

LIBERATION

PUBLISHED BY THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION OF THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT

VOL. II NO. 14

FEBRUARY 19, 1974

Muslims liberate Jolo!

Rebel forces led by the Bangsa Moro Army captured Jolo, Sulu's capital town, Feb. 8, controlling almost the entire province. Jolo is the last of the 21 municipalities to fall in the hands of the rebels.

Camp Asturias, headquarters of the Sulu PC provincial command and of the local units of the air force, the airport, the pier, Notre Dame University and the entire downtown area were seized by the Muslim forces after intense fighting.

Sources in the AFP said the rebel forces approaching in the evening of Feb. 7 from Patikul, a community north of Jolo, caught the government troops by surprise. AFP troops were expecting that the Moros would attack from the hills in the south.

The government troops suffered heavy losses. The PC brigade at the airport was overrun by advancing Moro forces which apparently had the support of a big portion of the local population. The Caltex depot was burned down.

Total casualties from both sides and the non-combatant civilians were estimated by various Liberation sources in Jolo at 10,000 dead and wounded. The civilian population suffered heavy casualties as a result of indiscriminate government artillery bombardments and bombings by Sabrejets which started Feb. 4 following Muslim victories in three nearby towns in Jolo Island.

Refugees who had fled to Zamboanga to avoid bombings and strafing swelled to 50,000. Tens of thousands of evacuees also rushed to Basilan.

Jolo Mayor Aminkadra Barlie Abubakar resigned on Feb. 7, the eve of the capture of Jolo. His resignation was reportedly triggered off by his failure to control the terrorist acts of Muslim surrenderees sent back to Jolo by the Manila

(Continued on page 2)



Survey reveals

FILIPINOS OPPOSE U.S. AID

A significant majority of Filipinos in the US think that American economic and military aid to the Philippines should be stopped "during the period of martial law".

This was revealed in a recent survey conducted among readers of the Chicago-based Philippine Times by the research committee of the Philippine Study Group.

In its second installment on the survey's results, the Jan. 31 issue of the influential newspaper reported that:

-- 51 per cent of those polled said that the US "should stop its economic aid to the Philippines during the period of martial law";

-- 64.4 per cent thought that US "military aid" should likewise be stopped;

-- and 71.1 per cent and 69.9 per cent, respectively, felt that US economic and military aid do not "benefit" the "majority of Filipinos".

The survey also showed that more than three-fifths (63.2%) of those polled believe that the martial law regime of Marcos does not enjoy the

"support" of the majority of Filipinos.

On the other hand, 71.1 per cent thought that "most military men" support martial law, while 51 per cent felt "most foreign businessmen" also support the Marcos regime.

The survey results also revealed
(Continued on page 2)

2 women bolt Camp Holmes

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet (BMP)— Two women political prisoners escaped from Camp Holmes in this capital town last Christmas eve, Bayan, a resistance newspaper in Northern Luzon, reported.

Arrested separately on Nov. 25 and 27 in Baguio, the two were taken to Camp Holmes and reportedly beaten by military interrogators in an effort to make them talk.

The two admitted to nothing, despite the physical torture.

Confined at the camp's confe-
(Continued on page 2)

◀ Pass on after reading

Food crisis in S. Luzon

People in Quezon and parts of Bicol are faced with a food crisis due to a breakdown in transport facilities, Balita ng Malayang Pilipinas reported.

Seventeen persons died of starvation in Sipocot, Camarines Norte, according to the report.

The paralysis in overland transport to Quezon and Bicol was traced to the poor condition of railroad tracks and roads.

The Philippine National Railways has been cancelling scheduled trips of the Bicol express pending repair of the tracks.

Very few buses ply the southern route beyond Lucena. Pantranco, the bus company said to be owned by the Marcoses, was sending out only five buses a day.

The food shortage was expected to worsen, unless the government took immediate remedial steps. ●

2 women...

(From page 1)

rence room for a month, the two women made good their escape on Dec. 24 while their guards were on a drinking spree.

Interviewed by Pahayagang Bayan, the two narrated how they escaped by forcing open a window and scaling the camp walls. They reached safety after hiking the mountains between La Trinidad and Baguio.

The two women have reportedly rejoined the anti-fascist forces. ●

MUSLIMS... (From page 1)

government. He wanted the military to take complete control of the municipal government. A Muslim surrenderer was recently appointed by Marcos to replace him.

Abubakar reportedly joined the rebel forces in the hills and is now being hunted by government operatives.

Abubakar's son, Nisan, is widely known in the town as one of the leaders of the Bangsa Moro Army. The younger Abubakar was a member of the executive board of the Movement for a Democratic Philippines (MDP) when he was still a student at the University of the Philippines in 1971-72.

Despite government claims that it had recaptured Jolo, and that the rebel forces were on the run, Jolo residents who recently arrived

Senator Diokno hospitalized anew

Imprisoned Senator Jose W. Diokno was hospitalized for the third time under the usual cloak of secrecy since his arrest and detention by the dictatorship in September 1972.

Suffering from a heavily swollen right elbow, Diokno was brought under heavy guard to the Veterans Memorial Hospital last Feb. 6, according to an international agency dispatch.

A cyst which had developed in the senator's right elbow was removed by military surgeons in an hour-long operation.

Diokno was held at the VMH until Feb. 11, occupying the same heavily guarded section he was placed in the last time he was hospitalized at the VMH.

Diokno, who is suffering from an arteriosclerotic condition aggravated by his imprisonment, has been detained for 17 months now without charges having been filed against him by the martial law regime. His request to be allowed to go abroad for necessary medical attention has been denied.

In a dramatic move last December, Diokno, opposition senator, and chairman of the Movement of Concerned Citizens for Civil Liberties (MCCCL), suddenly withdrew his habeas corpus petition from the reorganized Supreme Court, saying he did not expect justice from the tribunal which had vowed to support and defend the Marcos constitution. ●

in Manila reported that there was still fighting in almost all parts of Jolo as of Feb. 14.

With the capture of Jolo, communication between the remaining AFP troops in Jolo and Zamboanga City was cut off.

Heavy bombardments and jet air attacks on rebel positions started on Feb. 4 as the government's reaction to the capture of the towns of Parang, Bilaan and Maimbung by the Muslim forces in mid-January. In these battles, the Moro forces shot down two F86 Sabrejet fighters.

Meanwhile, sources at the V. Luna General Hospital in Quezon City said that hundreds of wounded PC and army soldiers had been flown in since Feb. 9. Many of these troopers were heard cursing their officers who, they said, abandoned their posts during the fighting. ●

STATE TROOPS DESECRATE DEAD

Desecration of the dead and public killings of suspected guerrillas by government troops have been reported as far north as Isabela and as far south as Sulu.

Some instances of these atrocities were reported in the international press by Robert Whyman of the Manchester Guardian, who witnessed the decomposing body of a slain New People's Army guerrilla on public display in Casiguran, Quezon.

The corpse, that of Joaquin Hibid, 28, was "decomposing in a buss of flies" near the market where it was "dumped a day earlier", Whyman wrote in a dispatch from Manila.

The local mayor told the correspondent that the slain guerrilla "would only be buried after everybody in the town and barrios has had a look".

This was standard practice by the PC to instill fear among the people and dissuade them from joining or supporting the NPA, Whyman reported.

Despite the atrocious practices, however, the AFP admitted in a press briefing last Jan. 12 that "insurgency far from receding is gaining new territory and winning new adherents". (BMP) ●

FILIPINOS... (From page 1)

that 4 out of 5 respondents (81.4%) were of the opinion that Marcos "intends to continue martial law indefinitely".

An even more significant majority (83.8%) expressed the opinion that the present Marcos government is "not democratic".

A dominant majority (77.5%) said that the "citizens' assemblies" which voted for the "new constitution" were not free.

On the Muslim "problem" in the Philippines, almost 4 out of 5 of those polled (78.3%) believe that "the Muslims fighting the government...have legitimate grievances".

In the first article of its series interpreting the survey data, the Philippine Times (Jan. 15) disclosed that more than 6 out of 10 Filipinos polled in the US voiced out "strong disapproval" of the Marcos martial law regime.

Observers noted that the survey data showed that the regime's gigantic public relations efforts to "sell" the blessings of martial law had little effect on Filipinos in the US. ●

U.S. CORPORATIONS AND MARTIAL LAW

[Part II. Report of the Corporate Information Center; November, 1973.]

While martial law has opened a dark era for 40 million Filipinos, it has inaugurated a bright new future for foreign big business in the Philippines, particularly for the dominant US multinational corporations.

The CIC report cites the relevant facts and figures: foreign oil companies have come in droves to take advantage of Marcos' ultraliberal policies on oil exploration. Between September 1972 and September 1973, no less than 25 US firms applied for huge investments in various fields; among them, General Motors, Chase Manhattan Bank, Levi Strauss Philippines, Boise-Cascade, G.D. Searle, Koppel, Petroleum Consultants, Universal Telectronics Financing and Security Consultancy.

Eleven other firms expressed a "desire to invest" in the Philippines, including the notorious ITT-Globe Mackay. Meanwhile, US corporations already in the country have been undertaking new or previously-planned expansion programs, among them Ford Philippines, Caltex, Arco Steel (in joint venture with the Marcos-owned Marsteel), First National City Bank, Cutler Hammer and the International Systems and Controls Corporation.

If there appears to be a sinister contrast between the windfalls foreign businesses are reaping and the deepening miseries the Filipinos are suffering, this is not incidental. Imperialism and national development are antithetical. Martial law was declared precisely to safeguard the threatened interests of US imperialism and its local collaborators against an awakening people. It was a preemptive move by the US-Marcos conspiracy intended to defuse the growing nationalist movement confronting the \$3 billion US investments in the Philippines, the largest block of US investments in any Southeast Asian country.

Martial law can then be seen as a logical episode in the history of US-RP economic relations. The CIC study traces this history.

US trade with the Philippines dates back to 1800. By the mid-19th century, the US was receiving 40% of Philippine exports, including sugar, hemp and tobacco. American victory in the Spanish-American War in 1898 ushered in an era of US colonial domination marked by a succession of unequal trade agreements engendering Filipino economic dependence on the US. The colonial pattern of trade thus established — raw material exports for manu-

factured imports — prevented the diversification and industrialization of the Philippine economy.

With the grant of "independence" on July 4, 1946, Philippine tariffs were instituted. The 1935 Constitution attempted to protect the country's natural resources by requiring 60 per cent Filipino ownership in any firm, but this provision did not cover existing American firms.

After World War II, the US took advantage of the war-torn condition of the country to further build its economic dominance. Through the US Trade Act of 1946, quotas were re-established and free-trade was extended over an eight-year period (after which there would be tariff increases of 5% a year until 1974, as provided for in the Laurel-Langley Agreement). The US president was given the discretionary power to withdraw economic concessions granted to the Philippines whenever nationalist opposition was seen to harm US interests. But the most oppressive provision of the 1946 Act was the insertion of the so-called "parity clause" into the Philippine Constitution, exempting US citizens and corporations from the constitutional restrictions limiting the exploitation of natural resources to Filipino citizens.

With the signing of the Laurel-Langley Agreement in 1955, US direct investments in the Philippines rose sharply. The agreement ended the "mutual free trade" period. It also served to increase Philippine reliance on trade with the US, and to protect US investments and "parity rights".

The scheduled expiration of the Laurel-Langley Agreement in 1974 is generally viewed as one of the major reasons for the imposition of martial law.

From 1929 to 1970, US investments in the Philippines rose from \$80 million to \$3 billion, with the sharpest increases registered after 1950, under "parity rights". US investments represent 80 per cent of all foreign investment in the Philippines as of 1970.

The Philippine economy is thus seen to be heavily anchored on US investments, which control strategic industries such as petroleum, manufacturing, automotive, mining, timber and agribusiness. And with the added privileges granted to foreign investors under martial law, US big business in the Philippines has attained an even more commanding position in the economy. ©

Highlanders fight Benguet mines

Bontoc peasants in the mountains of Mainit have risen to defend their lands against the interests of Benguet Consolidated, Inc. (BCI), one of the biggest gold mining firms in the country.

The peasants denounced the opening of gold mines in their area since this would result in the eventual pollution and destruction of their rice fields, rivers, and virgin forests.

Resisting the attempts of the BCI to encroach upon their ancestral lands, the Mainit peasants set up stone barricades to protect their homes. Hired goons of the local mayor, having been bribed by the BCI, then tore down the barricades last Jan. 18.

Angered by this provocation, hundreds of peasants, young and old alike, marched at daybreak of Jan. 20 to the BCI camp.

The women peasants, who like their menfolk carried bolos, were at the forefront. They fell upon the 6-man BCI team who were led by Engr. Lachica. Outfought, the BCI team fled to the forests.

In a public meeting held last Jan. 24, the Mainit residents, represented by Mr. Akyat, Mrs. Dirige and Mrs. Macling, disputed BCI



claims and demanded the immediate cessation of all BCI operations.

They argued that "when the mines have been exhausted of their gold, we shall have lost our lands and our fields shall have been wasted. What will happen to our children?"

The peasants further argued that any mining operation in Mainit would pollute the Balituan and Chico Rivers, and annihilate all available fish and other food resources and render the water unfit for ir-

(Turn to next page)

The Muslims' just struggle



With the liberation of Jolo by the Bangsa Moro Army, and the dictatorship's desperate efforts to retake the island by indiscriminate bombing and strafing, the Muslim liberation struggle has again been thrust to the fore of public attention.

Why, and for what, are the Muslims fighting?

The Muslims are fighting for self-determination -- for their inalienable right as a people to shape their destiny with their own hands.

The Muslims in the Philippines have been building and developing their own cultural, economic and political institutions since the 15th century. They successfully defended their lands and their way of life against the various foreign invaders who came to colonize the country.

Today, they are again fighting to protect their way of life against the forced "integration" desired by the dictatorship, an "integration" which means domination over the Muslims and the disintegration of their cultural identity for the profit of Marcos and the foreign monopoly firms interested in plundering the resources and people of Mindanao.

The Muslims' struggle for self-determination involves the defense of their ancestral lands, since their social life and cultural identity must have a geographic and economic basis. For decades now all sorts of "Christian" hacenderos, loggers, miners and "settlers" have been using naked force and legal tricks to dispossess the Muslims of their ancestral lands, seas and forests. Encouraged by the dictatorship's policy of attracting foreign capital, the biggest landgrabbers in the south have been giant US monopoly firms, like the United Fruit Company, which now owns thousands of hectares of land in several Mindanao provinces.

The Muslims are also fighting to defend and to assert their democratic rights -- basic rights which the fascist dictatorship is trying

to suppress completely.

The dictatorship has tried everything to disarm the Muslims in order to make them defenseless against political oppression and economic exploitation, but this has only made them hold on tighter to their guns. Like all other freedom-loving Filipinos, the Muslims are fighting against the martial law curtailment of free speech, free assembly and due process of law. They are fighting against the Marcos reign of terror exemplified in the infamous Jabidah massacre and the scheme to dismember the Muslim areas and put them under "military governors", as has already happened in Tawitawi and Cotabato.

The struggle of the Muslims for self-determination and democracy is a just struggle. If it has taken the form of an armed struggle -- a people's war -- against the US-Marcos dictatorship, it is because their past experience and the military violence unleashed against them by the regime have made them realize that this is the only correct and effective way to defend their liberty and way of life.

It is entirely just for the Muslims, under the leadership of the Moro National Liberation Front, to seek to remove themselves and their territories from the control and domination of the fascist dictatorship. This is also the goal of the New People's Army and the other armed groups waging armed struggle against the dictatorship.

The Preparatory Commission of the National Democratic Front (NDF) fully supports the just struggle of the Muslim people. The 8th point in its Ten-Point Program calls on the Filipino people to "Support the national minorities, especially those in Mindanao and the mountain provinces, in their struggle for self-determination and democracy".

The Preparatory Commission of the NDF, together with the Muslim freedom fighters, the NPA and other anti-fascist armed groups, is certain that more Jolos will be liberated and the people with arms in hand will eventually overthrow the dictatorship and win their freedom.

HIGHLANDERS... (From page 3)

The peasants refused to be deceived by the BCI promise of installing anti-pollutant devices, since they were reminded of the destruction caused by a copper mining firm (Black Mountain) on the flora and fauna in the vicinity of Beguio.

During the meeting, an audience of 300 people who apparently supported the struggle of the Mainit peasants, booed Atty. Bueno and Engr. Perfecto, the BCI representatives.

Later, the peasants said, "This does not mean that we have won against the enemy; this will be a long fight". ●

In a bid to create an aura of legitimacy for his regime, Marcos has been inviting one head of state after another to Manila.

Prime Minister Whitlam of Australia, who came early February, proved to be of a different political shade, however. In a private conversation, he warned Marcos that the continued imprisonment of Senator Aquino could affect relations between the two countries, according to a Reuter dispatch in Brisbane's Courier-Mail of Feb. 12.

Going further, Whitlam assured students in a speech at the University of the Philippines of his constant awareness of the "deep concern which students felt for the processes of democracy" and that he "looked forward to the recreation of Filipino democracy embodying the aspirations of the Filipino people".

Recently, an American church official came and asked for the release of Dr. Nemesio Prudente, former PCC President and church lay leader. "Sure," Enrile replied, "just hand over \$1,000,000! Who says corruption is gone?"

Poiled by the resistance of the urban poor settlers, the Marcos dictatorship recently resorted to arson last week to eject 500 Navaotas families from their homes. The dictatorship then prevented the settlers from rebuilding their homes on the same site. Marcos and his Japanese cronies intend to use the site for a multi-million port complex funded by the Japanese.

There are 17 "presidential decrees" which are not for public disclosure, as of August 1973. Some decrees, it appears, have to remain hidden, just like Marcos' wealth.

Fascist troops recently committed acts of oppression against unarmed peasants of Davao Oriental during a "search and destroy" campaign. Failing to find an NPA unit, they arrested and beat up innocent barrio folks. One peasant was forced to strip and dance.

Suddenly, a shot rang out from the nearby forest. The fascist bullies fell over each other as they scampered for cover. A hunter then came out of the forest.

"Akala ng mga gagang FC ay NPA," our informant chuckled. ●