

PERSPECTIVES

# The real exploitation

By BLAS F. OPLE  
Secretary of Labor

"Unemployment is the real exploitation."—  
President Ferdinand E. Marcos.

The exercise of self-determination is in the main determination of priorities. Thus, where a nation's integrity or survival is at stake, those measures required to defend such integrity must command the highest priority.

From this point of view, the basic difference between martial law and the period before it is that today the government can determine its priorities and allocate resources to them. Before September 21, 1972, the chaos of private interests and rivalries built into our political system prevented a setting of priorities except by lip service. Therefore, every administration began by avowing the highest priority for development and employment and soon it found itself mired in a chronic political and administrative stalemate. The real priorities were dictated not by the urgencies of public interest but by private greed and political exigencies.

Because of this, the Filipinos' genuine potential for rapid economic growth was aborted. Beginning as an independent nation in 1946 with better potentials than some of its neighbors, the Philippines lagged behind Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea and Singapore. Today the country is determined to make up for lost time. The priorities are being re-ordered. And President Marcos has elevated employment to the highest level of priority, defining it as the central goal of Philippine economic policy.

Whereas the professions of government in the past with regard to employment were never taken seriously, today the employment priority is reshaping the economic and social policies of the government. The National Economic and Development Authority is rewriting the economic plan to reflect this priority. The labor laws are being reviewed and codified to make them instruments of development and employment as well as instruments of protection for the workers.

The Board of Investments has recast its criteria for preferred areas of investment by rewarding projects with high labor intensity. The Department of



Public Works together with the Department of Labor is launching soon massive labor-intensive projects, utilizing "work brigades," which will also open up virgin lands for cultivation by the landless.

The Department of Education, again with the Department of Labor, is transforming vocational training by upgrading its quality and making it accessible to the out-of-school youth throughout the country through a system of regional training centers, financed by the World Bank. A system of public employment exchanges to match men and jobs, and to serve as a forecasting center for manpower needs, is also being established by the Department of Labor.

A National Manpower Plan which will mark out the manpower needs and priorities of the nation for the present and for the future, with guideposts for indicated adjustments in the educational system, is in preparation by the National Manpower and Youth Council. At the same time the Department of Education is steadily pushing through its program of realigning educational courses with the demands of the nation's economic and social development. In the future, there will be more technical and professional courses, and fewer of the business, teacher-training and liberal arts courses which have more limited employment potentials.

Land reform on the other hand will speedily promote the fuller utilization of labor on the farms, and therefore correct a major source of underemployment. The expansion of agricultural extension work, combined with the determined thrust in irrigation, will make possible double-cropping, which is the real answer to unemployment and underemployment in the farm areas. At the same time, off-season inactivity can be replaced by lucrative employment in labor-intensive cottage industries, which are being promoted by a set of policies utilizing credit incentives, technical assistance and tax and minimum wage exemptions.

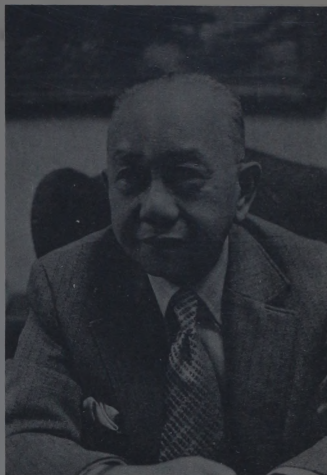
Realizing the crucial role of entrepreneurship in sparking economic growth and employment creation, the National Manpower and Youth Council is planning to initiate the training of entrepreneurs on a massive scale. Thus, unemployed graduates of business, engineering, teacher training and liberal arts courses can be inducted to become self-employed entrepreneurs, utilizing assistance from government lending institutions, and transform themselves from job seekers to job creators. Such a scheme can bring about an optimum kind of development which combines growth with employment.

That is really the point. More and more, governments have realized that economic growth by itself will not provide employment automatically. Where economic growth is forced by means of reliance on high technology and highly capital-intensive techniques, this can actually result in the displacement of labor, and will aggravate rather than relieve unemployment. The point was very well illustrated by Robert McNamara, president of the World Bank, when he said recently that economic growth in developing countries, during the first Development Decade (1960-1970) completely bypassed the bottom forty percent of the population. He was referring obviously to those chronically jobless and the underemployed.

Therefore to combat unemployment effectively, a society must utilize highly purposive and completely coordinated if not integrated measures and policies to which the highest priority and adequate resources are to be allocated. This means putting the employment goal in the very forefront of the economic plan. This means mobilizing all the available resources of the government, including all departments and agencies, in support of the employment priority.

For the first time, this is now being done under the leadership of the President and Commander-in-Chief. The nation as a whole is mobilizing for development and employment, for growth with social justice.

And we know that employment as a goal will be pursued with the same tenacity and dedication that has already transformed the country in terms of peace and order and a new climate of social discipline. The right priorities are being set, and that is how we are ordering our own future as a nation, a destiny better and nobler than what we have known before.



# Ours to create

By CARLOS P. ROMULO  
Secretary of Foreign Affairs

These critical years we face important foreign policy problems. They come to the surface with renewed intensity with the establishment of the New Society with its watchwords of national dignity and self-reliance. A time of new beginnings, the New Society instills in us a fresh political will to achieve the aims of a foreign policy that shall above all gain for us the respect of the world community. And this means merely that we should aim to be the sole judge of our national interest and to aim further that the national interest shall be the paramount consideration in our posture in world affairs.

The New Society already has gained a great deal of respect. A domestic order based on a new political stability has inspired confidence, especially in the foreign business and financial circles, proving perhaps that the best incentive for foreign capital is not swollen profits but political stability.

In the best sense of the word, the image of the Philippines in the outside world has improved markedly, for we are no longer regarded as a nation of gun-wielders, or as a nation addicted to violence.

The reorganization of the administrative structure of the Government ensures that the endemic graft and corruption, once regarded as an in-eradicable legacy of the past and a hang-over of colonial mentality, can be, and shall be, eradicated.

Above all, the agricultural and educational reforms set in motion by the New Society are an effort to prove that we are at long last ready to join the world of the twentieth century with its emphasis on the elimination of the colonial structure of our society, the recognition of the dignity of the common man, and the establishment of a democracy based on forms compatible with our indigenous cultural values.

We enter a fresh era. The past is irrevocable but the present is ours to create. This is the meaning of the New Society.