

road" in the underdeveloped, post-revolutionary societies. He insists that the divergence between material progress and socio-political emancipation was inevitable since "only a great leap in the technical and cultural level of the masses could create the precondition for socialist relations of production."

Lowy, however, castigates Bahro and other like-minded socialists for reducing the proletarian revolution to economic prejudice. Instead, he argues that what is crucial is the political leadership, i.e., the capacity of the proletariat to assume hegemony over the movement of plebeian masses. In other words, the decisive precondition for socialist democracy -- far more important than the degree of industrialization or level of technical skills -- is the accumulated *revolutionary praxis* of the proletariat as a class, both before and after the seizure of power.

As to the supposed inevitability of bureaucratic authoritarianism, Lowy assumes that the intervention of "subjective factors" -- that participatory character of the revolutionary process, the democratic outlook of the socialist vanguard, the degree of proletarian self-activity and popular self-organization, and so on -- can, if not abolish, at least limit and counter-

balance the tendencies toward bureaucratization inherent in the transition toward socialism in a poor and underdeveloped country.

At a time when a various tendencies of the Philippine Left are debating over the feasibility of putting socialism on the agenda of revolutionary struggle, Lowy's book is a rich source of lessons and insights from various revolutionary experiences. For too long, the Mainstream Left seemed to have shelved the class question and consigned it to a distant future in the name of forging "the broadest and strongest possible unity of the people", even if it meant the inclusion of the proletariat's main enemy, the bourgeoisie. From the socialist standpoint, the correct political line lies not in the subordination of the proletarian struggle to the "greater" national struggle but rather in the promotion of the national struggle to facilitate the working class' rise to power.

The resolution of this debate demands from the Philippine Left a thorough-going re-understanding of the dynamic of revolution. *The Politics of Combined and Uneven Development* provides an indispensable guide and framework for such a re-understanding. **K**

DOCUMENT

BISIG Endorses Constitution

Eight months after the February Revolution the drive for fascist restoration shifts to high gear. Those who prostituted the law and emptied the coffers of government in the dark days of authoritarian rule have found common cause with their ideological mates in the alliance that brought the bourgeois-liberal Aquino government into power. In the guise of warning the people about the evils of communism and the need to rid the government of graft and corruption, these reactionary forces are seeking the return of authoritarianism in the Philippines.

The discussion of the proposed Constitution cannot be separated from the issue of fascist revival. The issue of the draft Constitution is no longer a non-partisan issue because the neo-fascists have taken it as an issue with which to undermine our hard-fought democratic space. They are calling for its rejection not because its contents are objectionable but because rejection is a most powerful instrument to destabilize the Aquino government. Thus, a progressive group's position on the proposed Constitution must seriously consider the impact of ratification or rejection on the democratic space we gained last February. One's position in the coming plebiscite can be grounded on the most sublime revolutionary principles; but its effect is to destabilize a liberal democratic regime and pave the way for a neo-fascist dictatorship, such as position will be remembered in history as unpardonably reactionary.

In the light of this, the *Bukhuran sa Ikaunlad ng Sosyalistang Isip at Gawa* (BISIG) will vigorously campaign for the ratification of the proposed Constitution while, at the same time, pointing out its inadequacies. This critical endorsement of the Constitution is part of the efforts to protect the political gains of February. At the same time it is another opportunity to launch an education campaign to politicize the people so that they will not expect their liberation from a bourgeois state no matter how democratic and that they will not be misled into thinking that adopting this Constitution marks the end of our struggle.

From the point of view of socialists committed to the interest of the working classes, the proposed Constitution is not an ideal document. It is reflective of the balance of forces in the Philippines today. As such it is essentially conservative, reflecting the sentiments and aspirations of the bourgeoisie. Among other things it restores a bi-cameral legislature that paves the way for the revival of elite democracy and opens the economy to foreign plunder. But this is not to say that there are no pro-people articles in this document nor that there are no provisions that can be used to further the struggle for a free, democratic and socialist Philippines. This document is pre-eminently anti-fascist and recognizes people's organizations and their vital role in a democracy.

BISIG critically endorses the proposed Constitution not only because of some unquestionably progressive provisions in it and the broad arena for struggle that it makes accessible to the people but also because the ratification of this Constitution will be a severe blow to the immediate threat to the democratic space we fought so hard for--the rising tide of neo-fascism.