

# Humanist Review

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## COMBAT MARCOS DICTATORSHIP AND UNITE WITH ALL REVOLUTIONARY CLASSES AND PROGRESSIVE GROUPS AGAINST FASCISM!

The declaration of martial law is the declaration of a state of civil war throughout the country. Let us not mince words. It is the death blow to all possible illusions that have obscured, to the point of blindness, our understanding as to the nature of the fundamental conflicts that plague our society. Those who think that the sickness of this social body are mere "excesses" or temporary "aberrations", "short-comings" or the workings of a "conspiratorial few" have for too long deluded themselves in believing that if only these few "exceptions" of mere episodic injustices, isolated forms of exploitation etc. etc. can be cured, then the social and economic system (which is believed to be "essentially" just and proper) can be preserved. Today, they are either willing or unwilling collaborators of the present military regime and of the American power that supports it or else have been reduced, perhaps still unbelieving, to the silence of the betrayed and the dead. In either case, they have been proved to be fatally mistaken and hence, for the time being at least, impotent.

It is at this point- the point of conscience, of outrage, of terror - the realization of how profoundly we have been deceived, that our demands for basic changes are answered by empty "legislations", "decrees", obfuscating "measures", palliatives, etc. etc. This regime of idiots are still selling us this line of more "relief", more "reforms", that systematically evade the bedrock problems that characterize our national society: the feudal character and the colonial subservience of our economy to the United States, the mercenary nature of the fascist armed forces, the mindless bureaucrats and political opportunists who welcome this regime as one gigantic pork barrel (minus the usual competitors?), the endless intervention of the United States in the civil affairs of the country and its direct role in the maintenance of fascist rule etc. etc.

In other words, the basic structure of power and privilege has not been and cannot possibly be touched, let alone changed by this regime for the clear reason that this military rule is in itself the expression of precisely the most entrenched classes and power groups who are threatened by basic social changes and who shudder with fear before the increasing politicalization of millions of Filipinos! This regime relies for its image of "legitimacy" solely on this propagated lie: that it is capable of fundamental social changes. If we listen closely enough, we might even get the impression that these military goons really believe themselves. But we do not really care to share their delusions.

It is however not enough to be indignant. It is above all necessary to regain our composure, our now radical will, our now revolutionary patience. We shall not do this regime the favor of being obscure to ourselves, of being disheartened, fatalistic, etc., to poison ourselves: this is precisely what they wish us to do.

It is necessary to understand clearly the nature of this fascist rule that day after day infects us with its disease. What are the chief characteristics of this rule? What are the "basic changes" it proclaims?

(a). The classes which urged the imposition and maintenance of martial law and which are best benefitted by its economic policies are essentially the big landlords, the comprador bourgeoisie and the bureaucrats who utilize their political power to amass economic wealth the previously did not possess (i.e. bureaucrat-capitalists). These same classes and groups are precisely the same ones who have always possessed the decisive wealth and power in the Philippines from the very start. It is therefore sheer folly and illusion to believe that they are willing and capable of instituting "basic changes" in the economic and political system since such changes would mean precisely the destruction of their power and the deprivation of their privileges. In short, we are not convinced (in their dirty joke of a "new society") that they are about to commit class suicide. It is necessary to do it for them.

Of course, we are aware that this does not explain fully the specific motivations and immediate reasons for the imposition of fascist rule. And we shall have occasions in the future issues of this journal to examine the specific purposes of economic policies of this regime (e.g. the so called Agrarian Reforms, the oil exploration policies, parity and the Investments Incentives Act etc.). The economic policies of this regime, which is determined by the internal conflicts and factional struggles within the same ruling classes and groups may be broadly divided into two: First, the consolidation of the power of a faction (i.e. Marcos and his henchmen) supported by its economic wealth, political power and the loyalty of the dominant section of the fascist armed forces.

Second, the elimination, or at least reduction of the power of other factions (e.g. the Lopez group) which may pose threats to that clique controlling the regime at present.

It is necessary to examine the internal conflicts within the ruling clique, its competitions for power, and interest if we are to fully understand the shifting policies. But in no case are we convinced that these economic plans constitute a breaking-out of the oppressive economic political system. These power cliques are simply competing among themselves for the support of the American Gov't. and for the profitable control of political machinery.

(b). The fascist rule is strongly supported and advocated by the United States government. The reasons for this are numerous but the most basic ones are economic and strategic.

The maintenance of the Philippines as an agricultural appendage of the American industries, the source of export raw materials, an important market of American products (e.g. witness the large scale Ford car plan for Southeast Asia which is based here) and source of cheap labor. (Another economic reason is the presence of internationally competed off shore oil deposits particularly on the region of the Southeast Asia continental "shelf". The whole range of this oil-rich section of the world which extends from the gulf of Thailand and the shores of Vietnam down to the whole of the Indonesian archipelago. The Philippines is also included within this crucially significant arc, particularly on the eastern seaboard down to Mindoro, Palawan and Mindanao. The fact is that area has already been parcelled to more than a dozen, mostly American, giant oil companies and cartels, for "exploitation" and "development". It is not accidental that all the countries within this arc are by now under fascist rule - Thailand, South Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. It is not accidental that one of the first "decrees" of our petty dictator upon declaration of martial law is the "invitation" of "oil-exploration" to foreign companies). In any case, for the maintenance of these economic interests of the Americans, "political stability" and "peace and order" are required; things which our dictator Marcos is only too willing to assure his masters.

The many direct reasons for American urging of martial law are too clear to us: the impending termination of Parity rights in 1974 (which "fortunately" falls within the period of the so-called "ad-interim gov't"); the hiking of oil prices, the IMF-imposed lowering (again!) of the peso etc.etc.

The strategic reasons which serve the international economic and political "interests" of the U.S., its neurotic "containment" policy against the People's Republic of China and its support of corrupt regimes under the banner of anti-communism and the Nixon doctrine requires this imperial power to maintain hundreds of military bases and installations in the Southeast Asian region. This system of military bases are the armed security forces assuring "stability" to the economic and political interests of the U.S. in this part of the world. In the Philippines, the numerous American military bases, sanctified by "treaties", constitute the strongest armed support of the Marcos fascist regime. We shall have opportunities to study this in more detail in the coming issues.

(c). The Fascist Regime is Counter-revolutionary. The aim of the imposition of martial law is the consolidation of the power of the ruling classes against the developing revolutionary awareness and activities of more and more peasants, workers, intellectuals and other progressive sectors of the petty and national bourgeoisie.

The aim of this military rule is preventive. It seeks to destroy the patriotic and revolutionary movement in its early stages. There is reason to believe that it is too late. The revolutionary movement has spread throughout all the major provinces of the country. In a hopeless attempt to repeat the pre-emptive counter-revolutionary policies of the 1930's against the old left (the defeat of which was due more to the errors of the Lamas than to Magsaysay or Lansdale), this military regime is hoping for a re-enactment of that decade. We shall be glad to disappoint them. The present revolutionary developments have learned from the serious errors of the Past and in contrast to that time, are continuously learning, not in the least, from the actions of our fascist enemies.

What are the tactics of this counter-revolutionary fascist regime?

- (1). To deodorize the role of the fascist armed forces and to present them as a "modernizing" factor in the Philippines.
- (2). The ideological and economic consolidation of the middle and lower middle classes in support of the fascist "new society".
- (3). The consolidation and indefinite extension of the power of the Marcos dictatorship through political and "constitutional" reforms, (through the "Ad Interim" and "Parliamentary" gov't.)
- (4). The institution of para-military "civic action", of "counter-insurgency" measures, of "resettlements" of thousands of minorities and, as in the case of Muslims, the extermination of those who resist.
- (5). The fielding of "task forces", large military operations directed against the centers of revolutionary bases and strongholds.
- (6). Deprivation of civil rights, terror and suppression campaigns against all patriotic and progressive sectors of our society.

- (7). Sustained and systematic propaganda for the fascist regime, the brainwashing of the population through fascist-controlled media and educational system.
- (8). The use of the willing or unwilling collaboration of the religious groups, particularly the Catholic hierarchy (which we insist on distinguishing from individual Catholics) to lend support and "blessing" to this fascist regime.
- (9). The use of and collaboration of some writers and artists who give credibility and legitimacy to this regime. These hacks who deceive us that creative freedom and responsibility are possible under, and in fact, while colluding with the murderers who constitute this regime.

The numerous cases of massacres, terrorism and detentions under the Marcos dictatorship - and which are dutifully unpublished by its propaganda agencies (such as the Daily Express, Times Journal, Philippine Focus etc.) are well known among the lower classes and those who unite with them. This regime is based on deceptions and the suppression of the truth of what our true conditions are and what its criminal leaders are guilty of. It is based on lies, on deception and ignorance precisely as it professes truth, honesty and knowledge.

This regime, this ruling class, this American imperial power that crushes us beneath its infernal heels do not recognize reason nor compassion. We, however, recognize its endless pretensions to "reason", and its hypocritical postures of "compassion" and of a "new life" as so much unexcelled irrelevance.

From Resistance to Revolution: It is not enough to oppose Fascism and the Marcos dictatorship. It is not enough to take up the attitude of resistance, of a purely defensive position. It is above everything else, necessary to seize the initiative to radical action and radical consciousness, to pursue the Revolution and to live the Revolution. The journal will pay its main attention to this purpose. While it shall continue to negate the repressive regime, expose its violent nature, its crimes and deceptions, it shall develop the positivity of the revolutionary and patriotic movement, its advances, its risks and decisions.

In the political realm, it shall support the establishment and expansion of "counter-institutions"; of autonomous political organizations among the peasantry, the working class, and the allied classes of the intellectuals and the small and national bourgeoisie - these institutions of self-rule; the mobilization of the deep resources of the majority of our people. It shall support all alliances of all genuine revolutionary classes and patriotic groups that work together for the destruction of this regime and the reactionary classes which maintain it. It shall work towards the final liberation of the nation from American hegemony.

The Journal therefore devotes its energies to the propagation and deepening of political consciousness on the basis of the principles of the United Front and the alliance of all progressive classes in the pursuit of the national democratic revolution. It accepts this alliance as historically necessary and inevitable. It contends that a consolidation of all forces into a united front constitutes the strongest reserve of power alone capable of destroying these institutions that oppress us and to work for a coalition government that shall be truly representative of all progressive interests.

In particular, the journal seeks to elucidate the cultural dilemma brought about by these events. It seeks to situate the nature and consequence of philosophy, literature and the arts in the midst of these fascist onslaughts and the revolutionary movement. The place of artistic liberty, duty and meaning, the relations of political action to artistic sensibility, the tactics and forms of "cultural rationalization" of fascist rule, of ideology and the arts etc.

editorial.

REJECT MARCOS AND BOGUS CONSTITUTION. REJECT MARCOS AND BOGUS CONSTITUTION. REJECT MARCOS

#### THE BIG HOAX-LAND REFORM

Presidential Decree No.2 dated September 25, 1972 and Presidential Decree No.27 dated October 21, 1972, two documents which the dictator Marcos boasts of as his masterpieces of "land reform", are consistent with the anti-democratic and counterrevolutionary character of Proclamation 1081. They are also consistent with the most obnoxious anti-peasant and prolandlord provisions of the old Agricultural Land Reform Code (Rep. Act 3844) as well as of its latest modified version, the Code of Agrarian reforms (embodying Rep. Act. 6389).

The two presidential decrees do not get out of the old rut of all previous reactionary legislation on "land reform" which runs thus; if a tenant want to get emancipated, he must pay for the landlords land at "fair market value" or at the gov'ts overprice; or he can start calling himself a "leaseholder" and pay to the landlord a fixed yearly rent

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equivalent to 25 of the average yearly crop of 5 normal crop years, provided he shoulders all agricultural expenses and takes all risks, including those due to natural calamities and crop epidemics.

The land retention limit of 7 hectares set on the landlords by Presidential Decree No. 27 is as pretended and false as any of the land retention limits set by previous legislation because in fact the tenant masses are required to buy out the landlords at "fair market value" or pay for the high redistribution price set by the reactionary gov't. In the first place, this gov't which promises to expropriate landed estates for redistribution and resale to the tenant masses is a political instrument of the landlords and having extremely limited cash and bonds for buying lands at the "fair market value" it has set this as its own limit and burden in making expropriation.

It is utterly stupid of the dictator Marcos to boast that his presidential decrees are historically outstanding as they are original. It is redundant of Presidential Decree No.2 to "proclaim the whole country as a land reform area". The Code of Agrarian Reforms did so in 1971 by declaring share tenancy throughout the country as contrary to public policy and by calling for its automatic conversion to agricultural leasehold.

And has Marcos easily forgotten that some years ago he heard the same pious generalities in Presidential Decree No. 27, about "the emancipation of the tenant from the bondage of the soil" and "transferring to them the ownership of the land they till and providing the instruments and mechanism therefor", from another demagogue? In 1963, Marcos as Senate President was at the side of Macapagal when he signed into law the Agricultural Land Reform Code and proclaimed the "emancipation" of the tenant masses and "abolition of tenancy".

The demagoguery of the dictator Marcos is definitely stale. But what is now most striking is the fact that his Presidential Decree No. 27 has artificially increased land prices and has further put the tenant masses in a position of ridicule under reactionary laws. This decree dictates a higher cost for acquiring land and in effect twists the tenant masses with the fact that they cannot afford to buy land from the landlords. Also, the dictator Marcos by his speech of October 21, 1972 has pronounced the policy that any transfer of land between the landlord and tenant shall be strictly a transaction between the two and that the reactionary government shall avoid engaging in the buy-and-sell of a few landed estates between landlord and tenant. It is to be expected that it would rather shift funds to the fascist military.

Presidential Decree No. 27 orders that the value of land shall be equivalent to 2½ times the average harvest of three normal crop years immediately preceding the promulgation of the decree. In addition, the decree orders that the total cost of the land, including interest at the rate of 6% per annum, shall be paid by the tenant in 15 years of 15 equal annual amortizations. The entire formula set by the fascist dictator for the acquisition of lands from the landlords is simply ridiculous.

Let us translate what appears to be small numbers in the presidential decree into their real dimensions. Assume that the tenanted land is three hectares, irrigated and 2-cropped and that the average yield is 50 cavans of palay per hectare per crop. The total annual yield of the entire tenanted land is, therefore, 300 cavans of palay. Assume that the agreed price of a cavan of palay is ₱25.- which is the current floor price set by the National Grains Authority. The figure that comes out is ₱7,500; it is the money equivalent of the average annual crop. Multiply this by 2½. The resultant is ₱18,750. This is supposed to be the cost of the 3 hectare land, if only the tenant could pay in cash immediately.

At the unqualified interest rate of 6% per annum, the total interest charges on ₱18,750 in 15 years can range from ₱9,000 to ₱16,875. The final total cost of the entire land would therefore range from ₱27,750 to ₱35,625. Divide these figures by 15 in order to arrive at the 15 equal annual amortizations. The figures range from ₱1,850 to ₱2,375.

The per-hectare value of the land, without interest charges, is ₱6,250. This is far higher than the ₱4,149 per-hectare value of land (including a few urban estates) bought by the Land Bank from 1966 to 1971 under the Agricultural Land Reform Code. It may be argued that land prices have gone up since then. But then the value of ₱4,149 per hectare even includes a few higher-valued urban estates and, of course, the overpricing that ordinarily goes into transactions between the reactionary gov't and the landlords. The best thing to do in order to see how exorbitant a price is ₱6,250 is to go around and observe comparable lands and their current prices. If interest charges ranging from ₱3,000 to ₱5,625 per hectare are added to the principal cost of the land, then the total cost per hectare ranges from ₱9,250 to ₱11,875. In most areas, the land that we speak of can be bought at a price below ₱4,000 per hectare. Presidential Decree No.27 therefore, gives more than ever a better deal to the landlords and a worse deal to anyone who is baited into believing the bogus land reform of the fascist dictatorship.

Going back to the question of equal annual amortizations, let us now ask if a tenant on a 3-hectare, irrigated and 2-cropped land can really save and put up an amount ranging from ₱1,850 to ₱2,375 every year and for 15 years! The answer can be gotten from the masses themselves. Under conditions of increasing inflation under the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship, the tenant family has to pay more for basic commodities (other than grain

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and vegetables in the backyard) for its subsistence. It has to pay far more for fertilizers; pesticides; irrigation fees; hauling; and other agricultural costs requiring cash outlays. Then, there are other agricultural costs in the main involving grain outlays, as in seeding, planting, weeding, harvesting, threshing and milling. If the tenant has no work animals or implements, he has to rent them from the landlords or the rich peasants. At the end of every year, there is not much left for any tenant family to ever hope that he can buy out the landlord.

Under conditions of want and hard toil, every tenant family is usually beset within 15 years by a number of major illnesses, involving heavy medical expenditures or even temporary disability or death of the principal tiller. Within the same long period, calamities like floods, drought, crop infestation and the like is likely to occur. All these can disrupt the timetable of amortizations. If for one year he is in default of payments, the prospective landowner-cultivator will never be able to recover financially and will have to suffer complete loss of the land he has hoped to own.

The risks involved in the attempt to buy land from the landlord are exceedingly great for a tenant. Obviously, it is for this reason that Presidential Decree No. 27 requires him to join a "cooperative" first before being allowed to get into the act of trying to buy land on which he is a tenant. This "cooperative", an underling of the landlords rural banks or the landlord-dominated gov't is supposed to guarantee amortizations to the landlord and at the same time stands guard to take over the land lest the buyer goes in default. Ultimately, the tenant goes back to being a tenant after his futile effort to conform to the bogus land reform or, in other words, the laws of the landlord. The land that he has hoped to own also reverts to the landlord class through a bogus cooperative or the reactionary government.

Not a single poor share-tenant has been or can ever be emancipated by Presidential Decree No. 2 and Presidential Decree No. 27. Yet, as if a few glittering phrases would suffice to obscure the truth, the propaganda machinery of the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship has been endlessly claiming that the presidential decrees have already emancipated 715,000 tenants on 1.5 million hectares and distributed to each of them either 3 hectares of irrigated land or 5 hectares of unirrigated land. Anyone with the simplest knowledge of arithmetic will immediately see the Marcos propaganda as a cheap lie. Out of 1.5 million hectares, there can only be 2.1 hectares for every one of 715,000 tenants. Furthermore, the number of tenants in the Philippines is not as small as 715,000 and also the extent of landlords holdings devoted to rice and corn is not as small as 1.5 million hectares.

One more myth spewed out by the propaganda machinery of the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship is that land reform is being conducted by the reactionary gov't in Cagayan valley. The truth is that the reactionary armed forces are trying by all-out force to suppress the revolutionary peasant masses and protect the landlord class. The big landlord Marcos himself is rabidly trying to keep his landed estate of more than 22,000 hectares in the face of the surging revolutionary movement. This landed estate extending from Gordon, Isabela to Diffun, Nueva Vizcaya is the biggest of its kind north of Manila and is the most conspicuous landmark of feudalism in Cagayan valley. It is also the most scandalous example of land grabbed from poor tenants and settlers.

The Sabacalera Estate of 11,000 hectares has long been offered for sale to the reactionary gov't by its foreign owners who are terribly afraid of the genuine land reform program of the revolutionary movement. They want to sell the land at an overprice and at the same time contract the reactionary gov't to deliver the tobacco and other products to them. They want the reactionary gov't to secure the land from the revolutionary peasant masses and not really to make the land the object of any land reform. Should the U.S.-Marcos clique finally buy the land, it would be at an overprice and the landless tillers would not be able to afford the redistribution price.

With regard to the problems of land reform, there is nothing new to expect from the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship except the worsening of the plight of the peasant masses. The Department of Agrarian Reforms created by the Code of Agrarian Reforms has been assigned by the fascist dictator to work out the details of his "land reform" decrees. This department will go the way of its predecessors, such as the National Land Reform Council, the Land Authority and the like. It will be nothing more than a bureaucratic set-up for protecting the landlord class and demanding payments for land expropriated at an overprice from a few landlords. The emancipation of the tenant masses and the abolition of the "system of sharecrop and lease-tenancy" have become more gigantic impossibilities under the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship by virtue of Proclamation No. 27 setting the price of land even above "fair market value". What does it profit a poor peasant anyway even if the Land Bank exhausts its funds in buying only a few landed estates. He will still have to pay the heavy price of redistribution.

From 1965 to 1971, the long period during which the Agricultural Land Reform Code was in effect until it was relabelled Code of Agrarian Reforms, the reactionary gov't "appropriated" ₱1.3 billion and actually released a total of ₱399.24 million to the various "land reform" agencies. Out of the large amount actually released, only a measly ₱36.32 million was released specifically to the Land Bank, which in turn spent only

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\$16,002,900 to purchase 32 landed estates having the total size of only 3,876 hectares. The total size of the expropriated estates is equivalent to a measly portion of one Marcos hacienda. Now, we ask whether a single poor peasant, lower middle class peasant or farm worker ever succeeded during the last seven years in becoming a full owner of a family-size plot from any of these expropriated estates. Not a single one. Most of the 2,268 tenants of these estates have gone in default of their amortizations as in all cases of expropriation and redistribution before 1965. It is only the rich peasants and upper middle peasants who can keep up with the schedule of amortizations because in the first place, they have some amount of surplus lands or have more than enough work animals as well as better farm implements.

There is nothing in the past and there is also nothing in the present to show or indicate that the reactionary gov't, specially as it is now under a fascist dictatorship can implement a genuine land reform program. It is important to expose and condemn the past record of the U.S.-Marcos regime on the land problem and likewise the present hoax about land reform being drummed up by the Marcos propaganda machinery.

Under Proclamation 1081, the peasant masses are prohibited from having their own militant associations and from asserting their democratic rights. Under conditions of martial rule, the reactionary armed forces have the license to commit all kinds of barbarities against the peasant masses. In areas where the peasant masses have valiantly stood up to oppose landlord oppression and exploitation, the fascist troops who inflict direct physical harm are concentrated by the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship in order to suppress them and protect the landlord class.

The political and economic crisis, spawned by U.S. imperialism and domestic feudalism has been aggravated by the greed and barbarism of the fascist dictatorship. Massacres, mass arrests, mass evacuation, zoning, looting, kidnapping, assassination, abuse of women, blackmail and extortion at checkpoints exacerbate the sufferings of the peasant masses who even before martial law could not seek redress for their grievances.

As the resistance of the peasant masses rises, the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship shifts public funds to the reactionary armed forces in order to increase their numbers, equipment and antipopular operations. As a result, the reactionary gov't no longer has as much funds as before disposable for "land reform" and can no longer pretend as much as before to be for "land reform" by purchasing a few excessively overpriced estates from the landlord class and offering these for resale to tenants at prohibitive prices.

A land reform program must have as a minimum goal the reduction of land rent to at least 10% of the net crop, the complete elimination of usury and the development of multi-purpose cooperation among the poor peasants, lower middle-peasants and farm workers. Its maximum goal should be the confiscation of the lands of the landlords and their free distribution to the poor peasants, lower middle peasants, farm workers and all other impoverished people who are willing to till the soil but have no land. The achievement of these goals are interconnected with the comprehensive achievement of the people's democratic revolution.

REJECT MARCOS AND BOGUS CONSTITUTION. REJECT MARCOS AND BOGUS CONSTITUTION. REJECT MARCOS

"NOT ALL SLEPT OR PRETENDED TO SLEEP  
DURING THE DARK DAYS OF OUR COUNTRY"

\*\*\*Speech of Delegate Justice Jesus Barrera on Transitory Provisions of the Constitution

There is a rule in the law of evidence that a statement against interest is more convincing and trustworthy than self-serving declarations. Predicated on the provisions of Section 2 of the draft article on Transitory Provisions under discussion, to the effect that delegates who vote in favor of its adoption will automatically become members of the proposed Ad Interim National Assembly while those who voted against, will be excluded therefrom, it would seem that applying the rule, all arguments in favor, being self-serving should not be taken at their face-value, while those against should merit full faith and credit.

My friends, I do not propose to take advantage of this rule of evidence. The subject at hand is too serious and transcendental to be decided on mere technicality. The life of the nation, its institutions, traditions, aspirations and hopes, its very future are in the balance. The way I look at the proposed article, far from being transitory, it institutes a system which places the entire gov't in one single person for a period indefinite and uncertain, all depending upon the sole will and exclusive determination of that person. I now recall the proposal of the Gentleman from Abra to adopt a dictatorship of the Philippines with the present incumbent President as the life dictator. Most of us then took the proposal as a joke, but alas, we now find that, that is exactly what is embodied in the subject, draft article.

Let us analyze each section of the draft.