

The Other Revolution

by Hope C. Maximo

*"We make out times:
such as we are, such
are the times."*

— St. Augustine

THE PRESENT TIME is characterized by changes, both radical and moderate. This trend is evident everywhere — in the spheres of the sciences, art, fashion, and, most notably in the social sphere — in the clamor and concern for social change in terms of social justice. In contrast to the sheltered and the pampered youth of yesterday, the young people today are the harbingers of change. We see them in the forefront of demonstrations, group dialogues, rallies and other activities related to the upliftment of our society. They are deeply aware of the social ills wrought by a sick society.

In the Philippines, this illness manifests itself everywhere. It appears in the guise of poverty, the oppressed tenant, the privation which we see in the slums, the graft and corruption in the government offices, the crime we read. It is not a wonder then, that our young people should vent their utmost effort and energy to the eradication of these ills.

However, unless the people themselves move, unless every individual concerned cooperates in the task of solving these problems head-on, we hardly have any hope of correcting these ills. Everyone must be cognizant of his share in the task of nation building. Presently, we see that the students are a potent force in motivating our people to stand up and fight for their rights. They appeal to the farmers, laborers, the poor, and to all those who only have little of justice, wealth, and power. Their idealism and vigor warm up the blood of the older people and prod the latter to fight with them for a better and a more just society.

The fact that the moves done along the line of solving our social problems must be that of concerted effort cannot be overemphasized. If we want change we all have to work for it. For everything we desire, we must be willing to pay the price it requires of us.

One question inevitably comes up:

ARE WE EQUAL TO THE TASK? If we want reforms, do we have the fortitude to work these out to the end? Eventually, we have to take into consideration the whole Filipino people since it is as a whole that we must move and work if we are to succeed at all.

If at this juncture, we stop and ask the question why our people have never before made any definite move to correct the wrong they saw, never ventured to stand up for what they believed was right, we might wonder what the cause for such lethargy and such despicable inaction was? It could not be ignorance of facts. Certainly, our people had their eyes open

to the realities of extreme poverty everywhere. The haggard faces of beggars and emaciated vagabond children, and the appalling plight of the slum dwellers attested to these.

Our people were aware of the fact that while many individuals suffered in dire want, a privileged few had much more than what they needed. They knew that the poor who incidentally comprise the labor, tenant, and employee groups are practically puppets on strings in the hands of some unscrupulous rich. And, surely, our people were not ignorant of the graft and corruption in the government offices. Yet, this practice was accepted with shrugged shoulders. A few ventured to criticize it, but many seem to condone such a detestable practice with their silence.

During elections, our people witnessed the massive vote-buying of electors and other forms of election frauds and they took it easy. Is this not ironical? We criticize the corrupt men in our government service, we criticize the corrupt system, we despise the opportunists who feed on the blood of the ignorant and weak, yet we never criticize our corrupt permissiveness to all these warped practices. Is this not just another form of cowardice? If we do not change ourselves, how can we hope to change and rectify our ailing system?

The answer to our people's nonchalance to the ills which exist around them is not ignorance. Rather, it is a voluntary closing of the eyes to and a folding of the arms before the problematic situations which present themselves before our very noses. It is this smug attitude which contributes a great deal to the prevalence of injustice, crime, poverty, and corrupt practices in our country.

Sometimes, to prove a point, one has to be ridiculous. Sometimes, to make others aware of a pitiable situation which needs urgent attention, the situation has to be magnified, even out of proportion. It is vain to classify all people into two extreme poles, to categorize groups, associations, and individuals into two radically opposed groups and to treat one group as always the exploiter and the other the exploited not distinguishing between those who work and deserve the fruits of their labor and those who merely do nothing, poor as they are. However, this is resorted to, though unconsciously perhaps, to stress the existence of repugnant situations which need correcting. When some young people advocate revolution as the only means for curing these ills they talk sense into the ears of those who are already impatient with waiting for the others to move with them in working for the removal of these problems, especially in those aspects concerning social justice.

Here we see a NEED. There is a need for a radical change in the lax attitude our people toward the social ills which need remedying. This is where the youth can help a great deal. The young must work to revolutionize our people's way of thinking.

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experience in dealing with the establishment is dotted with frustrations due to the insincerities of their elders. This is the underlying cause why they refuse to seek mature advice in the belief that none of the elders is with them. This suspicion, born of actual experience, should not shatter man's confidence in man and should not blind the youth to the fact that the rank and file among the adults are wanting in men who could provide the proper element to temper their mettle into a metal of the highest quality. The right combination can produce steel of the greatest strength.

THE IDEA POWER

The sharpest tool can be forged out of this combination. There are well-meaning men; youth must trust them and adopt their ideas. There are reliably responsible young people endowed with the ability to think clearly. The adults should exploit their bright ideas. The convergence of ideas from both sources when synthesized will produce a most potent force — the idea power — incisive, penetrating, piercing, irresistible.

Idea power is a mastermind. It is the fusion of ideas emanating from the deep and profound thinking of several minds. Idea power is potent and long-lasting only if the element of youthful vigor is in it. Likewise in a dynamic society where the constant quest for a change for the better is a basic concern, maximum actualization of the desirable change is only possible through idea power in which youth again must be involved.

In the last analysis, youth on the rampage — properly utilized — is a social phenomenon which is an imperative to change!

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refused to rally behind their cause.

Ironically, the dissident movement in Central Luzon is gaining momentum because the government overlooks the real causes of the Huk uprisings which are poverty, social injustice, and maldistribution of lands. Many citizens are reportedly resorting to the so-called kangaroo courts of the Huks because they have completely lost their faith and confidence in the judicial processes. Ortega Y. Gaset, in his classic "Revolt of the Masses," observed, "Man had recourse to violence. Sometimes this recourse was a mere crime but at other times, violence was the means resorted to by him who had previously exhausted all other means in defense of the rights of justice which he thought he possessed."

Sad to say, the rule of the gun rather than the rule of law reigns supreme, nowadays. Just recently, Mayor Leopoldo Rabanes of San Marcelino, Zambales together with thirteen other persons were massacred in cold blood in the presence of horrified spectators. A few months ago, Rep. Jose Laurel and Gov. Lumaig of Ifugao narrowly escaped death when they were ambushed by a host of criminals. In the heart of the city of Manila a few weeks ago, Rep. Salipada Pendatun's life was nearly snuffed off by the assassins' bullets. If the government officials nowadays, who are enjoying the protection of bodyguards, are no longer safe from the barrel of the gun, how much more the ordinary citizens?

Unfortunately, innumerable perpetrators of those heinous crimes are roaming around scot-free, victimizing numerous innocent citizens. This could be attributed to the inefficiency and negligence of duty of the

authorities and the lack of moral courage of the witnesses who refused to go out in the open and testify in court for fear of retaliations and reprisals. Many witnesses prefer to be living cowards than dead heroes. As a consequence, many aggrieved citizens are now taking the law into their own hands.

The "Pearl of the Orient Seas" is indeed in travail. As Pres. Marcos puts it, "the country today is sitting on top of a social volcano that could erupt anytime with such a devastating force as to blow our institutions to smithereens."

However, there is still much hope that the Filipino people can prevent this dreaded volcano from erupting. It is the consensus that this can only be achieved by undergoing a catharsis of our mind and character and by eradicating greed and hatred from our hearts. Unless the people will change their hearts and see the best solutions to our problems, there will be no guarantee that we will not be drawn into the valley of destruction.

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It is imperative that such a change in attitude must be instituted if we are to accomplish anything in the line of alleviating the undesirable effects of these social problems. Unless this attitude of gross permissiveness to the corruption and injustice existing around is eradicated, we will not get anywhere in our work for social reforms. What is the use of changing and improving a system when the people for whom it is changed do not themselves fight for honesty, integrity, and justice in its processes?

Who fills in the need of a revolutionizing factor in our people's way of thinking other than the young Filipinos themselves? Who can understand Filipinos better than Filipinos? There is a need for a redirection of attitudes, of mentality, and the youth with their dedication and zest can do a lot along these lines. This is the essential change that they must effect before they can move on to work for other changes.

The attitude of awe and fear for those who have the money and the power must be eradicated. The justification of a contemptible act like dishonesty in government service for the reason that the majority does it, has to be made null. The resigned attitude towards a double-standard kind of justice, one that caters to the rich and bites the poor, must be checked.

It is high time that our people realize that a preponderance of individuals who advocate a wrong thing does not make it right and does not justify its practice; that money and power do not bestow on some individuals the privilege to trample on the rights of others; and, that tolerance and silent protest to these actions make us active participants in them.

The revolution we need is a revolution of attitude in ourselves. This is the other revolution that the youth have to work for. This is the revolution which they must effect for the success of the reforms they work for. This is the more fundamental revolution, hard to achieve perhaps, but this can be done, if we work for it with determination and perseverance.

For, such as we are, such are the times.