APPENDIX SIX

CULTURAL GENOCIDE IN THE PHILIPPINES

(Speech delivered by Nur Misuari, Chairman, Central Committee of the Moro National Liberation Front, before the International Congress on Cultural Imperialism sponsored by the Lelio Basso Peace Foundation and held at the Palais des Nations, Algiers, Algeria, from 11 to 15 October 1977.)

To begin with, allow me to convey the fraternal greetings of our people and the Central Committee of the Moro National Liberation Front to this International Congress on Cultural Imperialism and to the Lelio Basso Peace Foundation for the invitation to participate in this historic meeting of anti-imperialist forces in the world. Our boundless thanks go to the Algerian People and Government for their generous and brotherly welcome and for their firm support behind the just cause of our people.

Comrades in the cause of world peace and freedom: Today, as we listen to each other and discuss vital problems of the world we live in, there in South Philippines, the home of 5.5 million Muslim and another million indigenous people, a new war is raging with all its force and fury.

The physical and spiritual existence or well-being of a Muslim nation is precarious at stake. The colonial government of President Marcos, supported by American imperialism, World Zionism, Japanese and Western monopoly capital, is engaged in a new round of war of genocide against our people.

A War of Genocide as a Reflection of a Colonial Order

This genocidal campaign against the Bangsa Moro nation is 9 years old, starting with the cold-blooded massacre of 68 Muslim youths in the historic island of Corregidor in March 1968. This is not to mention the earlier crimes of Filipino colonialism against our people. Up to these days, over one-hundred of our youths who, together with those executed in the Corregidor tragedy, were recruited clandestinely by the Special Forces of President Marcos for the abortive invasion of the State of Sabah, are still missing.

This incident was followed closely by the launching of the notorious Ilaga gang by the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The Philippine colonial government, exploiting the deep-rooted hatred of the colonial settlers towards our people, organized, trained and armed the Christian settlers in all parts of our homeland and caused them to commit all acts of depre-
dation and savagery against our people, homeland and national culture.

In November 1972, barely two months following the unlawful imposition of Martial Law in the Philippines and the installation of the present dictatorial regime of President Marcos and his military collaborators, the Philippine colonial government finally declared war against our people. Since then South Philippines has been engulfed in a violent conflagration, which has wrought havoc and destruction on our people, as witness the death of about 50,000 innocent Muslim women, children and other civilians, the burning of 200,000 houses and over 500 mosques, several hundreds of Islamic schools and madrasas and vast plantation areas. Thirty-seven Muslim cities and municipalities, including the historic capital of the once powerful Islamic government of the Sultanate of Sulu, have been pulverized by cannons, bombs and napalm.

In addition, millions of our people have been uprooted from their homes and became refugees and are now exposed to famine, sickness and the like. This includes 92,000 Muslim refugees who have fled to Sabah, not to mention those affected by the latest military campaign of Marcos and his colonial armed forces.

What's more, as the colonial government of Marcos pursues its act of repression and extermination, it is certain to commit additional crimes against our people and humanity.

For this reason, I would like to ask your favor to focus more attention to this South Philippines problem and adopt this problem as part and parcel of the problems confronting the revolutionary world, the Third World and the peace-loving peoples of the world.

Already the Islamic World, which constitutes over 40 countries in Asia and Africa and represents nearly one-fourth of
mankind, has defined its stand and is strongly in support of our people's just cause.

I would like to say that the problem that afflicts our people is very much a part of the problem that grips the world at large.

In truth, the war in South Philippines is a reflection and indeed a product of a colonial order. And the South Philippines problem is therefore organically linked with our global colonial reality.

The Muslim people and homeland have 500 years of Islamic culture and civilization. They were once free, sovereign and an independent nation. As a matter of fact, they were once one of the strongest powers in Southeast Asia. From early 16th century until the close of the 19th century and on till the end of the Second World War, they fought one of the longest and bitterest anti-colonial wars in history.

For 33 years they held Spanish colonialism at bay, not to speak of the sporadic intrusion of Portuguese, Dutch, British, French and German colonialism. And from the beginning of our present century, in the wake of the dissolution of Spanish colonialism in the Philippines, our people were once again locked in an anti-colonial or anti-imperialist war. This time, they found themselves face to face with a newly-emerging colonial government, namely the United States of America.

For more than four decades, until the outbreak of the last Pacific war, our people fought against this new colossus, followed by a few years of violent confrontation with Japanese imperialism during the four years (1942-1945) of Japanese interregnum in the Philippines and its extension to our people's homeland after the defeat of American imperialism early in the war.

As you can see, our people have never been lacking in vigilance, more so when it comes to the defence and protection of their national freedom and independence.

But you'll understand, what a great odds our people had to face after the end of the Second World War and the emergence of US imperialist hegemony in our part of the world.

The Advent of Filipino Colonialism in the Muslim National Homeland

Taking advantage of the total confusion and trauma in the aftermath of the war, the US imperialist government, in its decision to grant independence to the Filipino government, entered into a collusion with its Filipino puppets to arbitrarily place our people under Filipino colonial rule and domination.

This fateful incident occurred on July 4, 1946, some 30 years ago. Before that our people were never part of the Filipino nation. They were separate—free and sovereign. Even when the idea of unifying our people was broached for the first time in the 1930s by the US colonial government, our people vehemently opposed such a sinister scheme: witness the famous March 18, 1935 Manifesto of the Bangsa Moro people addressed to the US Congress and the US President.

It can be correctly said that the present war in South Philippines is or was once also true to all the colonized peoples of the world, be it in Africa, Latin America or Asia.

At the same time, as a reaction to such a regime of colonial exploitation, oppression and tyranny, the oppressed colonized people are inevitably dragged into a violent clash with their colonial rulers, thereby accelerating the development of the revolutionary process and the revolutionary consciousness of the oppressed colonized people and unleashing at a certain stage their revolutionary energy and dynamism.

Such is the case of the emergence of the Bangsa Moro Revolution led by the Moro National Liberation Front.

Muslim Protest Against Filipino Colonialism is Not New

Our people have certainly been protesting against such unjust colonial imposition from the very start. A series of armed rebellions have been staged by our people, the most famous being the Kamalen rebellion, the Tawan-Tawan rebellion, the Hajal Ooh rebellion, and the peaceful independence campaign of the late Sultan Ombran Amilbangsa of the Sultanate of Sulu.

But such struggles were all aborted for one reason or other, and most particularly on account of their limited ideological scope and relative isolation.

But the present Bangsa Moro Revolution led by the Moro National Liberation Front is the culmination of such anti-colonial and anti-imperialist experiences. And it came at a time when our internal colonial contradiction has reached its breaking point in view of the intensification of the colonial aggres-
sion in all its political, economic, social, religious and cultural dimensions. Moreover, the Bangsa Moro Revolution has been influenced by the revolutionary ferment in the world.

**The Rise of the MNLF**

The Philippine colonial government, particularly under President Marcos, has curtailed and suppressed our people's political freedom. They usurped our people's economic rights by depriving them of their traditional sources of livelihood, specifically their ancestral land. Besides, they flouted the socio-religious and cultural rights of our people by imposing a totalitarian social order, which is embarked on the creation of a so-called "New Society".

This conception of a new society is but a misnomer for a more repressive colonial regime in South Philippines, which is being used to justify the brutal suppression of our people's Islamic and indigenous culture and supplanting them with the Filipino colonial culture. This Filipino colonial culture is fundamentally a reflection of Western Christian civilization — inherited from Spanish and American colonialism.

The Philippine colonial regime is now engaged in a programme which calls for total and complete integration of the so-called cultural minorities to which our people are classified.

In truth, this is a colonial scheme designed to complement its campaign of genocide against the physical existence of our people. In reality, therefore, this cultural scheme constitutes a cultural genocide, intended to annihilate the spiritual and cultural identity of our people.

It must be said that behind this cultural genocide is the sinister colonial attempt to destroy our people's national identity, which is essentially founded on our cultural reality.

However, as the Philippine colonial government pursues its criminal design, our people are all the more become alienated from the cultural milieu and are driven to the other extreme of the colonial spectrum.

This led to the appearance of a revolutionary consciousness among our people and the rise of the Moro National Liberation Front.

*The MNLF is the Vanguard of the Bangsa Moro Revolution*

The Moro National Liberation Front, to be specific, came into being some years before the formal launching by Marcos of his anti-Muslim genocidal campaign. While the MNLF had been directly involved in the anti-IIaga resistance, yet it did not surface formally until the colonial violence had become widespread following Marcos' declaration of war in November 1972. It stayed deliberately in the background while the masses of our people were putting up their own resistance against the colonial terror.

But once the MNLF was caught in the revolutionary storm, starting with the famous November 14, 1972 encounter in the historic island of Jolo, which was the bastion of our people's resistance during their 400 years of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist resistance, it rapidly became the rallying point of the Bangsa Moro Revolution.

Thus since this last 5½ years of intense fighting, interrupted only by the 9 months of ceasefire arranged by the Quadrilateral Ministerial Commission and the Islamic Conference, the MNLF has assumed the role of the vanguard of the Bangsa Moro people and Revolution.

*National Freedom and Independence: The MNLF's Initial Political Objective*

And in keeping with the desire of the broad masses of our people, the MNLF adopted a political programme which called for the complete liberation of our people and national homeland from all forms and vestiges of Filipino colonialism, to ensure our people's freedom and the preservation of our Islamic and indigenous culture and civilization as well as our revolutionary heritage.

Accordingly, the MNLF declared its intention to work for the restoration of the sovereignty and independence of our people. This declaration was contained in a Manifesto submitted to the 5th Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference in Kuala Lumpur in May 1974.

The "Bangsa Moro Republik" was launched by our people and a revolutionary government was organized at all levels in
the liberated areas, complete with its political, military, economic, judicial and other apparatus. Afterwards, a National Parliament and various provincial congresses were enthusiastically organized by our people.

In short a complete state system was brought to life.

**MNLF Changes Political Objective and Opt for Political Autonomy**

But despite our declaration of intention and largely due to the mediation of the Islamic Conference, the MNLF and our people agreed to tone down our political demand.

Instead of asking, therefore, for complete independence and for the liberation of the entire Bangsa Moro national homeland of Mindanao, Basilan, Sulu and Palawan, which has an aggregate land area of 116,895.3 square kms., the MNLF agreed to put aside its original objective and opt merely for 'complete political autonomy'. While the area we demanded was reduced to 13 provinces and 11 cities, which is roughly 60% of our people's national homeland.

There were other compromises made by the MNLF, as could be seen in the Tripoli Agreement of December 23, 1976 signed by the representatives of the Philippine government, the MNLF, the Quadripartite Ministerial Commission and the Secretary General of the Islamic Conference.

The United Nations, the Organization of the Non-Aligned Countries and the Organization of African Unity have been duly notified about this agreement.

**Philippine Colonial Government Sabotages Agreement**

But then when the representatives of the Philippine government, the MNLF, the Quadripartite Ministerial Commission, and the Secretary-General of the Islamic Conference met again to flesh up the agreement and prepare the groundwork for its implementation, the Philippine government began to recoil and to put up obstacles in an effort to sabotage what had been formally agreed upon by all the parties concerned.

Two negotiations were held, one in Tripoli last February until March, and the other one in Manila last April. But all our efforts were brought to naught all due to the treachery and betrayal of Marcos and the Philippine colonial government.

The MNLF delegation that went to Manila together with the representatives of the Quadripartite Ministerial Commission and the Secretary-General of the Islamic Conference returned empty-handed.

**New Phase of the War Starts: Ceasefire is Virtually Scuttled**

Following these debacles, the Philippine colonial government intensified its sabotage activities and launched what it called 'a search-and-destroy campaign' against our forces. And yet the joint ceasefire mission, composed of representatives of the Philippine government, the MNLF and the Islamic Conference [was] still in South Philippines actively supervising the implementation of our ceasefire agreement.

As a result of this search-and-destroy campaign, which was launched last July 6, tension rapidly began to mount and last week the second phase of Marcos' war of genocide was commenced. To all intent and purposes and by virtue of this new military campaign of Marcos' colonial armed forces, the ceasefire is virtually over, after 9 months of deceptive peace. South Philippines is therefore once again plunged into a colonial war of genocide. And once again our people are molested and massacred right inside their homes and even in their sacred places as the Tipo-Tipo massacre last August 27 would testify.

And from the look of things, it is impossible to determine how this new war can be stopped.

**The Bangsa Moro People Shall Win Final Victory and the MNLF the Final Liquidator of Filipino Colonialism**

The Philippine government is pouring in more forces and organizing new paramilitary and terrorist gangs among the colonial settlers. But our people shall remain steadfast and resolute and are decided to carry on with their revolutionary struggle until final victory is achieved and the total liquidation of Filipino colonialism in every part of our people's national homeland shall crown our people's patriotic endeavor. [It is] only then that the Philippine colonial war of genocide against our people and our national culture can be finally stopped.

Now that peaceful solution is impossible with the treacher-
ous and bloodthirsty colonial government of President Marcos, a return to our people's original political objective is at once irresistible and inevitable.

And despite heavy odds, our people and Revolution are certain of their final victory. The final verdict of history shall belong to the Bangsa Moro people and Revolution, and the MNLF and its heroic military arm, the Bangsa Moro Army, shall be the final liquidator and gravedigger of Filipino colonialism in South Philippines.

In this struggle, our people and the MNLF count on the support of all anti-imperialist and revolutionary forces in the world as well as on all other peace-loving peoples of the world.

**MNLF Appeals for Unity and Solidarity**

Accordingly, and on behalf of the MNLF, I would like to reiterate our appeal to you all and to the peoples of the world to strengthen their unity and solidarity with our people in order to accelerate the momentum of our people's march to final victory and freedom. The victory of our people shall constitute an integral part of the victory of mankind against the forces of colonialism and imperialism in the world.

Once again our thanks to the Lelio Basso Peace Foundation and to the great Algerian People and Government. Thank you.

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**APPENDIX SEVEN**

**EXHAUSTIVE SEARCH FOR A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO MNLF SECESSION**

While the Philippines considers the problem in Southern Philippines an internal domestic problem, to be resolved within the framework of the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Philippines, it has pursued all peaceful means of arriving at a just and honorable solution including direct negotiations, and resort to the good offices of the Islamic Conference through its Secretary-General and the four-nation Ministerial Committee.

The Philippine Government agreed to meet with MNLF representatives on ten occasions from January 1975 to April 1979.

**Negotiations and Agreements with MNLF**


2. **Tripoli, November 1976.** First Lady Mrs. Imelda Romualdez Marcos' meetings with President al-Qadhafi.


   I. **Tripoli Agreement of 23 December 1976**

4. **Zamboanga City, January 1977.** Admiral Romulo Espaldon with MNLF Commander Tham Manjoorsa.

   II. **Cease-fire Agreement of 20 January 1977**

5. **Tripoli, February-March 1977.** Government Panel composed of Defense Undersecretary Carmelo Barbero,