

CULTURAL IMPERIALISM IN THE PHILIPPINES

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From a Eurocentric viewpoint, the Philippines is in the Far East. It is a group of 11 major islands and more than 7,000 minor islands. The islands total more than 300,000 square kilometers of land in the Pacific.

The archipelago has a configuration of being strung on a north-south axis, parallel to the coast of southern China and Vietnam which are hundreds of kilometers away westward. Northward are Taiwan and Japan and southward are East Malaysia and Indonesia, with which you are very familiar in Dutch history. East of the Philippines is the vast Pacific Ocean and some thousands of kilometers away in the same direction is the United States of America.

Since the Spanish-American war at the close of the 19th century, the United States had eyed the Philippines as a prize colonial catch because of its comprehensive natural resource base and its strategic location in the U.S. imperialist design to turn the Pacific into an American lake for U.S. big business and take a piece of the huge Chinese market.

The Philippines has a current population of 67 million. Its gross national product is about US\$50 billion. By averaging this, you get an average annual per capita income of around US\$700. This figure is dismal enough, but the reality is so much worse. Most of the income actually goes to the foreign transnational corporations and banks and to the local exploiting classes. Some 80 percent of the people, mainly workers and peasants, including urban and rural oddjobbers, fall below the poverty line.

Around 85 percent of the people may be considered Malay. The rest include the aboriginal negroids, hill tribes of Austronesian origin and mixed-blood descendants of Chinese and Caucasians, including Spanish, American and Indian mestizos. Since 500 B.C. the Malays have lived along the seacoast and big riverine areas. They speak more

than 87 Malay languages and dialects. But the overwhelming majority speak 8 major Malay languages: Tagalog (29.7 percent), Cebuano (24.2 percent), Ilocano (10.3 percent), Ilonggo (9.2 percent), Bicol (5.6 percent), Kapampangan (2.8 percent), Pangasinan (1.8 percent) and Waray (0.4 percent).

The Malays were the most exposed to the control and influence of Spanish colonialism and Catholicism from the late 16th century to the end of the 19th century. They have also been the most exposed to the control and influence of American imperialism since the beginning of this century. But they retain their ethnolinguistic diversity.

Around 4.3 percent of the Philippine population belong to 12 ethnolinguistic communities called the Moro people in southwestern Mindanao, with Islam as a rallying point in their culture since the 13th century. Around 5 percent belong to the hill tribes whose origins may be traced back to the Austronesian migrations in the neolithic period. Only a fraction of one percent belong to the Negrito clans whose origins date back to 25,000 years ago, according to archeological evidence.

Manila-based Tagalog is the national lingua franca. Comprehension and use of this language have been popularized mainly by nationwide radio networks, Tagalog cinema, comics, the public school system and accelerated interisland migrations. But there is the regional lingua franca in various parts of the country.

Regional and local languages are retained by the people, despite the spread of Manila-based Tagalog, the preferred use of English as a medium of instruction in the school system, as official language in the bureaucracy and as the language of the major electronic and print mass media and the use of Taglish (mixture of Tagalog and English) mainly among the university-educated people in Manila.

Eighty-five percent of Filipinos are baptized or registered Catholics; 4.3 percent are Muslim; 3.9 percent belong to the Philippine Independent Church (a patriotic breakaway from the Roman Catholic Church in the aftermath of the old democratic revolution in the Philippines); 3.6 percent belong to the Protestant churches of U.S. origin and 1.3 percent belong to the Iglesia ni Kristo (Church of Christ), one more Protestant sect of Philippine origin.

I. Brief Historical/Cultural Primer on the Philippines

Philippine history may be divided into five periods: the precolonial period up to the late 16th century; the Spanish colonial and feudal period from late 16th century to the end of

the 19th century; the brief but highly significant period of the old democratic revolution from 1896 to 1902; the period of US colonial and semifeudal rule up to 1946, with an interregnum of Japanese colonial rule from 1942-45; and the current period of semicolonial and semifeudal rule which started in 1946.

In precolonial Philippines, small autonomous societies of patriarchal slavery prevailed among the predominant Malays. There were slave owners, a large number of free men and full slaves and half-slaves. The highest sociopolitical formation achieved was that of the Islamic sultanates in southwestern Mindanao, especially that of Sulu.

The iron age culture of the Malays persisted. However, the people absorbed the influences of neighboring Southeast Asian countries and China. There were no megalithic structures but the sultans, rajahs and barangay chieftains had large wooden houses and boats of varying sizes and capacities. The barangay which could carry a few persons was commonplace. The caracoa which could carry 50-100 persons was used for trade and war on an interisland scale. The joangga which could carry more than 300 persons was used for trade on a grander scale.

Spanish colonialism came to the Philippines upon the impulse of European mercantilism and the drive to spread Catholicism. The process of colonial conquest started in the late 16th century. A colonial and feudal social system evolved in the course of more than 300 years, with the Spanish colonial administrators and religious friars on top of the colonised people, extracting taxes from them, mainly in the form of labor, rent from the land, religious tribute, and commercial profits from the Manila-Acapulco trade until the early years of the 19th century and finally from trade with the industrial capitalist countries in most of the 19th century.

In the colonial and feudal society, the landlords comprised the highest class among the natives. They rode roughshod over the peasants who were about 90 percent of the population. The artisan and manufacturing workers were a small minority. The native priests, professionals and administrative clerks were even smaller in number up to the end of the Spanish colonial rule.

The overriding cultural force in colonial and feudal society was Catholicism propagated by the religious orders under royal patronage. The Spanish priests enjoyed social, political, cultural and moral power over the colonized people. They used catechetical instruction, the pulpit, the confessional box and the rituals to control the people and legitimize the colonial and feudal system. In fact, they effectively shared power with the lay colonial administrators in what was veritably a theocratic state.

In the 1880s, the reformist leaders of the Propaganda Movement of the indios and mestizos imbibed the rational philosophy and liberal political ideas of the French enlightenment, the French revolution and the Spanish enlightenment. In the 1890s, the leaders of the Philippine revolution grasped the revolutionary ideas of bourgeois nationalism and liberal democracy. Thus the Philippine revolution burst out in 1896.

By 1899, the revolutionary forces of the Filipino people had wiped out Spanish colonial power throughout the country, with the exception of the walled citadel of the Spaniards in Manila, and established a nationwide revolutionary government. But also in the same year, after pretending to help the Philippine revolutionary movement against Spain, the United States launched the Filipino-American war to seize the Philippines for itself.

The Filipino people and the revolutionary forces valiantly fought the militarily superior US forces. To effect the conquest of the Philippines, the United States resorted not only to military force and genocide, killing off at least 10 percent of the population, but also the deceptive slogans of "benevolent assimilation", Jeffersonian liberal-democracy, Christianity and "free enterprise" in order to sow confusion among the ranks of the leaders of the revolutionary movement.

The United States imposed its own colonial rule on the Philippines. But this was different from the old colonial system of sheer plunder by Spain. It was the colonial rule of a modern imperialist power which was out to dump on the Philippines its surplus commodities and surplus capital. It was out to go through the motion of investing capital in the colony in order to extract superprofits.

From the outset, the United States was willing to evolve a semi-feudal society with the big compradors and landlords as the basic exploiting classes among the natives, with the middle social strata of the urban petty and middle bourgeoisie and with the workers and peasants as the basic exploited classes.

To effect the shift from feudal to semifeudal society, the United States broke up a portion of the much-hated landed estates of the religious organizations, allowed the free movement of peasants to resettle on frontier lands or work in plantations, opened the mines, brought in more milling facilities in plantations and the mines, initiated the manufacturing of household products from local raw materials, improved transport and communications and established a public school system to produce the personnel for expanding business and bureaucratic operations.

To achieve economic and political control, the United States had to exercise cultural control over the Filipino people. It did so by super-imposing itself on and penetrating the

priorly existing colonial and feudal culture and on the folk culture of precolonial Philippines.

After the brutal conquest of the Philippines, some of the American troops ingratiated themselves with the people by becoming public school teachers and teaching English. Then, shiploads of American teachers came. The development of the public school system came into sharp contrast with the lack of it in the Spanish colonial era. American Catholic and Protestant missionaries also came in.

English became the medium of instruction at all levels of the educational system. It became the means for propagating a pro-imperialist liberal political philosophy and denigrating the patriotic and progressive ideas and values of the revolutionaries who themselves were being coopted within the colonial and semifeudal system. At the same time, political power was exercised to suppress as criminal offense the mere display of the Philippine flag or any other manifestation of patriotism through written articles, theatrical performances or mass actions.

School children were indoctrinated in the so-called American way of life and came to know more the anecdotes about George Washington than about the heroes of the Philippine revolution of 1896 and about the national and democratic aspirations of the Filipino people. At an early age, Filipinos were made to adopt ideas, attitudes and tastes receptive to U.S. colonial rule and to commodities made in the USA.

Teachers' schools of the colonial government propagated mainly John Dewey's pragmatist philosophy. The University of the Philippines was founded on a pro-imperialist kind of liberal philosophy and became the highest institution of learning for producing the leaders of the country in all fields. The so-called pensionado system of scholarship grants and assured job promotions involved the sending of bureaucrats and graduate students to the United States for higher education.

Not to be left behind in the Americanization of the Philippine educational and cultural system, the American Jesuits took the lead among the religious organizations to replace the Spanish priests with American priests in their upper-class academic institutions. While they babbled about the supremacy of the Catholic faith over capitalism and socialism in accordance with the social encyclicals of the Pope, they enthusiastically prepared their students to take their professional place in the society dominated by American monopoly capitalism.

In all the years prior to World War II, the U.S. colonial rulers harped on subjecting the Filipino people to a "tutelage for self-government and democracy". The U.S. steadily

developed the semi-feudal economic foundation and the political and cultural superstructure for semicolonial or neocolonial domination. The political, economic and cultural leaders were trained and prepared for the shift from a colonial to a neocolonial arrangement.

By 1936, the Commonwealth government was established to prepare for the establishment of a neocolonial republic ten years hence. Also by this time, English as the official medium fully replaced Spanish in the civil service. Professional and technical training was done in the American way. Writers and artists patterned their works after U.S. literary and artistic models. Hollywood films, American pop music, dances and clothes fashion and Philippine imitation of these became the craze in the archipelago.

II. U.S. Cultural Imperialism in Neocolonial Philippines

After World War II, the United States granted nominal independence to the Philippines in 1946 and gave to the politicians of the big compradors and landlords the responsibility for national administration. The Philippines became a neocolonial republic. Its social economy remained semifeudal and its political system, semicolonial.

The United States touted the Philippines as the show window of democracy in Asia, a proof of American "altruism" or "benevolence" until only 25 years in 1972 Marcos imposed on the Philippines 16 years of fascist dictatorship until 1986.

Just as it retained the property rights of U.S. corporations and citizens, parity rights in the exploitation of natural resources, its military bases and control over the Philippine armed forces through treaties and executive agreements, the United States retained control over the Philippine educational and cultural system through the accumulated colonial mentality and through new arrangements, new programs and new techniques.

Anticommunism which first became pronounced in the '30s became even more amplified as a crucial component of colonial mentality and it intensified after World War II in reaction to the communist-led national liberation movement in the Philippines and to the socialist countries and the national liberation movements in Asia and elsewhere in the world. The cold war became a driving force in American cultural imperialism in the Philippines.

Anticommunism has become the pretext for continuing U.S. domination of the Philippines, preserving the unjust colonial system of the big compradors and landlords and for suppressing the national and democratic aspirations of the people. It has been a

strong glue of the antinational and antidemocratic combination of U.S. cultural imperialism and the feudal culture at various levels of Philippine society and in various fields of social activity.

Since then, the study programs and textbooks have been ideologically designed and directed by U.S. educational advisors, visiting professors and their Filipino sidekicks and have been financed by grants under the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) and its predecessor agencies, under U.S. Public Law 480 and under a variety of U.S. foundations like Ford and Rockefeller.

Scholarships and study travel grants under the Fulbright and Smith-Mundt programs, the private U.S. foundations, U.S.-based religious organizations and direct exchange relations between U.S. and Philippine universities and other institutions have been exceedingly important in determining or influencing the mode of thinking of university professors and their students.

The U.S. Information Agency and its predecessor agencies, the Voice of America, the Peace Corps and American religious missionaries have been active in spreading anticommunist and pro-imperialist propaganda and biases against the national and democratic aspirations of the people.

Information from abroad is fed to the Philippines mainly by U.S. wire services, like the Associated Press and United Press International, and by the Voice of America. A recent powerful U.S. source of information is CNN on television. In its shadowy ways, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) deliberately plants stories in the Philippine mass media in order to slander and demonize personalities and movements considered anathema to U.S. national interests.

The agents of U.S. cultural imperialism always raise a hue and cry about objective reporting whenever they are confronted with the proletarian revolutionary stand and with the anti-imperialist line of national liberation. But in fact news and features in the bourgeois mass media are characterized by selectivity and a slant against those who oppose the dominance of foreign monopoly capital and local reaction.

But the direct purveyors of U.S. cultural imperialism do not have to be Americans. The print and electronic mass media have been nationalized since 1972 and are again under the pressure of denationalization. Nonetheless, Filipino owners, broadcast managers and editors have colonial mentality and use either canned U.S.-made or Filipino-made features and programs aping the current U.S. trend or fashion.

In the first place, commodities in the market are prestigious and preferable because they are U.S.-made or of U.S. origin. Coca Cola, MacDonal'd's and Marlboro are popular brands. Commercial advertising in electronic and print media popularize U.S. goods. The biggest advertising firms in the Philippines are American, or if Filipino-owned, advertise U.S. products and ape Madison Avenue style.

In the field of mass entertainment and pop culture, especially in the urban and semi-urban areas down to town centers, the U.S. has unquestioned supremacy over any other foreign influence and has a big headstart over any other foreign influence and even those who wish to give more play to Filipino cultural products or bring in more Filipino characteristics into cultural products and activities.

The agents of U.S. cultural imperialism use the slogan of pure entertainment with regard to pop culture. Their objectives are to spread apathy, cynicism and escapism by playing on the instincts and the ego, preempt the revolutionary message from spreading among the people and push ideas and sentiments directly or indirectly supportive of the position of U.S. monopoly capitalism.

Hollywood films, canned U.S. TV programs, musical pop hits and modes of dressing dominate the cultural world of the upper classes, urban petty- and middle-bourgeoisie, the rural bourgeoisie and even the urban poor. The poor and middle peasants and the ethnic minorities in the hinterlands are less bombarded by U.S. cultural imperialism. But there is no escape from its influence through the radio, the entry of certain U.S. products or the occasional trip to the urban areas.

Even in sports, U.S. cultural influence is excessively strong. Basketball is the No. 1 popular male sport and spectator sport in the Philippines, despite the low height of the average Filipino. Filipinos are very much acquainted with the names and playing styles of U.S. basketball stars in the NBA just as much as they know Hollywood stars.

Since the '60s, the U.S. promoted the multinational approach to foreign investments in the Philippines and to the exploitation of the people. Since then, Japan has beaten the United States in the sale of motor vehicles and consumer electronic products in the Philippines. But the Japanese cultural influence is of far lesser weight than the American. The video-players or compact-disc players may be Sony but the film or the music is still American. The general run of Hollywood films are trash and the pop hits, saccharine love songs.

The persistence of English as the principal medium of instruction in schools and likewise of official and mass communications provides an ever ready medium of U.S.

cultural imperialism. English is not simply the No.1 foreign language in the Philippines. Together with its Taglish (Tagalog-English admixture – like Brutch in the Netherlands) byproduct, English is the No.1 language to which the Pilipino or Manila-based Tagalog runs a far second as a medium of communications among Filipinos who have gone beyond high school.

The gains made by the movement for a national and democratic culture, from the '60s to the early '70s, were reversed by the Marcos fascist regime, starting in 1972. For instance, the increasing preference of university teachers for Tagalog as medium of instruction and radio broadcasters for Philippine music in Tagalog were reversed. Of course, songs, films and articles critical of the oppression and exploitation of the people by U.S. imperialism and the local exploiting classes were banned and their authors came under severe persecution, including job dismissals, confiscation of property, incarceration and torture.

Literature in English enjoys a higher stature than that in Tagalog among the university-educated even if the latter enjoys a wider readership in Tagalog publications. In fact, the standards and canons of what is considered good creative writing are still set in the main by aesthetics and literary criticism derived from U.S. bourgeois literature by the general run of university teachers, writers and critics who are rotated on scholarships and travel grants to the United States.

Whatever are the sophisticated theories that revolve around art for art's sake or the so-called purity of poetry among the university-educated, the fact remains that when they leave the classrooms, they buy mostly the mediocre American pulp novels or potboilers featuring sex and violence, comics and magazines featuring movie and athletic pop stars.

One very striking manifestation of the widespread and deepgoing influence of U.S. cultural imperialism in the Philippines is the result of a poll survey among public school children for someone's doctoral dissertation in the '80s. The children were asked what citizenship they would opt for had they been given the choice. The overwhelming majority opted for U.S. citizenship.

U.S. cultural influence, imperialist or otherwise, runs strong in the Philippines not only because of its superimposition on or penetration of the culture in the Philippines by American agencies and agents but because of the heavy traffic of Filipinos between the United States and the Philippines and the fact that around two million Filipinos now reside in the United States.

Since 1989, when the revisionist bureaucrat capitalist regime of China went into turmoil and similar regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union masquerading for a long time as socialist started to disintegrate, the U.S. ideological and propaganda machinery has gone into high gear in spreading the line that the struggle for national liberation and socialism is hopeless and that history can go no farther than capitalism and liberal democracy.

A small section of the intelligentsia has tended to be carried away by the imperialist ideological and political offensive. And a handful of paid agents of the U.S. and some unstable elements (?) have drummed up the idea that the anti-imperialist struggle and the class struggle have become marginalized and futile. They have prated that nothing can be done but to seek bourgeois democratic reforms within a "new world order" under the single hegemony of the United States. The NGOs financed by U.S., West European and Japanese funding agencies have misrepresented themselves as the alternative to the revolutionary mass movement led by the working class party.

Notwithstanding the hegemony of U.S. cultural imperialism in the Philippines, tightened by high technology in transport and communications, it rides on the persistent layers of feudal and folk culture due to the unchanged semicolonial and semifeudal character of Philippine society. There is resistance and collaboration between imperialist and feudal culture but there is mainly a schizophrenic collaboration, especially in the maintenance of the economic, political and cultural status quo.

III. Resistance to U.S. Cultural Imperialism

There is strong and consistent resistance to U.S. cultural imperialism by patriotic and progressive forces that take the general line of the national-democratic revolution and call for a national, scientific and mass culture. I count myself among these forces. Modesty aside, I have been known as an articulator of these forces since 1959 when I was still a graduate student and lecturer at the University of the Philippines.

The current national-democratic revolution may be considered as a resumption of the unfinished Philippine revolution of 1896. It is a movement to complete the struggle for national liberation and democracy against foreign and feudal domination. This struggle has been frustrated by the United States since the beginning of this century.

The ongoing national-democratic revolution may be described as one of a new type. There is a shift of class leadership from that of the nascent liberal bourgeoisie in the old

democratic revolution of 1896 to that of the working class. At the core of the revolutionary movement are the cadres who are guided by Marxism-Leninism; whereas at the core of the Philippine revolution of 1896, were cadres who were guided by an anticolonial liberal bourgeois ideology.

The national-democratic revolution now takes into account the objective and subjective conditions in the era of modern imperialism and proletarian revolution. While upholding the class leadership of the working class, it bases itself on the alliance of the working class and peasantry, seeks to win over the middle social strata and tries to take advantage of the contradictions among the reactionaries in order to oppose and depose foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

The national-democratic revolution programmatically takes up political, economic and cultural issues to arouse, organize and mobilize the people. It aims to replace the U.S.-controlled big comprador-landlord state with a people's democratic state to dissolve the agrarian semifeudal economy with a program of national industrialization and land reform and the antinational, feudal and antipeople culture with a national, scientific and mass culture.

Why must Philippine culture become national? It has long been captivated, burdened and exploited by colonial mentality under more than three centuries of Spanish colonialism and then by a colonial and neocolonial mentality imposed by U.S. imperialism.

The local cultures and the developing national culture must be cherished and affirmed and integrated into a revolutionary national consciousness in order to serve national liberation and do away with the stultifying sense of subservience to foreign domination. Thus, the Filipino nation can take its place in the community of nations with dignity.

Why must Philippine culture be scientific? It must do away with the deadening weight of feudal and semifeudal culture, release the people from the bondage that is due to superstition, lack of education and miseducation and avail itself of the scientific advances in the world.

The scientific culture must release the working people and other creative forces from the forces of oppression and exploitation. Science and technology must serve the all-rounded development of the people. The scientifically educated men and women must no longer be the mere servants of the imperialists and the local reactionaries.

Why must Philippine culture have a mass character? It must serve the toiling masses above all. The people themselves must develop this kind of culture. The most vital

knowledge is drawn by knowing their conditions, needs and capabilities. Whatever higher knowledge there may be from any section of the people can and must be popularized.

The people should not be regarded as a vapid mass. At this historical stage of the Philippine revolution it is clear that the working class leads the people and that they are constituted mainly by the workers and peasants in the overwhelming majority. The intelligentsia must take a choice in their favor against the exploitative owners of land and capital.

Before World War II, there were efforts to undertake the resumption of the Philippine revolution by either the working class or the urban petty-bourgeoisie. But these were always frustrated after some time until 1959 when something could be started and developed continuously up to the present.

The Student Cultural Association of the University of the Philippines was established in 1959 as an exponent of the new-democratic revolution and a culture along this general line. It included a secret core of Marxist-Leninists. This eventually became the main engine for the establishment of the Kabataang Makabayan (KM - Patriotic Youth), a comprehensive organization of young workers and peasants, students and young professionals on 30 November 1964.

The KM became the most outstanding organization promoting the legal democratic movement along the anti-imperialist and antifeudal line in most of the '60s until 1972. It considered its educational program, its propaganda and militant mass actions as constituting the Second Propaganda Movement, reminiscent of the first propaganda movement in the 1880s that paved the way for the Philippine revolution of 1896.

The KM became in fact the training school of revolutionary cadres in the political and cultural fields. Among the mass organizations of various types, it was chiefly responsible for promoting a new-democratic cultural revolution against the dominant pro-imperialist and reactionary culture since the latter half of the '60s and for carrying out the First Quarter Storm of 1970, which involved a series of mass actions ranging from 50,000 to 100,000 people and consequently inspired the formation of several cultural and literary organizations advocating a national, scientific and mass culture.

From the '60s to 1972 when Marcos proclaimed martial law, the KM promoted the adoption of the national language as the principal medium of instruction at all levels of the educational system, the reconstitution of study and reading courses as to include progressive and revolutionary works, the program of sending teams of students, writers

and cultural workers to the factories and farms to conduct social investigation and learn from the masses, the organization of cultural groups among the workers and peasants.

The martial law regime forced KM and all the legal patriotic and progressive cultural organizations into the underground. But many of the cultural activists joined the revolutionary armed struggle in the countryside and continued the cultural revolution on a wider scale and in a more profound way. Since 1969 when it was established by the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army (NPA) had been promoting an anti-imperialist and antifeudal cultural revolution in the countryside.

Even during the harshest years of martial rule, anti-imperialist and antifeudal cultural activity could thrive even in the urban areas despite censorship and military suppression. The cultural cadres secretly wrote and circulated their poems, plays, short stories and novels. Many dared to improvise stage performances among the workers and peasants. There were lightning cultural performances and lightning exhibits of visual art works. When the fascist regime started to crumble and eventually fell in the '80s, the revolutionary mass movement and the cultural movement that it nurtured came out strongly and brilliantly.

The cultural movement is a major component of the national democratic revolution. It is connected with the legal democratic mass movement based in the urban areas as well as with the people's war based in the countryside. The cultural cadres undertake cultural studies among the masses, create works such as music, paintings, poetry, plays, short stories, novels and produce films, stage and street performances.

There are specialized cultural associations both aboveground and underground. Aboveground are the Concerned Artists of the Philippines, Bugkos, Panulat and the like. The most prominent and comprehensive cultural organization underground is ARMAS which is an allied organization within the framework of the National Democratic Front. All the major legal mass organizations of workers, peasants, youth women and many of their lower organizations have their own groups of cultural cadres and performers.

In the countryside there are also the cultural teams attached to the NPA and there are the countless cultural groups of the local communities. The benign content and forms of folk culture have been adopted and integrated with the proletarian revolutionary line of the working class, the national-democratic program and the national, scientific and mass culture. Revolutionary content is put into the traditional forms of art and literature.

You might ask whether the national-democratic revolution and its cultural movement are adversely affected by the unprecedented globalization of production, the apparently

unquestioned single hegemony of the United States, the use of high technology for the extraction of superprofits, the collapse of the revisionist regimes ruled by bureaucrat capitalists masquerading as socialist, the apparent success of neocolonialism and the unprecedentedly strong imperialist ideological and political offensive since 1989.

As I have earlier pointed out, only a small section of the intelligentsia is confused and disappointed. It is the same section that has always tended to be subservient to the United States and the local exploiting classes. Some elements in this section of the petty-bourgeoisie appeared to be Left in the past, especially in the fight against the Marcos fascist regime, but upon the frustration of their illusions of quick victory in the revolution they have openly taken a Rightist position.

As far as the masses of workers and peasants and most of the urban petty-bourgeoisie are concerned, they say resolutely that there is no choice for them but to keep up their anti-imperialist and antifeudal struggle in the same manner that their revolutionary predecessors never gave up their struggle for national liberation and democracy despite centuries of Spanish colonial rule and decades of U.S. imperialist domination. They look forward to the resurgence of the anti-imperialist movement and socialist movement precisely as a consequence of the current world disorder.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, I wish to make a few remarks comparing the Philippines and The Netherlands with regard to U.S. cultural influence. I hope that these can help sharpen your understanding of what I have discussed at length.

Definitely, there is strong U.S. cultural influence in the Netherlands. It is a country often described as having the closest cultural relations with the United States among the countries in mainland Europe now and since the Dutch settlers went over to the North American continent. It is a close allround U.S. ally and one of the major U.S. allies in the colonial, imperialist and neocolonial exploitation of 20th century Asia, in the cold war of the bygone bipolar world and in the current new world disorder.

U.S. cultural imperialism is exceedingly obvious in the Philippines because my country is a preindustrial neocolony of the United States. The Netherlands is far more independent because it is a well developed industrial country and is even a neocolonial power on its own account.

Let me use language as a point of reference. The Dutch use English as their No.1 international language because it is objectively the No.1 language in international affairs. But within the Netherlands and among the Dutch people, the Dutch language is prevalent and dominant over any foreign language in all fields of activity. In the case of a neocolony like the Philippines, the English language is in fact dominant over what is formally recognized as the national language and is a vehicle of ideas, attitudes and tastes that subordinate the people to U.S. power.

There is a high degree of consumer interest in certain U.S. products in the Netherlands. But the Dutch people have a far wider range of its own products and a wider choice of imported products than the Filipinos. Urbanites in the Philippines are captives of a wide range of U.S. consumer products and are subject to the barrage of commercial advertising not only in the electronic and print media but also in the most unsightly billboards.

My impression is that the Netherlands is far more selective in importing American films. But the Philippines import a lot more indiscriminately, catering to the most vulgar taste. Filipino filmmakers produce far more feature films than do Dutch filmmakers but the general run of movies in Tagalog are patterned after Hollywood films and also after martial arts films from Taiwan and Hongkong. Moviehouses are far more capacious in the Philippines because videoplayers are fewer and less available to the people who have far lesser income than in the Netherlands.

My impression is that Dutch and Philippine TV stations have a penchant for canned American programs, especially the soap opera and comedy series. So far, I have not yet made even a rough estimate of the degree of addiction to such programs in the Netherlands and the Philippines.

With regard to American pulp novels, there are probably more Dutch buyers of these from the Bruna bookstore chain in both the English original and in Dutch translation than Filipino buyers who are usually university-educated and who so much prefer to read these in English that no Tagalog translations are made of these.

I hope that in my comparisons of U.S. cultural influence on the Philippines and the Netherlands you can grasp both the differences and similarities between a neocolonial vassal and a neocolonialist partner of the United States. #