

LIBERATION

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FIDEL RAMOS: A fascist general masked as democrat

When President Fidel Ramos hosted an informal dinner at the Malacanang Premier Guest-house last July, he handed each guest his blown up photograph on the cover of *Time* magazine's April 1995 issue. The American magazine featured Ramos as US monopoly capital's great favorite democrat who makes the market's economy work in the Philippines.

Ramos was to seal himself with pride in his address. He had arrived. He had attained his supreme ambition. That his US imperialist masters had acknowledged and put him up to the world as the type of democrat they want to behead every country whose national wealth and human resources they want to exploit in pursuit of a borderless world economy.

...reaching that state of triumph no matter how narrow. Ramos held each blown up photo to his chest with the receiver's same plus the message: Stay with me. Stay with us. Stay together. In the end it is victory. (Philippine, 2000)

...despite it has been a long way for Ramos and his regime of military thugs, masses and reactionaries. Even now, the Americans will still profit. It is a master of subterfuge, thug and thuglets, both legally scoundrel and unscrupulous. Having the American interests to and war in Vietnam. They also advised to withdraw the lowest division of the United States Marine.

Fidel Ramos is a classic example of a reactionary and fascist military officer who overcame in February 1986 to become a democrat by joining into the bandwagon of the anti-Marcos popular revolt at EDSA. That was a few days before the United States government extricated the dictator and his family from Malacanang and flew him to Hawaii.



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**FIDEL RAMOS: A fascist general
masked as democrat**



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Fidel Ramos is a classic example of a reactionary and fascist military officer who, overnight in February 1986, became a "democrat" by jumping into the bandwagon of the anti - Marcos popular revolt at EDSA. Employing psywar tactics to delude the people into believing that there is democracy and economic growth, he is actually putting in place the elements of authoritarian rule.

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On today's significant issues and events

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Ramos deftly fostered the image of loyalty to the successor regime of Corason Aquino. So deftly, in fact, that his crimes against the people — as chief of the Philippine Constabulary and as one of the engineers and the key implementor of martial law — seemed to have been swept aside or "absolved" long after the "people power" euphoria had evanesced.

Thus, Ramos was able to retain, in fact reinforced, his official and personal powers under the Aquino regime.

First, as Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief of staff in league with then Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile and rightist rebel military officers, Ramos sabotaged the Aquino-initiated peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front (NDF). Then he relaunched — under the concept of "total war" adopted with alacrity by President Aquino — extensive and intensive fascist attacks against the national democratic forces and their revolutionary mass base.

These military attacks, in escalating scale and intensity, resulted in countless human rights violations. In many instances, the violations exceeded the magnitude and the brutality of those perpetrated under the Marcos dictatorship.

After he was elected president in 1992 by a minority (23%) of those who voted, Ramos re-gearred the sinister campaign (carried out in vain under the Marcos and Aquino regimes) to rive and decapitate the underground revolutionary movement. He sowed the worst kind of intrigues concocted by his psywar experts trained by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

The revolutionary forces, however, frustrated the scheme by successfully carrying out, since 1992, the Second Great Rectification Movement.

This article aims to unmask Ramos for what he basically is. It also aims to expose how his American masters



Ramos with ex-Col. Rodolfo Aguinaldo: Torturers of the 5th CSU

and his clique of psywar experts deviously project the fascist general as the democrat who would steer the nation to the status of a newly industrialized country (NIC) by the turn of the century.

US military training

Ramos graduated in 1950 from the United States Military Academy at West Point. He went on to earn a master's degree in civil engineering from the University of Illinois, after which he served in the US interventionist wars in Korea and Vietnam. Both wars ended in humiliating defeat for American imperialism.

In 1952, Second Lieutenant Ramos joined the Philippine Expeditionary Force to Korea (PEFTOK) as an infantry platoon leader. Accounts of that war show that Ramos' unit aided the US-led forces, operating under the United Nations flag, in committing atrocities against the Korean people.

One account says that on May 21, 1952, Ramos led an infantry assault on Hill Eerie, west of Chowron in north Korea. Before Ramos ordered the assault, says the account, US

forces "softened" the hill with intense air, artillery and tank bombardment, including napalm bombs.

This "carpet bombing" has been a normal procedure used by the US Army in Korea, Vietnam and wherever American interventionist wars took place. While intended to lessen the casualties on the assaulting side, the excessive use of force causes destruction of lives and property far more than what is called for to attain the military objective. This type of warfare violates international humanitarian law and the laws of war.

In 1966, Marcos betrayed his electoral campaign promise not to send Filipino troops to Vietnam. At the bidding of US Pres. Lyndon Johnson, Marcos dispatched the Philippine Civic Action Group to Vietnam (PhilcagV) for a two-year stint. Ramos, then a Constabulary major, was the contingent's operations officer.

As the name suggests, PhilcagV was supposed to confine its activities to civic action. The name was devised to disguise the combat-support nature of its mission because there was strong public opinion against getting the Philippines involved in that American war.

The PhilcagV did its combat-support missions. Among other tasks, it built roads and bridges in Tay Ninh province that eased the movement of US Army combat units in "Operation Junction City," the largest military offensive under Gen. William Westmoreland. That offensive wrought inestimable destruction of human lives, property and the environment.

The choice of Ramos, a US-trained civil engineer, as PhilcagV operations officer seemed logical in this light.

In Vietnam, Ramos developed close relations with several military officers who would form the core of his military advisers when he became president.

Despite Ramos' lackluster performance in Vietnam, Marcos named him as his presidential assistant on military affairs. The post became Ramos' stepping stone to realize his ambitions: it brought him into the inner circle of his cousin's (Marcos) fascist cabal.

Martial law engineer

True enough, Ramos was a leading member of the military-civilian cabal that helped Marcos plan and implement martial law in 1972. The group was tagged as the "Rolex 12" because Marcos gifted each one of the members with a gold Rolex wristwatch.

The other "Rolex 12" plotters were Enrile and Tarlac Gov. Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. (the only civilians in the group), AFP Chief of Staff Romeo Espino, Gens. Rafael Zagala and Ignacio Paz of the Army, Gen. Tomas P. Diaz and Col. Romeo Gatan of the Constabulary, Gen. Jose Rancudo of the Air Force, Adm. Hilario Ruiz of the Navy, Gen. Fabian Ver of the Presidential Security Command and National Intelligence and Security Administration, and Gen. Alfredo Montoya of the PC Metropolitan Command (Metrocom).

Some American authors identified Ramos as the key planner and principal implementor of martial law. Marcos put to maximum use his cousin's ability on the following aspects:

- ▶ assignment and preparation of the Philippine Constabulary as the lead organization in implementing martial law;

- ▶ planning and execution of the arrest and detention of tens of thousands of persons who opposed or were suspected of opposing the Marcos dictatorship; and



Salvage victim in Negros: Heavy hand of martial law

- ▶ designation of Ramos as overall custodian of all political detainees, in which capacity he either ordered or implicitly allowed and tolerated the wanton violation of the human rights of the political detainees by PC security personnel

Government figures show that 30,000 persons were arrested and detained by PC soldiers immediately after the imposition of martial law on September 21, 1972. By the time Marcos was ousted in 1986, about 100,000 persons had been arrested and detained upon orders signed or orally given by Marcos, Enrile or Ramos.

At least 769 persons involuntarily disappeared and were believed to have been summarily executed — "salvaged" in police parlance — by the military and their paramilitary minions.

Arrests were usually carried out through the Arrest, Search and Seizure Order or ASSO. This was a presidential arrest warrant that skipped internationally accepted legal procedures. The ASSO was used from 1972 until 1981, when Marcos nominally lifted martial law but continued to rule by diktat. In 1982 he ordered more arrests through the Presidential Commitment Order or PCO, which was basically the same as the ASSO.

As the martial law regime sought to suppress — or to "extirpate", as

Marcos himself put it — the underground revolutionary forces that grew by leaps and bounds, massacres became a common feature of military operations in the countryside.

Forcible mass evacuations and "hamletting" — the US-designed population-control measure extensively used in Vietnam — were carried out from 1972 to 1984. These resulted in the displacement of close to six million civilians, and in many deaths and epidemics.

The victims included the Muslim population in Mindanao areas where the war between the AFP and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which began in 1971, was most intense.

Ramos' Constabulary was responsible for most of the atrocities perpetrated under martial rule, particularly in the handling of political detainees suspected of being members of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army (CPP-NPA).

As head of the PC, the AFP and the defense department in succession, Ramos is held personally culpable for the following "sins of omission"

- ▶ failure to prevent or stop the violation of the human rights of the people, in general, and of political detainees, in particular

- ▶ failure to take disciplinary action

against the PC and AFP officers and personnel who committed grave human rights violations, such as torture, summary execution, rape and sexual abuse, massacre, and involuntary disappearance.

All throughout the Marcos dictatorship, Ramos carefully shielded himself from direct implication in the atrocities and abuses committed by the officers and soldiers under his command. The rationale for this tack was to provide Ramos, in the days of reckoning after Marcos' downfall, ground to proclaim that had it not been for him, the atrocities and abuses could have been worse.

And he so proclaimed repeatedly with a straight face!

But Ramos has not — and obviously cannot — provide proof that he had opposed the policy and practice of torture, or that he had intervened in behalf of any of the victims of human rights violations.

In fact, Ramos never did take time out to visit political detainees under his custodial responsibility, to find out their conditions of detention and to hear their grievances, as one in his position ought to have done. He left that responsibility entirely to his subordinates.

Reportage and books written about the martial law period ascribe to Ramos specific accountabilities to the people.

For instance, Ramos is "credited" for organizing the intelligence and operating units in each regional PC command specifically to crack down on political dissenters and to "neutralize" the underground revolutionary leadership.

These units were initially called Constabulary Security Units or CSU (later the "unit" became "group," thus the name changed to CSG). The most notorious and dreaded of these units was the 5th CSU, based in Camp Crame not far from Ramos' office.

The first 5th CSU head was Col. Miguel Aure, under whose command a number of junior officers rose to no-

tority as torturers and "psy-ops" (psychological operations) specialists. Among them were Rodolfo Aguinaldo, Victor Batac, Cesar Chavez, Billy Bibit and Robert Delfin.

Ramos entrusted these officers to handle tactical interrogation of political detainees suspected of being leaders and members of the CPP-NPA. Such interrogation invariably included torture and other forms of abuses. Among those tortured by the 5th CSU were Edgar M. Jopson, Monico Atienza, Alan V. Jazmines, Satur C. Ocampo, Fidel V. Agcaoli and hundreds of others.

Human rights groups said Colonel Aure appeared to have been directly involved in the torture and murder in 1977 of Purificacion Pedro, a former University of the Philippines student arrested in Bataan as a suspected NPA member. Shot in the shoulder and beaten with rifle butts by her captors, Pedro was brought to a hospital in that province. She was later found dead, incredibly hanging by her neck with the straps of her brassiere, not long after Colonel Aure left her hospital room.

Of the young 5th CSU officers, then Lieutenant Aguinaldo was most often mentioned in torture accounts documented by Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP) and Amnesty International (AI).

The 1981 edition of *Pumipiglas*, a TFDP publication, describes Aguinaldo as a "persistent and systematic torturer" whose "legendary maniacal torture sessions...left many detainees permanently injured." Among his preferred methods of torture was to



AFP troopers harass protesters in Nueva Vizcaya: Fascism in action

burn his victim's genitals with a lighter or the lighted end of a cigarette, or by inserting a matchstick into the urethra then lighting it.

Aguinaldo, with Batac and Bibit, became leaders of the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM). He was one of the field officers who brought his unit to support Ramos at Camp Crame during the February 1986 mutiny. Now on his second term as provincial governor of Cagayan, Aguinaldo is charged with abuse of authority and malversation of public funds. He has joined the Ramos Lakas-NUCD party.

Of the original "Aure boys", only Delfin, now a colonel of the Philippine National Police, has stayed put with the intelligence command. He has consistently figured in the arrests of leading personalities of the underground movement. He it was, too, who had "arrested" Ricardo Reyes three times and allowed him to go free.

After the 5th CSU's crimes and abuses had been exposed in the official reports of the TFDP, AI, and the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Ramos relieved Aure. He replaced Aure with Col. Ishmael Rodrigo who, like Ramos, had served in the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Rodrigo gained notoriety as a top Huk killer in the 1950s under the guidance of then Col. Edward Lans-

dale, a US Special Forces officer and CIA top operative. Lansdale and Rodrigo were to work together again in Vietnam under the US Army Green Berets. In Vietnam, Rodrigo became a friend of William Colby, later to become CIA chief. Colby was instrumental in sending Rodrigo for further training at the CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia.

Colonel Rodrigo tried in vain his brainwashing techniques on Edgar Jopson in 1979 to turn him into a military agent. (Jopson put one over him by pretending to play along and then he escaped. Much later, however, Jopson was shot dead in a raid by the military on his underground house in Davao City.)

CIA's chosen man

As early as the late 1970s, according to one account, the CIA was already aware that Imelda R. Marcos had plans to succeed her husband as president in the event of his death.

But the CIA also knew that a group of senior military officers, one of them Ramos, was plotting to frustrate Imelda's ambition; they would exclude her from the power center in a post-Marcos scenario. And the CIA, so went the account, considered Ramos the logical choice to head a military junta because of his American military training and his public projection as a professional soldier — "an officer and a gentleman."

In the early 1980s, the account went on, the CIA and the Pentagon developed "long-range strategies" to enhance Ramos' visibility and his reputation as an honest military officer. Col. Gregorio Perez, a retired AFP officer who specialized in intelligence and psywar and an old Ramos pal, served as liaison between the CIA, on the one hand, and the NISA and the PC, on the other.

The plan was to pit Ramos' "professional image" against General Ver's image as a corrupt and ineffective AFP chief, and the fact that Ver's promotion to the top post was because

of his personal closeness and blind loyalty to Marcos.

An article by Linda Hayes in the August 16, 1985 issue of *The Executive Intelligence Review*, a US-based rightist publication, revealed that Stephen Bosworth, US ambassador to Manila at the time, had been meeting with Ramos, then acting AFP chief, "up to two hours everyday." The article adverted to Ramos as the man "the US is attempting to groom as a leader of a new civilian-military junta de-



*Political prisoners:
Victim of state repression*

spite his loyalty to President Marcos."

Hayes' article said that the US State Department had planned that "Ramos would come to power with a young officers' movement called 'We Belong'." At that time the CIA was covertly encouraging and supporting the military rebel group that became the RAM. Its core group was composed of graduates of the Philippine Military Academy loyal to Enrile.

Some accounts said that Ramos was supportive of the RAM. But he did not join the RAM-led mutiny in

1986 until he was convinced that, having gained the support of Cardinal Sin, the mutiny had a fair chance of succeeding.

This play-safe attitude, according to sources claiming to know him well, is typical of Ramos whom they describe as "not normally aggressive, not a risk taker." "He would be a tough adversary in a confrontation, but he lacked charisma and was not forceful as he might be," one writer said.

This assessment of Ramos' character was articulated in the banal gibe of RAM's leader, Col. Gregorio Honasan, who called his chief "walang hayag."

Total war point man

As earlier pointed out, Ramos convinced Mrs. Aquino to "unsheath the sword of war" against the revolutionary movement in 1987. It was he who put together the program for the total war policy that became the hallmark of the Aquino regime.

And Ramos, from 1987 to 1991, oversaw the implementation of the counter-insurgency program that took off from the low-intensity conflict doctrine of the CIA. He ordered the formation of paramilitary and vigilante groups to help the regular state forces fight the armed revolutionary movement in the countryside.

Total war swept through the countryside with the combined terror of aerial bombing, ground shelling and massive troop attacks. The repeated military operations spawned a stream of massacres, burning of entire communities, forced evacuations, hamletting, food blockades, mass arrests, summary executions, and other human rights violations.

By 1991 the number of displaced persons, whom human rights groups call internal refugees, reached 1,253,000. Arrests totalled 20,523 in the same period, 81% of whom were arrested without warrants. Warrantless arrests became de rigeur under the Aquino regime.

During that period, several known top CIA operatives, one after the other, met with Ramos and Defense Secretary Rafael Ilet, a retired AFP chief and reportedly a longtime asset of the US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). They were Gens. Richard Stillwell, John Singlaub and Robert Schweitzer, and former CIA deputy director Ray Cline.

Meantime, some \$10 million in CIA money was reportedly channelled through Ramos to finance the vigilante and paramilitary groups and various covert operations in the country, including planned assassinations of top leaders of the open Left movement.

As the total war raged in the countryside, Ramos and his psywar experts were busy planning to destroy the revolutionary movement from within.

Actually, the plan to "decapitate" the CPP started from the 5th CSU's "Project Evergreen" in the late 1970s. The plot was intended to stanch the continued growth of the national democratic movement despite the arrest of major urban-based cadres. But the plan failed.

The revived plan called for military intelligence operatives to recruit arrested CPP cadres, particularly those with questions on the Party's political line and strategy. The idea was to "re-project" these recruits back into the movement, there to push for changes in the movement's overall strategic line. If such changes were adopted, the expectation was that they would cause major errors and, eventually, lead to the movement's defeat.

The Party's central leadership intervened in 1991, however, and foiled the Ramos scheme. By 1992 the Party leadership launched the Second Great Rectification Movement and decisively repudiated and expelled those responsible for the grave errors in the 1980s and for instigating breakaway factions.

Ramos as President

Ramos' track record made him the logical choice of his US imperialist

masters to succeed Corazon Aquino. Thus he emerged winner in the seven-cornered presidential contest in 1992, whereas there were other candidates who were also in the CIA stable of reserve puppets, like Imelda Marcos and Eduardo Cojuangco.

Almonte headed Ramos' campaign think-tank. He employed the services of certain renegades from the revolutionary movement, like Isagani Serrano and Horacio Morales Jr. The latter may have contributed the use of the catchphrases "popular empowerment" and "sustainable development" to Ramos' electoral campaign slogans.

Now these catchphrases form part of Ramos' standard, boring presidential rhetoric. These were the same catchphrases introduced into the open mass movement in 1986 by the popular democrats (popdems) led by Serrano, Morales and Edicio de la Torre.

At the beginning of his term, with Almonte's team backstopping him, Ramos sought to institutionalize "national security" — that is, social control — measures. These included his plan to require a national identification card for every Filipino citizen, to set up an intelligence unit in every government office, and to increase the powers of the National Security Council headed by Almonte.

In the face of strong popular resistance and criticisms that he wanted to establish one-man rule again, Ramos backed down temporarily. However, after consolidating his control of the legislative, first the House and later the Senate, Ramos today seems determined to pursue his projects.

Rep. Bonifacio Gillego, Ramos' partymate from Sorsogon, has disclosed that bills had been filed in the 10th Congress, whose term began last July 1, providing for the following: a



Ramos at EDSA revolt: Blatant opportunist

national ID system for every Filipino over 17 years old; increased powers of law enforcers to tap telephone lines; and more emergency powers for the President to solve the country's pressing problems.

Moreover, two "anti-terrorism" bills that would allow wiretapping, warrantless arrest and arbitrary detention on mere suspicion—one authored by Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile and the other by Rep. Roilo Golez, a former military official — are pending in Congress. A most striking feature of the bills is their sweeping definition of "terrorism" where even participation in peaceful protest rallies may be construed as a terrorist act.

Ramos has also continually appointed top military officers, both active and retired and all personally loyal to him, in sensitive civilian posts. In this regard, Ramos has simply continued the militarization of the bureaucracy that Marcos began.

The revival of "national security" legislation and the militarization of the bureaucracy assumes ominous implications as they tie in with the renewed orchestrated proposal, sprung up by the Philippine Constitution Association and endorsed by legislative leaders led by Speaker Jose de Venecia to shift from a presidential to a parliamentary form of government.

The manipulations of Ramos and his Lakas-NUCD strategists have

been exposed in the hush-hush workshops held by the PCA both before and after the May 8 elections. The objective is clear: pave the way for Ramos and his cohorts in Congress to extend their stay in power by removing the barriers to their reelection under the present constitution. Through a parliamentary shift, Ramos can run for Parliament and be elected either president or prime minister, whichever post would be made more powerful.

Ramos also made a big thing out of his "peace initiative" — peace talks with the NDF, the MNLF, and the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabansa-Soldiers of the Filipino People-Young Officers Union (RAM-SFP-YOU).

He has succeeded in getting the military rebels to abandon coup plots and to participate in elitist elections. As regards the MNLF, Ramos is mired in finding means to fool the MNLF without antagonizing the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), which backs up the MNLF.

As regards the peace talks with the NDF, Ramos has persistently tried to maneuver the revolutionary forces into submitting to the political authority of his government.

Failing to entrap the NDF, and finding his government committed in writing to a framework for peace negotiations that has put the NDF on political and legal parity with the government, Ramos now attempts to pull out of the agreements — tediously worked out over three years of exploratory talks abroad.

Ramos disdains to see the NDF win points that could put his government at a strategic disadvantage on the negotiating table.

The points won by the NDF are equality in political status with the government in the negotiations; the government acknowledged and committed to honor the NDF's inherent right to issue identification documents and safe conduct passes to its own personnel in the talks; the sequence of discussion of the substantive agenda shall follow the NDF framework;

and all talks shall be held in a neutral venue abroad.

Wanting to negate the NDF gains, Ramos has called back his negotiating panel just as the formal negotiations were to begin. Thereafter he set as condition for resuming the negotiations that they be held only in the Philippines. Although he egregiously violates the agreements he has entered with the NDF, Ramos is doing his damned worst to blame the NDF for the talks' failure.

This antic is typical of Ramos. He earlier showed a cavalier attitude towards the commitments he had made in a "gentlemen's agreement" with Ramon Mitra when he joined the convention of the Laban party. After Mitra had beaten him in the presidential nomination, Ramos discarded the agreement, bolted Laban and formed his own party that put him up as presidential candidate in 1992.

An analysis of Ramos' track record reveals the following interesting insights:

► In the military profession, he had the reputation of being a highly exceptional staff officer. He performed excellently in the preparation of staff work and staff studies.

For instance, as key planner for the Marcos dictatorship, Ramos conceived the counter-insurgency masterplan, Oplan Katatagan. This he improved into Oplan Mamamayan and subsequently Oplan Lambat Bitag I, II, and III for the Aquino regime.

► Combat command requiring decisive action is not one of Ramos' strong points. His tendency to waffle, vacillate and procrastinate arises from a *segurista* and opportunist character. Although seemingly bland, he is ambitious and intense in achieving his goals even if it means the sacrifice of



Military checkpoint: Prelude to open fascist rule

principles and allies (as demonstrated in his joining and bolting Laban).

In essence he is more of a pragmatic politician than a professional militarist. As a politician, he belongs to the class of Pedro Paterno, the classic traitor of the old Philippine democratic revolution, or of Jose Avelino, Leonardo Perez and Ernesto Maceda.

► Ramos' strong pro-US and pro-Kuomintang (read as rabid anti-communist stance) orientation was heavily influenced by two factors: his upbringing by his father, former Foreign Affairs Secretary Narciso Ramos, an avowed Amboy and anti-communist, and his indoctrination and training at West Point.

Since his phenomenal rise to power under Marcos during the 14 years of fascist dictatorship, Ramos was the fair-haired boy and trusted confidante of the White House, State Department, and the Pentagon. With strong US backing, he is now continuously testing the waters for another stab at authoritarian rule, but this time with liberal-democratic pretensions rather than the mailed fist of Marcos.

Ramos is prone to employ intensive and pervasive psywar tactics to delude the people and give the illusions of democracy and economic progress, even as he gradually puts in place elements of authoritarian rule. ■

Crisis calendar

Crisis after crisis battered the Filipino people in the second half of 1995, portending graver crises in the year to come.

A new round of price hikes petitioned by oil companies in July was a dark foreboding.

So intent was the Ramos government in its bid to raise petroleum prices that the regime's front men prated about its "necessity" and "inevitability" even before the Energy Regulatory Board could complete its ceremonial hearings on the issue. In truth, the government move was intended to test the waters for deregulation. Scalded by the public's angry reaction, however, Ramos was later forced to announce that there would be no oil price hikes till after Christmas.

Then came the blow that hit the very guts of the impoverished masses. Rice, the national staple, which used to sell for P10.50 per kilo, suddenly upped its price to as much as P21 per kilo.

A government policy calling for the reduction of the number of hectares planted to food crops in favor of cash crops, a prolonged dry season and speculation by the powerful rice cartel all conspired to jack up the price of rice.

Putting the lid on an explosive situation, the Ramos regime resorted to rice importations. People formed long queues to avail of the cheaper imported rice sold by the regime's rolling stores. It was a pathetic sight reminiscent of the early martial law years.

Prices of meat, fish and vegetables all ballooned. By September, the official inflation rate was a high 11.8%.

As if this were not enough, the new expanded value added tax (EVAT) was approved in October. Even before its implementation this January, unscrupulous businessmen raised the prices of almost every commodity in the market.

In November, super typhoon Rosing's howling winds and torrentous rains left a wide swath of destruction. Severe floods hit several provinces. In many areas, roads were blocked by landslides and power lines were down for weeks. Once more, the government's ineptitude in coping with calamities was highlighted, as was the corruption that pervades the regime's disaster and relief agencies.

By December came the writing on the wall: a "negative six" rating for Ramos in the opinion polls — his lowest ever. Ramos tried to save his hide by promising a revamp of his Cabinet. But this was not enough to appease an angry populace.

Nineteen ninety-six came in with a bang, not from the traditional New Year's revelry, but from the 3-centavo increase per liter in the price of gasoline and other petroleum products — a result of the EVAT. On top of this, the government's deregulation of the oil industry is expected to lead to even higher fuel prices (and add to the cost of almost every service and commodity) in the coming months.

Then comes the question on most everyone's mind: With the former general's popularity in the doldrums, and with a deepening political and economic crisis at hand, can martial rule be far behind? ■

JULY

OIL PRICE HIKES



AUGUST



SEPTEMBER

PRIME
COMMODITIES

OCTOBER



NOVEMBER



DECEMBER



JANUARY



Developments in the people's movements

A new and higher level of waging revolutionary struggle

Excerpts from the message of the CPP Central Committee on the occasion of the Party's 27th anniversary

A rmando Liwanag, chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), has issued a message of greetings to the CPP cadres and members on the occasion of the 27th anniversary of the reestablishment of the Party on December 26, 1995.

Hereunder are important excerpts from the 20-page message:

On behalf of the Central Committee, I wish to congratulate you for the overwhelming and resounding victory of the Second Great Rectification Movement. The very act of launching and sustaining the rectification movement since 1992 constitutes a great victory. We have brought the unity and capabilities of the Party and the people to a new and higher level of waging revolutionary struggle in accordance with Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and along the general line of new-democratic revolution.

We have won brilliant victories in the ideological, political and organizational fields in the course of carrying out the critical and constructive tasks of the rectification movement. As a result, our Party is revitalized and further strengthened to perform all the fundamental tasks in the national democratic revolution and to take advantage of the ever worsening crisis of the domestic ruling system and the world capitalist system.

Resounding victories

We have attained a high level of ideological unity in Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. There is common understanding among Party cadres and members that a strong ideological foundation guarantees the victory of the new-democratic revolution and consequently the socialist revolution



*Red fighters meeting with peasants:
Deepening mass base*

until communism is reached.

The Party is now increasingly putting the stress on criticizing the remaining influences of erroneous currents and conducting social investigations, summing-up and analysis of current work and comradely criticism and self-criticism. The long running major errors of the renegades and incorrigible opportunists have been amply identified, criticized and repudiated and the worst of the renegades have been thoroughly defeated through criti-

cism and repudiation as well as through their own self-exposure.

The Party is in the process of deepening and heightening the study of its revolutionary experience. Those who lag behind are encouraged to catch up. Those who are ahead are advised not to become complacent. There is no end to the process of study and further study. It is a constant process of widening and deepening knowledge on the basis of revolutionary practice.

The New People's Army has been reoriented, retrained and redeployed in order to create an ever widening and deepening mass base for extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare within the stage of strategic defensive in the people's war. In every guerrilla front, the center of gravity has no

more than 30 % of the Red fighters and dispersed units comprise no less more than 70 % with squads typically covering entire municipalities and subdividing into armed propaganda teams.

The number and frequency of NPA tactical offensives are gradually increasing. The long-running damage on the mass base and consequently the stress on mass-base building in the rectification movement have tended to decelerate tactical offensives. Re-

building the mass base is the prerequisite to launching tactical offensives that we can win and sustain.

In the urban areas, the legal democratic mass movement is surging forward. Mass protest actions are expanding and intensifying. These take up the basic issues against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism and the specific policies that aggravate the oppression and exploitation of the people. As in the revolutionary armed struggle the tactics of the united front are employed in the legal democratic movement in order to mobilize the broad masses of the people.

The patriotic and progressive forces are prepared to celebrate the centennial of the old democratic revolution of 1896 up to the revolutionary resistance against the US war of aggression starting in 1899. They put the stress on the revolutionary essence of the old democratic revolution's continuity with the anti-imperialist and antifeudal new-democratic revolution in opposition to the reactionary stress on June 12, 1898 proclamation of "independence" under the "noble protection" of the United States.

There is an increasingly effective coordination between the urban and rural mass movement and the legal and illegal forms of struggle. From the urban-based legal mass movement the Party is generating a great number of advanced mass activists, developing an increasing number of them to become Party members and encouraging a significant number of the workers and educated youth to join the revolutionary armed struggle in the countryside.

The Party has deliberately reduced the existence and operations of armed city partisans in Metro Manila and some other cities to stress the need for the development of the revolutionary armed struggle in the countryside and to prevent the revisionist renegades who have become enemy spies from jeopardizing their security.

Taking advantage of the domestic crisis

It is a foregone conclusion that the Medium-Term Development Plan (Philippines 2000) of the US-Ramos regime is not going to change the agrarian and semifeudal character of the economy. So many parts of the country have been declared as industrial zones, yet no basic industries are being established. Only in a few en-



Ramos: A terrorist under every bed

claves are there some enterprises engaged in labor-intensive fringe-processing of semiconductors, garments, shoes, toys and the like for reexport.

The current reactionary regime makes scarce pretense for land reform. It has confiscated or canceled a great number of the certificates of land transfer (CLTs) and emancipation patents distributed by previous regimes. It has encouraged landlords to convert their rice and corn lands into other types of crop land exempted from its bogus agrarian reform program.

Foreign trade and budgetary deficits are ever growing. The reactionary government continues to beg for foreign loans. Foreign debt is now admitted to be more than US\$40 billion. The reactionary government has gone so far as to become dependent on the

most speculative type of foreign capital and on the sale of state assets, including prime land, major enterprises and public utilities to the foreign monopolists.

Some five to six million of the unemployed in the domestic economy have been exported as cheap labor. The foreign exchange income from this, now estimated at US\$6 to US\$7 billion, is officially regarded as a major component of the gross national product. But nearly all of this income goes into consumption of the families of the migrant workers.

The workers are being forced to accept lower wage and living conditions. Unions are being busted. Strikes are banned and labor leaders and strikers are physically attacked and killed. Existing collective bargaining agreements are being violated on a wide scale. Foreign and domestic employers are encouraged to prevent unionization and relocate to so-called industrial zones where the "no-union, no-strike" policy is brazenly implemented.

In the countryside, brutal military campaigns are conducted, whether the people's army is there or not. The objective is to grab the land from the peasants and the ethnic communities. The land is grabbed for corporate farming, integrated forest management, mining concessions and so on.

US imperialism and the local reactionaries have claimed democratization after the fall of Marcos and the reestablishment of the pre-1972 reactionary institutions and processes. It was precisely after the fall of Marcos that military campaigns of suppression like Lambat Bitag I, II and III, far more brutal than any under the Marcos regime, were launched by the post-Marcos regimes. Fascism has persisted but has been camouflaged since the fall of Marcos.

The Ramos regime is pushing the so-called Anti-terrorism Bill, which is far more antidemocratic and repressive than the Anti-subversion Law. It seeks to curtail the freedom of expression, regard publications against the

regime as criminal, restore the death penalty for political offenses and seize the properties of those accused of terrorism.

The reconciliation among factions of the same counterrevolutionary force is carried out under the long running "Armacost formula" for reuniting the AFP after the split necessitated by the overthrow of Marcos. But more significant than the so-called general peace agreement, which condones and amnesties the criminal responsibilities of the coup plotters, is the defection of Brig. Gen. Raymundo Jarque to the NDF and NPA by way of exposing the rottenness of the reactionary state and the continuing tendency of the AFP to disintegrate.

Taking advantage of the world disorder

The objective conditions in the world tend to favor the waging of the protracted people's war in the Philippines. So desperate is the US-Ramos regime about the crisis of the domestic ruling system that it readily welcomed the US demand for "access rights" of US military forces in the Philippines and is now maneuvering to pave the way for the return of the US military bases by making provocations in the Spratly island group and drumming up China as the threat to the Philippines and the ASEAN region.

The national economies of all the industrial capitalist countries have plunged to a new level of stagnation and are expected stagnate further in the forthcoming year. The centers of world capitalism, the United States, Japan and the European Union are currently registering growth rates lower than those of last year (1994). As usual, the downward growth rates are bloated by the most nonproductive accounts in the service sector. The lesser industrial capitalist countries are falling deeper into a state of depression.

The United States is straining to retain its position as the economic

and military leader of the world capitalist system. As it tries to solve its colossal debt and deficit problems without drastically reducing military expenditures, it does so at the expense of social programs and causes social unrest among the workers, the people of color, women, youth and pensioners. High-tech retooling of industries is killing jobs, causing large inventories of unsold goods and forcing losing firms into bankruptcy, mergers and sellout. And yet the unemployed are misrepresented as parasites unwilling to work and feeding on social welfare.

The United States is consolidating its own national market and its nearest regional markets, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the whole of Latin America. It has spearheaded the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum to further ensure that the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (AFTA) stays within US control and preempt the Japan-instigated East Asia Economic Cooperation (EAEC). It leaps over its West European trade rivals in dumping goods in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

The United States has used the devaluation of the dollar as weapon for promoting its exports and putting Japan and the European Union at a disadvantage. At the same time, it has maneuvered itself into taking the main burden and risks—in the name of NATO, instead of the UN—in Bosnia and picking up seemingly advantageous bilateral security agreements with as many as six states, including some successor states of the former Yugoslavia and former Warsaw as "partners for peace".

As in the United States, the fundamental problem in Japan and the European Union is the rapidly rising organic composition of capital and the disemployment of workers. This is exacerbated by shifting labor-intensive processes to countries where labor is far cheaper and importing what is more cheaply produced there. The shift of certain processes to other countries does not result in their development nor solve unemployment there.

The proletariat and people in the industrial capitalist countries have scarcely begun to fight back against the monopoly bourgeoisie. The politi-



Police operatives in urban poor demolition: Backing a repressive order

cal parties of the big bourgeoisie are discredited but there is not yet a single revolutionary party of the proletariat politically and organizationally strong enough to challenge the capitalist ruling system anywhere. The general strikes in France, combining the workers, students and other people this December, are so far the most telling protest action against the capitalist ruling system.

The biggest destruction of productive forces in the last five years is seen in the successor states of the former revisionist-ruled countries in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Unemployment runs rampant. The impoverishment of the people has been scandalously drastic. Even the average lifespan in the former Soviet Union has plummeted from 65 to 57 years.

Most of the former revisionist-ruled countries have retrogressed to third world socioeconomic conditions. Conditions are ever worsening and are conducive to the rise of bourgeois nationalism and military fascism. The same objective conditions are conducive to the reemergence of proletarian revolutionary parties. But these parties have to reckon with decades of revisionist deception and the current powerful forces of capitalism.

The overwhelming majority of the nation states in Asia, Africa and Latin America are still the worst victims of imperialism and neocolonialism. Since the '70s, they have suffered from the overproduction of raw materials, economic depression, massive unemployment, deteriorating terms of trade, mounting debt burden and a growing net outflow of capital. The overwhelming majority of the population is peasant and impoverished.

Our tasks

In conclusion, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines urges all the Party cadres and members to unite more than ever before and raise ever higher the revo-

lutionary capabilities of the Party and the people in accordance with Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, carry the rectification movement through to the end and accomplish the tasks for 1996 as laid down by the July 1995 assessment.

Let us further strengthen the Party ideologically. Let us integrate the theory of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism with the concrete conditions of our country and with our concrete revolutionary practice. Let us repudiate revisionism and subjectivism. Let us use the rectification movement to enliven and revitalize our ideological study and work.

"The objective conditions in the world tend to favor the waging of protracted people's war in the Philippines"

We must forge ahead in criticizing and repudiating the counterrevolutionary ideas masquerading as progressive and emanating from the outside. We must counter the ideological offensive of the imperialists. In the international communist movement, let us continue to be guided by proletarian internationalism and stand for socialism against modern revisionism.

Let us further strengthen the Party politically. Let us continue to heighten and sharpen our understanding of the semicolonial and semifeudal character of Philippine society and the general line of new-democratic revolution through protracted people's war. Let us conduct social research and investigation and wage the revolutionary struggle accordingly.

In the current phase of the strategic defensive stage of our protracted people's war, let us carry out extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare on an ever widening and deepening mass base. Let us expand and consolidate our mass base. Let us continue to integrate the armed struggle, land reform

and mass base building and develop all these stage by stage.

Let us carry out the legal democratic mass movement more resolutely and more vigorously than ever before. Let us continue to expose and condemn the greedy and brutal depredations on the people by foreign monopoly capitalists and the local reactionaries. Let us continue to raise the people's basic demands for national liberation and democracy. We must engage in solid mass organizing as the basis of mass campaigns. In turn the mass campaigns must lead to solid mass organizing through painstaking mass work.

Let us strengthen the Party organizationally. Under the principle of democratic centralism, let us strengthen our unity in accordance with Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and the general line of the new-democratic revolution. Under the principle of democratic centralism, let us promote discipline and inner democracy. We must recognize the uneven development of our Party members and from this recognition help each other to raise our revolutionary consciousness and capabilities and our general level of development continually.

We must promptly recruit Party candidate-members from the ranks of the advanced revolutionary mass activists and promptly raise them to full Party membership. Let us fulfill the target of recruiting 10,000 new Party members before the end of 1996.

In the process, let us raise the proportion of Party members from the ranks of the working class and peasantry. Let us also continue to recruit more Party members from the ranks of the educated youth. We must deploy to the countryside more Party members and candidate-members from the ranks of the workers and educated youth.

Long live the Communist Party of the Philippines!

Long live the Philippine revolution!

Long live the Filipino people! ■

To the mountains and the revolution!

Ex-Brig. Gen. Raymundo Jarque defects to the New People's Army

“Welcome to the side of the exploited and oppressed people, *kaupod* (comrade),” said Negros revolutionary leader Frank Fernandez as he welcomed retired Brig. Gen. Raymundo Jarque who defected to the New People's Army (NPA).

The former general broke the stunning news in a clandestine press conference held somewhere in the Visayas last October 1. In his statement entitled “The Only Way to Justice is Revolution”, (released to the media on October 9) Jarque said: “I have burned my bridges. There is no turning back... As a former soldier, I call on my comrades... to support me, even join me, in this just cause I now embark on, for and among the broad masses of our oppressed people.” Jarque added that he had turned his back on “a system that is rotten to the core.”

Jarque chose to defect to the NPA and not to the Visayas-based faction led by Arturo Tabara because the latter, he said, was being used by the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) as a tool against the “mainstream” or genuine revolutionary forces. This he learned from Philippine Army intelligence sources.

Jarque also refused to join the military factionalist group Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabansa (RAM) led by ex-Col. Gregorio Honasan. RAM, said Jarque, is already a “spent force” that may soon be absorbed by the (ruling) system.

One week after Jarque's defection was reported by the media, the National Democratic Front (NDF) in Negros declared that it would grant sanctuary to the former general. Said the NDF-Negros: “General Jarque's statement(s)...



Jarque with Frank Fernandez: Comradely greetings

are not the words of a man obsessed with a personal crusade of vendetta, although it is true his decision to join the ranks of the struggling masses was triggered by his personal victimization at the hands of the oppressive and exploitative ruling system”.

“They are the words of an honorable man,” said NDF-Negros, “a man of strong beliefs, who faithfully served an ideal only to realize, even before the end of his service, that the ideal he held so dearly was nothing but an illusion propagated by the corrupt rulers of the land to disguise their evil”.

Red fighters provided security for Jarque, who spent about a month in a safehouse before receiving word this December that he had been “provisionally accepted” by the NDF in Negros. Jarque then trekked for four days escorted by Red fighters to reach a

guerrilla zone where a welcome ceremony was held in his honor. During the ceremony, Fernandez explained that Jarque's acceptance into the NDF was “provisional” because the final decision on the former general will have to come from the Front's National Council as well as the CPP Central Committee and the NPA National Command.

This January, the NDF National Executive Committee appointed Jarque as a consultant in peace talks with the Ramos government. As consultant, Jarque should be covered by the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees, said the NDF.

Victim of injustice

The 57-year-old Jarque had what reactionaries would consider a bril-

liant military career. The son of a mechanic, he graduated from the Philippine Military Academy and rose through the ranks to become chief of the Negros and later the Panay Island Command in the late '80s. He then led the National Capital Region Defense Command in 1993 and was chief of the Southern Luzon Command in 1994. Sources say he was also in line to become Philippine Army chief had fate not dealt him a cruel hand.

Jarque gained notoriety among the revolutionary forces and the masses in Negros when he implemented the repressive Oplan Thunderbolt from 1989 to 1990. The massive counter-insurgency operation involved frequent aerial bombardments to cover the movement of thousands of ground troops into the hinterlands of southern Negros, long believed by the AFP to be the "heartland" of the revolution in the island.

Oplan Thunderbolt led to the involuntary displacement of some 45,000 villagers who were herded to strategic hamlets in the town centers. Military forces also blocked the entry of food, medicines and other provisions donated to the refugees by church groups, relief agencies and human rights organizations, claiming that these were meant for the NPA. Forced to live in crowded and unsanitary conditions, the villagers fell victim to various ailments. More than 300 refugee children later died of gastro-intestinal and other diseases in the evacuation centers.

Jarque served the system well enough to earn 30 medals in the span of his 33-year career. Despite his record, however, Jarque was victimized by the very system he so loyally defended. His enforcement of a court order favoring one party in a land dispute that involved warring scions of the wealthy Peña family of Pulupandan, Negros Occidental wrote finis to his military career. Reason: he sided

*Jarque announcing his defection:
Spurning a system that is rotten to
the core*

opposite Magdaleno Peña, who happened to be a close friend of Pres. Fidel Ramos and Defense Secretary Renato de Villa. For this, Jarque was charged with graft and robbery before the Sandiganbayan for allegedly stealing two tons of prawns worth P650,000 from Peña's farm.

Prosecuting his case was Ombudsman and former Philippine Constabulary (PC) officer Aniano Desierto. Not coincidentally, Desierto was also a close friend of both Peña and Ramos. (Ramos and Desierto were in fact both implementors of martial rule — Ramos as PC chief and Desierto as a military lawyer who knowingly used evidence obtained through torture to prosecute political prisoners.)

Desierto sat on the general's case for two years, during which time Jarque was passed over for the top post in the Philippine Army. The charges were later dismissed as a brother of Peña admitted that it was he who harvested the missing prawns.

In 1994, Desierto survived an ambush supposedly masterminded by Jarque. Then chief of the Southern Luzon Command, Jarque was stripped of his post. Later, the National Bureau of Investigation cleared him for lack of evidence.

When Desierto was appointed by

Ramos as Sandiganbayan chief, however, he revived the murder and graft charges against Jarque (the graft charge springs from Jarque's allegedly having used government facilities to place Desierto under surveillance).

Jarque appealed several times to Ramos through the chain of command for the just and speedy resolution of his case, but to no avail. He ended his military career in ignominy, and was unable to collect his retirement benefits because of the charges pending against him.

Said the NDF-Negros: "His story is no different from the countless comrades who, like him, sprang from the ranks of the masses and struggled to build decent and honorable lives only to realize that their hopes could never be realized while the greedy yet powerful few lorded it over the vast millions of the poor."

Historical precedents

Jarque's defection is not without precedent. In the early '70s, two young AFP officers, Lt. Crispin Tagamolila and Lt. Victor Corpus, defected to the NPA. Over the years, in fact, scores of non-commissioned officers, enlisted men and paramilitary forces have also aligned them-



selves with the revolutionary movement.

Another famous defector was Zhude, a brilliant general in the Kuomintang who joined the Chinese revolutionary forces under Mao Zedong.

Since the beginning of the revolutionary movement, it has been its policy to welcome the officers and men of the AFP who change from the side of the enemy to that of the people.

Said Communist Party founding chairman Jose Ma. Sison in a statement: "Quite a number of these officers and men have over the years joined the revolutionary movement and made significant contributions."

Sison explained that the victory of the national democratic revolution is facilitated "when officers and men of the armed forces of the big compradors, landlords and corrupt bureaucrats give their loyalty and service to the working class, peasantry and the rest of the people."

(An alternative to actually joining the ranks of the revolutionary forces is the formation of an alliance or the establishment of cooperative relations between the NPA and other armed organizations in fighting a common reactionary enemy and advancing a common program for revolutionary change.)

Like any other individual who joins the revolutionary movement after years of being deeply entrenched in the reactionary AFP, however, Jarque needed to undergo a drastic reorientation.

Said Fernandez upon welcoming the former general: "Jarque needs painstaking education to fully understand the movement's principles, directions and line" to offset his years in the military service. Only after he has voluntarily accepted and understood revolutionary principles, said Fernandez, "would we submit our recommendation (to the leading organs of the CPP, the NPA and the NDF)."

Although Jarque's defection was initially met with skepticism by many quarters within the revolutionary movement, the CPP declared its

willingness to consider his case with an open mind and with due consideration for the overall interest of advancing the revolution. In a statement last October, the CPP also said it would have to consider the sentiments of the masses, especially those in the provinces and regions covered by General Jarque's past operations.

Sison, on the other hand, said he was deeply pleased with Jarque's "regrets over his past service to the ruling system, his condemnation of the system, his respect and praise for the revolutionary forces, his initiative to go underground with the intention of waging revolution, and his desire to link up with the revolutionary movement".

"If he is honest, resolute and earnest as he seems to be," said Sison, "the responsible organs of the revolutionary forces will certainly recognize what he can contribute to the revolutionary struggle."

In the weeks since Jarque's defection, feedback from the revolutionary forces in Negros was positive — so much so that before the end of the year, the Ramos regime ordered the arrest of the former general after giving up on its initial tack of winning him back.

In his integration with villagers (which was part of the reeducation process he underwent), Jarque humbly apologized for his leading role in Oplan Thunderbolt which, he admitted, triggered the biggest evacuation in Philippine history since World War II and involved widespread violations



Jarque with NPA guerrillas: Treading the path of revolution

of human rights. His direct exposure to the impoverished masses in the Negros countryside also led him to strongly condemn the Ramos regime's so-called development programs. Said Jarque: "The pathetic sight, the abject poverty of the masses betray the government vision of Philippines 2000 as a big lie." He belittled the "indicators of progress" government officials raise as proof of economic development, saying "maybe to their minds, the Philippines is only Subic Bay, Ortigas, Makati and Cubao."

Jarque's defection has already reverberated throughout the reactionary military establishment. Weeks after his defection was announced, three CAGU members in northern Negros fled last November with their weapons to join the NPA. They brought with them an M60 machine gun, an M203 grenade launcher and an M14 rifle. In Bacolod City, some 200 former CAGU members attended a Human Rights Day rally to protest the nonpayment of their separation pay.

Jarque is not the first military man to see the light. And for as long as the reactionary ruling system with its main pillar, the AFP continue with their reign of greed and terror, Jarque will not be the last. ■

Friends of the forest

Revolutionary forces call for logging ban to save dwindling forests

The revolutionary forces in Mindanao and in Northern and Central Luzon have called for a ban on logging to arrest the most serious environmental problem in the country today — massive deforestation.

In Mindanao, where the wanton destruction of forests and watersheds has already led to landslides and flash floods, the revolutionary movement has declared a total logging ban. Said National Democratic Front (NDF)-Mindanao spokesperson Jorge Madlos, "This is in accordance with the national democratic program and manifests the revolutionary movement's deep and abiding commitment to preserve the ecological balance for the people's interest."

Madlos assailed US and Japanese imperialism, the big landlords, the big comprador bourgeoisie and the US-Ramos regime for their environmentally destructive policies. He cited the regime's Integrated Forest Management Agreement or IFMA as a ploy to legitimize illegal logging activities.

Madlos called on the people, especially the *lumads*, workers and peasants, to create a broad mass movement in all regions of Mindanao to support the total logging ban. He also appealed to big-time loggers to dialogue with the revolutionary forces instead of conspiring with the reactionary AFP.

In Northern Luzon, the revolutionary movement has been implementing "Oplan Lappat" since 1985. Derived from a native custom that forbids the use of certain portions of the communal forest for a number of years when a member of the tribe dies, "Oplan Lappat" involves the launching of sabotage operations to disrupt the activities of big-time loggers.

According to reports from the New People's Army, the Red fighters burned three logging trucks and two bulldozers and confiscated five chainsaws in three

separate operations from March to September in eastern Isabela.

In Central Luzon, where only 30% of the original forests remain, the revolutionary movement has banned illegal logging within guerrilla zones and bases and in areas where the organized masses are able to assert their political power.

The US-Ramos regime is in cahoots with illegal loggers in denuding the remaining forests, which are in danger of being wiped out in a few years. According to *Himagsik*, the mass newspaper in Central Luzon, big logging companies in the region such as Zamboanga Wood, Findlay Miller and PICOP, which are owned by American and Japanese capitalists, have divided the remaining forests among themselves. Protecting them are powerful politicians like House Speaker and close Ramos ally Jose de Venecia of Pangasinan and Sen. Edgardo Angara of Aurora province. Notorious illegal loggers in the region such as Emigdio Bondoc of Pampanga who have also won seats in the reactionary congress, are fighting tooth and nail to protect their interests.

Himagsik also blamed illegal logging for the long drought that has dried up rain-fed fields, which comprise almost half of Central Luzon ricelands. About 3,000 hectares of irrigated land have also been affected, said *Himagsik*, along with milkfish and prawn farms. The revolutionary forces lambasted the Ramos regime for failing to provide adequate irrigation facilities, saying that it prefers to build huge dams which do not benefit small farmers. (see

related article)

Aside from the ban on illegal logging, the revolutionary forces in Central Luzon have, within their limited means, been taking steps to protect the environment. For instance, Red fighters conducting mass work among the peasants help promote appropriate farming technology that makes use of inexpensive agricultural inputs which are not toxic to soil and water.

The national democratic movement as a whole has consistently advanced the struggle for self-reliant economic development and advocates the judicious utilization of the country's natural resources for the people's benefit. It has mobilized the people to oppose pro-imperialist and anti-people "development plans" that condemn the country to a perpetual state of dependency, backwardness and environmental degradation. In this regard, the revolutionary movement has firmly supported mass struggles against the Mount Apo Geothermal Project, the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, the Coal-Fired Thermal Plants in Zambales and Pangasinan, the Casecnan Dam (to be set up in the Nueva Vizcaya-Nueva Ecija-Aurora tri-boundary), the Chico River Dam and other government projects destructive to the people's health, livelihood and the environment. ■



**Flood waters rampage in Bicol and Davao (inset):
Nature exacts its cruel revenge**

Damn the dams

Reactionary governments from Magsaysay's time to the present have had a fetish for building large-scale — and damnable — hydroelectric projects.

In every case, the dams submerged entire communities, deprived the local people of livelihood, destroyed their way of life, and menaced the environment. In every instance, the main beneficiaries of hydroelectric power have not been the tribespeople living near the dam site but multinational companies and the local comprador bourgeoisie.

The bitter experience of Ibaloy and Karao natives with the Ambuklao and Binga Hydroelectric Plants in Benguet (operational since 1957 and 1960, respectively) provided early lessons on government apathy. For one, the government did not even bother to consult the affected communities about these projects. In fact, in the case of all other government hydro projects, the regimes in power have shown total disregard for the national minorities' rights over the disposition of natural resources (including water resources) within their territory.

With their villages destined to go under water, most of the Ibaloy and Karao were sent to resettlement sites in Palawan. Some were also resettled in Conwap Valley in Nueva Vizcaya.

They were promised livelihood projects, housing and other facilities to help them rebuild their lives. But the promised aid never came. Or if it did, it came in trickles.

By the late '80s, most of those who had resettled in Palawan could no longer bear the hardship. They left the island and returned to their ancestral lands in Benguet. As for those who were resettled in Conwap Valley, they are to be displaced once again to give way to another damnable project — the Casecnan Dam.

The US\$1.2 billion Casecnan Dam aims to "rescue" another government project gone wrong, the Pantabangan Dam in Nueva Ecija. This it plans to do by tunnelling water from the Casecnan River in Nueva Vizcaya. A major infrastructure showcase of the Marcos dicta-

torship, the Pantabangan reservoir has all but dried up due to the destruction of surrounding watersheds from indiscriminate logging. (see related article)

Ironically, more forest lands are set to go under water once the dam becomes operational. The planned entry of extractive industries into the uplands of Nueva Vizcaya will also exacerbate deforestation. At present, ARIMCO, an Australian-Filipino mining firm, has a 37,000-hectare exploration area in Kasibu and in Cabarruguis, Quirino.

With opposition to the dam mounting, the AFP has deployed to the project site a brigade-size force composed of PNP troops, army soldiers and CAFGU. Last June, PNP Recom 2 Chief Supt. Rufino Ibay Jr. also herded the town mayors of Dupax del Norte, Dupax del Sur, Kasibu and Alfonso Castañeda along with the barangay captains and tribal chiefs of Ilongot and Igorot communities to be affected by the dam. The local leaders were forced by Ibay to sign a petition stating that they consented to the project and agreed to build CAFGU units anew in and around ARIMCO's area of operations in Kasibu.

Meanwhile, the construction of another gigantic project, the Agbulu Hydroelectric Plant, is already underway. The Agbulu plant will reportedly generate 390 megawatts of electricity by

harnessing the might of the Apayao River. To do this, a giant reservoir-type dam with a capacity of 3.164 billion cubic meters will be built in Agbulu and Calanasan, Kalinga-Apayao.

In reality, NAPOCOR (National Power Corporation) researches on the generating capacity of the Apayao river have shown that several less expensive and less destructive mini hydro-plants will do the job.

Why the penchant for giant dams? Giant dams, of course, yield giant kick-backs for the greedy palms of corrupt officials.

The Agbulu project will submerge a total of 11 sitios and barangays, mostly inhabited by Isneg minorities. As usual, the government has promised the affected communities a comprehensive aid package, including free electricity, an elementary school, a 50-bed hospital and livelihood programs in the resettlement sites.

But the Isneg only have to ask the Ibaloy and Karao about the likely outcome of such promises. ■



Ilongot minorities march against Casecnan project (see inset): No to bogus development



An excellent prognosis

MSP unites to advance revolutionary health work in Third National Congress

The Makabayang Samahang Pangkalusugan (MSP), an NDF allied organization of health professionals, hospital workers and health science students held its Third National Congress from June 29 to July 1 in a guerrilla zone in Southern Tagalog.

During the congress, MSP delegates from the National Capital Region, Central Luzon, Northern Luzon, Southern Luzon, Central Visayas, Eastern Visayas and Northern Mindanao expressed their strong and unwavering support to the NDF and all the resolutions and decisions of its First National Conference held in July 1994. The revolutionary organization also drafted its Two-Year Program of Action and chose the members of the National Council, who in turn elected the five-member National Executive Committee. Unanimously elected as MSP chairperson was Ave Dimasilao.

Following are excerpts from an interview with the MSP National Executive Committee reprinted from *Rebolusyonaryong Lunas*, the organization's official publication.



MSP activists don surgical masks in lightning rally: Resurgent force

Q: What is the significance of MSP's Third National Congress?

A: The Congress reaffirmed the basic principles of the MSP as the revolutionary national democratic organization of the health sector. Its holding was also the culmination of a deep-going process to arrive at a high level of unity with-

in the organization. This will make it possible to advance revolutionary health work on a common compass, and to increase and intensify our participation in the national democratic revolution. Lastly, as MSP delegates from regions all over the country were present, the Congress reasserted the national character of the MSP. After MSP work

slackened because of serious security problems in 1988, it is only now that the organization has again acquired a national status.

Q: You mentioned the national character of the MSP and its being the revolutionary national democratic formation of the health sector. Can you expound some more on MSP's scope and reach?

A: The MSP is organized at the national level, with a presence in all urban centers where there is a major concentration of the health sector. Organizing is done on a territorial basis, with MSP chapters in different regions, provinces and in some cases, even municipalities. Within the sector, MSP organizing reaches all subsectors.

Because of the size of the MSP membership in the National Capital Region, separate MSP chapters have been established there for the subsectors of health professionals, health students and health workers. At this moment, the health professionals form the largest chapter, mainly because many previously organized health students have since graduated.

The MSP is currently doing organizing work among students in medicine, nursing, midwifery and the allied medical professions. What logically may be expected and targeted is that MSP's students' chapter would again become the largest. This is because among the youth, nationalist and democratic aspirations are still very much alive and are not yet restricted by financial and economic considerations. Developing the students' chapter is also important because the youth can become the main source for fulltimers, including medics for the New People's Army or even Red fighters.

Workers in the health institutions (hospitals and the like) constitute the most oppressed and exploited part of the sector, and have a specific role to play in helping respond in various ways to the health needs of the masses and the revolutionary forces.

MSP's organizing is territorial in character. This means that we put a premium on organizing where the broad masses of the sector are to be found, namely, in major schools and hospitals. This reorientation is a direct result of the summing up and rectification of the health sector.

Q: To this day, a few well-meaning people seem to believe that the DOH (Department of Health) offers some hope for the improvement of health services, especially since so-called "community doctors" like Juan Flavio and Jimmy Tan are in charge. What is your reply to those people?

A: The DOH should be analyzed in the light of the character and nature of the reactionary state, currently being represented by the US-Ramos regime. As an instrument of this state and regime, the DOH's policies and programs can only be part of the global counterrevolutionary scheme of

the US-Ramos regime. As an institution that may bring some limited services to the people — services that should be a basic people's right in the first place and that have the means to influence millions of citizens — the DOH is in an ideal position to be used as a deodorizer for the counterrevolutionary economic, political and military strategies of the regime. If anything, the fact that a perceived "community doctor" is at the helm of the DOH can only make its role as



*MSP-trained medic at work:
Heeding the challenge of the times*

deodorizer more effective. But of course, genuine revolutionaries who possess sharp tools of analysis and criticism can never be deceived by such maneuvers.

Q: What are the most important lessons drawn by the MSP from its more than 15 years of revolutionary existence?

A: First, for a long time, there was serious neglect in linking up our revolutionary work in the health sector with the struggle of the basic masses, and to have our forces engage in mass work. This was a result of, and was at the same time reinforced by, the then prevailing petty bourgeois thinking and attitude of many organized health professionals. The principle of simple living and of being close to the masses was not promoted within the MSP, although such is essential for the ideological tempering and remoulding of the world view of the middle forces, to which the larger part of the sector belongs.

Second, concrete assistance to our people's war in the countryside (CS) was almost completely abandoned. For years on end, practically not a single MSP member was developed and prepared to be assigned to CS work. The political work of MSP was one-sidedly focused on the urban mass movement, where the insurrectionist deviation held sway.

Third, organizationally, there was too much stress on sweeping organizing, while solid organizing continuously lagged behind. Sweeping organizing was mainly activity-oriented: successive mobilizations based on "hot" issues of the day, but without further follow-up. In contrast, solid organizing includes steps to ensure ideological grounding (such as political education sessions and integration with the basic masses of workers and peasants) and a clear organizational expression of the activists' commitment (such as integration in MSP cells).

Fourth, the MSP's organizing work was not based on a serious class analysis, and consequently didn't have a clear class bias for the most exploited and oppressed classes and subsectors. Today the MSP again recognizes social investigation and class analysis to be an important tool in its organizing work.

Q: Some years ago, the notion was floated by some comrades that it was almost impossible to organize health professionals for the revolution. What do you propose can be the role and tasks of health professionals in the revolutionary struggle?

A: The wrong concept transmitted to the health professionals was that their services and their professional medical skills sufficed as their contribution to the revolution. Doctors were only requested to take care of patients, including injured NPA combatants, but nothing more or nothing else was asked of them. They were not being organized and often not even study groups were set up for them. As a consequence, many of those health professionals didn't have firm ideological moorings and easily decided to lie low for a number of reasons.



Exposing DOH: Money for media hype, but none for basic health care

***"Health professionals are very well
organizable as long as their interests and
contributions are consciously linked to the
interests and the advance of the entire
national democratic revolution"***

These methods of work are now being corrected. It is recognized that health professionals are very well "organizable" as long as their interests and contributions are consciously linked to the interests and the advance of the entire national democratic revolution. Health professionals in our service network are now being given political education. A whole range of options to concretize their commitment is presented to them: not only medical services in hospitals, clinics or communities, but also helping in propaganda, education and organizing work, and even joining the NPA as medic or cadre.

Upon realizing the wealth of tasks they can undertake to serve the revolution, many a health professional has responded with enthusiasm. Thanks to the rectification movement, several health professionals have returned to active participation in the MSP and in the national democratic revolution. More are willing to render services to our revolutionary forces for free, and as a result of our expanded organizing work, more varied health services are now being tapped. One doctor expressed interest in becoming a political instructor. Unlike before, many health professionals now attend education sessions that, in their eagerness to learn, sometimes extend past midnight. And also unlike before, several health professionals are now willing to go to the countryside even if it is just for a single medical consultation of a patient who is too "hot" to be brought to the city.

Q: What has been the response of revolutionary health workers so far to the call to "go to the hills"?

A: Integration with the basic masses and service in the countryside are part of the political program of the MSP. As such, this orientation is also reflected in the concrete tasks of the different MSP organs and cells. Since this reorientation started to be implemented two years ago, the response of MSP forces has been very positive. Several scores of MSP forces have already had an exposure or integration program in the countryside, and they all appreciated it very much.

Many health workers exert special efforts to go on leave at their workplaces to be able to experience this. Among the health students, several are willing to go fulltime, because they recognize the importance of CS work both for the advance of the revolution and for their own remoulding. Before, the countryside was something abstract to them, but now, CS work has acquired a real face for them. This poses a concrete challenge, and gives our forces the additional courage to persevere in this arduous struggle. ■

The young and the selfless

Two student activists volunteer for the countryside

Vibrant with the flush of youth, Ka Jhune, a 19-year-old former Journalism major, laughs as she recalls a fellow activists' reaction when she declared her intention to work as a fulltime organizer in the countryside. "*Indibidwalistang pagpapasya iyan, kasama.*" (That's a unilateral decision, comrade).

Ka Jhune had been one of several activists who spent five months integrating with Red fighters and peasants in a guerrilla zone. They were to be away for three months but decided to extend their stay so they could take part in an important activity sponsored by the Communist Party organization in the area.

Several days into the activity, however, Ka Jhune received a letter from her KM (Kabataang Makabayan) collective, asking her to return to Manila, as school was about to open. After agonizing for some time over what she should do, she decided to stay till the activity ended.

Back in Manila, she was criticized for not coming back sooner. But Ka Jhune had even more stunning news. She wanted to go back to the countryside, she said. For good.

Apparently taken aback by Ka Jhune's decision, her comrades in KM argued that she was just as badly needed in Manila. They interviewed her, questioned her. The questions were not meant to dissuade her, they said, but to test her determination to go to the countryside.

But Ka Jhune could not help but feel that her decision to work in the countryside was not as welcome as she had expected.

Added Ka Anna, a 24-year-old working student who has also opted to work full time in the countryside, "In school, there are graffiti all over, saying '*Kabataan, magpunta sa kanyunan, sumapi sa hukbong bayan at lumahok sa digmang bayan*' (Youth, go to the countryside, join the people's army and participate in people's war). In KM, from day one, the call to the youth to go to the countryside was also very clear. So the reaction of our collective was rather puzzling."

The impasse, which lasted a few months, ended when a number of activists from school attended a gathering in a guerrilla zone to celebrate the 25th founding anniversary of the New People's Army. During the celebration, Gregorio 'Ka Roger' Rosal of the CPP Information Bureau exhorted the youth activists anew to go to the countryside, where their services were very much needed.

"There were a few who argued that the call applied only to new mass activists who needed to spend some time in the countryside to strengthen their foundation as comrades," said Ka Jhune, "and not to 'advanced elements' who were already being

groomed as cadres."

"But that was only for a while," she added. "Our collective finally gave us clearance to transfer to the countryside."

In a separate interview, Ka Bianca, a cadre formerly assigned to the CPP National Youth-Student Bureau, explained that the seeming inertia in heeding the call to go to the countryside could be traced to an error in defining the orientation of the youth-student movement.

"Since the early '80s," said Ka Bianca, "the YS movement has been defined as a propaganda movement. But it was not clearly stated that the main target of our propaganda efforts should be the basic masses. Thus the trend towards urbanism, towards gravitating back to the city-based youth movement." The error has been rectified, she assured.

Both Ka Jhune and Ka Anna agree "*Ngayon, patok na patok na sa YS ang pag-expo at pag-ft sa cs.*" (Nowadays, the desire to join exposure programs and work fulltime in the countryside is very widespread in the YS movement). ■



Youth activists attend NPA anniversary celebration in a guerrilla zone: A Concrete commitment to serve the people

Ka Sander

Profile of a veteran revolutionary and father

Tall, lanky, greying and with a dignified mien, Ka Sander might pass for a venerable village elder. In reality, he is a respected Communist Party cadre, and a veteran of the revolutionary movement in Cagayan Valley.

Now all of 50 years, Ka Sander has been a revolutionary more than half his life. With other comrades, he helped plant the seeds of revolutionary struggle in his province. Nurtured with much sacrifice, the struggle grew and took root. Subsequent errors caused the revolution to wither. But all this time, Ka Sander has stood firm in his commitment and is now deeply involved in the overall effort to see the revolution grow and thrive once more.

Ka Sander could still recall that fateful day in 1969, when young guerrillas of the New People's Army (NPA) came to their village.

He had opened a homestead, and worked the land with his wife. But life was still hard in the interior barrios of eastern Isabela.

The Red fighters, who spoke fluent Ilocano, explained how the rich, who allied themselves with foreign powers, exploited and oppressed the peasants. They explained why, despite their hard work, those who tilled the land would remain poor so long as such a system weighed down on them. But if the poor forged ranks to wage revolution, the guerrillas said, the day would come when they could finally enjoy the fruits of their labors.

All this, the barriofolk took to heart. But they were further convinced of the NPA's sincerity when the Red

fighters successfully stamped out or discouraged carabao rustling, theft, drunkenness, womanizing and gambling in their barrios.

Ka Sander became part of the first contact group organized by the NPA. His wife, Ka Nita, just as eagerly em-

at lower prices. About 5% of the store's net income was set aside for the NPA.

Before martial law was declared, the revolutionary mass base extended from the interior villages of Jones to the barrios in the eastern coast of Isabela.

The mass organizations became so much a part of daily life in the barrios that they would, at times, sponsor dances where revolutionary songs were played. During such festivities, members of the people's militia would come to watch with their rifles slung on their shoulders.

Occasionally, soldiers would swoop down on the barrios to harass the villagers and arrest known activists and mass leaders. But everytime, the barriofolk confronted the military and demanded their release. Faced with such angry crowds, the soldiers always relented and set the prisoners free.

In 1972, Ka Sander, then 28, decided to join the NPA as a fulltime guerrilla.

The imposition of open fascist rule in September that year marked a turning point in the young Red fighter's

life.

Seven AFP battalions poured into 11 towns of eastern Isabela, terrorizing villagers and forcing them to evacuate to the town centers. But about 5,000 barriofolk, including those on the enemy's wanted list, opted to move to the forested areas of Echague, San Guillermo and San Mariano to set up a revolutionary barrio with its own production base. Among them were Ka Nita and their six children.

The enemy was determined to crush the fledgling revolutionary



braced the revolution, after talking with comrades who often came to their house to hold meetings. Not long after, Ka Sander's brothers and other relatives joined the cause.

Organizing proceeded swiftly. By 1971, mass organizations of peasants, women and youth had been set up in the barrios. Communist Party branches existed in many villages.

The mass organizations led cooperative activities and ran communal farms. The income they earned from selling their produce was used to put up a cooperative store that sold goods

movement. It enforced a vicious food and economic blockade, and penetrated the forest regions in pursuit of the NPA.

Firefights raged between AFP troops and the NPA defenders. In one battle, 14-year-old Ka Sammy, Ka Sander's eldest son, was martyred.

The relentless military operations eventually took their toll. Deprived of medicine and other provisions, many of those in the base area decided to leave. Slowly, the base area became a ghost barrio.

Ka Nita and her three youngest children were among the last to go. While they were making their way out of the forest, however, they were fired upon by enemy soldiers. Ka Nita was hit by shrapnel and captured along with her children. Then pregnant with her seventh child, she was released a year later and returned to her barrio. Five years passed before she and Ka Sander were to meet again.

Meanwhile, the Red fighters in Isabela broke out of the enemy encirclement to conduct expansion work in nearby provinces.

Ka Sander led an armed propaganda unit assigned to eastern Cagayan. With him in the team was Ka Nicy, his 14-year-old daughter who had also joined the NPA.

One evening in 1979, Ka Sander's unit crossed the Cagayan river aboard three bancas. They were to contact an armed propaganda unit in western Cagayan.

At around 10 p.m., shots rang out. It was an ambush.

In the ensuing confusion, two of the bancas capsized. The Red fighters had to swim the remaining distance under sniper fire.

They found Ka Nicy sprawled on the other shore, bleeding. She had been shot in the spine. She lingered for six hours and died in Ka Sander's arms before dawn.

Three days later, the comrades held a memorial meeting in her honor. Ka Sander stood impassively, but vowed that for as long as he was alive to wage revolution, her death would be avenged.

A year later, comrades were able to send him news about his wife. She was well, they said, and working their old homestead. Ka Sander made arrangements for them to meet in Cagayan.

Theirs was a bittersweet reunion. Ka Sander told his wife of their eldest son and daughter's deaths. She had already heard of their son's martyrdom. But she refused at first to believe that her daughter was also gone, until other comrades confirmed the news.

Ka Sander and Ka Nita stayed together for about a month in a guerrilla camp. Before she left, Ka Sander asked his wife if she was willing to become a fulltime revolutionary like him.

She replied that she would join him, in due time. Meanwhile, their youngest child, a girl whom Ka Sander had not yet seen, was still too young to be left behind.

Two years later, Ka Nita left her children in the care of relatives and became a fulltimer. She was assigned to an armed propaganda unit and later joined the technical staff of a guerrilla camp.

Then tragedy struck anew in 1989.

Ka Nita was cooking breakfast at the height of a storm, when a huge tree crashed down, hitting her. She died instantly.

Ka Sander endured the loss of his wife as stoically as he bore the pain of his children's deaths.

But he draws strength in knowing that they had led meaningful lives and that their sacrifices have not been in vain.

Today, his five living children, aged 17 to 28, are all fulltime guerrillas. He is also a grandfather to four little ones.

In public, his children call him "kaddua" (comrade) or "Ka Sander". But in private, he is "Papang" (father).

He continues to guide his children, advising them and lending them moral support through rough times — but always he maintains a delicate balance between his role as father and his position as a leading cadre.

To parents in the barrios who are reluctant to allow their activist sons and daughters to join the NPA, Ka Sander has these words of admonition: "How else can we advance the revolution and win? Would you rather have your children spend all their time with their *barkada* and lead aimless lives? You should be glad that your children know what their role in society is. They are capable of, and have firmly decided to fight for their rights. If they do not fight, who will do it for them?" ■



Newsbriefs about people's struggles

15 TROOPS KILLED IN NORTHERN LUZON



Fifteen enemy soldiers were killed and 12 were wounded in separate ambushes and defensive actions staged from May to September by New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas. Two of those slain were Philippine army troopers who were

hit by booby trap explosions while conducting military operations in Cagayan and Isabela. The explosions also wounded five other soldiers.

The NPA offensives, which were launched in Ilocos Norte, Cagayan, Isabela and Kalinga-Apayao yielded eight M16 rifles and M203 grenade launcher. The Red fighters also destroyed two military jeeps.

In a related development, a member of Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) was killed and two were wounded in a firefight with NPA guerrillas in Hungduan, Ifugao last June 21.

Based on correspondence reports from the Lt. Crispin Tagamolila Command of Northern Luzon, the AFP suffered its biggest casualty last June 14 when a seven-man PNP force aboard a jeep was wiped out in Barangay Liliputen, Pinit, Ilocos Norte.

Last August 24, a PNP trooper was also killed and four were wounded in Barangay Baua, Gonzaga, Cagayan when their jeep was hit by a land mine planted by the NPA.

Earlier, on May 14, two army soldiers from the 17th IB-PA were killed and three were wounded in Barangay Fuyot, Ilagan, Isabela when they were fired upon by Red fighters.

Ten days before, three troopers of the 45th IB-PA were killed in an NPA ambush in Barangay Apatan, Pinucpuc, Kalinga-Apayao. ■

NDF DISOWNS "ABB"



In the wake of arrests of so-called members of the Alex Boncayao Brigade (ABB) last December, the National Democratic Front (NDF) issued a statement disowning the group that calls itself the ABB. In a statement, the NDF

clarified that the so-called partisan group is not part of the Communist Party of the Philippines, New People's Army or any other allied organization of the NDF. The revolutionary alliance explained that the "ABB" led by Sergio Romero is part of the counterrevolutionary Lagman group that bolted the CPP in July 1993.

The NDF also expressed skepticism regarding the arrests of members of Romero's gang. Military and police ele-

ments, said the NDF, have linked up with the ABB in committing criminal activities. Thus, said the NDF, the regime is actually coddling the Romero gang and is merely pretending to act against it.

The NDF also denounced the armed actions launched by Romero's gang such as the ambush-slaying of Filipino-Chinese businessman Leonardo Ty, for which the gang has claimed responsibility. The NDF said that such actions which place the lives of innocent people in danger are contrary to revolutionary policies and principles. ■

PROP TRAINING HELD IN WESTERN MINDANAO

Twenty-three territorial and sectoral cadres and activists from Western Mindanao successfully finished a course on revolutionary propaganda work this September. According to *Mangahas*, the National Democratic Front newspaper in the region, the six-day training included basic Marxist analysis, the history of revolutionary propaganda, the basic principles of revolutionary propaganda work, writing methods and techniques, and a review of the status of propaganda work in the context of the Second Great Rectification Movement. ■

REVOLUTIONARY FORCES DECLARE HOLIDAY CEASEFIRE

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), New People's Army (NPA) and National Democratic Front (NDF) declared a suspension of military offensives from midnight of December 23, 1995 to midnight of January 2, 1996.

In a press statement, the revolutionary forces said that the ceasefire was issued "in consonance with social tradition, in a humanitarian spirit and in celebration of the 27th anniversary of the reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines on December 26."

Earlier, the Ramos government declared a ceasefire from December 19 to January 17. The revolutionary forces, however, stressed that the regime's ceasefire declaration should not be trusted in the face of the government's continued violations of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees and its unilateral suspension of the peace negotiations. In case of offensive operations by the enemy, said the revolutionary forces, "the NPA or any unit concerned should take the appropriate defensive action." ■

Past imperfect

Review of *Ilang Taon na ang Problema Mo?*, 1995, 219 pages

Ilang Taon na ang Problema Mo? by Jun Cruz Reyes is a collection of eight narratives one may categorize as testimonial literature. The stories are derived from the author's interviews with a number of active revolutionaries during his visits to the guerrilla zones of the New People's Army. Thus, according to him, the stories were merely "borrowed" and his contribution to them limited to the editing and sequencing of these accounts.

According to the author, this collection is an attempt at providing an alternative presentation of history as told by the actors themselves. The actors in this sojourn into living history are the "little people", as opposed to traditional treatment of history as the domain of "great men" often idealized and presented as larger than life. *Ilang Taon's* heroes are ordinary people who are thrust into the struggle via circumstances peculiar to their concrete station in life under this country's moribund semicolonial and semifeudal conditions. People's war is indeed the rising of the "little people", the toiling masses, who are the real makers of history.

The story "Roger, Roger", is a lighthearted account of Gregorio 'Ka Roger' Rosal's life from childhood up to the time he served as spokesperson of the Melito Glor Command of Southern Tagalog. It recounts his days as a student activist and provides useful insights into the role of the youth in the revolutionary struggle.

"Andrea, Ang Amasonang Ina" tells the story of a young woman awakening to the revolution. It touches on her experiences as a Red fighter and her conflict with her father who disapproves of the life she has chosen. It also tells of her romance and marriage to a comrade, and the difficulties and sacrifices borne willingly by a mother who is also a full-time revolutionary.

"Sagang" speaks of the revolutionary movement's success in weaving itself onto the fabric of Kalinga society



and winning the people over to the side of the revolution. The story revolves around "sagang", a ceremony to celebrate the homecoming of a Kalinga youth who is an NPA red fighter. He is honored as a warrior who has fought the enemy well. In "Sagang", Kalinga traditional culture has survived, only this time it has taken on revolutionary content, a forceful testimony of the revolution's irresistible power and of the NPA's patient and painstaking mass work among the exploited and oppressed minority people. The Kalingas' fine tradition of armed resistance which insulated them from total subjugation by the Spaniards, the Americans and the Japanese aggressors, finds a friend in the struggle of the New People's Army against US imperialism and its local cohorts.

In "Paalam Teks, Paalam Itlog", Ces discovers the revolution at a very young age. He outgrows his fascination of the religious rituals and games of his youth and early childhood, and finds self-satisfaction and fulfillment in the struggle. On the other hand, there is a hint of romanticism in the accounts recounting the exploits of ABB (Alex Boncayao Brigade) partisans. In

another scene, the main protagonist shows off his battle scars incurred in close brushes with the enemy. It turns out that he has not quite outgrown the brashness of his youth — a forgivable failing, to be sure, considering the enormity of the commitment he has embraced.

In "Mga Anak ng Digma", the protagonists are angst-ridden young men caught in the maelstrom of a society pregnant with revolution. The actors have contrasting life stories but are bound by a firm friendship and by a seemingly all-consuming angst that breeds their alienation from society. In the final scene, all four are enveloped in the darkness of night, awaiting the break of a new dawn, another day.

One caveat. The stories are set in the 1980's, a period when the revolution was in a peculiar situation where it made great strides in practically all departments but underneath an incipient struggle between two lines was already developing that eventually led to the necessity of the second great rectification movement. The solid gains in the early part of the decade were due to the correct revolutionary line set since the Party's reestablishment and developed through a good part of the seventies. Some aspects of an incorrect line that started to be injected in the early eighties gave birth to the opportunist lines of military adventurism and urban insurrectionism which were responsible for the major setbacks experienced by the revolution in the latter half of the eighties. We see glimpses of the consequences of these opportunist lines in "Paalam Teks, Paalam Itlog", "Sagang", and "Mga Anak ng Digma".

A fitting sequel to this stimulating work is another anthology, this time exploring how comrades, none of them emerging unscathed and without fault from the errors and deviations of the past, are remoulding themselves even as they grapple with the demanding task of renewing and revitalizing the entire revolutionary movement. ■

Roger, Roger

Iba ang kolehiyo kaysa high school. Totohanan na ito. Ang balak ay dapat ding ituntong sa lupa. Magbabawad pa nga pala ng kaserita para may matirhan. Saka saan naya kukuhannang baon naya araw-araw? Saka nakakabiyang sa mga koridor siya mag-sistang ng kulambo, kumot, bangkayo nyan. May matrikula pa at may mga dapat pang bibling libro. Konkisyon sa utak naya, di naya kayang mag-aral sa Misyula. Pero hindi pa tapos ang usapan, hasta mag-aral pa rin siya.

Sa ibatangas naya nangipang mag-enrol nang sumunod na pasukan. Malapit lang ang eskwelahan sa kamula, kamula ayon ng commerce. Tinawag ito na "Mixer Rules" Business siya pang-pek. Kapag araw na wala siyang klase, imitigil din naya ang kanyang pagmamag-estudyante. Bumabalik siya sa pangkulambo. Minsan naya y lumibrot sa nagmala k sa eskwela. Parang sa tanang arawan siyang:

Iba ang presyon ng kulambo.
Sa may kotang, ibagsak!

Di pa siya nakakiusap semestre ay tumutrohetna na siya sa eskwelahan. Marami lang pala yonang tumatungo sa mga libro sa Golden Gate College ang pumalagang eskwelahan nila, pero sa kamulang mga estudyante ang mga kamabayan ng GCd, ay Golden Garbage Can. Mukhang basitahan talay ang eskwela kung ang pagmamag-estudyante ay may posibilidad nito, tulad ng kulambaw ng kubyeta sa laboratoryo.

Sa wakas ay may mga aktibista na siyang nakakiusap nila. Magkakar-pareho lang namang pala-silla. Ang pangkalahat lang ay mas matas ang marka naya dahil sa apat nuyang magpapasok kaysa katatuhang sa kamula na mga pumapasok dihi sa klase. Katwira y hindi naman natutunan ang lahat ng buhay sa loob ng classroom. Ang mga linsangan at kanyang

vinan ay isa ring eskwelahan. Duo y natutunan ang kahulugan ng tunay na buhay ng masang Pilipino. Pang-eskwelahan lang muna ang interes naya. Sa bukid na nga siya galing, duon pa siya pababalikin. E ayon nga ang gusto sana nuyang takasan kaysa siya nag-arall ng commerce.

Sa ikalawang semestre ay nagkaroon ng boykot sa eskwelahan. Ang tanitor kasi at ang titser ay halos magkasing-sahod lang. Hindi nakabubuhay ng pamula ang ibang mga guro. Binabarat ng husto ng administrasyon ang sweldo nila kulang na lang ay lungin yon nang libre. Dahil walang titser na magtuturo, kaya wala siyempreng klase. Kaya sapilitan siyang napasali sa welga. Ayos lang at pwede muna magbulakbol. Pero hindi rannon lang ang kahulugan ngon kay Roger. Kung matatapan ang titser, di dapat na mas matapan ang mga estudyante. Dahil sa matatino si Roger sa klase, namibit siyang magsalita para sa kapakinan ng mga titser.

Nagsalita ng iako, perotahang abut-abot ang akong kaba. Estudyante lang ako, malay ko ba nang magsalita. Galit na galit na pala ako sa may-ari ng eskwelahan. Nagnomura na pala ako. Anong klaseng talino ang makukuha mo sa eskwelahang magagawang puhuman ng may-ari sa negosyo? Anong klaseng eskwelahan ito na hindi marunong gumalang sa kanyang mga titser mismo? Kung pabayaan natin yan, anong klaseng edukasyon ang makukuha natin? Ang damo-damo ko na palang sinabi, nakal-unutan ko na ang oras pati ang sarili ko. Nuon na lang pumapalapak ang iako panagising.



Ang tutong hindi naman siya talagang mahusay pang magsalita nung mga panahong ayon. Medyo mahiyang pa nga siya. Ang treyning naya sa pag-salita ay sa mga kantahan at lasing naya napulot. Malinut kasing siya ang magagawang mag-salita sa mga kamula sa mga panahong okasyon. Ika nga naya y pang-patay lamang ang talino naya sa pananalita. Wala namat siyang magawa, magawa lang naman naya ang naririnig naya sa radyo. Sa kanya ayon pinapalabukan ng mga patawa. Masaya na ang taga-pakong. Ang ganitong estilo ay epektibo sa mga kababata at kababaryo nila. Iba ang usapang lasing sa usapang pangmatino, tulad ng magawa naya ngayon. At siya y nakapasa sa kanyang unang servosong pagtatangkang magpahayag. Balang araw ay duon siya hahangaan ng mga taga-media. Siya si Ka Roger Rosal, ang mahusay na spokesman. ■

ANG GERILYA'Y TULAD NG MAKATA

ni Jose Maria Sison

*Ang gerilya'y tulad ng makata
Matalas sa bulong ng mga dahon
Sa pagkabali ng mga sanga
Sa mumunting alon ng ilog
Sa amoy ng apoy
At sa abo ng paglisan.*

*Ang gerilya'y tulad ng makata
Nakasanib sa mga puno
Mga halaman at bato
Di maaninag pero malinaw
May kaalaman sa batas ng paggalaw
At bihasa sa laksang paglalarawan.*

*Ang gerilya'y tulad ng makata
Katugma ng kalikasan
Mga pinong ritmo ng luntian
Ng nakatimong katahimikan, namamalas na
kawalang-muwang
Ng aserong nababagling nang may lantik
Sumisilo sa kaaway.*

*Ang gerilya'y tulad ng makata
Cumagalaw kasama ng luntia't kulay-lupang kawan
Sa palumpong umaapoy ng pulang bulaklak
Na nagkokorona't nagpapaalah sa lahat
Nagsasama-sama sa isang daluyong
Nagmamartsa sa wakas laban sa kuta.*

*Walang hanggang kilusan ng lakas
Masdan ang matagalang tema:
Ang epikong bayan, ang digmang bayan.*

ISINALIN MULA SA ORIHINAL NA INGGLES ("THE GUERRILLA IS LIKE A POET") NI NA KA KRISANTA, KA ELY, KA ANA
AT KA OMPONG, MGA KASAMANG MAMAHALIG LUMIKHA AT MAGPALAGANAP NG MGA REBOLI SYONARYONG TULA AT AWITIN