

THE REPUBLIC

Isang bansa, Isang diwa

Vol. 1, No. 12

FOR GOVERNMENT MANAGERS

1-15 July 1976



The calesa and skyscrapers: traditional virtues must be preserved.

Strengthen the moral fiber

PRESIDENT Ferdinand E. Marcos recently pointed out the weakening fiber of the Filipino people as "one of the battles confronting the nation." Before the general assembly of the Veterans Federation of the Philippines late last month, he explained the reinvigorated drive to clean up the smut in the movies, magazines and other forms of mass media.

"Why did I accept all the resignations of the members of the Board of Censors?" the President asked, "Why did I order the arrest of all the exhibitors and corruptors of our young? Why do I go after the dishonest in the public service? Why did I ground the ASAC? And why do we keep cleaning up the armed forces?" The President explained that all these moves were "necessary (to) strengthen the moral fiber of our people, (to) infuse into our people the character demonstrated by the veterans in the war."

Soldiers lead the fighting in war, but in peace, the vanguard of progress could only be the people in government. The public servants, particularly the officials, are entrusted with the authority and the funds to promote the well-being of the people. It was indeed unfortunate that the recent spate of immoral films directly reflected some of the worst aspects in our bureaucracy. The continuing moves of the President to clean up the ranks of government people indicate that there are still backsliders in our ranks. It regulate relations between workers and employers." Seems that the September purge of last year has not deterred some officials in pursuit of their interests at the sacrifice of the people's welfare.

Again, people in government should take heed of the "tenet of public leadership" laid down by the

President in his book *Notes on the New Society of the Philippines*. He wrote: "There may still be old elements in the bureaucracy, overlooked in the summary process, either 'lying low' or still engaging in the old ways, safe in the false thought that the reorientation is over. It is not yet over: those who serve with me must accept the most ruthless discipline. They must work hard and observe the highest standards of service, otherwise they have no place in the leadership of the New Society. "At this point, we must take note that the President has been upgrading the salaries of government employees and officials. Reforms in the civil service include the recognition of the paramountcy of merit in promotion. These continuing efforts to improve the working conditions in the government should therefore suffice to keep us from the "temptation." Unless, of course, greed overtakes some of us. But to those who fall, they can be certain that the full might of the law will soon catch up with them.

THE First Lady, Mrs. Imelda Romualdez Marcos recently pointed out the primal link between fictions and actuations of government officials. In her keynote speech to the 14th annual convention of the Bureau Directors' Association Inc. (BUDIRAS) last July 8, she said: "The plans that we conceive, the projects that we implement—whether it be the creation of new settlements or the improvement of the environment—are all designed to establish a society fit for human beings. We are not serving statistics but people. It is not enough that the people we serve are just satisfied; far more than this, they must achieve

fulfillment derived from a quality of life made more meaningful."

What does this mean? The First Lady explained that we need a "strict code of conduct from the government bureaucracy that demands enlightenment, honesty, trustworthiness, moral strength to resist indolence, graft and corruption, and the courage to venture into the elevated zones of sacrifice, humility and dedication to the people. In a word, a *bureaucratic ethic*."

The First Lady stressed the need to counter the unfortunate trend of the bureaucracy sinking down from its previous position of prestige and popularity. She said: "There was a time when to be a bureaucrat was to belong to the elect and elite, for the bureaucrat was honored by the people he served with compassion, and excellence. But through time, service was corrupted by privilege, and the bureaucrat became the captive of rigid rules rather than the servant of society."

What must we in government do fully to regain the trust of our people? Mrs. Marcos pointed out that "the President needs responsive conduits to the people. The bureaucracy can be this responsive conduit only if it becomes infused with a sense of civic purpose and love." She added that "if your trust the basic wisdom of the people, you self-consciously will make yourself the vehicle of their aspirations. She warned that "if you cannot develop this basic trust, you will find that you have only become another burden, a new imperial master—whom the people in time of reckoning, will cast aside and destroy." □

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