefed up, the detachments and CAFGU units were being rapidly set up and the enemy forces were combing the guerrilla fronts. Big and entire chunks of the guerrilla fronts were lost almost without any fight.

In Bicol, the excessive concentration of guerrilla units at the regional command continued for some more years. It resulted in the loss of military capability over wide areas, the preoccupation of the regional command with the problems of administration and logistics, the almost total stop of tactical offensives over a long time, the deterioration of discipline, and the big decline in the political quality and integrity of guerrilla units.

In Northern Luzon the program for the rapid preparation of the requisites for SCO was drawn up in mid-1987 in connection with the analysis that reactionary infighting would intensify and that emergency rule or a civilian-military rule was imminent. The rapid increase of companies and

battalions, the preparation of areas for uprisings and the spread of partisan warfare were programmed. The territorial battalion had been formed as early as the end of 1986.

Within the framework of the overall plan of the Northern Luzon Commission and further additions to it, the Nueva Vizcaya Party committee prepared a plan for achieving strategic stalemate in the area under the illusion that the enemy was no longer capable of large redeployments of its forces. Peasant organizations were rapidly established and expanded through mass meetings, the implementation of the maximum program for revolutionary agrarian reform in the province was declared, platoon-sized armed units in the guerrilla front were made to participate in the "insurrectionary actions" of the peasants, raids and confiscation of the properties of landlords were initiated and other "Left" policies in dealing with identified and suspected counter-revolutionaries and bad elements were implemented.

After a few dramatic actions, an AFP battalion was dispatched. It targeted the open mass organizations in the barrios and relentlessly pursued the small armed unit of the people's army. The haphazardly established mass organizations were immediately destroyed. Eventually, a meeting of the guerrilla front's leading cadres was discovered and cornered and all those present were captured. After a series of setbacks, the leadership of the front veered towards a Rightist policy of retreat, limited links with the masses and individual recruitment.

The Visayas is a standout in the level of verticalization achieved by the people's army. The guerrilla units were concentrated in 15 companies which had started to be regularized and commanded at the levels of the region and large guerrilla front. In Samar, the battalion formation was set up after the Military Commission and the Politburo approved the formation of battalions in Northern Luzon. Meanwhile, the local armed forces were very weak; it would only be in 1988 that district guerrilla units and armed propaganda units would again be formed. The Visayas also pioneered in establishing command structures and support staff on the regional level and in stressing the importance of developing the capacity for regional and interregional coordination and for battalion and multicompany operations. Concomitantly, the logistical and financial problems confronted by the people army there were also much more serious than elsewhere.

In Central Luzon the guerrilla zones expanded several times over and in that situation platoon-size guerrilla units were formed and the company started to be built.

In the main, the fighting capability and technique of the people's army advanced. The national military staff created in September 1984 made a big contribution by planning, supervising and leading the work. The training of officers and men was systematized, developed and expanded; and so was the use of explosives and radio. Such basic tasks as surveillance at different levels and medical work started to be attended to and organized.

On the other hand, the surge in the building of bigger combat formations concentrating on military work and alienated from mass work brought down the political quality, integrity and capability of the people's army and encouraged wrong ideas and practices within the army. Among the ranks of the officers and Red fighters, the former skills and knowledge in mass work gradually deteriorated, and so did the desirable attitudes that were developed and needed for integrating with the masses. Problems of bad manners, lack of discipline and lumpen habits spread and worsened. Arrogance based on military strength and disregard for political considerations in the planning and handling of military actions grew strong.

In some areas and in some instances, the tendency emerged to depend on the sheer size of the formations and to be haphazard in the work of investigation and planning, the preoccupation with hitting hard enemy positions and with waging prolonged battles which exhausted the forces and the extremely limited logistics.

In 1987, the problem of discipline within the army had already become noticeable and particular attention again started to be focused on the development of political work within the army and the

army's participation in mass work and production. The campaign to rectify bad manners and looseness in discipline were initiated in a few regions.

Guerrilla zones continued to expand and membership in mass organizations in the countryside increased. But behind these were the weakening and decline in the quality of the forces deployed in the localities; the prolonged failure to consolidate the mass organizations, sustain antifeudal struggles and other mass campaigns and maintain lively political education and propaganda work; and the growing problem of ensuring the continued presence of the local guerrilla units in the localities given the extremely low level of their military capability in the midst of expanding and intensifying enemy operations.

At the peak of the antifascist struggles, thousands of cadres and peasant activists were recruited in the countryside. They were the main forces attending to the organizations and the tasks in the localities and were the backbone of the mass base. But in more areas, sweeping recruitment of Party members and full-time fighters were not followed up by the necessary education, ideological remoulding, training in political leadership and close attention and guidance. There were serious shortcomings in the ideological, political and organizational consolidation of the local Party committees and branches in the barrios. On top of all these was the gross neglect or inability on the part of the higher Party committees, especially those based in the cities, to provide supervision, guidance and support.

In the countryside, there was a rapid depletion of cadres with high educational level, knowledge of theory and capacity to study theory. The expansion of our areas by several times over, the creation of committees in more territories and levels, and the redeployment of cadres to staff organs at higher levels totally exhausted the limited and constant number of these types of cadres in the countryside. Many leading committees at the guerrilla zone level and a few at the regional level, excluding the districts and sections, did not have or had only a handful of these types of cadres. Under such a situation of a diminishing number of cadres with the capacity to study theory, the redeployment of even only one quality cadre from the work in the localities became a difficult problem and had telling negative effects.

The countryside did not benefit from cadres produced by the powerful surge of the political movement in the cities since 1983. Despite the further expansion and growth of the progressive workers movement, worker cadres and activists deployed to the countryside in the countryside came only in sporadic trickles. Very few cadres and activists from the intelligentsia went to the countryside. As a matter of fact, the reverse happened: cadres in the countryside were redeployed to staff organs based in cities or asked to be redeployed for various reasons to the cities. On top of this, the leading committees whose attention and efforts had been drawn by the issues and work in the cities had less and less time for giving timely attention and guidance to the work in the countryside.

The result aside from the low level and the unconsolidated state of the organizations and the sporadic activation and growth of the mass base, were the emergence and spread of the problems of bureaucratism, commandism, neglect, lack of discipline, abuses, and -- in a few instances -- corruption, which caused the erosion of the confidence of the masses, their lack of interest and alienation from us. It was not only in the army combat units that the problems of discipline worsened in 1986-1987 and even afterwards, but also in the local Party organizations and units for mass work. In order to create a broad, strong and continuing mass base in the countryside, particularly those with a capacity to confront and overcome the systematic and ceaseless attacks of the enemy, there is need for untiring, unceasing and painstaking mass work, continuous strengthening of cadre forces in the localities and unrelenting guidance and care by the central leadership and other higher committees and cadres of the Party.

It was during those years that the growing problems in maintaining our position and continuing our work in the plains, alongside highways, seashores and small islands which came under

frequent enemy concentrated operations were already being felt. The enemy started to attack these areas using massive anticommunist propaganda, special operations teams, vigilantes and CAFGUs and took advantage of the political and military errors of the revolutionary forces.

At the end of 1987, the Executive Committee came out with the concept of the terminal crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal system. Although the term was used in its broad historical meaning, it confused some units and areas which interpreted and applied it tactically.

At the meeting of the Military Commission, the analysis was reached that the AFP had used up their strategic reserves and were already overstretched. Carried away by such an analysis, by an overanticipation of a violent confrontation among the reactionaries after the coup attempt in 1987, and by a one-sided overemphasis on what had been assumed as advanced experience in high-level coordination achieved by the anti-LIC campaign, the conclusion was drawn that conditions existed for "local strategic counteroffensives" that could be undertaken at the district, front, provincial or regional levels.

The central leadership went along with these wrong analysis and views. In the meeting of the Politburo during the early part of 1988, the decline in mass base was already noticed, but it was still regarded to be within the normal limit; the spread of the guerrilla zones and the mass base was also regarded as sufficient for the continued intensification of the war. It was clarified that we were still at the stage of guerrilla warfare but it was stressed that the further development of its quality was decisive for a sustained general advance. It was also declared that the strategic stalemate was within sight.

The implementation of SCO program was pursued and the line of further verticalization of the army, the coordinated military campaigns, the initiation of the maximum program for land reform in the most advanced guerrilla bases, and peasant uprisings was further pushed. The overall stress was on developing the offensive capability of the people's army, while intending to catch up in strengthening the local guerrilla units.

The formation of the General Command of the army, the commands at the different levels, and their staff, was approved. The General Command, besides being in command of the units of the national military staff, was tasked to act as the command of the campaigns directed by the central leadership, during emergency situations (like coups), and upon assignment to directly handle units and military work in an area.

The outcome of Apos Campaign was reported to the Politburo. The excesses were strongly criticized and the policy on the absolute ban on torture was reiterated. But the facts and bases for what had then been the assessment of Mindanao Commission of having identified and punished a big number deep penetration agents up to the level of the regional leadership were accepted without any investigation.

In keeping with the program of the 9th CC Plenum, the diplomatic offensive was undertaken in order to solicit big financial, military and political support from overseas. This offensive was based on the view that support from overseas is crucial in preventing the threat of U.S. aggression and acquiring military weapons necessary for raising the level of the war.

The Party attempted to open fraternal relations with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the other parties in Eastern Europe. The former stand and the criticism against the revisionist character of the Soviet government and party were disregarded and their total reversal, such as the proposal to regard the Soviet Union as socialist and the CPSU as Marxist-Leninist, was considered. But during those years, the Gorbachov leadership had already gone all out on its line of "new thinking" and on a campaign to dismantle the ruling governments and parties in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Within the Party, the manifestations of ultrademocracy and liberalism worsened. After the boycott error, the tendency to question, to belittle and to disregard the central leadership and its decisions became strong.

Within the ranks of cadres of the national and territorial commissions, the tendency to take positions on their own -- and beyond their own scope -- on national, and strategic and tactical issues became very strong. A few cadres and units developed the habit of disseminating their own views and papers without passing through processes and the committee system of the Party.

There was a proposal to make Ang Bayan a forum for debates. Ideas similar to the "freedom of criticism" (freedom not to follow and to openly oppose the analysis, standpoint and decision of the Party) emerged.

Some classified documents and information were spread around and reached even those who should not, including the newspapers and the enemy. Talks about the leadership that could only come from its members were also spread around.

All these were not promptly criticized and rectified until it seemed to have become a part of normal processes.

The urban basing of leading committees, staff organs and cadres on the enemy manhunt list continued and even worsened. Legal offices and institutions maintained for various tasks and needs further proliferated. Cadres drawn from the countryside to the cities further multiplied. The central leadership was rocked by security problems and internal disputes.

In 1986, as a result of a big change in the situation, a comprehensive summing-up of the work of the Party and a deeper review of the content and bases of the current program of action should have been regarded as important. A new plenum of the Central Committee was needed at the very least.

The special course on political leadership which revolves around the writings of Lenin and the issues on boycott and insurrection was drawn up and popularized to correct the wrong interpretations and the application of these on the analysis of the EDSA uprising and the situation after. The plan for the course originally included a few writings and the revolutionary experiences in China and Vietnam, but these sections were never finished.

The special course helped in unifying cadres on the correct interpretation and application of Lenin's ideas on theoretical and political issues that emerged after the EDSA uprising. But those studies were overstretched and exceeded the original intention: more a familiarization with the writings for most of those who undertook the study; and it continued to be given long after the intensity of the particular issues focused on by the course had passed. In a few regions, there were attempts to combine the course with the study of the people's war in China and Vietnam within the framework of the concept and program of SCO.

In the study sessions held, the big inadequacy in theoretical education for cadres, including the predominance of questions and differences in the understanding of many issues on line, strategy and experiences, became even more obvious.

V. 1988-1991

By early 1988 the magic of Aquino's popularity had vanished. The surge in commercial activity had been shortlived and had receded into a rapidly worsening crisis. Aquino's economic, military and foreign policies, which were no different or were even worse than those of the Marcos regime, spawned widespread discontent among the masses. The unresolved factional strife among the reactionaries grew deeper and more intense .

However, by 1988, the AFP had completed the reorientation, redeployment and other preparations of their forces and launched a general offensive against the revolutionary movement. As a result of increases in the military budget and in U.S. military assistance, a number of new Philippine Army divisions and the CAFGU (civilian armed forces geographical units), with a membership of several tens of thousands, could be formed; and brigade- and division-size operations and urban surveillance operations could be increased.

The U.S. and the local reactionaries intended to finish the war quickly. In the countryside, big regular military and paramilitary forces were deployed in guerrilla zones identified as primary targets; campaigns of "gradual constriction" or "clear, hold and consolidate" operations, were simultaneously and relentlessly intensified in various parts of the country, while smaller and medium-size operations were also continued in other guerrilla fronts. Enemy combing, surveillance and holding operations were intensified and accelerated in as many localities as could be covered for the purpose of identifying, taking by terror or by force the leaders and activists of the organs of political power and mass organizations, intimidating them to turn traitor or else kill them and, thus, destroy the mass base of the armed revolution, allow the AFP with its exceedingly far superior military strength to dictate the type and the pace of the battles, and finally corner and crush the units of the people's army.

In the cities, there was an intensification of counter-partisan operations, campaigns of suppression and intimidation of legal progressive forces and, worst of all, the widespread and long-term surveillance against the leading organs and cadres of the Party. Long-term surveillance was undertaken to identify, track and box in entire Party leading committees and their links and communication lines in the cities. The objective was to cut off the head of the Party.

Simultaneously, a campaign of psychological warfare was undertaken. It consisted of campaigns in the mass media and various forms of counterrevolutionary propaganda for deceiving the people, confusing and dividing the revolutionary forces, destroying the morale and determination of the Party, and encouraging defeatist, pacifist reformist and parliamentarist tendencies.

In the main, the enemy did not achieve his original target of destroying the armed revolution within three years nor even his repeatedly adjusted target of attaining "strategic control", the latest version of which had been to cut the movement's strength by half in 1988. Nevertheless, these campaigns wrought great damage and there was a heavily felt decrease not only in scope and quantity, but also in depth, firmness and quality, especially of the mass base and cadre forces of the Party.

From 1987 to 1990, there was a decline of 15 percent in Party membership, 16 percent in the total number of barrios covered, 28 percent in the total number of Red fighters, and 60 percent in the total organized masses registered in the countryside. The NPA rifle strength continued to increase, but there was a drop in the annual rate of increase to the 1976-1978 level. A large number of cadres at the levels of the province, front and district were lost due to arrest, death or loss of interest.

A large percentage of what had been our consolidated barrios were lost. There was a general slackening of the organized strength of the masses and mass activists even in the remaining barrios as a result also of a weakening of the leadership. Many among the total number of barrios covered were either being recovered by us or sharply being contested by us and by the enemy forces stationed there.

We either lost hold or experienced a drastic narrowing of our mass bases in the plains, alongside highways and seashores, and around town centers (poblaciones). These parts of our mass base were of relatively denser population, important sources of cadres and activists with relatively higher education, important for maintaining supply and communication lines, and staging areas

for reaching and influencing the people in the town centers.

Within many of our guerrilla fronts, the enemy forces built a network of regular troop and CAFGU detachments either to drive away or to put our mass work units under constant pressure and limit the areas of maneuver for the big formation of the people's army.

Oplan Lambat Bitag succeeded to a certain extent. But even before the enemy could mount a big offensive, our own internal weaknesses -- such as our failure to sustain the work of consolidating and deepening our mass base, our negligence of ideological work as well as in developing Party cadres and committees in the localities, our own reduction of our political and military capability in the localities, our growing negligence of expansion work and our own error of forcing our mass base into a war situation whose intensity and level were beyond their capability -- had already preceded him.

At the national level, there was a repeat of the basic pattern of the Mindanao experience: the formation of many companies and the premature raising of the level of war. Initially, the enemy was surprised, the tactical offensives were accelerated, and military gains were bigger than before. In the main, our areas and mass organizations continued to expand despite the increasingly serious overextension of our forces, the growing imbalances in deployment of forces and work, and diminishing capability for military and mass work in the localities.

However, after two or three years, the enemy forces were able to adjust, at first, by further strengthening their defenses and, eventually, by concentrating bigger forces and launching massive counterattacks. It did not take long before the weakness of the foundation and the gaping vulnerabilities of our mass base became thoroughly exposed. Our mass base and our local forces in big chunks of the guerrilla fronts collapsed.

And the huge losses in our mass base areas aggravated the problems of our units in maneuvering, maintaining links and coordinating their efforts; and also in knowing and monitoring the movements of the enemy. Full-time armed units, especially the much smaller and weaker teams for mass work in the localities, became even more vulnerable to enemy attacks. The casualties in defensive battles and also the number of weapons recovered by the enemy, rose, while the number of tactical offensives, especially victorious ones, fell. Other problems in logistics and finance, accelerated loss of forces, declining number of new recruits, in supplies, in maintaining troop morale, etc., were also more intensely felt.

The rush to achieve an acceleration of the offensives and the growth of our forces through premature "regularization" and verticalization finally led to a serious loss of initiative, weakening of tactical offensives, and general decline.

The massive enemy attacks were not seriously and promptly confronted by the city-based central leadership which had preoccupied itself with the issues in the urban movement. The regions and the guerrilla fronts where the enemy forces concentrated their attacks were overwhelmed by the size, intensity and duration of the enemy campaigns. In many guerrilla fronts, huge chunks of territory and mass base were lost without any serious fight and resistance because, first, the forces in the localities were extremely weak; second, guidance and support from the higher Party committees were lacking; and third, political support from the people in town centers and cities was not mobilized. However, in some places the Party and army organizations put up serious resistance but were nevertheless forced to leave because of the overwhelmingly large concentration of enemy forces and attacks.

At the height of the enemy's general offensive in 1988 and 1989, the formation of additional companies and one more battalion of the people's army continued, a bigger number of cadres, personnel and rifles were further concentrated in a few big formations, and more localities were deprived of arms and forces. The view emerged that it was necessary to continue the enlargement of the formations not only to sustain the intensification of the offensives but also to

fight the bigger enemy military formation attacking our territories. So did the idea of proceeding with efforts to “upgrade” the army and only eventually “catch up” with efforts to build and strengthen the mass base and the Party.

Since the end of 1988, the central leadership has seen more clearly and comprehensively the extent and depth of problems confronting the movement in the countryside and the armed struggle. These problems were identified as the narrowing and weakening of the mass base and the work in the localities and the imbalances in the overall deployment of our forces and efforts proceeding from the premature verticalization of the army and raising of the level of the war.

The 1989 Politburo meeting indicated that to solve the problems, there was the need to totally change the priorities, the entire balance and deployment of forces and efforts, and the system of planning and leadership of leading Party committees. A decision was taken to stop the verticalization of the army and emphasize attention on and strengthen the horizontal forces. While maintaining the appropriate number of companies at the level of region and big fronts, higher priority was given to strengthening the forces engaged in mass work and deploying the forces for extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare. It was clarified that all guerrilla units, including the companies, must actively participate in mass work -- in expansion, recovery and consolidation -- aside from fighting and production work.

In the 20th anniversary statement of the Party in 1988, the basic principles of the revolution were again clarified and the following were given emphasis:

- a. Comprehensive establishment of the political, military, economic and cultural requirements for advancing towards a more developed level of warfare and total victory.
- b. Guerrilla warfare that persistently expands and consolidates the organized participation and support of the people.
- c. Limitations on the building of bigger formations by strictly basing these on the extent and depth of the guerrilla forces, strength of the mass base, capability of Party cadres and leadership, and adequacy of reserves and logistics.

The statement emphasized the requirements for advancing the people’s war, but at the same time pointed to the possibility of victory within 10 years premised on the “militant all-sided participation and support of the broad masses of the people” and the fulfillment of all political, economic and cultural requirements for victory. That projection was based on the data of 1987 and early 1988, which failed to make an accounting of the gravity of the weaknesses and the imbalances in the deployment of forces and efforts, which were further revealed in the succeeding months.

The 1989 and 1990 Party anniversary statements, more clearly identified and criticized the errors of premature “regularization” and verticalization, and even more clearly emphasized the need for extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare and building the mass base in the countryside. But internal contradictions over this issue intensified. The NPA General Command and a handful of its leading cadres went against the criticism and peddled their own views through communication with the regions.

In 1990 the Politburo formally took a decision to put a stop to the implementation of the SCO program and clarified that at the advanced substage of the strategic defensive, the overall stress would be on extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare and on the mass movement while at the same time maintaining and developing some elements of the regular mobile warfare.

However, the Politburo also approved the results, without discussing the particular contents, of the Command Conference in 1989, which -- contrary to the Politburo decisions -- pushed for continued and further verticalization and “regularization”. Such contradictory signals from the

central leadership indicated a lack of firm unity on and understanding of the issue. This hindered a more vigorous and more widespread impulse for rectification in the regions.

Since 1989, adjustments and the practice of putting more emphasis on mass work, the mass base and the localities have become widespread in the regions. Conferences on mass work at the regional and interregional level were held and a bigger part of our forces, including the companies, were redeployed to mass work, expansion and recovery.

In 1990 and 1991 the accelerated narrowing of many guerrilla fronts was stopped and we started to be able to recover in these areas because the leading committees gave emphasis to local work, strengthened the forces deployed there, and mobilized the companies for mass work. These positive currents were further encouraged by the national conference on the political work of the army.

In areas where the enemy continued to concentrate, the combination of widespread small-scale attritive and annihilative actions, a few concentrated and large-scale thrusts, mass protests and actions, and various forms of legal and illegal organizations were used in resisting the enemy and in making him pay a high price.

However, there was widespread and insistent demand among leading committees and cadres in the regions for a comprehensive summing up of our experiences and a clarification of the direction and the principles for advancing the war, in accordance with revolutionary theory and principles, lessons from history and, above all, lessons from our own rich experience. Although there was extensive unity on the changes made by the Politburo in 1990, the struggle with regard to the analysis and judgment of past practice continued, especially with regard to the program of "regularization". There were still differences over the understanding of the lessons to be learned; and this meant that a lot of effort still had to be exerted in uniting not only on the level of practice, but also on the level of theory and principles of the strategy and tactics.

But in 1990, following the attempted coup of December 1989, there was a renewed gust of insurrectionist illusions and attempts on the part of some organs and leading cadres, when apprehensions among the ranks of reactionaries were further fueled by the crisis in the balance of payments, the devastation caused by the earthquake and greater disorder threatened by the impending Gulf war. There was a flood of insurrectionist speculations, but much worse than this were the organizational maneuvers led by one member of the Politburo to force through the implementation of an insurrectionist plan.

The "national conference on mass campaign" held in April 1990, without consultations with the Executive Committee or the Politburo, united on the view that the situation was "leading to a renewed big confrontation". Three crisis points were identified: the issue of the military bases ("society is being polarized on a national issue"), the issue of land and agrarian revolution ("the battle line has been drawn" on this issue) and the intense economic crisis ("an explosion will also be created by the intense economic crisis"). Each of these points was assumed to be a ground for "major tactical battles that must be won by the revolutionary forces" and the interaction or conjuncture of all three points would produce a big explosion.

Plans based on dreams of an uprising surpassing the EDSA-type -- "a people's uprising, far more extensive and of deeper strategic significance for the revolution" -- were formulated and implemented. It was supposed that in the anticipated uprising, the people could benefit in accordance with "the strength wielded by the revolutionary forces", or even more if we could correctly "ally ourselves with other progressive forces and even with some conservative or reactionary factions that would subscribe to some major interests of the people."

Thus, we were supposed to "prepare and lead the possible explosion of an insurrection in the cities and wide plains". The call was made to use "the entire strength and the maximum combination of the mass movement, the united front, military action and solidarity work abroad".

To make the situation explode, the following tasks were set:

- a. Expansion and intensification of the anti-U.S. bases struggle and once the treaty had been brought to the Senate, struggles up to political strikes and people's strikes were to be intensified. During the negotiations, "confrontational and assertive actions like barricades" were to be pushed. Also to be pushed were "sabotage actions inside parliament until a parliamentary crisis is reached".
- b. "Widespread, continuous and aggressive launching of direct revolutionary actions by the peasant masses", whose "principal line and direction ... are the direct revolutionary assertion by the peasants of their right to own and control the land and other instruments of production".
- c. Building the "broadest anti-imperialist and democratic front (AIDF) and proper positioning of the NDF and the revolutionary alternative at its center".
- d. "Widespread campaign to win the hearts and minds of the soldiers and low-ranking officials of the reactionary army".
- e. "More active efforts to hasten the disintegration of the reactionary camp".

[Such an opposing line was drawn and implemented without the knowledge of the Executive Committee and the majority of the Politburo members. The document resulting from the "conference on mass campaigns" which covered even other principal lines of work and attempted to sabotage the general flow of the struggle in the countryside and the cities was distributed to different organs and areas. But this reached the Executive Committee only in February 1991 after many months of persistent demand for a report from the instigator of the "conference" and, even then, the copy that reached the Executive Committee did not come from him.]

The "conference" contradicted the 1990 analysis of the Politburo that the eruption of an uprising was a mere possibility and if ever it would occur, the highest form that it could take, based on the existing strategic balance of forces, would be that of the EDSA uprising. In other words, it would be an uprising brought about by the conjuncture of the violent battles among the reactionaries and the widespread struggle of the people and would bring about a government still controlled by the reactionaries with but minor participation of some elements of the legal revolutionary movement.

The "politico-military struggle" advanced by the Manila-Rizal Regional Committee came within the general framework of that 1990 plan. Essentially, it meant the direct combination of partisan operations with mass struggles, especially with general "paralyzing actions". Partisan warfare was assumed to hasten "revolutionary organizing" of the people in the cities, "fill in" the deficiencies of the political factors for launching people's strikes, and "directly prepare" the broad masses for insurrection.

With regard to the peasant movement, the Peasant Movement Secretariat promoted the shift of general emphasis to preparing for insurrection, and accordingly, to open and legal struggle in the plains, intensification of open peasant struggles highlighted by "direct revolutionary actions" (like land occupation and confiscation of grains, fertilizers, etc), "combining military factors with open mass struggles" and "making the armed struggle serve the mass movement and the preparation for insurrection". The target was peasant uprisings to spark or to occur simultaneously with the eruption of the people's general uprising.

In Central Luzon, the regional leadership subordinated all other efforts to the wish for an insurrection. In Bulacan, instead of organizing groups or committees and peasant associations, insurrectionary forces were formed as forces for anticipating the "opportune moment". The Regional Committee plenum in early 1991 approved the "play to win, victory in one year" program through insurrection.

In accordance with the insurrectionist plan, preparations for the building of an anti-imperialist and democratic front (AIDF) were undertaken. The intention was to develop the AIDF as a broad coalition to serve as the political center and unified command for the anticipated uprising. This was supposed to be of extreme importance not only for positioning at the center of the political struggle, but also for maximizing the gains to be derived by the people from the uprising. This explains why so much emphasis was given to coalition tactics, why tendency to kowtow to the middle forces' position and consciousness is so strong, why there is so much predisposition to encourage the spontaneous pacifism of the urban petty bourgeoisie, and why the tendency to be overwhelmed by the schemes of the bourgeois mass media is so strong.

The AIDF was not only intended to be an alliance of a wide array of legal democratic forces and oppositionists united by a minimum common program. The NDF was to directly link, join and put itself within the framework of the program and activities of that front. That was why in 1990, a number of leading cadres used their positions in the NDF to draw up and finalize the "Proposal for a People's Agenda" laid down by a legal meeting of a wide array of legal progressive, democratic and opposition forces. The proposal was supposed to constitute the NDF's medium-term program. It downgraded the stand and status of the NDF to that of a legal opposition, attempted to subordinate the NDF to the processes and rules of the reactionary government, and worst of all, made a public promise binding the Party, the people's army and the entire movement to whatever common program -- no matter how much more diluted -- would be approved by the legal progressive, democratic and opposition forces. There is nothing wrong for legal progressive forces to enter a broad alliance on the basis of a common minimum program or medium-term program. But to attempt or to seek to include the NDF under that front is to distort the status and political position of the NDF and to derail the revolutionary forces.

In the rush to form the AIDF and position the NDF at its center, the holding of the first NDF congress was also rushed and in the process even the Party's central leadership and its role in the process of finalizing the documents and the arrangements for the congress were disregarded.

Subsequently, there was the attempt to push the NDF to embark on a campaign for multilateral peace negotiations between the NDF, GRP, MNLF- BMA, RAM-YOU, various legal opposition groups, businessmen, etc. The newly formed NDF units were maneuvered into a scheme of confining the peace process within the tactical plans of building the AIDF, contrary to the line of a just, lasting and liberating peace, and contrary to the policy of bilateral negotiations between the NDF and GRP abroad.

The "politico-military struggle" was put to a test in the failed "people's strike" in October 1990. Because of the obsession with achieving a "general paralyzation", there was the attempt to force such a "paralyzation" through partisan operations. As a result, a struggle on a very popular issue which initially enjoyed very wide support from the people became a target of condemnation and put the legal progressive forces into the danger of violent enemy repression. Because of overreaching, a very favorable opportunity to propel the mass actions towards a powerful current of protests and to advance considerably and firmly was wasted.

The obsession for "people's strikes" and "general paralyzations" that overstretch the mass movement is dangerous for the urban struggle. The danger is even greater if partisan operations are combined with it because there is the increased temptation to force the struggle, rush to confrontations beyond the capacity of the masses, and recklessly disregard the level of consciousness and practice of the masses and the allies. Worse, the struggle in the cities prematurely assumes a military character and the legal organizations are made vulnerable to violent counteractions by the police and military.

But even if partisan operations are not combined with the general strikes and people's strikes, such strikes, if not carefully handled, have the potential of exhausting the forces and drawing them towards premature offensives. These are higher forms of struggles with distinct political

characteristics. Every general strike should be carefully planned based on the existing general political situation, relations of forces and general status and aims of the movement. Otherwise, the movement would be drawn prematurely into large encounters, the forces and mass movement, exhausted and isolated from the masses.

By itself and unattended by premature partisan actions, the revolutionary movement, based on its organized strength among the workers and other segments of the populations, does not yet have the capacity to launch general paralyzing actions in Manila-Rizal. In some victorious people's strikes and general workers' strikes that were staged in Manila-Rizal, the strength of the progressive forces had been further augmented by the participation of a wide range of organized forces on issues that are specially hot and attract wide spontaneous participation or sympathy from the people. Nonetheless, the longest ever achieved had been two or three days.

However, because of insurrectionist illusions and the tendency to excessively bet on the spontaneous participation of the masses, there was the strong tendency to frequently and suddenly raise calls for general paralyzations and to recklessly launch these actions. These calls were made despite the almost complete cessation of expansion among the ranks of the workers since 1988, the inability of the youth and student movement to recover from its decline since 1984, and narrow work in the urban poor communities that had been adversely affected by sweeps of antipartisan operations conducted by the police in 1987 and 1988.

In July 1991 a broad front was again achieved against the oil price hike. Even the Iglesia ni Kristo took a posture of joining the struggle and rumors were rife about a new coup d'état. Again, there was an overflowing urge to rush into a gigantic confrontation with the enemy. And a people's strike was pushed. Contrary to what was wished for, the broad front became divided; the support gained for the people's strike was narrow. This allowed the U.S.-Aquino regime to gain the advantage and to easily maneuver to force its wishes on the people.

Paralyzation was set as the target and was given the highest priority instead of the more important task of further cementing the links among various forces that were mobilized by the issue, strengthening their commitment to fight, gradually raising the level of their consciousness and action, and taking advantage of the opportunity to further expand and accelerate solid and comprehensive organizing among masses. By overreaching, another great opportunity to achieve significant and solid political and organizational gains was once again wasted.

Despite the failure and the problems spawned by the 1990 plans, the same Politburo member responsible for them continued to spread his insurrectionist line and illusions. After the Senate's rejection of the military bases treaty in 1991, he peddled the view that a trend to be "more autonomous" had developed within the ranks of the local reactionaries and, supposedly as a result of it, "the strategy of encircling the cities had further been rendered ineffective". Supposedly, "the strategy of war and uprisings aiming for the best combination of political and military struggles" and with the option of shifting to an insurrectional strategy was more appropriate.

Towards the end of 1990 and in 1991, the Manila-Rizal Party organization undertook extra efforts to increase the number of mass activists and expand the Party membership. There were also efforts to expand mass work at the basic level.

But as a result of putting too much weight on "stretching the limits of legality" and overanticipating an explosion that would lead to an insurrectionary situation, the Manila-Rizal Party Executive Committee (MREC) pushed a proposal for an upsurge in the first quarter of 1992. They pushed their plans even as these were clearly contrary to the decisions and directives of the Executive Committee and despite the objections of other Party organs that had to do with the campaigns and mass struggles at the national level.

The targets to be achieved from accelerated and prolonged street actions were overblown, given the still limited organized forces. Worse, there was the insistence on an upsurge characterized by "open revolutionary actions". In the attempt to achieve these, the MREC usurped authority for themselves and bypassed other concerned Party organs and even the legal structures, changed the orientation of one legal alliance within their area and geared it for "open revolutionary action".

The MREC's insistence on their own type of upsurge did not only limit mass participation in the mobilizations and gain a broad range of condemnation from various sectors. It also created a lot of confusion and disruption within the organization, especially because the existing relations and processes of the Party were abused to the point of causing disruptions not only within the Party but also within the legal movement.

In 1991 the Executive Committee came up with the analysis that there was a revolutionary flow in the political situation and called for offensives in the form of big demonstrations in the cities and intensified tactical offensives in the countryside. The use of the term revolutionary flow became controversial because of the differing interpretations of its context and the correctness of its application to the people's war in the Philippines. Moreover, there were those who twisted it according to their own insurrectionist point of view. What the Executive Committee had emphasized was the exceedingly favorable situation for broadly arousing, mobilizing and organizing the people and for further advancing the people's war.

Nevertheless, the Politburo meeting of 1991 approved the call to launch offensives in the form of big demonstrations in the cities and tactical offensives within our capability in the countryside. It affirmed the analysis that there were conditions for the creation of a new upsurge of mass struggles. It also approved the tactical slogan calling for the overthrow of the U.S.-Aquino regime.

The document on the world situation and our international line issued by the Executive Committee in 1988 was reviewed and adopted by the Politburo in 1989. The document upholds the Leninist line of proletarian internationalism and anti-imperialism. At the same time, it accepts at face value Gorbachov's claim that perestroika and glasnost were being undertaken to revitalize socialism.

In 1990, following the collapse of parties and governments in Eastern Europe, there was a debate during the Politburo meeting whether the events were a "revitalization" or a failure of socialism. The draft for the Party's 21st anniversary statement with an analysis of the event was discussed and a decision was taken to deepen the study of the theoretical issues involved and to know the history and circumstances of the Eastern European countries. Nonetheless, it was emphasized in the meeting that the Leninist line should be used in analyzing the events and in formulating the stand of the Party.

But due to the longstanding neglect of theoretical study and the earlier loosening of the grip on the line against modern revisionism, some elements in the Party had become very vulnerable to the flood of anticommunist and anti-Leninist propaganda and gloating of the bourgeoisie. There was profuse praise for Gorbachov, ahistorical and relentless attacks against Stalin, and a strong current of populism, liberalism, reformism and social-democracy.

In 1990 Ang Bayan praised the 28th Congress of the CPSU, despite the decisions and stand of that congress to openly call for the dismantling of socialism, the conversion of the CPSU into a social-democratic party, and the rejection of proletarian internationalism and anti-imperialism. The pages of Ang Bayan echoed the Gorbachovite line that the collapse of revisionist parties in Eastern Europe meant the revitalization of socialism.

Because of the depth of the disorientation over the line against modern revisionism and the seriousness of the skepticism about Marxism-Leninism, Ang Bayan continued to praise Gorbachov, glasnost and perestroika even after the attempted coup d'etat in August 1991, the victory of Yeltsin's counter-coup, the dismantling of the Soviet Union, and the existence, beyond

any doubt, of a bourgeois dictatorship in Eastern Europe and in countries formerly controlled by the Soviet Union. The AB editor's outpourings of ecstasy over these events, which according to him was the "strong march of democracy and civil society in the world", continued.

Since 1988 there had been repeated serious damage inflicted on city-based leading organs and cadres of the Party and army, especially in Manila-Rizal. More than a hundred national and regional level cadres, including a big bulk of CC members, were arrested by the enemy, mostly in the cities. The Visayas Commission, the army general command, Central Luzon Committee, the National United Front Commission, the Commission on Organization, the Mindanao Commission and the Executive Committee itself, including the units attached to them were repeatedly and seriously hit in Metro Manila and other cities by raids conducted by enemy intelligence units. These raids resulted in repeated seizures of diskettes and documents containing sensitive information about the Party and its work

The existence of a grave security problem besetting the urban-based central and other organs was clear. But the analysis of the circumstances and causes of every arrest were utterly particularistic. Lessons drawn remained at the level of individual mistakes, while serious basic violations of the rules of underground movement and security, such as the urban basing of the central organs and of leading cadres identified or hunted by the enemy; and wanted cadres meeting with their relatives, allies and legal forces in the cities were ignored or dismissed.

During the 1990 Politburo meeting the widespread and persistent enemy surveillance operation and the security problems were extensively studied from the point of view of comprehensively reorganizing and strengthening the underground movement. The policy of countryside basing for the central leadership, national organs and territorial commissions based in Manila-Rizal, among others, was adopted. A decision was taken to redeploy cadres identified and wanted by the enemy. The system of guidance and coordination in the mass campaigns was also changed.

But despite the policies that were firmed up and implemented by the Politburo, the repeated arrests of leading Party cadres in the cities continued. Many leading units and cadres (that should not have) persisted in basing themselves in the urban centers until they were captured by the enemy. Many highly wanted cadres persisted in basing themselves and moving around the cities in pursuit of special projects, in anticipation of "extraordinary opportunities" and because of their one-sided emphasis on the speed and facility of communication in the cities, reluctance to change old habits, avoidance of the difficulties of life in the countryside, and others. Even members of the Politburo and the Central Committee violated security rules. The decision to change the system of guidance and coordination in the mass campaigns was disregarded in the pursuit in 1990 of an explosion in the situation.

The loss of cadres increased not only because of enemy arrests. Scores of cadres at the national and regional levels lost interest or were killed. Hundreds of cadres at the district and section levels were arrested, killed or lost interest. The disorientation over the line, the repeated errors, the repeated arrests of leading cadres, and the long-standing neglect of ideological work are some of the principal reasons for the loss of courage and interest among the rank and file.

In 1988 the impact of intense enemy attacks was aggravated by the destruction wrought by the anti-infiltration hysteria -- especially among cadres at the district and section levels -- in Southern Tagalog, Manila-Rizal, a number of national organs and regions. The Politburo meeting's acceptance in 1988 of what were then the Mindanao Commission's conclusion that there had indeed been a widespread enemy infiltration network frustrated by the Apos Campaign fueled renewed fears of infiltration in other areas and organs.

In Southern Tagalog, the anti-infiltration campaign was pushed by the wish to discover the cause of capture and "salvagings" of many members of the Southern Tagalog Regional Committee in 1977; the arrests of suspected infiltrators had started even before the Politburo warning was received.

In Manila-Rizal, the arrests of suspected infiltrators began after an investigation of the enemy's arrest and "salvaging" of an ABB (urban partisan) cadre. The National Organization Commission implemented a 1987 decision to arrest a cadre who had been implicated as a result of investigations made during Aho Campaign and proceeded to investigate other suspects. The United Front Commission and General Command were overwhelmed by the results of the arrests and interrogations undertaken by the Manila-Rizal Party Committee.

After some months and the first wave of arrests, the Executive Committee directly involved itself in assessing the "whole design of the enemy infiltration" by putting together patches of information drawn from the interrogations, which had not been carefully analyzed and examined. To prevent the campaign from getting out of hand, a set of rules on deciding and undertaking the arrest, interrogation and investigation was drawn up. The system of communication and coordination among concerned Party organs was also firmed up. All these were made within the framework of what was believed to have been a wide enemy infiltration network and a gradually creeping sense of panic. Selected territorial cadres were alerted about what had been "discovered" as an infiltration network.

The Executive Committee came to its senses when it entered Southern Tagalog in November 1990 and directly witnessed the gross errors in the judgment, interrogation and treatment of those arrested. It immediately ordered a stop to the entire campaign and led the review of the cases, the summing up of the event and the formulation of clear guidelines based on the bitter experience.

Along with its self-criticism, the Executive Committee also immediately ordered a stop to the campaign in Manila-Rizal, directly reviewed the key cases and set the steps for a continuation of the review and for rectification. However, before these campaigns could be halted, these had already created serious damage and disorder in the organization and in our relations with the masses and allies in some areas and sectors.

In the Politburo meeting of 1989 the two anti-infiltration campaigns were reviewed. The serious error was traced to panic, a siege mentality, grave subjectivism and unbridled suspicion, violation of the rights of the suspects, wrong views and methods of investigation and prosecution, and carelessness in the investigation and weighing of facts and circumstances. A clearer and stricter set of rules on investigation and prosecution of suspected infiltrators was adopted.

In the rectification, the task to review all anti-infiltration campaigns and the correction of past wrong judgments and excesses was set. Also set were the need to review the general conduct of investigation, prosecution and judgment of informers and criminals and the continued refinement of the guide and rules for the revolutionary system of justice. The importance of widespread education among the ranks of cadres and members regarding the principles of humane treatment of captives, respect for the rights of individuals and the revolutionary system of justice was emphasized.

Since 1989 the extent of the disorientation and the deviation from the basic principles, line and strategy; the weakening of the central leadership and the unity of the Party; and the big decline in the ideological, political and organizational level of the vanguard Party came to be more clearly discerned.

For a long time a number of basic tasks and rules in establishing the Party have been neglected, the problems have accumulated and worsened, and the determination and vigilance of the Party cadres and members have been eroded.

The wanton disregard for theory and the basic principles had been allowed to spread and worsen. Among the leading cadres themselves, there are those who do not have a clear understanding of

the Party's basic principles. And in 1991 the AB editor presented to the Politburo meeting a view that totally rejects Marxism-Leninism. Even before this, the Party's central publication had published the same view on its pages although with some flimsy camouflage.

The peddling of all sorts of denunciations of the line and strategy of the Party and propositions to dismantle them without any footing on an earnest study of theory, history, revolutionary practice and the concrete conditions became commonplace. The line and strategy of the Party was allowed to become the target of all kinds of irresponsible speculations.

Worst of all, views deviating from the line of protracted people's war strongly influenced the very policies and program of the Party, a matter that spawned worsening problems, such as the loss of initiative, repeated miscalculations, overreaching, exhaustion of the forces and political support for the revolution, and serious setbacks.

The weaknesses and shortcomings in Party building were clearly manifested even in matters of organization. The central leadership has been weakened by the repeated arrests of leading cadres based in the cities. When the central organs which had been hit by grave security problems, transferred to the countryside and passed through a difficult process of readjusting their entire system of basing and linking with the different parts of the organization, a handful of elements took advantage of this to undertake various ultrademocratic actions; to go ahead with putting into practice their views and line opposed to the official line, policies and decisions of the Party; and to maneuver and spread intrigues against the central leadership in a bid to reject and block the criticisms and rectification started by it.

In 1990, the Politburo decided to concentrate itself continuously so as to be able to directly attend to the task of deciding on important issues. The continued existence of the Executive Committee did not become an issue; there were plans and structures that were created and directly assigned to the Executive Committee.

But that Politburo decision was misrepresented by a Politburo member as a decision to dissolve the Executive Committee and at the same time he arrogated unto himself the authority to make decisions regarding big projects and strategic and tactical issues, including the 1990 insurrectionist plan and change of AB's orientation. While strongly attacking the supposed overcentralism of the Executive Committee, he made himself the center in initiating and implementing major policy changes and big political projects by keeping the central leadership ignorant of them and through sheer lies and maneuvers.

The ultrademocratic acts that had worsened in 1986 and 1987 went on, further spread and since 1990 have become even more aggressive. When more pointed and direct criticisms of the gross errors and deviations were made, the reaction of some those who were responsible for these became even more adverse and they refused to accept criticism, their gossips and intrigues became more malicious, and their maneuvers to insist upon their deviations and oppose the rectification became more adamant.

The longstanding and serious neglect and shortcomings in Party building has reached the point of undermining even the integrity of the Party organization, leadership and processes.

Nevertheless, even with the serious damage and internal problems, the Party firmly upheld the national democratic struggle. It persevered in exposing, attacking, isolating and weakening U.S. imperialism and the local reactionaries.

The revolutionary movement remains outstandingly the strongest and firmest force fighting for the rights of the working masses and for national liberation. On major issues and political battles, like the struggle against the military bases, the Party-led forces were the principal force upholding the progressive position and the interest of the people.

The identification and criticism of our major errors and deviations had already started in 1989. In most of the regions, the clarifications and changes in the policies and program were readily accepted. By then, rectification had actually begun.

But there is still the need to thoroughly identify, criticize and repudiate the errors and deviations. Their ideological, political and organizational roots should be identified so that the return to the correct line for advancing would be strong and firm. The old issues and problems should be resolved at the level of theory and principles for the strong ideological, political and organizational consolidation of the Party.

As long as we persevere in upholding the basic principles of the Party and in applying these on our concrete practice, we shall definitely overcome our weaknesses and problems and the Party and revolution can be brought back on the path for correctly, firmly and continuously advancing.

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