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## All roads lead to boycott

## EDITORIAL

# Unmasking US intervention

For the US, no Philippine election in the past has been as important as the coming Batasan Pambansa elections. Reflecting this is the shared opinion of US State Department officials and the US House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs that the coming elections "mark a watershed in Filipino history ... at a time when there is growing support for the violent left throughout the country and at a time when more and more people are beginning to question whether peaceful change is really possible in the Philippines."

The US is presently going all out to directly control and influence the course of the May 17 elections. Top US State Department officials have held caucuses and closed-door talks with known national and regional leaders of legal opposition parties, the church, professionals and the business community. In these rounds of talks, the US makes it appear that it is in the thick of hard bargaining with its chief puppet over the conduct of the coming elections. To further lure legal opposition forces, the US is stressing that it has pushed Marcos to concede 30 to 40 percent of the Batasan Pambansa seats.

Apparently, the recent alteration in the 1985 Philippine foreign assistance request in favor of the economic over the military component and the hesitation on the part of the IMF to release its promised loan point to a certain degree of haggling between some US policy makers and the regime. But before scenarios of major conflict between the US and Marcos are conjured, certain questions have to be clarified. What do all these recent US actions amount to? Are these, as US-inspired rumor mongering would claim, arm-twisting measures or, even more intriguing, sinister maneuvers to finally sweep Marcos out of power?

Despite rumors of "disagreements" or "falling out" between the US master and his puppet dictator, the former is at present firmly behind the Marcos regime and is hell-bent on preserving the status quo of US privilege and dominance in the Philippines. The US unequivocally supports the regime because the latter guarantees the presence and unlimited use here of US military bases - infrastructures of key importance in the American "defense network" in the Asia-Pacific region. The Marcos regime has also secured the country as a profitable area for US investments and as a source of cheap raw materials. Of course, the regime's full support of US interests has been of mutual benefit too to the Marcos clique.

Although the US has been striking quid pro quo agreements with the regime, these have been only over minor matters like the formation of a probe body on the Aquino assassination and the adoption of small electoral reforms. However, the US cunningly pictures such petty bargaining as "strong pressures" on the regime to democratize in order to check growing popular dissent. By doing so, the US portrays its devious meddling as a magnanimous gesture to "restore democracy" while washing its hands off the present grave political and economic crisis wracking the country, a crisis which in the first place was spawned by US imperialism and the dictatorship it installed and perpetuated in power since September 1972.

Despite the growing unpopularity of the Marcos regime, the US considers its puppetry and counter-revolutionary features as more paramount considerations in determining US policy vis-a-vis the regime. At present and in the foreseeable future, the US will not opt for an alternative regime which perhaps might be more popular and democratic but which could put in uncertain terms US interests in the country.

As part of its scheme to preserve the ruling system and stabilize the present dictatorship, the US is beguiling the growing number of politicized elements in the upper and middle strata to confine their activism in the controlled sphere of parliamentary struggle and away from the revolutionary path of armed struggle.

Some people think that the US is merely a non-partisan observer or moderator in the current battle between the Marcos regime and the broad anti-dictatorship forces. While rejecting one-man and repressive rule, they dilly-dally on openly attacking US interventionism because this might prematurely jeopardize the probability of the US ranging itself against the dictatorship. Some of them have gone as far as to openly solicit US support.

These are forlorn hopes. For it is not *with* the US - but *against* it - will the Filipino people advance their struggle to overthrow the hated Marcos dictatorship. Anti-dictatorship forces, therefore, in carrying forward their struggle for democracy must attack US domination and intervention in the country as well. Victory over US imperialism is the sole guarantee for attaining genuine and lasting freedom and democracy for the Filipino people.

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Cover: Rallying to the boycott movement

**Cover story:** The boycott movement geared to a higher level this month with Marcos' refusal to accede to the six democratic demands. Yet even as increasing numbers of people opted for non-participation, some opposition leaders chose to take their chances in the coming elections. But the snowballing boycott movement is pressuring them to reject the regime's sham elections and sham parliament.

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The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDF) is a framework or channel for the unity, cooperation and coordination of all national democratic forces in the country. It traces its beginnings to the establishment of the Preparatory Commission for a National Democratic Front on April 24, 1973. The 1973 NDF Ten-Point Program upholds armed struggle as the main form of struggle to overthrow the US-Marcos dictatorship. **LIBERATION** is the official publication of the NDF.

## COVER STORY

# The countdown ends

Various political forces join hands and opt for boycott

Feb. 14, the traditional day of hearts, was celebrated rather differently this year by about 12,000 people who gathered at the now-historic Ugarte Field in Makati. Songs were plaintively sung, poems passionately recited and dances meaningfully performed. But the people were not humming to the tune of their individual concerns. They were chanting to the beat of their collective will: the desire to end once and for all the hated Marcos dictatorship. And a significant step towards this: boycotting the May 14 Batasan Pambansa elections.

As 12 midnight drew nearer, Agapito "Butz" Aquino, younger brother of the slain oppositionist leader Benigno Aquino Jr., started to count down. The countdown was to signify the end of the period which the people had given Marcos to accede to their democratic demands as preconditions for participation in the elections. Twelve midnight came, there was still no word from Marcos, and those assembled decided to unfurl the banner of a full-blown boycott movement.

The Valentine Day vigil was followed three days later by another mass action that pushed the momentum of the boycott movement. On the streets of Metro Manila, youths, professionals, church people, traditional politicians, housewives and workers trooped to the Liwasang Bonifacio to urge other people to heed the boycott call.

But even before Feb. 14, the momentum of the boycott movement was already building up. Weeks before, 10,000 people representing the workers and urban poor marched on the streets of Manila on Feb. 5 declaring their protest over their prolonged abject conditions, widespread poverty and unemployment. In the last week of January, hundreds of thousands of people threw in their support to a group of protesters who jogged their way from Concepcion, Tarlac to Metro Manila.

Dubbed the "Tarlac-to-Tarmac Protest Run," the marathon, led by the August Twenty-One Movement (ATOM), called for a boycott of the Jan. 27 plebiscite. The mass action drew local and



All systems go: Oppositionists staying up in Feb. 14 vigil at Ugarte Field (above); Feb. 17 demonstration at Liwasang Bonifacio (center and below)

then worldwide attention as the regime sent its military forces to block the participants from entering Metro Manila. Grossly underestimating the intensity of the people's anger towards this latest repressive move of the dictatorship, Marcos was surprised to learn of the massive moral and material support that flowed to the joggers when news of the blockade spread. Five truckloads of food and money were donated to the stranded protesters - whose number had grown from a handful to countless of thousands - who refused to call off their marathon in spite of threats of arrests and continuous harassments. But it was finally the government that had to back off and allow the joggers to enter Manila. Upon entering the city, the participants were treated to a heroes' welcome, as victorious survivors of the onslaughts of a tyrannical dictator.

Elsewhere, in different parts of the country, similar protest actions were staged. In Bicol, rallies and symposia were held successively. Mass actions calling for a boycott were launched last Feb. 11 in Legaspi City, Feb. 17 and 18 in Naga and Legaspi cities, Feb. 25 in Daet and Feb. 26 in Sorogon.

In Angeles City, Pampanga, around 15,000 farmers, workers, students and businessmen converged last Jan. 31 in a gathering called the Central Luzon People's Assembly. The assembly was attended by delegates from Bula-an, Bataan, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Zambales and Pangasinan - all of them urging an election boycott.

In Baguio City, enthusiastic on-lookers cheered and tossed sunflowers to the marchers as they wended through the city's streets last Feb. 10. The march castigated the regime for putting up sham electoral exercises that are massive and blatant forgeries of the people's will.

#### Marcos-US partnership

From the very start, Marcos had rejected the call of leading opposition groups for the granting of six demands as a precondition for participation: the repeal of the president's decree-making power and of all autocratic and oppressive laws, the restoration of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus, amnesty to all political prisoners, ensurance of electoral reforms such as non-interference by the military, and the formation of a credible Commission on Elections.

Marcos had gone through the motions of "acceding" to oppositionist demands, but his concessions were more form than substance: a new voters' list, election by province or city rather than region, and the promise of an independent Comelec. The closest he had come to any of the six demands was the suspension of the Preventive Detention Action (PDA). But even this was ren-



*A heroes' welcome: Tarlac-to-Tarmac joggers entering Manila led by Butz Aquino*

dered useless by the continued enforcement of other repressive decrees, not to mention the fact that the PDA itself will be suspended up to the end of May only.

To boost the faltering rule of its puppet Marcos at a critical juncture of the regime's existence, the US stepped up its interventionist moves in Philippine politics. Displaying keen interest in the coming elections, US embassy officials consistently attended major opposition rallies and conventions, openly showing their support for the regime's election ploy.

In further concrete support, at the precise time that the opposition was bargaining for more electoral concessions from the dictator, the US-controlled World Bank signed away a \$41.2 million loan to the regime - a very much needed shot in the arm for the bankrupt regime. More brazenly, the US sent over five Huey helicopters to buttress the armed forces' combat-support mobility. But even these kinds of economic and military aid are a mere pittance compared to the \$900 million US bases rental that Marcos will be receiving unconditionally from his American sponsors.

To the chagrin of some opposition leaders still entertaining illusions that the US will dump Marcos in the interest of human rights, US pleas for clean elections have appeared to be nothing more than a case of "lots-of-thunder-but-little-rain." In view of the latest moves of the US, it has become clear that the coming elections will not serve as a means of "returning the country to normalcy," as American officials would put it, but as means to salvage the regime's tattered

image and defuse political unrest that has increasingly become a threat to the regime's stability and US imperialism's own massive economic and military interests in the Philippines.

Apparently, in spite of the turn of events that followed the Aquino assassination, some members of the opposition have still failed to grasp the basic nature of the present people's movement and resistance against the dictatorship. They view this development still from the framework of pre-martial law traditional elitist politics. With the elections and the prospects of "winning" dangling before them, certain opposition leaders have interpreted the people's heightened anger for the dictatorship as something that would guarantee their entry into the halls of power.

Their insistence on playing by Marcos' rules has isolated these political leaders from their enlightened colleagues who have realized the futility of trying to beat the dictator in his own electoral game. The confusion within the opposition was best manifested in the PDP-Laban's third annual convention held this month. Though the pull of public opinion was strong enough to convince a sizeable number of oppositionists to join the boycott movement, just as strong was the grip of political ambition and expediency that continues to seize traditional politicians.

In justifying their pro-participation stance, some politicians cited a number of reasons that have become standard: the bigger probability of winning in the polls as a result of the people's high-

tened anger against the regime, the "futility" of the boycott stand, and the survival of their own parties, which, they said, was hinged on the electoral process. Over and above these reasons, however, these politicians cited the urgent need to "defuse the danger of armed violence."

Oppositionists who have opted to join the May 14 elections like to say that the election will take place whether one likes it or not. They know that the elections are even more important to the regime now than it is to the opposition. And precisely because of this, the pro-participationists say the dictator will go to great lengths to put up a democratic facade, even to the extent of launching "independent" candidates. Thus, to prevent the installation of a "bogus opposition," anti-Marcos politicians said they would rather take part in the electoral race themselves.

In meeting the odds against a well-entrenched dictator, participationists also say that the widespread political unrest and the regime's heightening political isolation will work in their favor. Although their political machineries are puny compared to the vast resources at the disposal of Marcos' party, the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan, they are prepared to meet those with the people's strong anti-government sentiments. These sentiments, they pointed out, have risen to a degree that has become dangerous for the government since the assassination of opposition leader Aquino.

Because of the prevailing and growing anti-government mood of the people, the participating anti-Marcos politicians are expecting to win as much as 40 percent of the seats in the assembly. They are counting on opposition bailiwicks such as Cagayan de Oro, Cebu and Batangas to carry their votes. Similarly, they are hoping that with extraordinary vigilance - to be made possible through the National Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) - the opposition will finally have a sporting chance.

According to the traditional politicians, their expected victory at the polls, however, will not end with the elections. Upon assuming their seats at the Batasan Pambansa, they plan to enact laws that will hopefully benefit the people and block legislations that would further tighten Marcos' grip on power. The ultimate victory, they say, will come when he is finally out of the political picture - either by death or by some other political circumstance. By then, an opposition that legally holds power in the legislative assembly would very well provide for an orderly transition of power.

An election boycott, on the other

hand, is seen by participationists to mean sure death for legal political parties. In a statement betraying the opposition's failure to perceive the changing nature of the relationship between the dictatorship and the Filipino people, many a politician has said, "If we abandon elections, we may as well disband our party. What are political parties for, but to take part in elections? Without elections, especially this forthcoming one, any political party is believed to be bound to die."

The strongest reason for rejecting a boycott stand lies, however, in some of the oppositionists' deep-seated fear of a bloody revolution. Time and again, anti-Marcos politicians would refer to the elections as "the last chance to save democracy." They are now saying the same thing about the Batasan polls in fearful reaction to the growing trend of radicalization among the people and the political opposition.

#### A hard look at the election

When the pro-participation opposition insists on taking its chances against Marcos in the forthcoming election, exactly what are these?

Participationists are hoping to win as much as 40 percent of the seats in the assembly given a chemistry of three ingredients - the people's all-out vigilance to guard the ballot, US blessing for some of them to win, and Marcos' own concessions to the legal opposition forces.

They are hoping that pressure from the US - a decisive factor in every political exercise in the country and especially so at this point in time - would be sustained long enough and hard enough to tie down Marcos' hands and keep him from cracking down on the opposition. They also hope that the dictator would even permit the opposition to win in certain places to strengthen the illusion that, indeed, there has been a free and honest election.

Obviously, the opposition is not

asking for much. But from all indications, even these crumbs from the dictator's feast of power would be hard to come by. As mentioned earlier, the US has already thrown its support behind the regime, as can be seen from the economic and military aid that continue to come despite some US officials' criticisms of Marcos.

And the logic for this is not hard to see: Marcos continues to prove not only his loyalty toward the US but his capacity and willingness to protect imperialist interests. Marcos has lost no time making clear that the bases may stay for as long as the US likes provided the latter pays the "proper" fee. He has also consistently demonstrated his bias in favor of foreign business interests. His economic policies show he is willing to sacrifice national patrimony if this would guarantee continued foreign support. Against him, the present crop of pro-participation politicians is held suspect by the US either because of their uncertain loyalty or their lack of capability to wield enough power and clout to "keep the house in order."

There are certain oppositionists, however, who have seen through the election maneuvers of Marcos, have gotten tired of them and have truly kept their options open with regards to the courses of action that may be taken to topple the dictatorship. These political leaders, astute observers of the changing political scene, have come to realize the need for other forms of exerting political force especially by unity with the broad masses of the people in militant struggle. In doing so, they have cast their lot with the boycott movement. After nearly two decades of Marcos' rule, they have come to the conclusion that the dictator would never allow himself to lose in any electoral exercise, especially not in one that he himself has stage-managed.

Opposition stalwarts like former Senators Lorenzo Tanada, Jovito

*NPA's in Kalingo burning plebiscite ballots confiscated in polling places*



Salonga, Jose Diokno, former Constitutional Convention delegate Abraham Sarmiento and even former president Diosdado Macapagal and the brother of the slain oppositionist leader, Butz Aquino, have come to regard non-participation in the coming election as "the only decent and honorable course we can now take to protect and promote the interests of our people."

The people's cold reception of the Jan. 27 plebiscite has boosted the position of boycott forces. The people's disgust over the Marcos polls was unmistakably apparent in the dismal turnout of voters. Even the government-controlled Comelec was forced to admit that

allotment for the campaign efforts alone of the KBL.

Truly, if there is anything distinctive about the boycott movement, it is the widespread support that this continues to gather from increasingly broad sections of the population. The numerous mass organizations that have emerged in the wake of the Aquino assassination and that have been tempered as a result of continuing struggles with the fascist dictatorship are all signs pointing to the readiness and willingness of the people to intensify the fight against the regime. In these struggles, there have been no signs of backing down on the part of the people.

to consolidate the militant posture of the various mass organizations, legal political parties and personalities fighting the US-backed Marcos dictatorship and continues to heighten their unity around clear anti-fascist and, to a growing extent, anti-imperialist demands.

Unity on tactics of struggle has been achieved as well. In a sweeping manner, the boycott campaign is teaching millions of the futility of the parliamentary road in toppling the dictatorship and, on the other hand, the potency of engaging in mass-based, militant and extra-parliamentary struggles to wring out meaningful reforms that will favor the further advance of the people's resistance against the dictatorship. Moreover, various mass organizations and parties have been expanding rapidly in the process of carrying forward the boycott movement.

The dramatic advance of the armed struggle in the countryside has helped the boycott campaign in a big way. At this time of heated debate over the options to take in ending the dictatorship's reign, successive victories by the New People's Army and the Moro National Liberation Front-Bangsa Moro Army (MNLFBMA) in the battlefield drive home an all-important message: that it is not in rigged elections and in an ornamental parliament of the dictatorship but in the field of armed struggle complemented by open militant struggles will the people have the power to bring down the regime.

The current upsurge of militancy, widespread practical training in organization and tactics, as well as the emergence of organized and sympathetic forces in the present boycott campaign can be geared progressively towards a total war effort against the US-Marcos dictatorship as the latter persists in its unpopular and tyrannical rule and mounts its attacks on the people.

Who will be the victors and losers after the May 14 elections? The KBL candidates or their opponents who are scrambling for the seats in the Batasan Pambansa will not really be the victors and losers. Their winning or losing is of little consequence. The real big losers will be Marcos and the US, whose present election scheme which is meant to stabilize their rule and delay their downfall will certainly turn against them and push them nearer to collapse. On the other hand, the real big winners will be the people who, by militantly rejecting participation in the dictator's sham election and sham parliament, will surely come out stronger and more capable in pursuing an all-out battle against a tottering regime.

Minda Rodrigo



Portent of things to come: Empty polling booths on Plebiscite Day

only 30 percent of the voting population went to the polling centers. Empty booths greeted the survey teams sent by politicians to gauge the voters' turnout.

To be sure, the people's hatred against the regime and its electoral farce will continue to smoulder. What with the country's political and economic crisis which continues to worsen by the day and the regime's aversion to any move that would require a substantial diminution of its power and wealth, no matter if this would save the country from final collapse.

Moreover, popular resentment against the regime has been heightened by its recent profligate spending at a time when the country is in dire straits: Imelda's junket tours that were reportedly financed by \$2 million siphoned from a government bank, the building of monumental but useless stone busts of the dictator and his wife, and most of all, a reported P2 billion

And as the people have manifested their conclusion that ballots -- and other forms of political exercises stage-managed by the regime -- would not bring about their emancipation, so should the legal opposition forces now uphold this belief. The pro-participationists' fear of their parties' demise if they do not participate in the elections is not well-grounded: nothing guarantees a political party's survival and growth than its responsiveness to the people's needs and true aspirations. For the opposition to insist on playing by Marcos' rules when these have long been unmasked and rejected by the people is to lag behind the latter and drift towards collaboration with the regime.

What would become of the broad anti-dictatorship front that developed after the Aquino assassination depends, to a large extent, on the final outcome of the current boycott movement. However, even at this early stage of the campaign, the anti-dictatorship front has already been reaping tremendous gains. The boycott movement conti-

## MAINSTREAM

# Two faces of struggle

Victories and setbacks temper the NPA in Kalinga



Victory celebration: Guerrillas taking part in tribal dance

That Friday the 13th of January seemed just like any other day for the seven-man squad of the 44th Infantry Battalion (IB) manning the military detachment in Barrio Ableg, Pasil, Kalinga-Apayao. The soldiers went about their daily routine after breakfast. Four of them left behind their armalites and headed for the barrio proper, a few minutes' walk from the detachment, to hook some barrio girls although they themselves were married. Not to be outdone, the three who stayed behind to guard the detachment set up a table and played cards in their makeshift gambling and drinking saloon located outside their wooden bunkhouse.

That Friday, however, was not just any other day for the two squads of the NPA operating in the northwestern area of the Kalinga sub-province. For on that particular day, the Red fighters would launch a daylight assault on the roadside military encampment, the first in the guerrilla front of Kalinga. One month of meticulous surveillance by selected barrio activists had confirmed the guards' routine. A last-minute intelligence report had also established the troopers' exact number. All things considered, no day could have been more excellent for the operation.

Darkness still wrapped the mountainsides when the combined force of a squad of the front guerrilla unit (FGU) and another squad of the area's armed propaganda unit started off from an adjacent barrio and hiked towards the detachment. Carefully, they descended the mountain trail, then concealed themselves among the dense santol and guava trees at a position slightly above

and about a hundred meters from the detachment.

At 9 a.m., a team from the 15-man NPA raiding force dashed towards the three soldiers engrossed in gambling. Quickly and accurately, the guerrillas fired at them. Five shots instantly killed two soldiers and fatally wounded the third who had managed to run a few meters away but also slumped dead nearby. The raiders swiftly gathered seven M-16 rifles, 2,500 rounds of ammunition, one radiogram and other military materiel. After moving the soldiers' dead bodies away, the NPAs burned the camp. In less than 15 minutes, the whole operation was over and the guerrillas retreated safely to the next barrio.

Upon hearing the gunshots, the four other soldiers who earlier went to



NPA offensives in Kalinga

the barrio proper did not bother to check the fate of their companions. Fearing an ambush along the way, they instead waited for the regular private passenger jeep that would take them to Barrio Cagalwan where the nearest military camp was located. Because of the soldiers' delayed reporting, a company of army soldiers was dispatched to the scene only at five o'clock in the afternoon.

The raid at the Ableg military detachment capped a series of sniping operations by local militiamen and the NPA guerrilla forces in the northwestern municipalities of Pasil, Balbalan and Uma in the Kalinga sub-province which began late last year.

Last November, three gritty militiamen armed only with World War II vintage Japanese rifles and a homemade shotgun, fired at an approaching military vehicle. The vehicle turned out to be an armored personnel carrier and the militiamen's bullets merely ricocheted against its thick steel armor. But this first disappointing try did not dampen the militiamen's enthusiasm. On Christmas day, they came back and sniped at a more vulnerable target - the detachment of the Philippine Army in Barrio Balatoc near Batong Buhay Mines. They killed four soldiers.

On Dec. 27, a five-man militia team sniped at a military detachment in Barrio Latawan in the municipal district of Uma, killing two soldiers. On the same day, in the adjacent municipality of Pasil, NPA guerrillas fired at a four-truck military convoy near the Batong Buhay Mines. Six soldiers of the 44th Infantry Battalion were killed.

These retributive operations of the NPA were made at the prodding of the people who had become victims of many military abuses and atrocities in northwestern Kalinga.

The tale of military terrorism started in September 1981 when the Batong Buhay Mines in Balbalan resumed full operation. Three army battalions, including an engineering battalion, were assigned to the area to check the growth of the NPA in Balbalan and other nearby municipalities. The reactionary troopers transformed the mine into a virtual garrison and maltreated and abused many workers. Looting and cases of barrio women made pregnant and abandoned by soldiers also rose. At present, the number of troopers deployed in the area has decreased to one company, but this holdover force continues to perpetrate atrocities.

### A sudden twist of events

News of the successful Jan. 13 raid spread like wildfire and was greeted with much rejoicing. Because of the people's seething hatred against the

military, almost every village welcomed the victorious NPA unit with traditional festivities --the butchering of a pig, the beating of gongs, and the staging of tribal dances. In every village they passed, the guerrillas were begged to stay longer for the victory celebrations. But the Red fighters had to move on to avoid being caught by the enemy's massive search operations.

But the festive mood was not to last. A sudden twist of events the following day doused cold water on the people's and guerrillas' jubilation. On Jan. 14, four political cadres of the NPA, traveling unarmed and without their usual knapsacks and ammunition belts, were ambushed by the military in Barrio Putao, Tomiangan, in the municipality of Pasil. The four had just separated from the front guerrilla unit that conducted the Ableg raid and were heading eastward to a district-wide meeting of political cadres. Unknown to them, a unit of the fascist army had telescoped them, held them suspect and decided to waylay them.

The unexpected military ambush abruptly interrupted many victory celebrations scheduled for that day. Tribal elders and peace pact-holders in the area immediately negotiated with the military to recover the bodies of the slain cadres. The military wanted to bring the bodies to their main camp in Tabuk, Kalinga, but the peace pact-holders and tribal elders adamantly refused, invoking tribal customs in order to expedite the burial of the dead NPAs. "We have an inviolable and time-honored tradition of immediately bringing home anyone killed on our soil," argued the tribal leaders. "To neglect this duty is to be a party to the killing and invite bloody reprisals from the victim's tribe."

Unnerved by the wisdom of the tribal elders, the military grudgingly released the bodies, but only after these had been mutilated. With the peace pact-holders taking the initiative in mobilizing, nearly a hundred able-bodied tribesmen from various villages of Pasil took turns in carrying the four slain cadres, all of whom were in their 20s, to their respective home villages: Ka Barra to Barrio Balensiagao, Pas; Ka Ruthie to Barrio Tanglag, Lubuagan; and Ka Rose and Ka Gaspar to upper Tinglayan.

Along the way, more people reinforced each funeral cortege. After a non-stop journey, the bodies of Ka Barra and Ka Ruthie reached their destination that same afternoon. The bodies of Ka Gaspar and Ka Rose arrived in their more distant villages the next day. Memorial meetings were held for all the martyrs.

Ka Gaspar

Ka Gaspar was the head of the

group of cadres which was ambushed. He was one of the first recruits of the NPA in the entire Kalinga and in his village in 1976. Because of his exemplary record as a political cadre, he had earned the respect and affection of his comrades and barriomates.

Ka Gaspar's body arrived in his village at upper Tinglayan in the early morning of Jan. 15. As the men bearing his body cautiously crossed the rickety 60-meter hanging bridge leading to the village, young and old alike lined on top of stone-terraced walls to get a clear view of their returning village-mate. Minutes later, Ka Gaspar's body was laid on the floor of his father's wooden hut.

Blood still dripped from his wounds; part of his head was blown off. His right ear had been sliced off by the soldiers, perhaps to exchange for reward money from their higher-ups or simply to serve as a gory souvenir. His parents cried unabashedly. Grief overcame his barriomates and comrades as the NPA medical officer wiped off the bloodstains and dirt from his body and dressed him up for a decent burial.

On the same day, at sunset, hundreds of villagers (many of whom came from other tribes), militiamen, NPA guerrillas and political cadres, held a memorial meeting for Ka Gaspar. Spokesmen of the people's revolutionary mass organizations, the local organization of the Communist Party of the Philippines as well as the NPA took turns in holding up the fine example of Ka Gaspar as a revolutionary and explaining the meaning of his martyrdom. Ka Juan, a leading cadre in the Kalinga guerrilla front, said, "Ka Gaspar was a no-read, no-write teenage poor peasant who, through sheer interest, diligence and, above all, a firm belief that it would help the revolution, learned how to read, write and speak fluent Filipino in the people's army. His hard-earned skills were to serve him well later as a leading cadre performing district-wide administration duties. His heart's content was to go where the

work and difficulties were heaviest."

As Ka Gaspar's body was lowered in the burial ground dug in front of his father's house, in a last tribute to their fallen comrade, the people's militia and guerrillas raised their rifles. "One, two, ready, fire!" the military leader bellowed. Simultaneously, all the rifles fired in the air in a thunderous roar that seemed to nudge the surrounding mountains to join in salute to the revolutionary martyr.

Night fell and the funeral ceremony was over. But still, the barrio people, some militiamen and Red fighters remained gathered around the fire stoked by burning chips of resinous pinewood. "What a difference a day makes! Yesterday, we were celebrating the news of our victory in Ableg. Today, we are mourning," repeatedly uttered the young men in the group.

At this point, Ka Wasan, an elder in his fifties and a village blacksmith turned full-time district-level cadre, remarked, "Let's look at it this way. Is there any other way to temper ourselves except by going through victories and setbacks? A bolo, when forged, glows in the furnace and darkens on the anvil. So, too, do we glow during victory and become gloomy during setback. But at every turn, between the furnace of victory and the anvil of setback, we, like the bolo, emerge stronger and sharper." Though feelings of loss lingered, everybody in the group understood his words.

Deeper into the night, at another place, selected activists, militiamen and NPA cadres huddled together. Their emotions had calmed; lessons of the defeat had been summed up. They now moved on to the next agenda --planning retributive and arm-gathering operations against the enemy. They had pulled off a successful raid on a detachment in Kalinga just the other day. Nothing would stop them now from staging another -- and many more -- in the days to come.

Alfredo Amuyao

*Kalinga mountain villages: Serving as strongholds of the guerrillas*





# Five blows in a row

Agusan Red fighters score successive raids and ambushes

NPA guerrilla units in Agusan del Norte greeted the start of the year with successive raids on three military detachments and a punitive partisan operation against an abusive town mayor. The offensives - staged close to the heart of the capital city - highlighted the increasing capability of guerrilla forces to launch daring attacks on enemy military outposts and detachments.

The first attack was staged on Jan. 22 in Barangay Dulag, about eight kilometers from Butuan City. The operation, executed by a combined force of front and district guerrilla units, occurred shortly after a team of local city officials conducted an information drive on the Jan. 27 plebiscite in the barangay center.

At around 2 p.m., the Red fighters numbering more than 70, arrived in two logging trucks. Some of them quickly posted themselves on the main road connecting the barangay to the city while the rest proceeded to encircle the 36th Infantry Battalion (IB) army detachment. Several passenger jeepneys were stationed along the main barangay road to serve as a blockade in case of enemy reinforcements.

At the time of the attack, which lasted for 15 minutes, only six of the nine-man regular outpost personnel put up a fight while the rest ran away. When the smoke of the fighting cleared, three soldiers lay dead while the rest were nowhere to be found. A reinforcement from the 36th IB unit stationed at Barangay Tungao, eight kilometers from the battle-scene came hours later. But by the time the soldiers arrived, the guerrillas had already fled, carting away a .30-caliber machine gun, 10 M-16 armalite rifles, one M-23, one grenade launcher, scores of grenades, and several rounds of ammunition.

A week later, on Jan. 28, more raids were pulled off on police and constabulary outposts both located just seven kilometers from the city proper. The daring assaults - the nearest to hit the city - were staged simultaneously and in a well-coordinated fashion.

At around 2 p.m., a combined force of front guerrilla units massed up at Tagulbo River, a few kilometers from the detachment. Numbering more than 200, the guerrillas commandeered several 10-wheeler trucks which were hauling sand and gravel in the area.

Shortly after, aboard 12 trucks, they headed for Barrio Ampayon where the detachments were located. Blocking forces were set up along three national highways connecting



NPA offensives in Agusan del Norte



Integrating with the peasants

the barrio to the three major urban centers of Northeastern Mindanao - Butuan City, Surigao City and Davao City. At the Pepsi bottling compound located along the highway leading to Surigao City, a company-size NPA blocking force of about 20 guerrillas divested the company guards of their .38-caliber pistols.

A 30-man NPA assault team mounted the raid on a police substation located at the heart of the barrio. At the time of the assault, only two policemen were on guard. One was slain, the other surrendered. A simultaneous attack was staged on a PC detachment at the western approach, killing a PC trooper and a CHDF member. Swiftly, the guerrillas withdrew on foot but not after they had divested the barrio captain of several rounds of ammunition and seized over 20 high-powered rifles from the lockers of the military outposts.

On the following day, Jan. 29, an eight-man NPA armed partisan team meted the death penalty on Francisco Herrera, the town mayor of Magallanes. The mayor was a notorious extortionist, union-buster and labor-fixer and had a long list of other crimes against the people. At around 7 p.m., five armed partisans entered the mayor's house. Two others stayed in the get-away pumpboat moored nearby while one posted himself outside the compound gate. Before meting out the penalty, the armed partisans explained to the mayor and his concubine the grounds for the death sentence. After killing the mayor, the NPA members took away his .38-caliber pistol and quickly withdrew to the pumpboat. But the drama did not end here.

After disembarking at nearby Barrio Lumbocan, the NPA unit spotted a military vehicle. Quickly, they girded for an assault. But the five policemen riding the vehicle swiftly ran away, leaving the driver behind. The NPA then ordered the driver to contact the city mayor through the radio set inside the car. Bluffing the mayor that five policemen were being held hostage, the NPA team leader ordered him to produce five armalites.

In panic, the city mayor referred the demand to the city chief of police. The two government officials pleaded for the release of the "hostages" not knowing that the five policemen manning the vehicle were not actually in the hands of the NPA. The mayor and police chief would have become hoarse pleading had not the NPA armed partisans decided to call off the entire bluff. They promptly released the driver, confiscated the radio receiver, and headed back to the guerrilla camp, laughing.

Minda Miranda



Ambush in Pilar, Sorsogon: Wiping out enemy troops

## Training pays off

Bicol NPA pulls off successful ambush after training

Darkness still heavily shrouded the land but an NPA guerrilla unit in Bicol was already briskly traversing the rugged hills in Barrio Naspi, Pilar, Sorsogon. After two hours of continuous hiking, they finally arrived at the ambush site. It was a winding road sandwiched by two hills, a perfect site for mounting a surprise attack.

For several hours, the guerrillas waited patiently for the enemy, trying not to mind mosquito bites and the early morning chill. At around 10 a.m., the sound of a fast-approaching vehicle arrested their attention. The enemy vehicle had finally arrived. Quickly, the Red fighters trained their guns at the target. And as the vehicle entered the ambush dragnet a volley of gunfire rained upon them.

The military jeep zigzagged before finally coming to a full stop. The soldiers inside — caught in total surprise — failed to return fire. Some jumped off from the jeep, wounded. Others were killed instantly.

When the smoke of the gunfire had cleared, five soldiers lay dead. Swiftly, the guerrillas moved out from their firing positions and cleaned the area, collecting six M-16 rifles, one M-203, one .45-caliber pistol and 1,171 rounds of ammunition.

But before they could finish the cleaning operation, a staccato of gunfire was heard from approaching vehicles, signalling the arrival of enemy reinforcement forces. But the guerrillas were unfazed. They had been well-prepared for this contingency. The night before, they had carefully studied the most likely approach not only of the enemy target but of the reinforcement forces as well.

Displaying complete composure, they promptly girded for another ambush, taking the best firing positions against the reinforcement forces, as well.

"Boom!" A grenade hurled by the Red fighters exploded, creating pandemonium within the ranks of the military. Stricken with fear and panic, some of them dove to the ground; others turned back and ran. In a matter of minutes, the much bigger and better-armed enemy forces had deserted the area.

Promptly, the NPA fighters headed back to the camp. But on their way, they spotted a wounded soldier. His arms were raised in surrender. He was 1st Lt. Leopoldo Barroso. As in previous cases of enemy surrenderees, the wounded military official was given medical treatment and a brief lecture on the purposes and goals of the revolution and the NPA's lenient policy on enemy surrenderees. Shortly after, he was released unharmed.

The successful offensive — staged

last Dec. 6 — was largely the result of the NPA unit's systematic planning and coordination, reported *Silyab*, the revolutionary mass newspaper in Bicol. The operation, which took only 15 minutes to execute, illustrated the increasing mastery of NPA forces in Bicol of the principles and tactics of guerrilla warfare, especially in wiping out isolated and scattered enemy forces. Much of this development may also be attributed to the stepped-up military training undertaken by NPA units in the region.

Highlighting this drive was the holding of the First Regional Military Conference from July 30 to Aug. 8, 1983. Attended by leading NPA cadres from various parts of the Bicol region, it was held to upgrade the NPA's military capability to enable it to cope with the growing demands of an advancing people's war. The conference underscored the need for a vigorous military training as an essential component in the entry of the people's war into the advanced substage of the strategic defensive.

Since then, a series of NPA training courses has been launched in the region, ranging from squad to company exercises, as part of the overall thrust to accelerate the momentum of guerrilla war. Guerrilla war exercises, such as ambushes, encirclements, counter-encirclements and maneuvers, have not only become more frequent but also more systematic. To implement the present thrust as stressed in the regional military conference, all Red fighters must undergo the NPA's Basic Course in Political and Military Training.

No doubt, the intensification of guerrilla training has yielded significant results as borne out by the increasing victories scored in the field of actual combat by the revolutionary army against the bigger and better-armed fascist troops. In the months ahead, as the training courses pick up more steam, the Bicol region promises to be another major flashpoint in the NPA's nationwide drive to intensify and accelerate the momentum of guerrilla war.

Marco Bonifacio

Military training camp: Upgrading the NPA's fighting skills



# Hitting the enemy

NPA scores victories in successive offensives in Panay

The NPA calls it an offensive decoy. And this is what happened in Barrio San Juan, Culasi, Antique last Nov. 19.

At about six o' clock in the morning of this day, an NPA team meted out the death penalty on Ever Lumogdang, a notorious military informer and unrepentant barrio councilor who had a long list of crimes against the people. Lumogdang was the decoy and his killing turned out to be only a prelude to a bigger offensive of the NPA.

Days before, knowing that the military would send soldiers to claim the corpse of the informer, the guerrillas had meticulously worked out an ambush plan. Sure enough, a convoy of three jeeploads of enemy troopers soon entered the barrio of San Juan that morning. As the first military jeep rolled up straight into the ambush dragnet at 10:15 a.m., a hail of gunfire struck it from the banana groves above the road. The jeep reeled and zig-zagged, causing its passengers Maj. Vicente Dumpit, Antique PC provincial commander, and Culasi Mayor Alpas to jump out and scamper towards the newly harrowed ricefields.

In a while, a military truck trundled up the road, carrying fresh troops to reinforce their embattled companions. Hardly had the truckload of 315th PC Coy and CHDF members reached the ambush site, when a platoon of Red fighters sprayed them with bullets. In panic, the enemy troops dove into the muddy rice paddies, firing their rifles without any direction.

In the ensuing 45-minute gunbattle, six military men were killed and four others were wounded. The guerrillas confiscated two M-16 rifles, one carbine, one .45-caliber pistol, one .38 revolver and assorted ammunition. The NPA platoon then swiftly retreated, leaving the other soldiers wallowing in the mud and hiding in the bamboo thickets.

Six other NPA military operations were reported in Panay in November and October last year by *Daba-Daba*, revolutionary mass newspaper in that island in the Western Visayas. The series of NPA attacks attest to the Panay guerrillas' improved fighting capacity and firmer grasp of the tactical maneuvers necessary in guerrilla warfare. In most of the operations, the NPA maintained the initiative, making good use of the element of surprise as well as diversionary tactics.

On Nov. 30, at about 12:45 high noon, Red fighters ambushed a jeep carrying seven soldiers of the 322nd PC Coy on the Iloilo-Capiz highway in

Barrio Patong-patong, Janiway, Iloilo. The military vehicle was on its way to the PC patrol base in Barrio Jibolo in the same town when the NPAs waylaid it. Killed were two PC soldiers and one CHDF member while three others were wounded. Two civilians—a road construction worker and a driver—were shot dead by a fleeing PC sergeant.

A month before, the NPA sprung an ambush in Tapaz, Capiz, belying the boast of military authorities that they had "cleaned up the town of Tapaz of NPA guerrillas." In the morning of Oct. 29, an NPA squad surprised 16 troopers belonging to the Alpha Coy,

killed by an NPA sniping team in Barrio Layog, Maasin, Iloilo. In another operation, the head of a patrol team of the 7th IB PA was killed in Bagunaynay, Tubungan, Iloilo when NPA snipers attacked their detachment. The guerrillas collected the firearms abandoned by the fleeing soldiers.

In cases when the NPA was put on the defensive, the guerrillas ably showed their capacity to seize the initiative and to make an organized withdrawal. In the first week of October, a combined army-police-CHDF force of over 30 men encircled a hut in Bog-ot, Maasin, Iloilo where an NPA unit was staying. The



Mounting guerrilla victories: NPA offensives in the island of Panay

4th IB PA, including two CHDF men. Maintaining the initiative in the 20-minute firefight, the guerrillas killed four soldiers and one CHDF and wounded two others. Upon orders of distressed military authorities, radio stations kept mum over the military defeat.

In the first week of October, an NPA unit ambushed some soldiers of the 7th IB PA in Leon, Iloilo. An undetermined number of troopers died in the clash but the military as is their usual practice hid the list of casualties.

Also in early October, a CHDF member known for his brutality was

enemy troopers were only a few meters away when NPA forces in neighboring huts came to the assistance of their embattled comrades and peppered the soldiers with bullets. Ten troopers died in the firefight while three revolutionaries were killed on the side of the NPA.

As the armed resistance heats up in Panay, the regime's military forces will increasingly find itself more heavily entangled with the guerrillas in deadlier battles. The regime's troops are up against an "enemy" which is rapidly gaining greater skill and expertise in the continuous practice of guerrilla warfare. **Leon Fortaleza**

# Caring for the people

An eyewitness account of surgery performed by the NPA in a barrio

*Following some years of an intensive medical training program in the countryside, the New People's Army has produced skilled and competent paramedics from among the masses. The NPA medical training program is an important component of the task to regularize the guerrilla army and accelerate guerrilla war. This is an eyewitness account of LIB contributor Lualhati Gregorio who recently visited a guerrilla front in the countryside.*

It was during an exposure trip in Eastern Mindanao — in the summer month of April last year — that I met Ka Erning. A young man in his 20s, Ka Erning was a tailor before he joined the New People's Army. But there was something else about him that was special: along with some other men and women of his age, he is a member of the NPA medical team "doctors" who learned their skills not from expensive medical schools but through actual medical practice under comrades who had formal schooling in medicine.

Ka Erning's skills as a potential paramedic was gleaned by his comrades who noticed the unusual dexterity of his fingers and the steadiness of his hands while sewing pants and jackets for the guerrillas. Acting on a hunch, on the possibility that the youth could carry out a more demanding task, they asked him if he wanted to take up training as a medical worker specializing in surgery. Surgery? Not just ordinary medical work but surgery! The thought captured his imagination and his dread. But, in the end, with enough cajoling from his friends, he decided to try it out. Pretty soon, Ka Erning the tailor was stitching up bullet wounds as expertly as pants and jackets. They were all minor operations, of course, but the help they gave to wounded Red fighters brought more than just relief. Sometimes, they saved lives.

I had the chance to see Ka Erning perform one of his operations when we heard about a poor peasant who was badly in need of medical help. The barrio where the peasant lived was about two-and-a-half kilometers from the place where we camped so



Barefoot doctors at work: NPA medics operating on scrotum of patient (inset)

it was no trouble putting the peasant Ka Dinoy in the medical team's long list of patients.

When we visited Ka Dinoy, we learned that he was suffering from an enlarged scrotum. He and his relatives offered their own explanations for Ka Dinoy's ailment but it was clear that he needed help immediately. When Ka Erning looked at his patient's enlarged scrotum, it was as big as a pomelo. There was no pain, Dinoy told his doctors but having endured his condition for the past 19 years, he could no longer think of postponing medical treatment since he could no longer walk or work.

The peasant said he had hoped to be operated on in the town hospital. But when he was told that he would be needing P10,000 for his operation and other hospitalization expenses, he was stunned. He computed the additional costs he would incur for the board and lodging of his wife who would be looking after him while he recuperated. He shook his head. He could not afford it. Why, he didn't even have P1,000.

So it was with pure joy when Ka Dinoy heard about an NPA medical team that happened to be in his vicinity and was ready to give medical treatment at no cost. The day before the medical operation, Ka Erning's companions — Ka Lisa, a cheerful, young woman, and three other medical workers — prepared the materials needed for the operation. Ka Dinoy, in the meantime, reinforced his kitchen table which would be used as the operating table. He added supporting beams to make sure it would carry the patient's weight and would not wobble or collapse.

The peasant family's best mosquito net was washed and hung over the "operating table" to keep out flies and other insects. Banana leaves were spread under the table to catch the bloodied gauze and cotton swabs.

By early morning of the day of the operation, Ka Dinoy took a bath and was laid down carefully on the table. Amid reassurances from the NPA medical team, he was put on dextrose

and injected with local anaesthesia. To make sure the patient felt no pain during the operation, acupuncture needles were inserted on him to temporarily deaden his nerves.

As the medical team stood around Ka Dinoy, the mosquito net was drawn down around them. Ka Erning acted as "chief surgeon" while Ka Lisa assisted him. Ka Tino, another medical worker, served as surgical nurse and handed to them the surgical instruments. The other medical workers stood around outside the net and, from time to time, Ka Erning would look up at them and point to certain parts of the human body.

A long incision was made on the outer skin of the scrotum, then on the second and third layers until the sac itself was exposed. A small cut was made on the sac which contained fluid. The fluid was suctioned out and gathered in a plastic oil container. When the full amount was dredged, the liquid came up to about two cups. The sac was then turned inside out, to make sure no fluid remained trapped inside. The incisions were closed, again, layer by layer.

Throughout the operation, Ka Erning and his co-workers would reassure Ka Dinoy. Once, when the patient complained that the operation was getting too painful, Ka Lisa gave him another injection of anaesthesia.

Soon, the operation was over. The medical team was served chicken with broth, a special meal cooked by the peasant's family for the visitors. Ka Dinoy's wife, Ka Aring, their children and grandchildren who spoke little during the operation broke into smiles.

Relieved over Ka Dinoy's operation, his family could now talk about other things with the NPA. Of high land rents and of meager harvests. Of oppression and violence inflicted on them. They also wondered and became hopeful of possibilities. Of how an unschooled youth could perform surgery and of how much an army could care for the well-being of the people.

Lualhati Gregorio

# Auxiliary corps of the revolution

Urban support groups buttress people's war

Beth is a former student who travels often to guerrilla zones in the countryside. With a knapsack on her back and with peasant activists as her guides, she crosses mountain forests and streams to bring letters and supplies to Red fighters and other comrades. After a few trips, she has learned to keep her balance on narrow and steep mountain trails and to jump nimbly from rock to rock across gurgling streams.

Lenny is a waitress in a small restaurant. Working irregular hours, she finds time to serve as a courier like Beth, helping to maintain the lines of communication between the city and the countryside. She also receives and transmits coded messages over the restaurant's telephone during particular days.

Aling Pale works as a seamstress in a dress shop. She sews knapsacks, jackets, pants and other apparel for the guerrillas. Through her tireless efforts, she has organized seamstresses into a sewing circle supportive of the New People's Army. At present, her group is excitedly preparing to make complete sets of battle apparel for the NPA.



Sewing battle apparel for the NPA

Tom and Ramon are employees in private firms. Tom secretly reproduces underground publications and documents in his office's xerox machine. Ramon, on the other hand, gathers paper, stencils, folders, ballpens and other office supplies for his friends in the movement.

The brothers Asyong and Pempoy are jeepney drivers. Following prearranged schedules, they haul and transport clothes, food, medical and military supplies to "drop posts" in barrios located within guerrilla zones. They are currently widening their contacts among jeepney drivers to form them into an underground group.

All of them - Beth, Lenny, Aling Pale, Tom, Ramon, Asyong and Pempoy - are members of support groups of the revolutionary movement in Bicol. All of them hail too from that region. However, they now reside in Metro Manila where many of them had migrated in search of work and a more promising life. Some were already being tapped by the revolutionary mass movement in Bicol before they left for the bright, beckoning lights of the metropolis. Aling Pale, for instance, had belonged to a woman's organization in an NPA-controlled barrio.

Other regions of the country boast of similar support groups bolstering revolutionary activities and force in their territories. These groups are also based in Metro Manila, the nerve center of the country. Their membership is also as broad and varied, springing from a rich reservoir in schools, factories, urban poor communities, church organizations, hospitals and medical institutions, government and private offices.

For instance, for the Cagayan Valley support group, there is Dr. Mike who personally attends to wounded Red fighters, not asking for a single centavo. For Central Luzon, there is Teresa, a nurse in a medical laboratory who smuggles out vitamins, antibiotics and other medicines. For the Mountain Provinces, there is Tony, a student who visits the hospital after classes to care for sick and wounded comrades from his region; there is also a nun fondly called "Sister Precious" whose welfare home shelters expecting mothers and nurses newborn babies.

These, of course, are not their real names, but they are real people. Though all of them live in Metro Manila, majority maintain close kinship ties and loyally identify with their home regions. Some have relatives and friends in the NPA. Some come from guerrilla-controlled or -influenced barrios in the countryside. Others were contacted by province-mates active in support groups and other revolutionary organizations. To start with, many of them already had a basic sympathy for the revolution even as their strong sense of regionalism or personal friendship with some comrades initially facilitated organizational work among them. As their political consciousness developed in the course of their revolutionary activity, their "holistic" commitment to the national democratic cause deepened.

Support groups, however, also openly welcome people who hail from other



Tending a bedridden Red fighter

regions to buttress their ranks. Similarly, those who can only give a part of their time to support groups because of work, study or family pressures are equally welcomed. But usually, in response to the growing demands of the revolutionary struggle, it is these comrades themselves who decide to devote their full time to the movement.

"No work is too insignificant and no contribution is too small so long as these help advance the revolutionary cause," said Rosella, the head of a Bicol support group in an interview with **LIBERATION**. "If you add all of these up together, you come up with one big contribution to the struggle." Take all the little tasks that go into the production and relay of clothing, knapsacks, tents and other paraphernalia for the NPA, Rosella noted.

"Students solicit the clothing material and the big plastic sheets. Aling Pale and her group sew these up into serviceable gear. Then, two other students bring these to a drop house where they are sorted out and packed. Afterwards, a car arrives to take these to waiting comrades in the countryside," Rosella explained. "Everyone plays an important and indispensable part in this chain of logistical support for armed struggle."

## Support and liaison work

Two main tasks are necessary in building up a network of material, technical, personnel and political support for the armed revolution and the underground, Rosella said. First is providing technical services like liaison. Second is the formation of a mass base through the setting up of legal and underground groups. Though the first task is immediate, the second is basic in tapping the inexhaustible source of people and supplies that will further advance the revolutionary war effort.

Both tasks concretize and advance the the fourth point in the NDF Ten-Point

Program which was issued in April 1973: Gather all possible political and material support for the armed revolution and the underground against the US-Marcos dictatorship. With the ever-increasing demands of the people's war, the NDF has further urged underground and legal support groups to intensify their efforts and mobilize more allies and friends to give bigger contributions to the national democratic cause.

Rosella ticked off five components of the first task: 1) linking up underground regional organizations with national organizations and other groups based in Metro Manila; 2) organizing the lines and network of communications between the region or province and the national urban center; 3) generating supplies, funds and houses for meeting places, for stockpiling materials and as communication posts; 4) caring for sick and wounded Red fighters, cadres and mass activists who cannot be treated in the province by NPA medics or sympathetic doctors due to lack of medical expertise or equipment or for security reasons; and 5) arranging trips to and from the countryside.

An important component of the second task -- building up a mass base for support work -- involves projecting and disseminating the political and economic issues fulminating in the region.

Thus, support groups hold support activities for major mass campaigns held in their region, doing their best to generate the widest attention and support possible for the struggle of their provincemates.

Support groups, however, also participate in mass campaigns launched in Metro Manila itself. Students belonging to support groups, for instance, join mass actions involving national or sectoral issues like multi-sectoral rallies condemning the US-Marcos dictatorship or student pickets protesting unjust tuition fee hikes. In this way, their political experiences are enriched, their understanding of issues is broadened and they are tempered in other forms of struggle. This also helps them to overcome what could develop into a parochial or purely regional outlook and to be politically active the whole year round, since regional mass campaigns usually last for a definite period only.

Another function of support groups is to serve as news correspondents and a medium for the dissemination of national underground publications like *LIB* and *Ang Bayan*, the *CIP* paper. The highly mobile nature of their work -- constantly traveling to and from the countryside -- make the support groups valuable channels for transmitting and disseminating news, especially about NPA military offensives which are often distorted



Silkscreening posters for mass campaigns

or censored in the government-controlled press. At present, all regional support groups in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao perform this vital function for revolutionary propaganda.

#### Organizational and educational work

Minda, a member of the Cagayan Valley support group, added that about three to five people usually compose an underground support group. But the membership of a legal mass organization which does support work could number much more, depending on its ability to influence and draw in many people.

Support groups tap anyone so long as he is willing to help in various ways. Even the regime's military forces have been "drafted" into the revolutionary war effort. Through tireless explanation, not a few activists have successfully persuaded their relatives in the military not to attack the NPA during combat operations. Minda related the case of a PC soldier in Northern Luzon who has relatives in the NPA and in the underground movement. "*Kung may banatan, di siya bumabanat.*" Minda said. "When his co-soldiers come near him, he simply fires his rifle in the air." Later, he passes on his unused M-16 bullets to an underground contact. "He would tell us, '*Di bale ako ang maaksidente, b'wag lang sila (NPA).*'"

The tendency of provincemates to gravitate in small communities in Metro Manila makes organizational work easier among them. Inngo, who helps in the support groups of the Ilocos and Montanosa region, said this is especially true in the case of national minorities from the Cordillera mountains who band together to maintain their tribal identity. Among the Igorot students in particular, organizational work gains added significance.

"Like other students, the Igorot youth are open and receptive to revolutionary ideas. They are also politically keen and articulate," said Inngo. "Their participation in the movement

will increase the crop of cadres among the Igorot intelligentsia who play a key role in speeding up the integration of national minorities into the mainstream of the national revolutionary struggle." Inngo stressed that support groups for the Montanosa struggle must therefore pay close attention to the national minority youth here in Manila and rapidly recruit and develop them. Then, these students must be encouraged to return to their villages and do mass work among their tribespeople or join the NPA.

To raise the political level of activists and consolidate the support group itself, the members regularly conduct political education comprised of the general mass course on national democracy, a regional situationer which includes the progress of the armed struggle and revolutionary mass movement in the region, and constant updates on regional and national events and issues. Trips to guerrilla fronts are also organized to expose activists to the actual situation and struggle of NPA guerrillas and the peasant masses in the countryside. In the case of individual contacts, they are regularly informed of the latest political developments and supplied underground publications like *LIBERATION* and the revolutionary mass newspaper of the region.

#### Providing medical care

It is not a one-way relationship, however, between city-based support groups and countryside comrades, with the former merely servicing the needs of the latter. It is in fact a reciprocal relationship of mutual benefit. This is especially true with those assigned to tend Red fighters and commanders wounded in battle. While nursing the guerrillas back to health in hospitals or private homes, there are many occasions for mutual sharing, especially as regards NPA work. In this way, support group members broaden their understanding of the revolutionary armed



Transporting a wounded guerrilla



Packing contributions for the NPA struggle.

"*Pero di madaling mag-alaga ng mga sugotang gerilya.*" Inggo said. He noted that the volunteer "nurses" need to constantly buoy up the morale of the patient. "Sometimes, the fighter's wounds are not only physical but psychological too. For those of peasant background, this could in fact be their first time in Manila. And the first time too that they were cut off from the company of their comrades and family. Suddenly, everything to them seems alien and threatening. Oftentimes, too, they are restless to return," Inggo said.

It is then the yeoman task of the "bantay" (attendants) to lift the depressed spirits of their patient and give them the utmost understanding and best personal care. Usually, to ensure round-the-clock care and protection, support group members take turns in guarding their patient. Should security problems arise, the group immediately whisks out the guerrilla to a safe place.

The release of the guerrilla from the hospital, however, does not mark the end of the support group's work. It continues to arrange regular check-ups with the doctor and sees to it that the patient keeps to his medical regimen. Once he is fully recuperated and if he is not "hot," he is given a guided tour around the city. "This is one way of returning the hospitality shown us by the NPA and the masses during our trips there," remarked Inggo.

For national minorities who have never been to Manila, their stay here could be quite a culture shock. It then becomes the duty of the support group to teach them about city life. Inggo humorously recalled the experience of an Ifugao woman courier for the NPA who was recuperating in Manila. "In her village, she had been used to walking around barefooted as was the practice there. But when she arrived in Manila, comrades told her she had to learn to wear

slippers because it was customary to do so in the city. So she wore slippers in the house where she was billeted, but would shake these off when she walked in the garden."

One day, Inggo narrated, a support group member brought her to Quiapo. Upon stepping down from the taxi, she left her slippers there and happily walked barefooted in the plaza. "She thought she had to wear slippers only in the house but not outside," Inggo said. "The support group member had to rush her to nearby Carriedo to buy a new pair of slippers."

#### The ultimate support

There are times when the bravery of wounded Red fighters can so inspire support group members that they decide to give the ultimate support to the revolution — joining the NPA themselves. One such person was Mara, a teacher in a support group for Central Luzon. One of her patients was an old guerrilla who had been seriously wound-

ed in an ambush by enemy soldiers. He was shot close to the heart but managed to walk for 45 minutes to seek help. He was brought to Manila and to Mara's care.

The guerrilla inspired her with stories about the NPA and the peasant masses' warm and vigorous support. When the feisty guerrilla left for home, Mara went on an exposure trip to a guerrilla front in Central Luzon to experience firsthand the conditions and struggles of the NPA. Today, Mara is an NPA member and a fulltime organizer in the underground peasant movement in the area where she had her exposure.

It has taken time for parents of fulltimers in the support groups to accept their children's decision — as with the families of other activists in other lines of work in the movement. Rosella said her mother, to convince her to change her mind, would tell her, "*Sila na lang, b'wag na ikaw.*" "But I would answer her, '*Paano kung labat ng nanay ganito ang kaisipan.*'" After a year of convincing her and showing that she was fully intent on continuing her work, Rosella said her family has come to respect her decision.

The difficult and dangerous conditions of support and liaison work have tempered many activists. Said Beth of the Bicol support group, "It has taught me to adjust to guerrilla conditions, to walk for long miles, to eat whatever food is available, to bathe fully clothed in streams and to make do without toilet facilities." On the whole, support and liaison work as a distinct form of revolutionary work, has taught activists patience, resourcefulness, creativity and flexibility. The sensitive nature of their work has also taught them prudence and alertness in guarding the security of their collective and the entire underground movement at all times.

Many opportunities for integration with the peasant masses have also helped them to strengthen their commitment. "*Kabit di ka kilala ng masa, mainit ang pagtanggap nila sa iyo.*" Beth noted. "*Pag naging malapit ka na sa kanila, babanapin ka nila kung wala ka. At tuwing aalis ka, bibigyan ka nila ng baon.*"

Do support group members find meaning in their work? "Before, during my schooldays, I had been looking for direction in my life," answered Beth. "I found it here in the movement." Added Minda, "*Sa akin, basta makakatulong, doon ako masaya.*" After the interview, both bade farewell and picked up their bags and copies of **LIBERATION**, ready and eager to resume work and do their share for the revolution.

Leon Fortaleza

## HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR OWN SUPPORT GROUP

1. Contact your friends, former classmates, provincemates, relatives and convince them to help in the struggle against the dictatorship.
2. Invite them to a merienda in your house where all of you can discuss the various ways of advancing the anti-dictatorship struggle.
3. Organize those who attended the meeting into a group.
4. List the tasks your group can do for the movement. Ask each one what he or she can personally contribute or do.
5. Call up those who failed to come to the first meeting and invite them to attend the second one. If they are busy but are willing to help, approach them individually for their support.
6. Plan out a program of action based on the courses of action your group plans to take. For instance, solicitation campaigns, letter-writing to friends abroad, contacting volunteers to house of nurse wounded Red fighters.
7. Regularly assess your group's work and define further how methods of work can be improved and resources expanded.
8. Pay attention to conducting sharing sessions where guerrillas, cadres or activists under your care can share their revolutionary experiences and the conditions of the people in the area they are assigned to.

With creativity, daring and fortitude, you can build up your support group into a pillar for the revolutionary war effort.

# SPARKS

## BAYAN KO



### BAYAN KO IS OUT

*Bayan Ko*, an underground revolutionary newspaper of businessmen and professionals, came out with its maiden issue last January. Analyzing and commenting on the economic developments following the Aquino assassination, the newspaper called for a boycott of the Batasan Pambansa election and the overthrow of the US-Marcos dictatorship.

The NDF committee for businessmen which published the paper said *Bayan Ko* will contain economic or financial analyses of trends affecting businessmen and professionals in general. It will also issue economic forecasts, discuss business and political issues and international developments as well as publish news of the armed struggle raging in the countryside.

### CPP PAYS TRIBUTE TO OLALIA

The Communist Party of the Philippines' Trade Union Commission paid tribute recently to Felixberto Olalia, chairman of the Kilusang Mayo Uno, who died last Dec. 4 after undergoing eight months of imprisonment in the hands of the fascist regime.

Citing the labor leader's contributions to the revolutionary movement, the CPP said Olalia went beyond fighting for the workers' economic interests alone. He also fought for their interests in society as a whole and believed these could be won only when US imperialism and its local allies are defeated and national democracy achieved.

The Party also noted that "Ka Bert" proved himself a true labor leader when he fought side by side not only with the industrial workers in the cities but also with agricultural workers and farmers in the countryside. The formation of the Malayang Samahang Magsasaka (MASAKA), with a membership of 65,000 farmers in Central Luzon and the Southern Tagalog region, was an offshoot of Olalia's commitment to agricultural workers.

Above all, the labor leader worked closely with revolutionary organizations in the belief that freedom and prosperity of the workers could be attained only by the armed seizure of power from its present wielders. Describing Olalia's commitment to the revolutionary struggle, the CPP organization said, "*Kabit nitong umiral ang pagbabaring militar, makailang ulit na walang-takot na ibinando ni Ka Bert sa madla ang kabalagaban ng tuluy-tuloy na pakikibaka na di lamang natata. sa ligal na pamamaraan. Hindi rin ilang beses niyang binangay sa mga malalaking pagtitipon, bagamat bindi pa direkta, ang kawastuban ng armadong pakikibakang isinusulong ng Bagong Hukbong Bayan.*"

### KMU HOLDS 2ND CONGRESS

The nationalist labor alliance, Kilusang Mayo Uno, held last Feb. 25-26 its second congress and called on its members to work harder for the attainment of workers' rights. The congress, which had for its theme, "Stronger Unity Towards a More Militant Struggle for Our Economic and Democratic Demands," was attended by 500 labor representatives from all over the country.

The KMU set for its main tasks in 1984 the advancement of the strike movement to push further the workers' demands

for higher wages and the restoration of the right to strike. The alliance also vowed to support and participate in other sectors' struggles for justice, freedom and democracy and to unite with all organizations, foreign and local, that are fighting for the people's demands.

Earlier, the KMU staged a rally last Feb. 5 at the Liwasang Bonifacio to denounce mass unemployment and poverty of the people. Attended by about 10,000 workers, the rally was preceded by marches from five different points in Metro Manila. Speakers in that mass action exposed the role of US imperialism in the country's worsening economic crisis and demanded an end to foreign control over the economy.

### SUGAR WORKERS, PLANTERS HOLD RALLY

About 10,000 sugar workers and planters from Negros and Panay islands staged a rally for the first time in Bacolod City to demand an end to the government's monopoly over the sugar industry.

The sugar workers demanded the dismantling of the National Sugar Trading Corp. (NASUTRA) and the Philippine Sugar Commission (PHILSUCOM), two government agencies which control the sale of sugar locally and internationally.

Producers, on the other hand, complained that they do not receive fair prices for their products. "A trading cooperative, owned and managed by the sugar workers themselves, must be set up instead," said Prudencio Jalandoni, president of the Philippine Agricultural Federation of Labor Unions (PAFLU).

### NUSP PICKETS MECS

About 800 members of the National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP) picketed the Ministry of Education and Sports (MECS) last Feb. 3 to assail the rise of tuition fees in many schools.

The NUSP, which was established before martial law and was revived this year, also denounced the present educational system as being suppressive, colonial and commercialized. At the same time, the students expressed their support for the struggle of the teachers for just wages and the right to unionize.

### HEALTH WORKERS SIGN PETITION

The newly-formed Alliance of Health Workers, composed of health workers from private and government-owned hospitals, signed early this month a petition demanding higher wages and better working conditions. They also demanded that the government respect the health workers' right to organize for collective bargaining purposes. The petition likewise called for an increase in the health budget for the improvement of the delivery of health services to the people.

### URBAN POOR PROTEST POVERTY

The Alyansa ng Maralita (ALMA) and Ugnayan ng mga Samahan ng Mamamayan ng Tondo Foreshore, Navotas, Malabon at Dagat-dagatan (UGNAYAN), an organization of the urban poor, held a congress last Feb. 26 demanding the following: employment to the unemployed, raising of workers' salaries to just levels, lowering of prices of commodities, implementation of a genuine mass housing program, a stop to demolitions, sufficient social services to the people and repeal of all laws which are against the interests of the workers.

In mid-February, the urban poor sector staged a picket in front of the National Housing Authority to protest the demolition drive of the government.



## VIEWPOINT

# Our allies and the armed resistance

Four practical courses of action for allies to advance revolutionary armed struggle



*"The main task of armed resistance is to annihilate and defeat armed enemy units."*

*In this article, noted Marxist writer, Patnubay K. Liwanag, explores the many and different ways by which NDF allies can help advance the revolutionary armed struggle in the country. This article is intended as a discussion paper for the benefit of allies who are interested in carrying out armed struggle, preparing for it or simply exploring it.*

The downfall of the Marcos dictatorship would be accelerated and completed within a relatively short period of time if our allies who belong to the middle strata and certain sections of the upper classes would do what they can to advance the armed resistance.

At a certain point in the growth of the armed resistance, the US would be induced to junk the fascist puppet clique as a total failure. Otherwise, as the US would calculate, the armed resistance of all patriotic and progressive forces would advance faster not only to end the fascist regime but also US domination of the Philippines.

At whatever pace our allies respond to our call to increase their share in the armed resistance, the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army are steadily developing all forms of struggle, especially armed struggle, all over the country.

In the wake of the assassination of Aquino by the Marcos regime, a great mass movement which is peaceful but militant has come to the surface. While this movement is important and necessary, it cannot by itself remove the Marcos clique from power. It is in constant danger of being crushed by the enemy through brute force.

The key to the ascendance and prolongation of the Marcos fascist dictatorship is the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). Conversely, the key to the overthrow of this dictatorship and the reestablishment of democracy at a higher level than ever before is armed resistance. The US will never allow Marcos to lose control of the AFP until the armed resistance reaches a certain level that indubitably proves his failure as a puppet.

It is wishful thinking to hope that the Marcos clique will give up its power voluntarily through electoral exerci-

ses or as a result of peaceful mass actions. These mass actions are useful and indispensable in arousing, organizing and mobilizing the people. But armed resistance must be resolutely and systematically developed.

The lesson correctly drawn from the Aquino assassination is that the enemy does not hesitate to perpetrate the most brazen acts of terror in order to destroy anyone that he deems a serious threat to his power. The Aquino assassination marks a new level in the desperation of the fascist regime and the escalation of its violence against the opposition and the people.

As the political and economic crisis of the ruling system worsens, the regime unleashes more and more counter-revolutionary violence against the people. The fascists are emboldened in their barbaric acts, especially in the countryside, because of US support for the "modernization" (re-equipment) of the AFP and Oplan Katatagan as a result of the secret talks between the Marcos-Ver panel and the US-Department of Defense-CIA panel in 1982.

The evil that is tyranny must be extirpated. Allowed to persist, it spells the daily violence of exploitation and oppression. A well-prepared and well-implemented armed resistance will put an end to it. Submission to tyranny is acceptance of violence against the people.

Tyrannicide is justified. This is upheld by all major ideologies in the country: Christian, Islamic, liberal democratic and Marxist. Those who advocate acquiescence or purely peaceful methods in the face of tyranny, if they are not among the chosen few who benefit from it, are either wittingly or unwittingly surrendering to it in cowardice.

The moral and practical necessity of armed resistance against tyranny must be patiently explained to our allies. With due respect to their class interests and tendencies at every given time, we must propose to them practical measures on how they can contribute their share in the people's armed resistance.

In this regard, we propose to them four practical courses of action:

1. Support or join the New People's Army;
2. Form their own self-defense organizations;
3. Go into active armed struggle; and
4. Encourage a democratic movement in the AFP.

#### Support or join the NPA

The NPA is a people's army. It includes Communists and non-Communists. They are workers, peasants and members of the middle class. Moreover, the NPA is recognized as the main armed organization of the National Democratic Front, which is the consultative or confederal organization of the broad united front of all democratic forces.

Our allies can therefore wisely and whole-heartedly support or join the NPA. There is no hindrance whatsoever to extending various forms of support to it. Joining it, however, involves certain individual qualifications and responsibilities.

Support may be made directly to NPA units or through support groups or NPA representatives. It means collecting materials, services and funds for the NPA; providing facilities for the reproduction and distribution of revolutionary propaganda; counter-surveilling the enemy and giving information to the NPA; and encouraging persons with business or landed interests in NPA-controlled areas to negotiate and pay their taxes (a mere pittance compared to taxes paid to the fascist regime) to the people's government.

The most important materials and services needed by the NPA are the following: arms and ammunitions; communication equipment; transport equipment and services; medicine, medical equipment and services; propaganda equipment; clothes and food.

The acquisition of arms and ammunition can be done through donation, purchase and confiscation from the enemy. The extensive contacts, facilities and other means of our allies can be very helpful in the acquisition and delivery of military material to the NPA from local and foreign sources.

Counter-surveillance of enemy personnel, facilities and actions are for immediate and long-term purposes. That of enemy personnel is for the purpose of enlightening, disarming or punishing them. That of facilities is for the purpose of confiscating weapons and other related actions. That of actions is for the purpose of countering them.

Any ally who is determined and qualified to join the NPA may do so and be attached to a specific field unit of the NPA. It is fine if he is prepared ideologically, politically and organizationally by responsible representatives of the NPA.

The NPA may also qualify as its members individuals who belong to support groups even as they maintain their legal occupations. Their distinction from other members of civilian support groups is their pledge to perform military duty when necessary.

#### Form self-defense organizations

Self-defense organizations are armed organizations that do not actively seek combat with the enemy for reasons such as that they would use their weapons in self-defense only when they are attacked; or that they would go into combat only after they accumulate a certain level of armed strength or when they feel it would be effective to do so.

This type of armed organizations is very unsuitable to quite a number of allies who think that they cannot detach themselves from their legal occupations. The concept of self-defense is exceedingly acceptable to them.

Our allies may form self-defense organizations of varying sizes and strength and under whatever name. These may be completely independent of the NPA but cooperating with it bilaterally and/or within the NDF framework.

The NPA recognizes the right of our allies to form self-defense organizations, especially if these are intended as reserve armed strength against the common enemy. Liaison with them is necessary not only to avoid misunderstanding but also to achieve positive and concrete forms of cooperation.

It is quite easy for certain allies to form self-defense organizations. They have the legal right under the ruling system to own licensed guns and have guards to protect their homes and properties, especially because of rising criminality. They can also acquire unlicensed firearms from local and foreign sources.

In forming self-defense organizations, all that our allies need to do is orient, organize and train their armed friends and subordinates for self-defense and prospective armed struggle against the enemy. They have some experiences to build on, such as their background in ROTC, in running legal gun clubs and security agencies, and in giving or lending arms to their local leaders.

The NPA is willing to cooperate with allies in the formation of self-defense organizations by giving advice and political-military training and leeway for existence. In turn, our allies can give arms and ammunition to the NPA regularly or whenever possible.

It is also possible for the NPA and our allies to cooperate in acquiring arms in great quantity from local and foreign sources so that both sides are assured of increasing armed strength. Materials for the local manufacture of weapons

*"Allowed to persist, (tyranny) spells the daily violence of exploitation and oppression."*





"The great mass movement which developed in the wake of the Aquino assassination cannot by itself remove Marcos."

can also be imported.

#### Go into active armed struggle

Allies who have arms can go into active armed struggle anytime they choose, whether or not they pass through the stage of forming self-defense organizations.

At any rate, they need to cooperate and coordinate with the NPA and other armed organizations in the NDF in order to avoid anarchy or unnecessary conflicts and thus deliver the most lethal blows against the common enemy.

Cooperation and coordination can best be achieved on the basis of common political agreement in the united front and through liaison groups.

The areas of cooperation are: planning, intelligence, political-military training, the build-up of arms and other logistics, and combat operations.

To help prepare the self-defense organizations for active armed struggle, the NPA is willing to include some of their units or elements in actual military operations, regularly or occasionally. Participation in NPA activities would raise their morale and improve their skills.

The arms in the hands of self-defense organizations also do not have to be idle all the time. These can be lent within clearly agreed time limits to NPA units in order to augment their strength and seize more arms from the enemy or to accomplish other objectives.

In the future, when the NPA is already defeating the enemy in bigger battles, there will be greater opportunities for the self-defense organizations to go into battle or openly assume rearward duties in areas where the enemy has been defeated.

#### Encourage a democratic movement in the AFP

The main task of the armed resistance is to annihilate and defeat the armed enemy units. But at the same time, we must conduct activities to cause their self-disintegration and turn them against the fascist dictatorship. This is the purpose of encouraging a democratic movement in the AFP.

We must recognize that the overwhelming majority of ordinary troops are recruited from the toiling masses of workers and peasants. They are ill-paid, victimized by intra-service corruption and often brutally treated by their officers. They will be increasingly discontented due to the worsening political and economic crisis and demoralized by increasing casualties.

Even among the officers, there are severe contradictions between the Marcos loyalists and officers who are not benefiting from the evils of puppetry, brutality and corruption, favoritism, and nepotism. At the rate the economic crisis is worsening, the honest democratic-minded officer is already discontented and disgusted with the dictator Marcos and his clique of loyalists.

Our allies can counter-surveil and develop their contacts with AFP officers and men who are their relatives, friends,

townmates and neighbors so as to encourage them to reject the fascist dictatorship and embrace the democratic movement. Dialogues and literature for this purpose must be made.

The democratic movement in the AFP might develop to the extent that some AFP officers and men would decide to put the fascist dictator into their protective custody and require him to sign away his autocratic powers in favor of a democratic form of government. They can round up the Marcos loyalists after they have taken Marcos into custody. The concentration of power in his single person is both Marcos' strength and his weakness.

At any rate, the democratic movement in the AFP will be useful in destroying the Marcos-Ver clique, in effecting a complete reorganization of the AFP, or in countervailing or frustrating any coup inspired by the US to advance its own interest.

While long-term purposes are not yet achieved, our allies can purchase arms and ammunitions from AFP officers and men on a friendly or business basis, collect data on AFP personnel and facilities, and prepare for the day that the most rabid minions of the fascist dictator can be incapacitated.

The NPA does its share of encouraging a democratic movement in the AFP. It implants cadres within the AFP; sends revolutionary propaganda within AFP ranks; deals fairly with the families of AFP soldiers in NPA-controlled areas; gives safe conduct to these soldiers on their family visits and treats enemy captives leniently.

The wise policy of the NPA yields positive results. An increasing number of AFP officers and men give for free or sell arms and ammunition to the NPA and promise to join the side of the people (which include their own families) at the proper time. These soldiers speak well of the NPA even in their barracks and they regret being put into combat with it. Many quit the AFP to join the NPA because of enlightenment and moral conviction.

#### Calculations for the near future

The armed resistance is now in the advanced substage of the strategic defensive. The NPA can launch tactical offensives within the scope of 500 to 600 municipalities out of the country's 1,500 municipalities. It has at least 10,000 rifles shared by some 20,000 fighters in rotation.

There are now 40 guerrilla fronts, each with three to ten guerrilla zones. Each zone covers three to ten municipalities. The organized mass base has risen to six million people in close to 60 provinces. It involves local organs of political power, militia, and mass organizations of workers, peasants, youth, women and others.

If the NPA succeeds in raising the number of its automatic rifles to 25,000, the NPA shall be already secure in the early substage of the strategic stalemate; and shall be able to launch tactical offensives within the scope of the majority of Philippine municipalities.



*"Allies can support or join the NPA."*

The NPA would then gain the capability of wiping out entire enemy companies quite frequently. Dramatic offensives, up to repeated temporary seizures of major towns and provincial capitals, will be carried out by battalion-size operations. The enemy will be forced to concentrate on key points only to leave extensive areas open for the people's government and the NPA to control.

The point shall have been reached when the US will declare the Marcos puppet clique a complete failure and remove it from power. The armed resistance would then advance faster toward the stage of strategic offensive. It will be futile for the US to install another fascist puppet dictatorship.

If our allies have strong self-defense organizations, they, together with the NPA and other armed organizations, will be able to tell the US not to install another fascist puppet dictatorship and to desist from interfering in the formation of a broad united front government.

The word of our allies will have tremendous weight because it would be backed up by their self-defense organizations. These can help bring about the strategic offensive by going into active armed struggle and joining up with the NPA and other armed organizations. Also, without firing a single shot, our allies will be able to persuade local governments in extensive areas to break away from a fascist regime sponsored by the US.

As a possible plus factor in favor of a united front government, the democratic movement of AFP officers and soldiers will likely grow rapidly after the Marcos fascist clique has been eliminated either by this movement or by a US-inspired clique.

The democratic movement inside and outside the AFP will countervail US influence and will incapacitate any fascist military clique so as to make possible the total reorganization of the AFP under a broad united front government. This is a possible alternative to the continuance of civil strife.

By helping the NPA increase its armed strength rapidly in one, two or three years, our allies can gain an effective lever for removing the Marcos puppet clique from power. At the earliest, the US will begin to drop Marcos after our allies contribute a few thousands of rifles to the NPA.

Our allies can, at the same time, form their own self-defense organizations to protect and promote their legitimate interests and gain more confidence in the united front for armed struggle and in opposing the US-Marcos regime. The NPA respects these legitimate interests and will unite, cooperate and coordinate with its allies in securing these legitimate interests.

The key to our allies being able to form their own self-defense organizations and also help the NPA increase its rifles

in a rapid manner is to import arms. If certain commercial goods can be brought into the country by various methods, there is no reason why arms cannot be brought in, using the same methods.

The amount of arms imported can grow progressively as the ability to solicit, purchase, carry and receive them increase. The importation of ten to twenty thousand rifles in one, two or three years is a realizable and sufficient target.

The world is wide open for acquiring the arms. These can be had from any friendly source abroad. At any rate, revolutionary or anti-imperialist countries, parties, movements or groups are the most reliable sources. The weapons of freedom can be acquired through grants, loans or purchase, especially from friendly revolutionary movements and organizations abroad.

There is no more effective way to end the fascist dictatorship than by waging armed resistance. Whatever our wishes might be to the contrary, the Marcos fascist clique, driven by the rapidly worsening political and economic crisis and by its own greed and fear of its victims, will continue to rule by terror to the very end.

It would be a pity if the great upsurge of mass actions galvanized by the martyrdom of Benigno S. Aquino and other victims of fascist injustice is not promptly corresponded to by determined efforts to accelerate the growth of the armed resistance.

Without the development of the armed resistance, the US-Marcos regime will continue to suppress the national sovereignty and democratic rights of the people and perpetrate bloody acts to keep itself in power.

Since its defeat in the Vietnam war, the general decline of the US has been accelerating. The United States is being weakened by its internal socio-economic crisis as well as by being drawn to so many trouble spots in the world. It has become more and more possible for countries like the Philippines and for peoples like the Filipino people to free themselves from the clutches of US imperialism one by one.

**Patnubay K. Liwanag**



*NPA posters sprouting everywhere*



Human chain for peace: Anti-nuclear protesters demonstrating in Bonn, West Germany

## INTERNATIONAL FOCUS

# Political offensives abroad

NDF links up with progressive people's forces

Though thousands of miles away, Philippine support groups abroad are doing their share to swing international opinion against the US-Marcos regime and bolster world support for the war of national liberation in the Philippines. They have achieved significant gains in isolating the regime from the community of nations and projecting the National Democratic Front as the legitimate representative of the Filipino people.

In Europe, headway has been made in firming up Philippine solidarity ties with various progressive political parties and forces in that continent. To muster material and political support for the Philippine anti-dictatorship struggle, support groups in many countries in Europe have launched numerous forums, symposia and open mass actions, drawing in increasing numbers of people.

In Holland, the Philippine support group, Filippijengroep Nederland, sponsored a symposium last Nov. 19 spiced up with cultural presentations like songs and dances. Some 300 people attended the "Manifestatie," many of them representing organizations, political parties and solidarity groups in the Netherlands. Solidarity group members from Ireland, Belgium and West Germany also attended.

Luis Jalandoni, NDF international representative, spoke on the Philippine situation and the favorable prospects for the advance of the national democratic struggle in the Philippines. Messages of solidarity were read by representatives of the Pacifist Socialist Party, the Socialist Party, EVP, IKVOS, FNV, Wereldwinkel and other organizations in Holland. Cultural numbers presented by "Alab," a Filipino cultural group, "Rebellion," a singers' group from Chile and Tam Tam, a Dutch theater group, enlivened the

affair.

Philippine support groups, however do not only focus or limit themselves solely to the Philippine anti-dictatorship struggle. They also participate in the campaigns of other groups for such causes as world peace. For instance, during the second half of October, Philippine support groups in various countries of Western Europe participated in the series of massive peace rallies and marches to protest the arms race and the sudden deployment of US Cruise and Pershing missiles in Britain, West Germany and Sicily. About five to six million people participated in the peace rallies held in West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Britain, Ireland, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Spain, Austria, Denmark and Sweden.

"Though we are thousands of miles away ... we share your aspirations for peace and disarmament," said Jalandoni in a solidarity message to the European peace movements. "In the Philippines, the NDF and the Filipino people are also struggling against the storing of nuclear weapons. We oppose the continued presence of US bases and troops in our country." He revealed that as the site of the largest US bases outside the US mainland, the Philippines is now part of the US first strike nuclear capability, amplifying the threat of making the country a theater of nuclear confrontation and war.

"Our liberation struggle in the Philippines weakens and aims to defeat US aggression in one of its key strategic positions," Jalandoni said. "By impairing US first strike capability and opposing intervention, we aim to contribute to the worldwide struggle for peace."

In a peace march in Rome, huge streamers proclaiming "Solidarity for the Philippines" and "US Bases Out of the Philippines, Out of Europe"

were carried by members of the Philippine support group. They sang solidarity songs as they marched with an estimated half a million participants through the downtown area of the Italian capital.

In Bonn, in a spontaneous action during the Oct. 21 demonstration, some 1,000 marchers stopped by the Philippine embassy as several participants painted "Murderer" on the walls of the chancery building -- in graphic reference to the Marcos regime's role in the assassination of Aquino. In anger, others hauled down the flag in the embassy flagpole and burned it in protest against the regime. In a peace march in The Hague, the Filippijengroep Nederland joined over 55,000 people around the city last Oct. 29, waving banners denouncing US bases and US intervention in the Philippines.

Through its international office in Europe, the NDF has also succeeded in linking itself with various national liberation movements that are also resisting the aggressive designs of US imperialism. On the eighth anniversary of the proclamation of the Democratic Republic of East Timor last Nov. 28, the NDF reaffirmed its firm support for the revolutionary struggle of the Maubere people led by FRETILIN in that island in Southeast Asia.

About nine years ago, the Maubere people had declared their independence from Portuguese colonialism with the establishment of the DRET on Nov. 28, 1975. Suharto's fascist troops, however, invaded the island several days later in complete disregard of international law and world public opinion. Since then, the FRETILIN and its army, FALINTIL, have been leading the Maubere people in the struggle against the Indonesian invaders.

Combined with the worldwide impact of the Aquino assassination, the efforts of support groups abroad to isolate the US-Marcos regime have caused the latter to lose ground in its propaganda battle to win foreign support for its faltering rule. Increasingly, foreign newspapers and TV-radio commentaries have been publicizing the underground resistance to the regime. Said the West German daily, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, in an article, "The Philippines at the End of an Era: Marcos on the Brink of Disaster": "Nowhere in free Asia has the underground such strong support, nowhere is the guerrilla praised to such an extent by the ordinary people."

As the regime's political isolation worsens and the anti-dictatorship struggle escalates in the homefront, and as Philippine support groups abroad intensify their efforts, the US-Marcos regime will surely be rejected by broader sections of the world population.

Based on NDF Update

# Notes on a culture in crisis

## "LAUGH IT OFF, TAKE IT OFF"

In the world of "local entertainment" (to distinguish it from the Source Of It All: American Entertainment), two contrasting deaths made headlines early this year - that of popular, well-loved, TV director Ading Fernando, and that of (more) popular, more "loved," film actress Claudia Zobel.

After the Aquino Assassination, their demise was arguably the most publicized in print and audio-visual media these past few months. But unlike the tarmac killing, their deaths managed to grip the public's imagination for only a few weeks. They came, they went. Art - especially the art of sensations, the art of "pure" entertainment - can prove to be most ephemeral, ending when the artist goes. We paid, we watched; we laughed, we fantasized. And that was it.

Though both entertainers, these two well-meaning human beings led contrasting lives. One was a purveyor of sitcom fun, the other "lorded" it over the field of "bold actresses" as the Sex Symbol of our time, the epitome of the Sensuous Filipina. One was basically a creator, an initiator, of certain videoculture trends, ranging from "wholesome family entertainment" (e.g. *John En Marsba*), to "full-some adult comedy" (e.g. *Chicks to Chicks*). Both shows excelled in the ratings war, boding not too well for the First Lady's delusions of the Renaissance's Second Birthing in the Philippines. The other was basically a creation of parents with dubious qualities: sensationalist media and profit-nad film producers.

The comedian created *atypical* Filipino families whose members were just characters or mere caricatures, and not actual representations of hoping, despairing, working, sinning, struggling - yes, even laughing - people in Philippine society. These were creatures of the imagination, channels of wishful thinking even. This fantasy-world, of course, somehow gets translated into social reality when, and only when, Filipinos begin aping the antics, the idiosyncracies, the neuroses; begin assuming the ambitions, yes, the fantasies, built into these one-dimensional characters. (So after all, it may well be said that there are a number of live Filipinos who are creatures of the Audio-visual Revolution, the first of the mutants. Watch out some of them may be your children...)

But, in the final analysis, Ading Fernando was indeed a fine spinner of yarns, a good gag-writer who gave the masses (or at least that portion of them denigrated by the hoity-toity cognoscente as the "bakya crowd") a tug or tickle at their funny bone, even as they rested for an hour or so their thousand other shopworn bones. So goodbye, Ading, we knew you well. At least you made us laugh. The fatally serious comedians in our midst



"Let the masses eat pornography!"

- generals, presidents, technocrats - could only make us wince, and we swear to repay them for their cruel jokes.

And Claudia? They mourned her leaving. They filmed her funeral. They interviewed the mourners. Her death had meant a tremendous loss to her family, for after all, her rags-to-riches saga was not without a good intent: to bail out her family from a grinding poverty not unlike that suffered by hundreds of thousands, millions of other Filipino families, they who are with neither circumstance nor connection in their favor, neither clout nor Claudia, to see them through the present and future crises of Philippine society.

The would-be producers of Claudia must have also grieved. Perhaps even more. And for reasons

known to man since he first discovered the many exquisite ways of exploiting his fellowman for profit.

\* \* \*

## THE VILEST OF THE VILE CAN COME FROM THE HIGHEST PLACES

*Tiktik* and *Sakdal* - the Trash Twins of the magazine trade, "soft-porn" peddlers par excellence - were brainstormed in a tax-devouring government office, according to (our) intelligence sources. Thus, pity the poor slobbs getting all the adverse publicity in the press because of the crackdown on the publishers and writers of pornographic stuff. Pity the dummies. But then, watch how their Fat-cat Bosses pull their chestnuts out of the fire. Pity Bagatsing, perhaps. This do-gooder may yet be left holding an empty bag.

Better yet, pity the public, who sometimes cannot help expecting too much from such zealous crusades to safeguard decency and morality in this country, hoping that something may yet come out of nothing. Will the nominal publisher (an obscure, pseudo-nationalist lawyer) and his cabal of dummies be ever successfully prosecuted? Will they suffer a tinge of guilt over having possibly damaged beyond repair the impressionable psyches of those hooked on smut? Will *Tiktik* and *Sakdal* magazines at last prove their "socially redeeming value" by causing a gang of perverts to be clapped behind bars? But what about their financiers? What project will they think of next, to justify their liberally dipping into the people's blood money in order to rip them off for more?

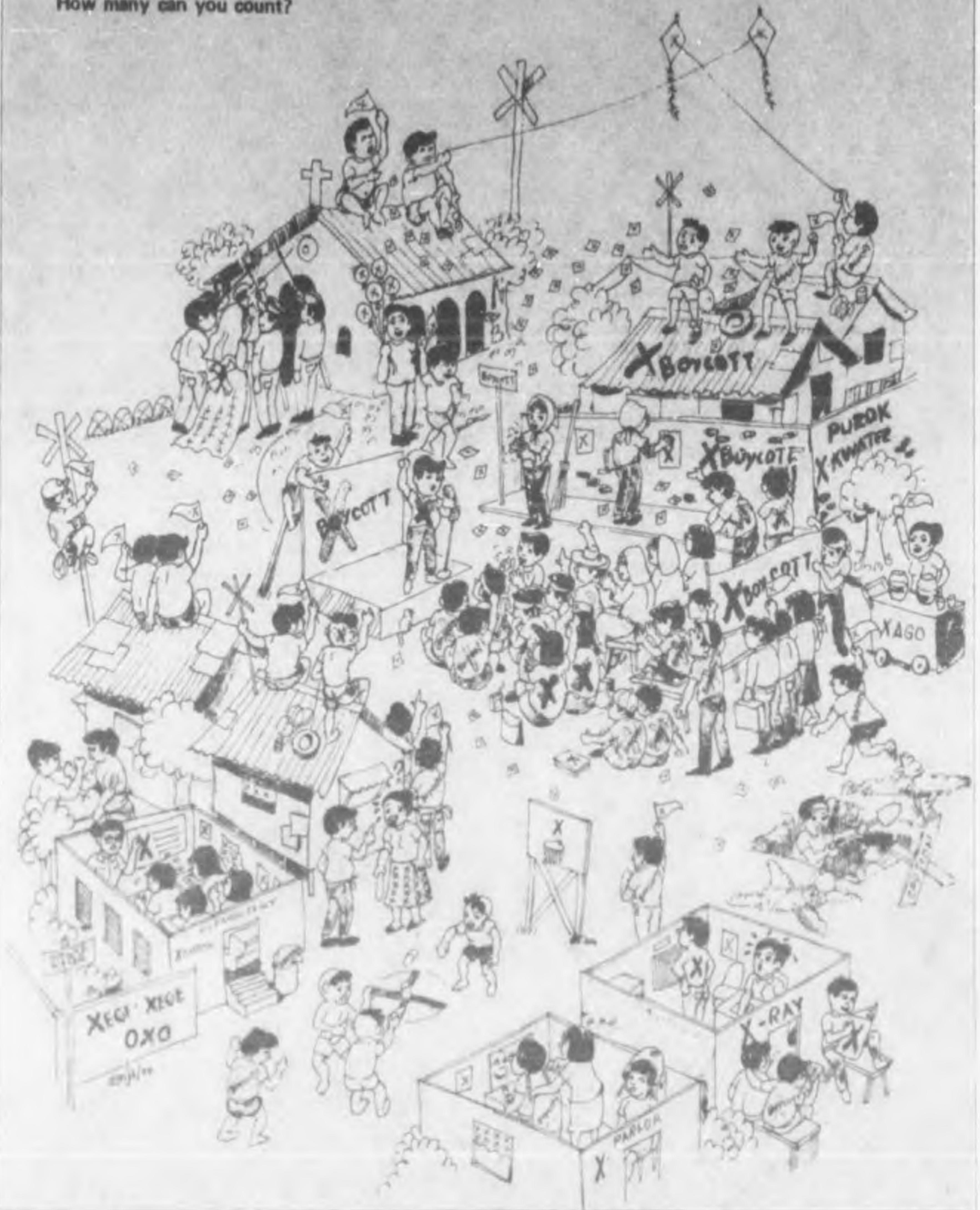
Call it by any name you want: squid tactics, Huxley's *soma* (a dream-inducing drug), opiate of the people - pornography is indeed a very interesting weapon in the cultural arsenal of the neo-fascist state. First it was Madame Imelda's *Flesh Fiesta* (MIFF), then the "Baron's" *Tiktik* and *Sakdal*. These scoundrels must really think they can effectively poison the people's minds and blunt the cutting edge of the reurgent criticalness of our time.

It will not be enough later to say to them, Take your millions and go, and may you gag on them. No...these vipers deserve, and rightly so, to be dumped in the "dustbin of history," and may their route be not figurative at all!

Hansel Menz

# BOYCOTT X-ENA

We counted 250 Xs in this picture.  
How many can you count?



## "Snoopy"

Americans are proud of their female heroines, like Wonder Woman and Supergirl. Filipinos, too, have their own fictional heroine called Squander Woman and Superspender. The thing is, we want the Americans to have this heroine too.

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There's also this American hero we christened "Snoopy" who we want to go back to his kennel in the USA. He's not that lovable comic character, but a real life devious, underhanded, prying fellow. He's Jim Nach, an official of the US Embassy, caught red-handed snooping around the office of JAJA.

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The Americans must really be desperate in their futile attempts to discredit progressive organizations that they have to resort to such stealthy means. Apparently, they have learned nothing from the lessons of Watergate that they now have to create another ignominy in the Philippines - JAJAGATE.

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The normally accurate rumor mill in Switzerland recently reported the arrival of \$1 billion in hard currencies to the banks in Zurich for the account of the Marcos family. A flat one billion dollars is considered the minimum sum needed by deposed heads of state these days if they are to live out their days in security and comfort.

That's one billion hard proof that Marcos truly deserves the popular epithet - "Marcos, Marcos, Magnanakaw!"

\*\*\*\*\*

In 1983, the Philippines paid P4 million an hour or P48 million a day for the interest alone of our foreign debts. The Philippines also ranks fifth among the most debt-ridden countries in the world with a \$34.5 billion foreign debt.

Still, that's not enough to stop debt-pusher Cesar Virata in his trips around the globe to borrow more money for his debt-addict master Marcos.

\*\*\*\*\*

How true is it that Madame didn't go to the US simply to have an eye checkup? Rumor mills say she actually went there to buy presents for an old flame, American actor George "Dracula" Hamilton.

The presents didn't go to George, really, but to his mom. The same mom who was astounded when she went shopping in Rustan's during her visit here and was told she could take anything she wanted from the store - all for free!

\*\*\*\*\*

News item: Imelda Marcos to go to US for eye checkup to prevent blindness.

She need not have gone that far. She could have stayed right here, and given back all her stolen wealth and her eyesight will be good as new. It's just the glitter from all that gold and jewels that's blinding her.

\*\*\*\*\*

So, the KBL will be choosing its candidates for the elections on the basis of the aspirants' popularity. In that case, a never-heard aspirant said, they should get Wengweng or the kids from the movie "Bagets."

\*\*\*\*\*

KBL loyalists, on the other hand, insist that the First Couple won't be so petty as to base the choice of candidates on popularity alone. It's performance that counts, they said.

That's why they're getting performers like Dindo Fernando, Fred Montilla and Anthony Castelo to run for assemblymen.

\*\*\*\*\*

In a recent speech before members of the military, Marcos pooh-pooed reports on military abuses.

"That's ridiculous, that's a blatant lie!" he said. "We never tolerate abuses. And just to prove how wrong our detractors are, I will cite figures: We have punished 10,000 soldiers, hundreds of CHDFs, and even a number of high-ranking officers."

Now, who's being ridiculous and a blatant liar!

\*\*\*\*\*

This is the year when election promises are broken even before the elections are over.

The dictator said no party turncoatism will be allowed. Several days later, "independent KBL candidates" were in the offing. Then, he said, no political dynasties will be formed. Just as he was saying it, relatives of incumbent officials were already in the running.

He also said political normalcy and economic recovery will come once a clean election is held. So, brace yourselves, folks, for martial law and the plague!

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