



## The Nacionalista Party through the Years

*or what is new with the  
Philippines' oldest  
political party?*

(6 Dec. 1990)

He was a senator from 1967 to 1973, a member of the Batasang Pambansa from 1978 to 1983, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs from Feb. 25, 1986, to

Sept. 18, 1987, and very briefly the prime minister from Feb. 25 to March 25, 1986.

It is with distinct honor to present to you the Vice-President of the Philippines, Honorable Salvador Laurel.

**VICE-PRESIDENT SALVADOR LAUREL:** Thank you. I take special pleasure in being with you because of the feeling of nostalgia that always comes to me whenever I visit the Alma Mater. It was here many, many years ago, way back in 1948, when probably most of you were no more than a twinkle in your mothers' eyes then, when we came here to Diliman. We were the first batch.

The subject you have given me this afternoon relates to the, I quote, "The Nacionalista Party through the Years." I am supposed to talk briefly about the history of the Nacionalista Party (NP), its views or ideology on Philippine society, its political line, its programs and vision for our people. I would like also to tackle the stand of the party on the various current burning issues of the day.

Let me give a brief background of the NP. It is the oldest political party, founded in 1903 by such great statesmen as Manuel Quezon, Sergio Osmena, and Jose Palma. It traces its ideological roots to Apolinario Mabini, and therefore, is highly nationalistic. That is why it is called Nacionalista because of its nationalistic

### Guest Speaker:

- **HON. SALVADOR LAUREL**  
The Vice-President,  
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### Discussants:

- **PROF. LUZVIMINDA TANGCANGCO**  
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- **MR. FRANCISCO MAGNO**  
Department of Political Science,  
U.P. Diliman
- **MR. FRANCIS RONALD PEREZ**  
Editor-in-Chief,  
*Philippine Collegian*

**PROF. ALEXANDER R. MAGNO** (Acting Director, Third World Studies Center): This is the first of a series of dialogues organized by the TWSC that shall be participated in by the major political parties.

Our guest speaker this afternoon needs no introduction. He is the president of the Nacionalista Party. He obtained his law degree in the U.P., and his master of laws and doctorate in political science in Yale University.

roots and orientation. It has been nationalistic from the very beginning.

In every critical point in our history, the NP has always been there at the forefront of the fight. It attempted to organize first in 1904 but because it was too nationalistic for the American organizers, it was suppressed, it was not allowed to organize in 1904. At that time, Mabini was considered a subversive because he never thought of surrendering to the Americans. He was exiled in Guam, if you remember. His writings were very nationalistic.

But the NP attempted again in 1906 and finally succeeded. The NP members said that they had to organize in order to participate in the first election for the National Assembly in 1907. The NP was allowed to organize and it fielded candidates for the first Assembly. It was able to get the majority. The NP was first headed by Osmena and he became the first speaker of the National Assembly.

We have a record of splitting during fair weather and uniting during crisis. That is the record of the NP. And so, after uniting in 1907 for the first Philippine National Assembly, fair weather came in 1916. The fight for the Jones Law, the issue of Filipinization, and because of the personal rivalry between Quezon and Osmena, the party split time and again.

Then during the crisis of 1923, when my father resigned as Secretary of Interior in protest against the decision of Governor General Wood to reinstate a corrupt American executive, all Filipino members of the Cabinet of Wood resigned *en masse* and again the NP

reunited in 1924. Then, fair weather came again. There came the issue of the Pros and the Antis. That was the fight on what kind of independence act should we have. Roxas, Osmena, and my father championed the Hare-Hawes Cutting Act and Quezon championed the Tydings-McDuffie Law. And so the NP was split between the "Pros" and the "Antis."

Then came the Philippine Commonwealth in 1935 and because it was necessary that it showed unity so that the Americans will allow it to have the Commonwealth government, the party reunited. Quezon and Osmena joined forces. Quezon became number one and Osmena settled for number two. Quezon became the president of the Commonwealth and Osmena became the vice-president. That was in 1945.

In 1946, it split again. After the Second World War, Osmena came back as the successor of Pres. Quezon and he assumed the presidency of the Commonwealth but Roxas wanted to contest the position. Although Roxas was also a Nacionalista and was with Osmena during the "Pros" and the "Antis," this time, they split. Roxas called his wing the Liberal Party and Osmena ran as the candidate of the

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*"The Nacionalista Party is highly nationalistic. It is called Nacionalista because of its nationalistic roots and orientation. It has been nationalistic from the very beginning."*

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original Nacionalista Party. They split in 1946 and that was how the Liberal Party was formed.

Then in 1954, under Magsaysay, the Nacionalista reunited under the leadership of Pres. Magsaysay. I think we were able to break the back of the Huk movement during that time.

Then martial law came in 1972. Pres. Marcos imposed martial law. The NP was split. Some were in favor of martial law. The other faction of the NP, my wing, the "Laurel Wing," opposed it. The other faction was called the "Roy Wing" and it supported martial law.

Then came the EDSA Revolution, and again, the NP was divided into several groups. Some joined the United Nationalist and Democratic Opposition (UNIDO) and others joined other political parties.

In May 24, 1989, finally, the NP reunited. All the different factions of the NP merged into one political party and is now registered as such in the Commission on Elections.

That is the brief history of the NP.

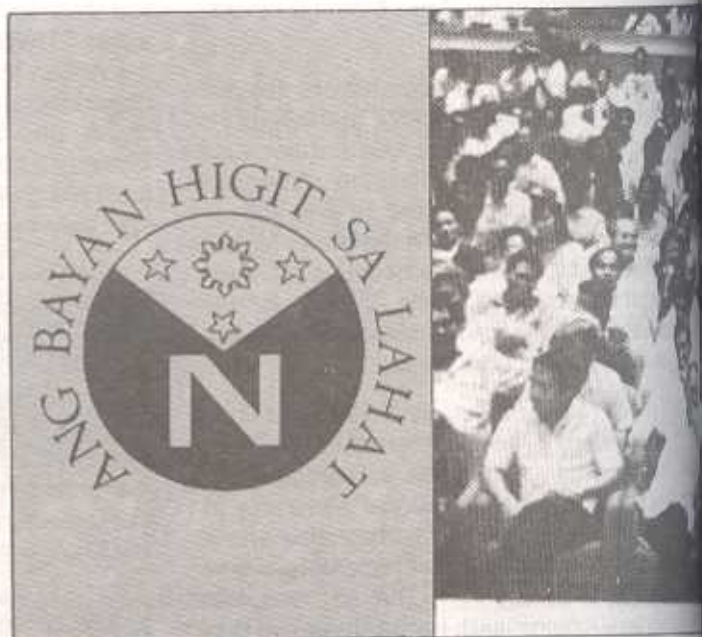
NP has a track record of producing at least seven or eight presidents out of ten. Some people say even eight out of ten presidents. Let's count. The first president was Quezon,

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*"In 1972, President Marcos imposed martial law. The NP was split. Some were in favor of martial law."*

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Nacionalista; the second was Osmena, Nacionalista; the third was Magsaysay, Nacionalista. After Magsaysay came Garcia, another Nacionalista. After Garcia came Marcos who was elected twice. After Marcos, you could include Cory or Roxas because Roxas was a Nacionalista but in his certificate of candidacy, he just put there "Liberal Wing." Cory ran as an official standard bearer of the UNIDO and the NP. So, if you want to include either, or



The Nacionalista Party logo; Laurel delivering his acceptance speech in 1948

both Pres. Roxas and Aquino, you could say that the NP has produced seven or eight presidents out of ten presidents so far. Anyway even if you remove the last two, the Nacionalista still has at least six or seven presidents out of ten.

What is the platform of the NP? Probably we could summarize the platform of the party into three main battlecries.

First is Filipinism, as a continuation of the political ideology of Apolinario Mabini. The first battlecry of the NP was complete, absolute, and immediate independence. We are still fighting for that, although they say that independence has been achieved already in 1946, we still believe that the fight must go on.

The second is federalism. We are advocating federalism as a necessary solution to many of our major problems.

The third is social justice through industrialization. We believe that the social and economic upliftment of our people will be hastened if we industrialize the nation, without of course neglecting agriculture.

What is our stand on the major issues in the country particularly on land reform, graft and corruption, peace and order, and the U.S. bases?



caption: "The NP tends to split during fair weather and unite during critical times."

First, on land reform. We are for land reform. We believe that the Comprehensive Agrarian Land Reform Program is not going to bring about genuine land reform because of the inherent defects of the law and because it has the wrong priorities. Our position is that land reform should first attend to the distribution of idle government agricultural lands because that will be cheaper.

We do not have to raise too much funds. We do not have to buy the lands because they already belong to the government. The only thing the government has to do is spend a little money to subdivide those lands; build roads and infrastructures and then distribute the lands. This will take about ten years. There will be no resistance to this because the lands to be distributed belong to the government.

After distributing government lands, we believe that the second class of lands should be idle private agricultural lands -- lands that have already been neglected, abandoned, foreclosed. Nobody will object to the distribution of these lands and the government does not have to buy them. It just has to spend a little for the tilling and sub-dividing to make those lands accessible. That will take another five to ten years of distribution. So, we will have at least ten to twenty years of agrarian peace because we will be distributing lands without disrupting agrarian production.

The third group of lands will probably be the lands that are already owned and productive. This is the problematic portion of land reform and our proposal is to entrust the disposition of these lands to the local governments in areas where they are located. This will be a part of the powers that will be delegated to the local governments under the proposed federal system.

Of course, the mere distribution of lands is not sufficient. You have to accompany it with other measures. First, you have to provide appropriate facilities to the farmers. They need money to buy seeds, fertilizers, and implements. Second, you have to teach them the latest scientific

methods so that they can improve the produce of the lands. Third, you have to offer them an adequate access to market so that their harvest will not be spoiled. Fourth, the system of cooperatives should be set up so that even in small lands, they can organize collective efforts.

This, in brief, is our concept of land reform if it is to work at all in this country.

On peace and order, we believe that this is the number one problem of the nation. No nation can move forward amidst chaos and lawlessness. Investors will not come while there are killings in this country. Law and order is not only heaven's first law; it is freedom's first condition.

Therefore, in line with this urgency to establish peace and order in this country, our proposal is that we consider seriously the grant of a general amnesty to all political offenders. I think we should start with the general amnesty with military rebels. We should consolidate our armed forces first so that our government will be respected when it deals with the other rebels like the New People's Army and the Moro National Liberation Front. When the government deals with the insurgent groups with a fragmented military, they may not take the government seriously.

I am also advocating food production as a necessary step to prevent the people from suffering in view of the announced oil price increase. Oil price has been doubled and that is not the end of it. If war will erupt in the Middle East, the experts say that the price of oil can rise up to sixty or a hundred dollars per barrel. Now, it is only a little over thirty dollars. The prices as they are now, which are already high for our people, may even go higher. Some people are asking why prices should go higher just because of the conflict in the Middle East. Well, if you look at the map of the Persian Gulf, you will see the strait between Iraq and Kuwait, and if a war will explode, the strait may be closed, locking in there about forty percent of the world's oil supply.

We are importing ninety percent of our oil from the Persian Gulf. If the war should erupt and we have to look for other sources, there are only five other countries we could go to: Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Malaysia, and Soviet Union.

But our problem is we do not have the money to buy oil. We will be competing with rich countries like Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea. These countries do not have oil reserves and they will also go to the same alternative sources of oil. We cannot match their money. They will be able to pay any amount asked of them; whereas for us, we may probably say, "Give us loan, we will pay you later."

What is the position of the NP on the bases? We are for a five to ten year phase-out of the U.S. military bases. Why? Because it is necessary for the Philippines to have time to prepare. It is not that United States so much as the Philippines that needs time to prepare to take over the external defense of the country. All these years, the U.S. has been the one undertaking the external defense of the country, from 1898 when it took over this country up to the present. It is to the U.S. that we have entrusted the responsibility of defending the country externally. We are just concentrating our armed forces on our internal security.

If the U.S. should pull out suddenly, we believe we need a little time to prepare our external defense. You look at our coastguard and our navy. I doubt if they can protect our coastal waters. We have 7,100 islands and we need at least a very good navy and coastguard to protect our coastal waters. Second, there are



Philippine Commonwealth president Manuel L. Quezon

more than 70,000 families who are dependent on the two bases and if you abruptly terminate the bases, where will you put these 70,000 families? Our unemployment problem is serious enough and if we are just going to throw 70,000 families in the streets, we are going to exacerbate our unemployment problem.

Some people are asking, "Why are you for phase-out?" We believe that as a basic fundamental principle, no foreign military base should ever be permanent in any host country. That is fundamental to our sovereignty. But it is already there and what we have to do is to have it removed. But it is not wise to remove it abruptly, so we have



Ramon Magsaysay with NP leaders: "The NP has a track record of producing eight presidents."

do it gradually so it does not hurt our people and jeopardize our security and external defense.

As we witness the negotiations, I believe that the ideal future for the phase-out of the bases is within seven years, that by 1998, exactly a hundred years after the proclamation of Philippine independence in Kawit, Cavite, those bases should be completely out.

Last December, a resolution was approved by the central committee of the NP asking for the immediate removal of the bases effective 1998 because of the persuasion flights that were undertaken by the U.S. planes during the December 1 aborted coup. I was not yet in the country, but this was approved by the committee unanimously. However, this has not been amended as the platform of the NP. If it is to replace the existing platform, it has to be approved by a convention. So, right now, it is still a proposal.

Let me conclude by saying that all the beautiful platforms of all the political parties will have to be brought down to earth during critical times. These are critical times. We have to go back to the basics. What do we mean by basics? I can refer you to two great teachers in history. The first is Confucius who gave us the basic basics of government. The second is Abraham Lincoln.

Confucius, when he was asked by his students as to what are the three essential elements of a good government said: "First, a government must have weapons to defend itself. Second, it must have food so people will not starve. Third, it must have the confidence of the people."

When the students pressed Confucius and asked him, "But what if the government has to give up one of the three, which one must the government give up?" Confucius answered, "It can give up weapons. Even without weapons,



NP sec. gen. Blas Ople, vice-president Juan Ponce Enrile, and president Salvador Laurel at the NP national convention where they were sworn in as officers.

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*"All the beautiful platforms of all the political parties will have to be brought down to earth during critical times. These are critical times."*

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as long as it has food and confidence in the government, the government will survive." Students pressed him further and asked, "What if the government has to give up one of the remaining two elements?" Confucius said, "It has to give up food because even if people will starve, as long as the government will starve with the people, people will have confidence with the government, and as long as there is confidence in the government, it will survive."

From Abraham Lincoln, we can learn the wisdom of reconciliation and unity. Lincoln was the president of the United States in 1861 and he was faced by the civil war. At the end of the civil war, he adopted the policy of reconciliation. He formed a mixed Cabinet. He did not limit his Cabinet to people of his party. He was a Republican but he appointed Democrats in his Cabinet. For example, Gen. Stanton was a guerrilla but was appointed by Lincoln as his Secretary of War. With the mixed government, Lincoln was able to unite the nation. The memorable line of Lincoln, "With malice toward none and charity for all, let us together bind the nation," remains fresh to those who have read it.

Lincoln's example was followed by Roosevelt. During the great economic depression in the United States in 1932, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected president and he was faced with a very critical economic crisis that started in 1929. Again, he followed Lincoln's example and formed a mixed Cabinet although in his case, he was a Democrat and appointed Republicans.

Churchill followed the same example. During the Second World War, Churchill was the prime minister of England. England was facing Nazi Germany alone. At that time the Allies had not joined England. He did the same thing. He appointed four members of his party, the Conservative Party and four members of the Labor Party. With a mixed Cabinet, the government stirred the nation into a successful victory.

My own late father, when he was the president during the Japanese occupation did the same thing. One example was Recto. Recto and he were political rivals in Batangas and in the fifth senatorial district. They have been fighting with each other for twenty years. When my father became president, the first thing that he did was to go to the house of Don Claro Recto, asked Recto to put aside all their political rivalries and help save the nation. Recto responded and accepted the position of secretary of foreign affairs. Other members of the different parties were brought into the Cabinet. I think it was one of the best Cabinets ever put together.

I think those are the lessons that we can avail of right now. All of the platforms that we have now have to be adjusted to the circumstances confronting the nation today.

**PROF. LUZVIMINDA TANCANGCO:** My contribution this afternoon is based on our study of elections through the years. As one of the key actors in the political process of leadership selection, the NP through the years has been contributing to the quality of electoral politics and to the level of political consciousness of our people.

The first point to be asked is: what are the functions of political parties that distinguish them from other political organizations? First is to offer alternative sets of leaderships and programs of government to the electoral process. In the process of competing for power in the electoral contest, political parties have

the task of educating politically our masses. Parties also aggregate, articulate, and represent interests.

Given these functions of a political party, how does the NP or the other parties contribute to the kind of politics the country has? What is the relation between leadership selection and the quality of programs of government that is given to us?

Through the years, our democracy has been an elitist one and our political parties have preserved such condition. Leadership selection is not based on who is really deserving to lead this country but on who has the money, goons, and political machinery.



In this sense, political parties are said to have been responsible for the institutionalization of patronage and clientism that characterizes Philippine politics. In terms of political recruitment, we found out that only a few families have a control of the political and elective positions. This has an effect on the administrative recruitment of the bureaucracy. Political debts are being paid through positions in the bureaucracy.

During elections, political parties are not educating the masses and elevating the political judgment of our people on whom to choose.

We saw that at the barangay level, fraud did not exist in the same magnitude as it did at the higher levels. It is at this point that a political aspirant is elected into position without the

cal machinery. So, the uses of political es differ from one stage to another. This a very great bearing on the accountability ur leaders at different levels of our govern- t. We then drew the hypothesis that as you higher into the level of government, the e fraud happened because of the omic stake attached to the position. In a centralized system of government, almost power is left to the barangay. Basically, they for mass mobilization and then as ward ers for the national or local political parties gures.

to the task of political parties to educate the ple remains unfulfilled. There maybe some ogical positions and programs of govern- t but these do not take the center stage ng elections. It is purely the personalities still dominate. *At kung minsan naman, ang sabi lang ng mga kandidato, "Sino ba ang mga gipit?"* (And at times, the can-

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*We drew the hypothesis that the higher the position being contested in elections, the more fraud happened because of the economic stake attached to the position."*

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just say, "Who there is in need?") They italize on the weaknesses of our people to trench themselves deeper in power.

So, what have the political parties done ng this line? If you are in the opposition, not n money is involved because it comes n your own pockets. But if you are the party power, whether during Marcos or Aquino, at happens is that the funds of the eaucracy constitute a large portion used in e campaign. Not to mention the logistics of e bureaucracy that are being used for elec- al purposes. Even after the elections, politi- partisanship or affiliation remains the major tion as to who is given what. This is the nd of political relationship that defines the ay in power and the government vis-a-vis the eople.

Having said this, our concern is, how do we improve the political process or the electoral process to be able to elect people who are most deserving and, at the same time, elevate e political judgment of our people?*Hindi*

*iyung emosyon o miyembrong pampulitikal lamang kundi iyong ano ba talaga ang mga isyus? Ano ba ang gagawin nila sa kahirapan? Ano ang gagawin nila sa suliranin na lalong dumadami sa halip na mabawasan? Sabi nila, mas mahirap kay Marcos. Parang mas mahirap ngayon ang buhay eh. So, bakit ganoon? At kung noon kay Marcos, meron ding dayaan, mas sophisticated ngayon ang dayaan. Bakit ito ang nangyayari?* (Not on emotion or political affiliation alone but on what really are the issues. What will they do with poverty? What will they do with the problems that continue to increase instead of decreasing? They say, it was hard with Marcos. Life seems to be harder now. Why is that so? And if during Marcos there was fraud, today fraud is more sophisticated. Why is this happening?)

The concern is how do we come up with a machinery that we can say that the people, the political parties, and the candidates themselves are cooperating with each other to elevate the quality of politics in this country?

The political parties, if they would be enlightened enough and if they are really for the people would work for the integrity of the political process to start with. And to really be sincere with whatever programs of government they would work forward to the people. *Hindi iyong mangangako lang ng ganito pag eleksyon pero iba ang ginagawa pag nandoon na sa poder* (Not those who make these promises during elections but do otherwise when already in power). So this is the kind of accountability that we are looking for from political parties and their standard bearers.

**MR. FRANCISCO MAGNO:** The University of the Philippines has a tradition of welcoming its guests, specially from the government, by asking them direct, pointed, and controversial questions. I do not wish to depart from this tradition. Having said this, let me proceed.

With respect to the discussion of the Vice-President, he mentioned that the NP is the oldest political party in the Philippines. My question is, what then is new about it?

He mentioned that the NP tended to split in fair weather and unite in times of crisis. He mentioned that during martial law, the NP was split between the Roy Wing and the Laurel Wing. Wasn't martial law a reflection of crisis?



He also mentioned that seven to eight presidents out of ten came from the NP. Ferdinand Marcos is one of them. Is the NP proud of Ferdinand Marcos?

The NP stands on the platform of Filipinism. How is NP's Filipinism different from that of the Young Officers Union (YOU) and the Filipinist movement of Nilo Tayag?

Vice-Pres. Laurel also mentioned the party's position on land reform and he said that the first priority will be given to public idle lands and it will take ten years. Another five to ten years will be provided for in the reform of idle private agricultural lands. Don't you consider land reform to be an urgent reform measure? So, it should not wait. You mentioned that there is a need for ten to fifteen years of peace but isn't this an uneasy peace?

We should note that in world history, Britain implemented land reform as early as in the 1700s. It's an early industrializing society, one of the first to industrialize. Japan undertook land reform in the 1800s towards the 1900s. Taiwan and South Korea undertook land reform in the 1950s, therefore they have been termed as late industrializing societies. Thailand and Malaysia are trying to embark on a full scale land reform and they have been called late-late industrializing societies. How should social scientists call our country? Late-late-late, I suppose.

What is your stand on IMF conditionalities? What is your stand about its suggestion that government withdraw its subsidy on oil prices?

You mentioned that there is a need for a five to ten-year phase-out period for the U.S. bases. How do you reconcile this with the nationalistic orientation of the Nacionalista Party?

Whatever happened to your party UNIDO? Are we to believe critics that UNIDO is just another fly-by-night party? Wasn't UNIDO supposed to be the dominant opposition party in the 1986 snap presidential elections? In fact, Cory Aquino was supposed to have run under UNIDO. Why was it marginalized in the aftermath of the 1986 elections?

You are now back in the arms of the NP. Why did you join the *Kilusang Bagong Lipunan*



(KBL) in 1978? Wasn't the NP a party worth dying for?

President Aquino feels that the *trapos* (traditional politicians) are not contributing to the enhancement of Philippine democracy. Do you feel the same way?

As a former secretary of foreign affairs, what do you think is wrong with the way the Philippine foreign policy is being handled, or some say, bungled today? What is your position on the foreign debt?

The Ateneo Social Weather Station and ABS-CBN recently came out with survey results regarding the popular preferences for the 1992 presidential elections. Do you feel uncomfortable being ranked number 7? You were ranked behind Miriam Santiago, Joseph Estrada, Fidel Ramos, Jovito Salonga, Juan Ponce Enrile, and Cory Aquino. Are they better qualified than you?

Land reform in the Philippines  
Late-late-late!

If ever you decide not to run, who would you support for president in 1992?

**MR. FRANCIS RONALD PEREZ:** *Nais ko po lamang magbigay ng pitong punto ukol sa plataporma ng gobyerno ng NP.*

*Unang-una ay tungkol sa Industriyalisasyon. Binanggit ni Bise-Presidente Laurel ang*

Tungkol sa industriyalisasyon. Gusto ko lang magwain kung ito ba ay nangangahulugang heavy industrialization. Ano ang gagawin natin sa mga relasyon na umiiral sa industriya ng Pilipinas ngayon, katulad ng ugnayang kapitalista - manggagawa? Siguro dapat nating magwain ang pansin ito kung gusto natin ng isang socialist industrialization.

Kumusta na ang oryentasyon ng industriyalisasyon sa Pilipinas? Nananatili itong export-oriented at import-dependent. Kung magkabal, pagkatapos ng mahabang kasaysayan ng pagluluwal ng mga presidente, ano ang gagawin ng NP sa isyung ito? Papaano pagmamamahin ng NP ang industriyalisasyon at ang mga problemang environmental natin?

Pangalawa, napansin ko ang pangatlong prioridad sa reporma sa lupa na hinahain ni ex-Presidente Laurel ay ang pagbabahagi ng privately owned lands which will be entrusted to the local government.

unit alam naman natin na ang may hawak ng lokal na pamahalaan ay mga panginoong kapitalista. Ilang taon na bago makumpleto ang land reform na ito? Wala siyang sinabi. From ten to fifteen years, or perhaps, never.

Mahusay na pagwain ng pansin ang mga support facilities na naglunsad ka ng land reform pero hindi ibanggit ng bise-presidente na tuturuan sa mga magkasaka ng bagong pamamaraan sa pagkasaka. Hindi ba ito rin ang ginawa ng International Rice Research Institute [IRRI] na kinasira ng maraming mga magkasaka?

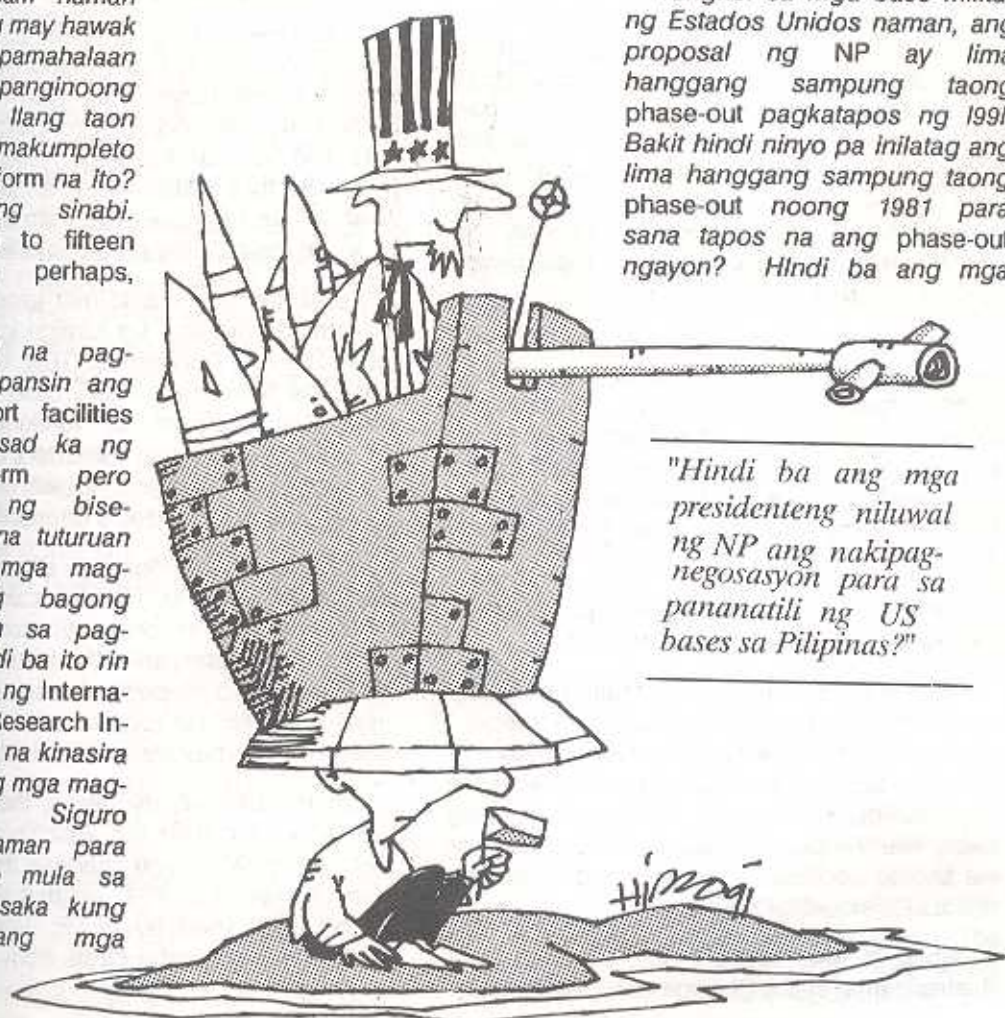
Siguro nanahon naman para magtayo mula sa mga magkasaka kung papaano ang mga

angkop na pamamaraan ng pagsasaka.

Gaya ng inaasahan, sinabi niya na ang peace and order ang magbibigay daan para bumalik ang mga investment ng mga dayuhan sa Pilipinas. Lagi namang ganyan eh. Kaya gusto natin ng peace and order dahil gusto nating umunlad ang mga negosyo ng mga dayuhan dito. Ang sinasabi niya ay, "freedom's first condition is peace and order." Hindi ba ang first condition ng peace and order ay freedom?

Sinabi rin niya ang amnestiya sa lahat ng mga rebeldeng politikal. Sa kabilang banda, sinabi rin niya ang amnestiya sa mga military rebels para mabuo ang hukbong sandatahan at banatan ang insurgency. Ito ba ang amnestiya para sa lahat ng mga rebeldeng politikal? Ano ang tingin ng NP sa mga rebeldeng katulad nina Joma Sison? Hindi ba sila ay mga rebeldeng politikal din?

Tungkol sa mga base militar ng Estados Unidos naman, ang proposal ng NP ay lima hanggang sampung taong phase-out pagkatapos ng 1991. Bakit hindi ninyo pa inilatag ang lima hanggang sampung taong phase-out noong 1981 para sana tapos na ang phase-out ngayon? Hindi ba ang mga



"Hindi ba ang mga presidenteng niluwal ng NP ang nakipag-negosasyon para sa pananatili ng US bases sa Pilipinas?"

presidente na niluwal ng NP, sila rin ang nakipag-negosasyon para sa pananatili ng US bases sa Pilipinas?

*Papaano nga pala pagtutugmain ito doon sa plataporma ng partido na "complete, absolute, and immediate independence?" At ngayon, sinasabi mo na ang sentral komite ng NP ay humihingi ng immediate dismantling ng US bases dahil nakialam ang US sa kudeta noong Disyembre. Sa pakikialam bang ito nabago ang kondisyon sa Pilipinas? Sinasabi natin na pag nawala ang mga base, 70,000 pamilya ang madi-dislocate. Sa pagtulong ng US sa paggupo sa kudeta, nagbago ba ang pagtingin ng NP doon sa dislokasyon ng 70,000 mga pamilya, na ang partidong ito now demands the immediate withdrawal of the bases?*

*Mapa-dako kay Confucius at ang kanyang weapons, food, at confidence of the people. Masasabi ba natin na kasamang nagugutom ng sambayanan ang gobyerno?*

*Bilang pagtatapos, nais kong itanong kung paano na-evolve ang programa ng NP. Ito ba ay bunga ng konsultasyon o karanasan? Hindi na kasi uso ito eh. Ang uso ngayon ay partisipante dapat ang mga tao sa plataporma ng gobyerno. Matagal nang naisang-tabi ang mga Pilipino sa ganitong aspeto ng pamamalakad ng gobyerno. Palagay ko panahon na na bigyang pansin ng mga partido politikal ang bagay na ito.*

*Katulad nga ng nabanggit ni Prof. Tancangco, ang leadership-oriented na programa ay kabaligtaran ng demokrasya. Dapat doon sa baba mag-umpisa para maging epektibo ang pamumuno. Hindi mo kayang i-perfect ang art of leadership dahil ang leadership ay nagmumula sa mas nakararami at hindi sa sarili mo lang.*

(I would just like to raise seven points about the platform of government of the NP.

First, with regards to industrialization. Vice-President Laurel mentioned industrialization. I would just like to clarify if this means heavy industrialization. What would we do with the relationships operant in Philippine industry today, like the capitalist-labor relation. Perhaps we should address this if we want to have a nationalist industrialization.

What is the present orientation of industrialization in the Philippines? It remains ex-

port-oriented and import-dependent. If so, after its long history of producing presidents what will the NP do about this issue? How will the NP reconcile industrialization with our environmental problems?

Second, I noticed that the third priority in the land reform proposed by Vice-Pres. Laurel was the distribution of privately owned lands which will be entrusted to the local government. So

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*"Ang leadership-oriented na programa ay kabaligtaran ng demokrasya. Dapat doon sa baba mag-umpisa para maging epektibo ang pamumuno."*

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we know that those who hold the local government are landlords. How many years then before we can complete land reform? From ten to fifteen years, or perhaps, forever.

It is wise to give concern to the support facilities when you launch land reform but the vice-pres. mentioned that we will teach the farmers new methods in farming. Is this not what the International Rice Research Institute [IRRI] did that ruined many farmers? Perhaps it's about time that we learn from the farmers on what are the suitable methods of farming.

As expected, he said that peace and order will provide the way for foreign investments to return to the Philippines. That is always the case. We want peace and order because we want the business of foreigners here to prosper. He is saying, "freedom's first condition is peace and order." Is it not that the first condition of peace and order is freedom?

He also said amnesty to all political rebels. On the other hand, he also said amnesty to military rebels in order to consolidate the armed forces and strike the insurgency. Is this the amnesty to all political rebels? What is the view of the NP on rebels in the likes of Joma Sison? Aren't they also political rebels?

On the US military bases, the proposal of the NP is a five to ten year phase-out after 1991. Why didn't you propose this five to ten year phase-out in 1981 so that the phase-out period is finished by now? Isn't it not that these presidents who came from NP were the

... who negotiated for the retention of the US bases in the Philippines?

By the way, how is this to be reconciled with the platform of the party for "complete, absolute, and immediate independence?" And how do you say that the central committee of the party is asking for an immediate dismantling of the US bases because the US intervened during the December coup. Did this intervention change the conditions in the Philippines? We say when the bases are gone, 70,000 families would be dislocated. With the help of the US in crushing the coup, did the NP change its view on the dislocation of the 70,000 families, that this party now demands the immediate withdrawal of the US bases?

Going to Confucius and his weapons, food, and confidence of the people. Can we say that the government starves with the people?

To conclude, I would like to ask how did the party evolve its program. Is it a result of consultation or experience? This is no longer in vogue. What is in vogue today is that the people are the participants in the platform of government. For so long, Filipinos have been neglected in the aspect of governance. I think it is time for the political parties to address this issue.

Just what Prof. Tancangco mentioned, a leadership-oriented program is the opposite of democracy. Effective leadership must start from below. You cannot perfect the art of leadership because leadership emanates from the greater number and not from yourself alone.)

**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** Let me just react very briefly first to Prof. Tancangco. In effect, my impression from the thrust of her remarks and her response is that she questions the utility of political parties nowadays. I think that is the

thrust of her main points. It is as if political parties do not contribute anything good to the people particularly to the voters during elections.

I agree that there is a lot of improvements and reforms that should be done. Many things are being done which should not be done and many things are not being done which should be done. Well, there are a lot of shortcomings. But if political parties are so tainted with defects, is there a better way? If you are going to abolish political parties, what are we going to use instead?

If I remember correctly, democracy started as a direct form of representation. Did not people themselves voted directly? That was when democracy was small like in Athens, Greece. But as people reached millions, representative government became necessary and political parties developed.

In some mature democracies like England; they do not have much of the defects that we are complaining of here. But I think many improvements that they were able to achieve were brought about by consistent attempts for reforms. They were brought about through practice, education, and the power of example. Things do not just come easy and if there are no other ways that we can think of that will replace the political parties, I think we are stuck with them and all we can do is really improve the system.

Really, we should improve the chances of the poor man getting elected to office, having as equal a chance as a rich candidate. And they can only be made possible through constant efforts on the part of the academe and the reformers in the political arena.

The objective is to safeguard political morality. Right now, we have just read from the papers how the son of a political leader in Nueva Ecija was killed and the brother just took the floor in Congress yesterday implicating one of the members of the Cabinet as directly involved in the killing of his brother. The reason why this thing started, according to the congressman, was that his



brother or his family had to change political party. They were elected under a different political party, other than the party in power and they were asked to change their parties and become members of the *Lakas ng Demokratikong Pilipino* (LDP).

That is an act of political immorality. Nobody should be compelled to change his political party after he is elected under one party. In Singapore, which is a much younger country than the Philippines, if you are elected under one party and you want to change your party, you have to resign first from your elected position and then run again under the party to which you want to transfer. You cannot just change political parties.

I agree with Prof. Tangco that we have to upgrade the quality of our political party system. There are two ways of improving political morality and improving the political system. One is the short range and the other is the long range.

The short range is through strict and faithful enforcement of the laws. We have enough laws. This could be done by the executive department. The second is long range and that is through education and through consistent reforms which are to be undertaken by every generation until the political system becomes better and better.

On the questions raised by Mr. Francisco Magno. What is new with the NP? It is an old party but it is new in the sense that it is the only party which advocates social justice through industrialization and a federal system of government.

Is the NP proud of Pres. Marcos? We are not proud of his record as having imposed martial law. In fact, I parted ways with him because of this. But there is something good in the worst of us, just as there is something bad in the best of us. We cannot say that Mr. Mar-

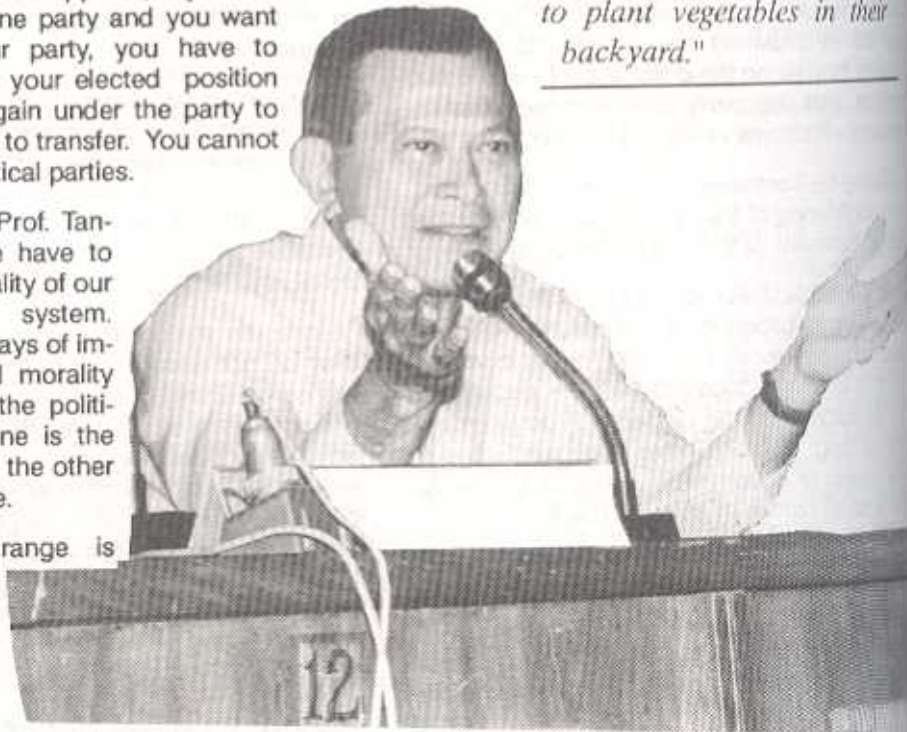
cos is completely bad. I would not want to judge Mr. Marcos.

On Filipinism. Ours is different from that of Nilo Tayag and the YOU. The Filipinism we advocate here to and advocate is non-violent. I think their Filipinism do not hesitate to resort to revolutionary method.

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*"I am for a nationwide food production campaign. I am asking everyone to plant vegetables in their backyard."*

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You said that if land reform was urgent, why should it wait for ten to fifteen years. I think you have misunderstood my point. If we distribute government lands first, we will commence immediately and it will take ten to fifteen years. It is better that you start right away and finish ten to fifteen years later than not starting at all. Land reform cannot happen overnight. Successful land reforms in other countries took fifteen to twenty years.

On the IMF conditionalities, I did not touch on this but I will answer your questions. I believe that we should not deceive our people. If the world price of oil is X number of pesos per liter, we should not tell our people that the price is much lower than that. The sooner we are truthful to our people, the better.

What happened to the UNIDO? The UNIDO is its role to play during martial law. The NP is then put in the state of suspended animation because there were no real politics at that time. The two-party system was abolished and the KBL was put up by Marcos. We formed the UNIDO to be the counterpart of the KBL. When martial law ended and the people power movement happened at EDSA, the role of UNIDO was terminated in the same way as the role of the KBL also terminated.

Do I agree that we have a foreign policy? I think we do not have a clear-cut foreign policy. For instance, we do not even speak with one voice on the question of the US military bases. I think we should have only one spokesman in dealing with foreigners.

On my being number seven in the Ateneo Social Weather Station survey, I think that will change with the social weather. I think that is a permanent situation. A rearrangement will come in as the days go by.

Who will I support in 1992? I would rather talk about 1992 at this time because if we do not solve the problems facing us right now, there may even be no 1992. We do not even know who will still be around.

Would I like to go now to the points raised by Mr. Perez.

First is whether the industrialization will prejudice the agricultural development. I have never abandoned the latter. As a matter of fact, I am for a nationwide production campaign. I am asking

*We are not proud of Marcos's martial law rule. But there is something good about the worst of us. I would not want to judge Mr. Marcos."*

everyone to plant vegetables in their backyard. I think we have to go back to basics. When prices of oil go up, we have difficulty in transporting goods from the farms to the market. It is better if we become self-sufficient. We are an agricultural country and we must develop agriculture to the optimum.

I agree with you that we should not overlook also the environmental problems that arise as a consequence of industrialization. We should take care not to exacerbate the environmental problems that we already have now. I would even favor special, powerful governmental agency to attend to these to the extent of even forming a department.

I hope you did not misunderstand our land reform program. When I said that the third class of land should be delegated to the local governments for decision, I was referring only to lands privately owned which are already productive and which are resisting land reform. These should be entrusted to the local officials because these people know better what to do with those lands than people in Manila who have never even reached those regions.

On foreign investors, I believe that a great deal of our economic development can be generated if we get foreign and local investors. Investors are shying away from the Philippines because of the peace and order of our country.



Take a look at the Southeast Asian scenario. We used to be ahead of our neighbors, now we are behind them. If a war should erupt in the Mideast, the experts say that the countries that would be worst hit would be the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka because they are the poorest. The other countries which used to be behind us got ahead of us because they industrialized and attracted foreign investors. They used foreign money to improve the economy of the nation. The key also to the upliftment of our poor is better pay and employment which can be provided if we have more industries and factories.

On the insurgency problem, Mr. Perez misunderstood me. He got the impression that the consolidation of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) would be given priority in



order to beat up the rebels. What I meant was consolidate first the AFP because it was fragmented. Nobody will believe in a government whose armed forces is fragmented. I am for a general amnesty to all rebels provided that they forswear the use of force and violence.

Why did I not propose a five to ten year phase-out of the bases earlier? I proposed the five to ten year phase-out in 1986 but it was not heeded. This is one of the differences I had with Pres. Aquino.

Also, there is an existing 1947 agreement which specifically says that we should talk about the termination of the agreement one

year before 1991. Therefore, it would have been premature to just terminate the bases unilaterally because this is a bilateral agreement.

On the proposal of the central committee to terminate the bases because of the persuasion flights of the American planes. Well, this is just a standing proposal and it still has to be approved in a convention. The platform of the NP on the US bases has not changed.

I think that's about it. Let me just say one thing before I submit myself to the other questions. The Philippines is a developing Asian country, and as such, it requires a special kind of leadership. Ordinary leadership cannot work out well with a developing country. It needs a leadership that is at three places at the same time. A leader that is in front, beside, and behind the people at all times. In front, to provide leadership and direction. Beside, to feel their heartbeat; to suffer and laugh with them. Behind, to urge them onward when they doubt or hesitate.

## OPEN FORUM

**Question:** Sir, how long will it take the country to turn around?

**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** Given the right leadership, one that is in three places at the same time and one that can bring in a mixed Cabinet tapping the best brains regardless of party leanings, I can see the country turning around within two years.

**Question:** With that kind of drastic change, would that mean that we can become a newly industrializing country (NIC) in the year 2000?

**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** That's possible. We have all the essential ingredients needed to make this country an NIC. We have natural resources, talented, skilled and hard working people, and entrepreneurs. All we lack are directions and sound economic policies. Once these are given, we can see an economic turn around.

**Question:** Four days after the downfall of Ferdinand Marcos, a new government took over but it seems that it carries the practices of the old government. Nepotism and corruption linger. Our government now is even worse. Do you think that the 1992 election will bring about reforms? How?




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*"I hope you did not misunderstand our land reform program. Land that should be delegated to the local governments for decision are those privately owned, already productive, and which are resisting land reform."*

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**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** I think it is a necessity for us to give our people a better government.

**Question:** We have to face the fact that we are a developing country, so we need investors here. We have a law on patent which does not allow us to have free trade. If you win as president in the coming elections, would you repeal that law?

**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** You are asking me a hypothetical question, so I can only give you a hypothetical answer. I think we should study that carefully. While there are many advantages to be derived if we abolish the law on patent, there are also consequences that we must take into account the moment we remove patent rights. I know Taiwan did that but that does not mean that we can do it too. We must study this well.

**PROF. A. MAGNO:** How will you define a sound economic policy?

**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** Right now, I think that our economic policy is defective in that it simply tells the people "Buy Filipino." We should also say, "Sell Filipino."

We should improve our products so that they will be of competitive value in the world market. Through this, we can generate more dollars to buy the needed oil. We should replace our import-oriented policy with an export-oriented one.

**PROF. A. MAGNO:** But in the last document we signed with the IMF last year, the Philippine government clearly committed its policies to exports and part of the adjustment to that was the devaluation, wasn't it?

**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** Yes, but that came about because we were borrowing. When you borrow, you place yourself at the mercy of the lender.

**PROF. A. MAGNO:** Yes, but what I want to say is that the conditionalities that the IMF wants are precisely the programs that you want in place.

**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** Yes, but it is one thing to prescribe and another thing to implement.

**PROF. A. MAGNO:** We have a cluster of questions on the oil price increase which, as we all know, is an effective implementation of the IMF prescription.

The first question is, does the NP have a specific stand to solve the oil crisis?

**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** Yes, in fact, we held a Citizens' Crisis Forum. We invited the most knowledgeable people we thought who could help bring about the needed solutions.

The first step is to find alternative sources of oil. Second is to find alternative sources of energy. Not only oil. We should develop our own available sources here like geothermal, hydroelectric, and so forth. Third, we have our inventors. What inventions or combinations can we have to put together fuel derivatives so that we can have our own fuel? Somebody was suggesting cocodiesel. During the war, when we had no fuel, we had charcoal-fed cars. The fourth is to undertake conservation measures to reduce the consumption of fuel, and we underlined some steps to this. Those are the things that we suggested.



**Question:** Do you approve of the eighty per cent oil price increase that was done yesterday?

**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** You cannot simply say I approve or disapprove. Maybe the question should be modified. I do not approve of making everybody, irrespective of whether you are able to absorb it or not, pay the price increase. I think it should be graduated so that the poor who cannot pay too much pay less and the rich who could pay more pay more. It should be calibrated that way.

**PROF. A. MAGNO:** How is that to be implemented?

**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** I think we have enough agencies that could determine who are in what bracket of income.

**PROF. A. MAGNO:** So, we should issue discount coupons?

**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** No. For instance, car owners are people who can normally afford. Those who ride on buses and jeepneys are people who cannot afford. So, you have to reduce the rates of public utilities. It can be studied. It does not hurt the poor too much and whatever crunch it produces should be shouldered by those in better positions to shoulder price increase.

**PROF. A. MAGNO:** You are saying Sir that the oil prices were increased drastically without enough studies.

**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** *Oo. Hindi pinag-aralang mabuti ito. Dapat pinag-aralan muna. Biglang-bigla.* (Yes. It was not studied thoroughly. It should have been studied first. All of a sudden.)

**PROF. A. MAGNO:** A follow-up to that. The Cabinet had a stormy meeting last night. Opposition to the oil price increase was that the oil price for the premium gasoline was increased too little and diesel was increased too much as a mechanism for distributing the burden. Do you agree with that?

**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** I think there are certain kinds of fuel like aviation gas that can be increased. The people who ride in planes often are people who can afford. People who ride in buses cannot afford so you should not increase that too much.




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*"The conditionalities that the IMF wants are precisely the programs that you want in place."*

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**PROF. A. MAGNO:** The proposal was to reduce diesel fuel to its original price and raise prices of premium gasoline to twenty pesos a liter. Do you agree with that?

**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** We have to compare that. We have to be sure that the average should come out the same! One thing that we have to face is that we can not close our eyes to the world prices of oil. You cannot say, we can pay twenty dollars here when the price is already thirty dollars per barrel.

**Question:** Do you perceive another coup by military rebels with the oil price increase?

**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** No, I don't think a coup would be necessary because the people would not even think about it. The oil price itself is already a very terrible blow.

**Question:** You claim that the NP has bred six to seven presidents, but obviously not effective ones, as seen in the country's present critical situation. The point is, is the NP proud of these presidents?

**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** As you look at the sad state of the country, you cannot blame people for thinking, "*Ano ba naman ang nagawa ng mga presidenteng ito?*" ("What have these presidents done?") But I do not think we should think only of the wrong that they have done. There were certain good things that they

... achieved. For instance, I do not think that you should deny Quezon the credit of fighting for Philippine independence or that there were certain things that Magsaysay fought for which you should close your eyes. As I have said, there is something good in the worst of us, and something bad in the best of us.

**Question:** What is the NP doing in the task of educating the masses?

**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** Actually, when you say educating, I suppose you are not referring to classroom education because that would belong to the teachers. I suppose you are referring to the power of example. And that is where leadership comes in.

A leader must lead through the power of example and the power of example is really a part of education. I think that the NP leaders before have helped in educating the citizenry insofar as nation-building is concerned in that they have fought for nationalism at the time when it was even considered subversive to do so. And they did it during critical times.

**Question:** Will not devolving powers to the local governments restore warlordism or political bossism?

**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** I don't think so. That will depend on the federal system that will be established and the kind of people you will elect into power in the regional states. We will now have regional states and the best disciplinarians will be the people who will vote for the leaders.

**Question:** Speaking of coups, this may be a good opportunity for you to clarify the statement attributed to you in the wake of the December 1989 coup that you will be willing to serve in a military junta. I think you were in Hongkong then and that was the only report that came about you. Was that inaccurate? Was it a distortion?

**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** I would like to state, for the record, that I never uttered that statement. I never said that I would serve under a military junta. First, because at the time I was supposed to have said it, the coup had already failed and it would be stupid for anyone to say that he would be willing to join a military junta that was no longer possible. Second, I always believed in the rule of law and I have taken an oath not only as a lawyer but as a senator.

My political career will bear me out that for the past twenty-three years, first as a senator, then, as a member of the Batasan, and as the vice-president, I have upheld the Constitution and the law at all times and under all circumstances. I have never wavered from that.

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*"People need a government which can bring peace and order. So they'll probably vote for those who they believe would be strong enough to enforce law and order."*

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If you recall, even during the Marcos years when martial law was imposed, I led a political opposition that was committed to non-violence. We fought Marcos through demonstrations in the streets but we never resorted to violence. I do not think I could change overnight and suddenly switch to violence after twenty-three years of non-violence.



**Question:** There has been a continuing debate since 1986 on the adequacy of the presidential form of government. There is a counter proposal to restore or to institute a parliamentary form of government. For a month, you were the Prime Minister, although the government remained presidential in form. What is your preference on this debate?

**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** I am for a shift to the parliamentary system. When we took over in 1986, I was for maintaining the 1973 Constitution which has a parliamentary system and simply repeal the transitory provisions or the so-called Marcos amendments, because I believe that the parliamentary system should be tried out. We already had a Constitution and after all, Cory and I ran and took our oath as president and vice-president under the 1973 Constitution. We ran under the 1973 Constitution. We filed our certificate of candidacy as candidates



under the 1973 Constitution. Our oath said, "we swear to uphold the Constitution," so I said that we should preserve the Constitution because we promised to.

But she decided otherwise. She decided to abolish the Constitution, the Parliament, the Supreme Court; and the entire governmental structure was changed and we reverted to a revolutionary type of government under a "Freedom Constitution." I think we have lost four years. We had to go through a process of writing a Constitution by appointed delegates; had the Constitution ratified; had new senators, congressmen, and local officials elected, and in the process, we lost four years.

And here we are again, thinking of going back to the parliamentary system which we abandoned. The Constitution, if we are going to change it, will have to be amended and will

have to call and convert the two Houses to their constituent body and that takes time. I think it's only eighteen months away from the national elections in 1992.

**Question:** Regarding the 1992 elections, what did you say are the qualities of the next president or the next government which the majority of our people expect?

**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** I think our people would like to see a good government in the sense that it has morality and decency.

I have talked with different people from eighteen provinces and they perceive peace and order as the number one problem of the nation. Their number one complaint is graft and corruption. They need a government which can bring peace and order and can substantially reduce graft and corruption. That is what they want to see, so they'll probably vote for people who they believe would be strong enough to enforce law and order, and opt for candidates that will restore morality and decency.

**Question:** That question actually leads to a question that was written in. Have you made your decision to run for the presidency in 1992?

**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** As I have said, I have to beg off from answering that question. As I have said, I would rather not talk of 1992 at this time. *Napakaraming malulubhang problema na hinaharap ng ating bansa ngayon.* (Our country faces many serious problems today.)

In Metro Manila alone, and some of the victims are from UP, there are eighteen murders committed a day without the killers being caught. Seven cars are being carnapped without the carnappers being caught. That is the present state of peace and order. This is not a laughing matter. That's why I am saying let us not talk about 1992 because we do not know who are still alive in 1992.

**PROF. A. MAGNO:** Maybe we shall ask you to give a few words if you still have something to say.

**VICE-PRES. LAUREL:** My gratitude to all of you who gave me this opportunity. I really appreciate this exchange of ideas. It's nice to be back to UP again. Thank you.