

## OPEN FORUM

*Moderator:* Thank you Dr. Nemenzo for that very informative academic analysis and evaluation of dependency and liberation of the New Society from your own point of view.

We would like the audience now to ask questions for further clarification on the topic just delivered.

\_\_\_\_\_: Dr. Nemenzo, am I correct in my impression that you are picturing the present dispensation as an instrument of U.S. imperialism?

*Dr. Nemenzo:* Do I have to say it?

\_\_\_\_\_: Now as a follow-up. Can you tell us in concrete terms how are we going to liberate ourselves from the clutches of such imperialism?

*Dr. Nemenzo:* I cannot tell you how. But the most that I can do is perhaps to indicate what are the conditions that will make this possible. I have indicated in desperate privacy in the last part of my paper that this is only possible if our people, the masses of our people, are made sufficiently conscious and made sufficiently active. In other words you have to mobilize the masses. It cannot be done otherwise. Because without a conscious involvement of the masses in the struggle against these social structures, I don't think anything will ever happen. But as to how to do that, perhaps I will keep my thoughts to myself.

\_\_\_\_\_: Is the organization of barangays not an evidence of the masses' involvement?

*Dr. Nemenzo:* The digging of ditches and cleaning of streets are not the kind of involvement that will liberate us from dependency.

\_\_\_\_\_: I think Dr. Nemenzo wants to impart the idea that the masses should liberate themselves. And I think to evolve that idea would entail the overhaul of the present educational system in the Philippines, which I think Dr. Nemenzo will also admit is patterned after the American system. Am I right with that impression?

*Dr. Nemenzo:* Yes, but it is not the factor. If you equate the educational system with the school system, our situation is hopeless. But

there are many other structures in society that play an educational function aside from the schools.

\_\_\_\_\_ : But how can you expect the masses to liberate themselves if they are not themselves liberated?

*Dr. Nemenzo:* They have to be liberated first from this dependency culture and it's going to be a long process. I would like to think that it is our responsibility as intellectuals not only to help accomplish this in the classroom but also outside.

\_\_\_\_\_ : Precisely, but the point of view of a human being starts from the very first time he steps into a school. If the educational system in which he develops that educational outlook depends upon the American system, then you perpetuate the present practice that you condemn. Isn't that correct?

*Dr. Nemenzo:* Well, that "it depends upon the American system" can be dialectical, in the sense that those institutions created by the Americans for their own purposes will, if it can enlighten people, also help them in understanding their situation. I would like to think that the educational system is really decisive in the history of our country, because I also belong to it. But unfortunately I think its role in the development of a new liberated culture is not as great as we would like to imagine it.

\_\_\_\_\_ : And I think an educational system that can produce a Dr. Nemenzo can also produce others like you. It is not totally a lost cause, therefore. We don't need to overhaul the present educational system. Actually, I think it depends upon the people. If the people want to continue the present situation, then so be it. As you said, Martin Luther said so. Thank you very much.

\_\_\_\_\_ : If you mean the overhaul of the masses, Dr. Nemenzo, don't you think that you need to have a leader to instigate the masses, or to lead the masses towards a change of culture or a change of attitude? And where will that leader come from? Will it come from the elite, the masses or from the middle class?

*Dr. Nemenzo:* Of course, the masses cannot act on their own. There will have to be leaders. But what I am saying is that the leaders will have to be real leaders of the masses. In other words, people will just try to manipulate the masses, but will use their leadership in order to change the mentality of the masses. Where they will come from, I do not know. Most likely from people who have been educated and who have understood the logic of history and their situation.

\_\_\_\_\_: Dr. Nemenzo, for a while I believed that there is really political development in the Philippines. I got this impression from the previous speeches, especially with the establishment of the barangay. I thought that the barangays are actually manifestations of political development. After your speech, I realize that it is actually an instrument of the government to legitimize an illegitimate government.

*Dr. Nemenzo:* Aside from its legitimizing functions, it has other functions as well, which do not really serve the purpose that I have in mind or the historical purpose, that is, the liquidation of our dependency situation. For instance, it would be the barangays that would be very useful, as I said, in cleaning the streets, directing the traffic and digging ditches, and that is a form of involvement that is relevant to the local situation. The trouble is that it cannot be tied up with the national situation. Involvement in that kind of activity might even lull the people to thinking that they can improve themselves just by digging holes and cleaning streets, when the nation is confronted with bigger problems.

*Mr. del Castillo:* In line with the last statement, sir; it is true that the barangay members are good in cleaning the streets or digging holes, but these are strategies by which the government is trying to instill in the people the importance of disciplining themselves so that later on they can develop those particular habits whereby they can liberate themselves when they have enough discipline from dependency. That is my comment, sir.

*Dr. Nemenzo:* May I just comment on your comment? Discipline is of course necessary, but it is not enough to liberate us from dependency. More important than discipline is critical thinking which I'm afraid is not propagated by the barangay.

\_\_\_\_\_: Yes, I agree with you, sir. However, we need not blame ourselves here. The fact is we give power to somebody; and power tends to corrupt. Absolute power corrupts absolutely. Thank you.

*Dr. Nemenzo:* We did not give that power to anybody. He got it because of our apathy.

\_\_\_\_\_: Sir, the dependency theory postulates that the first world is composed of Western states.

*Dr. Nemenzo:* Not only Western states because that includes Japan, an advanced capitalist country.

\_\_\_\_\_: The advanced capitalist countries are the metropolis while the Third World or developing states constitute the periphery.

But sir, how about the Socialist states, especially the dependency relation of the eastern satellites of the Soviet Union? How do you place the relationship?

*Dr. Nemenzo:* Well, it's a different kind of dependency relationship that is prevailing there. As a matter of fact, dependency theory has also been used to criticize that kind of relationship. But it's a different kind of relationship from that between the capitalist metropolis and the colonial periphery. In another forum, I can explain that further. In my original notes I also dealt with that applied dependency theory to the analysis of the relationship between the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, but I decided to drop it. Otherwise my paper would have been overextended. But just because I did not mention it here, please don't think that I am ignoring that reality.

*Dr. Abelarde:* We have a Visayan expression which I think is apropos to the paper of Dr. Nemenzo. This expression runs as follows: "*Iya ulo, iya kulo. Iya kalag, iya bakero.*"

*Dr. Nemenzo:* Excuse me sir, I'm Visayan but I belong to another Visayan group. Will you kindly translate that?

*Dr. Abelarde:* The people are the masters of their own destiny as well as of their own souls. It takes time to bring up the intelligence of the masses to appreciate the kind of society that they live in. I'd like to emphasize the view that we should try to give encouragement and opportunities to the masses to learn. Our people, just like any other people, are capable of understanding their problems. I think it is apropos to us to find out ways and means wherein the masses can participate in our own upliftment. It is not bad to borrow things from other people. As a matter of fact many of our institutions are borrowed from other countries and we have improved on these institutions. Of course, the matter of time must be taken into consideration. Our civilization, notwithstanding the western civilization, took years to develop. Consequently we cannot reform ourselves overnight. But I insist that our people must be given a chance to find themselves. Give them the opportunity to resolve their own problems. Give them hope. Because I think our people are capable of innovations. And it has been shown by actual manifestations that we have improved on what we have borrowed. Thank you.

*Dr. Nemenzo:* I believe, sir, that time will never solve anything. I think the illness of our people is not because we are impatient, but because we have been too patient. When I call for critical thinking I'm not suggesting that things can be changed overnight. But we

have to change it, and change it consciously. How long it will take will depend upon a lot of factors. I also do not want to give the impression that I am opposed to any kind of borrowing. Because we live in a period of international exchange of ideas and values. I think that is one of the realities we have to accept I'm not a chauvinist who would go back to the ways of Lapu-Lapu. I think there are a lot of things that we can learn from the West. What is important is to use these things against Western domination.

\_\_\_\_\_ : The exposition, the way I size it, leaves us in a dilemma or a vacuum. The analysis is accepted as far as I am concerned. I think it is true. But the fact remains that there seems to be no solution as of now that has been offered to the problem which we are in, and you did not offer any solution so far. The changes are alright; we must change. But, how we could change is most important. That is the thing that we have not answered in this forum. If we analyze, evaluate and point out the ills, the evils of a certain system, then we must somehow offer solutions or possible remedies for improvement. I don't know whether I'm right but that is my reaction to the presentation.

*Dr. Nemenzo:* A lot of short-run solutions have failed because they were based on inadequate analysis of the situation. The dependency theory, after all, is not a solution to the problem. The dependency theory is a model, a conceptual framework for understanding a problem. I think it is more important to analyze our situation than to offer solutions that are ill-thought-out. It is a difficult task. So, to me, as long as you have understood the problem correctly, you are already 80 per cent towards solving it.

\_\_\_\_\_ : You mean to say we are only on first base, and we have not been to second base yet. At least we have reached the first base, the first step towards the solution to the problem. The awareness and the consciousness of the problem, of course, is the first step towards the solution. Now the next step is for us to work out what might be the solution to the problem of which you are aware and conscious.

*Dr. Nemenzo:* I will answer that by posing a challenge to each and everyone. That is, if more of us political scientists, sociologists, historians, and social scientists in general, could undertake more empirical studies about the Philippine reality and about the Philippine situation within the framework of the dependency theory, then I think, eventually, we will find a viable solution to the very basic problems of our people.

*Atty. Alcantara:* It seems to me that all the avenues, the approaches and strategies of the present government are suspect to you. Nothing is right. Is that correct?

*Dr. Nemenzo:* No, I'm not saying that. Building roads is right for the purpose of facilitating traffic. But what I'm saying is that there are other problems where these are not the solutions. That is quite different from saying nothing is right.

*Atty. Alcantara:* Well, you suggested that there was a way, but you decline to reveal to us the way by which a better situation might be had. Could you say in all honesty that such a way would be also free from all suspicion of deleting human freedom and liberty?

*Dr. Nemenzo:* Well, in life, there is no assurance about anything. As a matter of fact I was kidding when I said that I already have the solution which I will not reveal. Actually I don't . . . I think, at this stage what we ought to do is to study Philippine reality more, to understand our society better, without the blinders provided to us by development theory and functionalist theory. That is what I am appealing for, for more studies, for more critical reflection, because it is only on the basis of these that you can have or work out a strategy that will conform to our values especially the value of freedom which I cherish so much. Incidentally, sir, if you are interested, just wait for a book edited by the former U.P. President S. P. Lopez entitled "*The Philippines into the 21st Century*" because I have a paper there where I discuss such practical steps in greater detail.

*Moderator:* Yes, Atty. Causing is the author of one of the books in political science.

*Atty. Causing:* We are assuming that we are now in the state of dependency on two great powers particularly the United States and Japan. And if we look back at the remolding of our foreign policy from the moorings of the past towards the current development posture, that is, maintaining relationships with communist countries, are these not signs of national liberation? When we look at the current move to import technologies from other countries with certain precautionary measures, especially from the incursions of Japanese industries in the form of the progressive car manufacturing program, progressive truck manufacturing program, are they not signs of national liberation? Meaning, we are moving away from the moorings of dependency towards a more truly nationalistic posture.

*Dr. Nemenzo:* I quite agree that there are, as I have said earlier. Probably, I overexaggerated my point for the sake of emphasis, that

there are certain steps taken by the present government which could not have taken place under the old setup, which I think could serve as a springboard for liberation. But this will only lead towards liberation if we understand what the process of liberation is all about. And more important, if we understand the structure of dependency that ought to be liquidated. So if these steps, these nationalistic measures are sustained and directed towards that goal, and especially if it is accompanied by the mobilization of the masses, please don't forget that, to me that is the critical thing. I think it is possible that we are going to reach the stage of liberation; that we can do away with dependency. But for as long as we keep the masses silent and inactive, I don't think all this will lead towards that.

*Atty. Causing:* So you are advocating mass movement like the long march of Communist China in order to awaken the intellectual curiosities of the masses.

*Dr. Nemenzo:* Well, the long march was not intended to awaken the intellectuals. The long march was a very practical step to pull the forces of Mao Tse Tung from the cities to the Yen-an area.

*Atty. Causing:* In one way or another it opened the eyes of the masses towards national unity and liberation, because they were in conflict with the forces of Chiang Kai Shek and the other opposing factors. You assume that there could be no national liberation from the top. National liberation could only be attained if the masses are involved. But could not the current leadership start or move towards national liberation indirectly without directly involving the masses and free our country from dependency of any sort?

*Dr. Nemenzo:* I doubt it very much. Because if it does without getting mass support, I am not sure if this regime is going to last that long. But of course I am not eliminating the possibility that the present leadership, instead of paralyzing the masses, will activate the masses in support of liberation policies. It might succeed and we might be thankful. We might have Proclamation 1081 to thank God for.

\_\_\_\_\_ : I'm looking at the possibility of obtaining national liberation without the need of bloodshed, if the leadership from the top is sincere in really moving towards national liberation.

*Dr. Nemenzo:* I am not saying that bloodshed is necessary. As a matter of fact without involving the masses there can be bloodshed. You know, there were more people who died in Philippine elections before Martial Law than in Russia when the Bolsheviks came to

power. There were less than one hundred people who died in the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. But, in every election we had before thousands died. So, the involvement of the masses should not equate it with violence and bloodshed.

\_\_\_\_\_: Dr. Nemenzo, the holding of the IBP elections and the proposed local elections before the end of the year have created the impression among many people that we are moving towards what they call normalcy or normalization. Now, on the basis of your description of a Bonapartist regime, is this real normalcy? What kind of normalcy will we have?

*Dr. Nemenzo:* In political science, we don't use such terms as normalcy. It depends upon your frame of reference. Because if it means a return to the old system, I don't think it will come about. I don't think the intention here is to go back to the old system. As a matter of fact even with this so-called parliamentary system that will be created, (I prefer to call it quasi-parliamentary) there will be no separation of powers.

\_\_\_\_\_: You are therefore saying that the regime is trying to shift the basis of its legitimacy from what is considered military to civilian, while essentially preserving the same regime. The basis of its legitimacy would now be the IBP, the barangay, and all these other organizations that are being formed. Would this be the proper basis for legitimacy of a Bonapartist regime?

*Dr. Nemenzo:* I would not use the word shift. It's not a matter of shifting a base of support from one to the other. But it is one of broadening the base of support. For a Bonapartist regime where executive and legislative powers are vested in one person, the regime will have to rely, just the same, on the coercive organs of the state to enforce his decrees.

\_\_\_\_\_: Yes, I agree with you but Martial Law will be lifted after the KBL wins in the IBP. That's why, I use the term "shift."

*Dr. Nemenzo:* But even if Martial Law will be lifted, the structures created under Martial Law will survive.

*Julius Elvas:* You are advocating a change in the present condition of the Philippines but you have not cited the solution to that, because you said that the solutions will be presented later in a book which is now in the process of publication.

*Dr. Nemenzo:* I am not advocating a form of action other than that; social scientists should study the Philippine reality more critically.

*Julius Elvas:* I stand corrected. However, what really are the motivations for changing the present system if we are not sure of the consequences which we are afraid would be the same because of the tragic consequences which we have already experienced?

*Moderator:* The question of the gentleman is: what assurances do we have if we change the present system with something else? Are you sure it will be better than the present?

*Julius Elvas:* Actually, that can be one interpretation.

*Dr. Nemenzo:* I don't know if it can be. I cannot be sure if it will be better; for the simple reason that I don't even know what specific changes ought to take place. And if I may repeat my point for the sake of emphasis, we must first study Philippine reality. We must study it critically, and on the basis of these critical studies work out a viable solution to these problems. Because right now, we will just be playing in the dark and gambling with the lives of people. And I am not suggesting that, at all.

*Moderator:* Mr. Ganchorre.

*Mr. Ganchorre:* Maybe we are afraid to discuss openly here because we are afraid to receive grants to go to the same place where Dr. Nemenzo was before right?

Dr. Nemenzo, you mentioned what you call the models or framework in analyzing our situation like functionalism, dependency, development and liberation.

*Dr. Nemenzo:* By the way, the idea of liberation is not a conceptual framework or a model for analysis; rather it is something that will grow out of a critical analysis of the situation. It's a process.

*Mr. Ganchorre:* I see. After you developed the three, I thought you were moving towards liberation and then you briefly made a statement on that and then you rested your case, so to speak. So I was thinking, if we push it further, if we study further what may be referred to as liberation, this could provide us with some kind of a framework. It seems to me in some other circles they may not want to come out in the open and are kind of abusing liberation as a term for possibly analyzing Philippine reality, so that hopefully we may arrive at a solution that will be truly meeting our own specific needs. I was thinking if it could be pushed further that way?

*Dr. Nemenzo:* Well, I would say that my concept of liberation is just the negation of dependency. That's why you have to be clear as to what it is that you are trying to negate. And that's the reason why I

spend so much time explaining the phenomenon of dependency and the internal structures of dependency, because these are the things to be negated. And the negation process is what you call liberation.

*Mr. Ganchorre:* Are you suggesting, therefore, that we may be able to have a real understanding of Philippine reality and then come up with what might be a peculiar Philippine solution to our problems? After I have understood the so-called phenomenon of dependency and moved toward liberation, will we be able to have a real grasp of the Philippine reality and then come up with a solution?

*Dr. Nemenzô:* I think so.

*Mr. Ganchorre:* Thank you.

*Moderator:* To be a little fair with the Bonapartist Administration or dictatorship, do you think that the leader should be a student in political science and conversant with the reality and the problems of the present society? The solution he is offering now — I mean his attempts now in all aspects of his administration — is an attempt to liberate us from dependency? Maybe he is wrong, but do you think he might also be sincere in his desire to liberate the society from the dependency that you are talking of. Although the results or the consequences as you might look at it, might not be the solution, at least he has made an attempt to do something about it. What do you say to this?

*Dr. Nemenzo:* Well, as a social scientist, I will pass no judgment on the sincerity of other people's motives. I can only pass a judgment on the actions that he has taken.

*Mr. Nelson Apsay:* Dean, you talk about dependency and liberation, and I was thinking if we could correlate it to international politics. Is it safe to say that the Philippine situation is just a cycle from one dependency to another with regard to the bigger states?

*Dr. Nemenzo:* No, I don't take it that way.

*Mr. Apsay:* Because you talk about American relation — I mean the American dominance in the Philippines — could we correlate it to the topic earlier this morning about an impending Japanese domination, and could we not say that we are just moving from one dependency to another in relation to international politics?

*Dr. Nemenzo:* No, it is not even moving from one dependency to another. It is a total dependency situation in which we are connected with two metropolises — the American and the Japanese. So, it is a total system of metropolis-periphery relationship.

*Moderator:* This is the last question.

\_\_\_\_\_ : Well, actually, when Dr. Nemenzo discussed liberation, dependency and all that, I was led to think of a Utopia where we live completely free, not dependent, and conduct things on our own will, rather than other nations conducting or rather imposing their will on us. In other words, we tried to discuss dependency from our own standpoint, as if we could just declare ourselves liberated just as a small nation could declare itself neutral. But actually, liberation or neutrality or dependency for that matter would depend on the sanction from the big powers. Can we just free ourselves without the Americans imposing their will on us or is it to their interest if they just leave us dependent? Shall they always meddle with our affairs simply because it is to their interest?

*Dr. Nemenzo:* Well, of course, we cannot do anything about what the big powers or how the big powers will respond. But at least we can do something to transform or to change or to liquidate the structures that make that dependency necessary. In other words, the liquidation of structure may not insure that we will be completely independent from the big powers. What I am saying is that we can never achieve real independence unless we do away with these internal structures of dependency that were implanted here during the period of colonial rule.

\_\_\_\_\_ : But the way I look at it sir, total or complete independence would seem to be an impossible thing.

*Dr. Nemenzo:* I am not saying that, because I am also aware that the world consists of one total system. I am not suggesting that independence means isolation. Of course we have to have relationships — economic and otherwise with other nations. We cannot stand alone. What I am saying is that our relationship should be one based on independence rather than dependence.

\_\_\_\_\_ : You mean by independence here, we could negotiate things and dictate things on our own terms rather than us being dictated upon and pressured?

\_\_\_\_\_ : No, we have to realize our capability, our strength! As Dr. Fernandez lectured on us, we are a small nation.

*Dr. Nemenzo:* That's why I'm suggesting that we build up our strength by removing the causes of our weakness.

\_\_\_\_\_ : We must know how strong we are in the international community. What voice have we to be heard?

*Dr. Nemenzo:* Naturally, nobody will listen to us for as long as we have a system like what we have now.

\_\_\_\_\_: My point is, that we cannot really be totally independent or totally liberated as we might say on our own terms. But this will depend on whether the other powers are willing to grant us liberation without meddling in our affairs, and that I think is an impossible thing to do. Japan, the United States, Russia and all the rest will never stop meddling as far as the affairs of the small nations are concerned.

*Moderator:* Professor Aguilar.

*Prof. Aguilar:* May I make a little background statement on the theoretical level of this colonial relationship that Dr. Nemenzo is working on. It seems that the heated discussion or disagreement here is caused by some kind of a vague understanding or misconception of the dependency theory. Maybe we can go back to the process of development. If you will look at the topic, the dependency theory that we have here focuses on the Third World. The basis of this is the beginning of the colonial period wherein the countries of the Third World were colonies of all these big powers. Then, they attained their political independence. However, political independence did not give them economic independence because they had to depend on aid, on loans, on all kinds of "goodies" (if I may use the term of Dr. Ventura yesterday) in order to develop economically. Now the structure of the society was such that the ruling class, or shall we say the political elite (if we have to use the political dynamics terminology), agreed to receive all the benefits that the rich countries are giving. Now, the dependency theory that Dr. Nemenzo is discussing, and which I already said is the theoretical basis of this colonial relationship, states that the dependency did not end because we kept on availing ourselves of the goodies that the big powers have. So that I have the feeling that the question here—on what shall we do in order to put an end to dependence—was misunderstood from the very beginning.

*Moderator:* Thank you for the clarification. We are now ready for the business meeting. The open forum now ends. Thank you Dr. Nemenzo for that enlightening paper.

*Dr. Nemenzo:* No, you can negotiate in the bargaining situation.