

ang KATIPUNAN



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Marcos Enters Backdoor:

U.S. SUPPORT EMBOLDENS MARCOS



For the first time in many years, dictator Ferdinand Marcos will step on American soil to address the "free world" as guest speaker of the American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA) convention in Hawaii this month. Long desirous, yet reluctant to pay his mentor a visit because of the "dissident movement" abroad, critical world opinion and tense U.S.-R.P. relations, the dictator has finally mustered the courage to "test the waters." And signs show that Marcos' hosts will attempt to give the dictator a warm welcome. While Marcos can bank on his host for an enjoyable foray to the U.S., he can also count on the anti-martial law movement in North America to make his visit a "memorable" one. We pledge to stir public opinion into one huge wave of protest against the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship!

WHAT'S BEHIND THE VISIT?

Now what made Marcos jump at the opportunity to pay even just an unofficial visit to "the home of the brave and the land of the free?" Self-respecting heads of states usually dislike making unofficial public appearances in another country, especially "the most powerful country in the world." That would be like accepting a dinner invitation on the condition that one eats in the kitchen. How unbecoming! But Marcos is willing to swallow his pride. While secretly hankering for an unofficial invitation from the U.S. government, this political animal will eagerly grab for crumbs with one hand, and leave his other hand free to grop for the bread. Not uncommon behavior for the servile puppet that he is!

For Marcos, the chance to "eat in the kitchen," holds immediate and long-range benefits, which any self-serving and desperate dictator can't miss.

First Marcos is eager to reverse the negative image of his regime abroad because of critical foreign press coverage. What better occasion to broadcast his deception to the world, than to seize the platform offered by ANPA. Secondly, the visit is well-timed to do some heavy public relations work for the Philippine economy. A recent spate of articles forecasting a gloomy horizon for foreign investments in the Philippines, has made it imperative for the regime to bouy business confidence in the flagging Philippine economy.

Finally, and most important, the visit is meant to cement further the friendly turn in relations between Marcos and the U.S. Symbolically, it represents the U.S.' unwillingness to be more bold in openly associating with an "illicit lover" whose well-known mischief, like violating human rights had caused embarassment and quarrels in the past. Determined not to make "trivial" issues such as respect for human rights, come between puppet and master, the two are making amends and being more open with their partnership. The Marcos visit is a big stride in this direction.

U.S.-R.P. RELATIONS IN THE EIGHTIES: FROM SOUR TO SWEET

Indeed, the visit of Marcos couldn't have taken place under more favorable conditions. With the political climate veering to the right and the Cold War mongering of the Carter administration reaching a feverish pitch: the "water" is just right for Marcos to take a dip. Now that the human rights rhetoric and consciousness has receded to an all time low, the U.S. hopes that the public will tolerate the presence of a dictator in some "harmless" newspaper convention.

Furthermore, in terms of U.S.-R.P. relations, the ground-

work for such a visit to occur has been laid.

The steady march towards closer, cooperative relations was clinched with the signing of the U.S.-R.P. Military Bases Agreement, pledging \$5 billion in military assistance to the Philippines last December 1978. The finalization of the treaty ended a relatively tense period in U.S.-R.P. relations when the U.S. used the human rights issue as a bargaining chip and the Philippines used the bases as a trump card, in the bases negotiations. Since that time, the U.S. has conveniently ignored Marcos' continued violations of human rights. Especially now, in light of renewed threats to its imperialist hegemony of the world, the Carter administration has made it very clear that such considerations as human rights, democracy, etc., take a back seat, to the protection of American global interests, insofar as U.S.-R.P. relations are concerned.

Marcos on his part has returned to his original form of puppetry. He now echoes U.S. sabre-rattling at the Soviet Union. Like a dutiful puppet, Marcos has been at the helm of efforts to transform the mutual aid society of Southeast Asian dictators, ASEAN, into a military alliance. He has also been in the forefront of attempts to revive the infamous Manila Pact, and the NATO counterpart in Asia, SEATO.

The U.S. in turn has responded generously, not only promising more assistance but acting as an apologist for the regime as well. The 1980 State Department report on the Philippines, reversed its earlier critical assessment of the Marcos regime and asserted that, in the main, the Philippine government is moving towards a "positive direction." The State Department might as well have congratulated Marcos for torture, salvaging, mass arrests, indefinite detention, etc.

ANPA INVITATION: CASUAL OR CALCULATED?

The ANPA invitation therefore, has to be placed in the context of the shifting U.S.-R.P. relations to be properly understood. Because the U.S. has thrown its weight behind Marcos for the moment, it will naturally strive to develop the latter's legitimacy and acceptance among the American people. Naturally, ANPA will deny any conscious role in such a scheme. In fact, it is trying to pass off the invitation to Marcos as some casual event. But the inescapable truth is, the ANPA has provided a discredited dictator a public forum. Hard as they may try to portray the invitation to Marcos as an apolitical gesture, we maintain that such an occurrence would not have been possible without the tacit approval or encouragement of the U.S. government.

Marcos is a U.S. puppet and a despicable dictator with a passionate hatred for press freedom and public opinion. He is, not as ANPA would have us believe, a mere personality represented the free world; slated to address an Associated Press luncheon. If the ANPA were merely after "interesting personalities" and speakers to fill the conference's agenda, they might as well have hired the services of an entertainer. The delegates could certainly use more comic relief than more lies to break the conference tedium.

Furthermore, for ANPA to gloss over Marcos' record on press freedom and yet project itself as "the guardian of the free press," is a glaring contradiction. There is no way to explain this apparent irony unless one views the ANPA invitation as a political act. The ANPA invitation obscures the fact that Marcos' freedom to speak and be heard is built upon the destruction of the Filipino people's freedom to speak and be heard! This does not serve journalistic "objectivity." Instead, it objectively serves Marcos' and the U.S. government's ignoble political goals. Furthermore, the ANPA invitation certainly raises doubts about the much vaunted journalistic ethics of objectivity and neutrality. Historically, the press has been used as a powerful instrument to shape public opinion in support of U.S. foreign policies. Quite a few cases of CIA bribery of correspondents, government pressure on publishers and editors, and monopoly control of the media, is enough proof to dispell the myth that the press is a "neutral forum," a paragon of objectivity, standing above society.

ANPA's invitation to Marcos, in sum, is a manifestation of the overall changed attitude of the U.S. policy towards the Marcos dictatorship.

OPPOSE THE MARCOS VISIT

And what does the "mere invitation" to Marcos mean for the Filipino people? It means that with the legitimization and acceptance of the regime by the press, and by extension, the American public, Marcos and his masters, can confidently ride roughshod over the people's rights. No longer fettered by such constraints as "adverse public opinion" (which is being diverted anyway into popular hatred for the Russians), the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship can plunder with greater ease, the national wealth and labor of the Philippines. This is the ultimate implication of the ANPA's "mere invitation!"

For these reasons, all freedom loving peoples must effectively oppose the impending visit of the dictator Marcos. Not an inch of legitimacy must be conceded to this criminal.

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