

# LIBERATION

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## LIBERATION --

*the official publication of the National Democratic Front (NDF) welcomes comments, suggestions and contributions from its readers nationwide.*

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## EDITORIAL



# Of hamlets and palaces

What is the regime up to? Building strategic hamlets in Laac, Davao del Norte, in a doomed effort to apply a tactic that failed in Vietnam.

Such hamlets are meant to kill people. First the people's army, once they can be isolated from the people who have been forced to accept the AFP's protection. Then the people themselves, of diseases, hunger, or worse. Such is the twisted logic of counter-insurgency, killing people in order to save them.

But hamlets are not the only structures the regime has built. Counter-insurgency dictates not just open terrorism, but also deception. Divide the people from their army and leaders (hence the propaganda barrage against the growing NPA and the radical opposition); but also divert them, lest they learn too well from life.

And so, among others, a film festival. Of course, there had to be a film palace, to be built at breakneck haste, like previous crash projects by the Manila Bay.

The film palace was not meant to kill people.

But it did, much like the other palace by the Pasig river. Remember the favored metaphor of 1972? A sick society needed major surgery. Too bad that in the process the old political order had to die, and quite a few people with it.

Somehow, the regime's current projects lack the frantic energy of its early gimmickry. They appear old, tired, tinged with sickness and death. There are persistent rumors about Marcos' health, but what is more significant are the obvious evidences of a sick regime. Its hamlets and palaces are monuments to death.

And the people, what are they up to? Also building, but not death monuments. Instead, living, vigorous movements and a variety of organizations, both secret and open. Their escalating protests and struggles are the freshest and most hopeful signs of life in 1982.

There is an even more significant structure rising — a national united front. Built on the solid foundations of organized workers and peasants, it has grown with the increasing participation of the middle classes, both intelligentsia and entrepreneurs. It has place for more — every Filipino who refuses to passively watch the Philippines go to the dogs under the US-Marcos dictatorship. ■

February 1982 LIBERATION



## MAINSTREAM



*Then and now: youth activists spearhead protests.*

## Ethnic music, rhymes and chants

By MINDA RODRIGO

With torches held aloft, the marchers made their way through the chilly night, passing by the dormitories, calling out to their friends to join them. Singing and chanting, they crossed the campus, until finally, they settled at the sunken garden where they gathered around a big bonfire.

The participants were mostly students, but there were also residents from the outlying communities in the university, slum dwellers, workers and even tribal Filipinos who came for this special night.

It was the 29th of January, the climax of a week-long observance of Youth Week that tried to recall the First Quarter Storm of 1970 and the Diliman Commune of 1971. The celebration was capped by a vigil at the University of the Philippines campus at Diliman, Quezon City which lasted up to six o'clock the following morning. All through that night, there were songs and sharing of experiences by those who witnessed the First Quarter Storm.

### Remembering the barricades

"Tension was rising to a pitch in those days. One morning, we saw a phalanx of Metrocom soldiers coming close to the College of Engineering building. We had made it clear to the authorities earlier that we did

not want any military forces on the UP campus. Now, they were sending soldiers.

"At the sight of the approaching soldiers, there was momentary panic. Everybody seemed to be running in all directions, not quite sure what to do next. Suddenly, above the confusion, someone shouted: '*Mga kasama, kantahin natin ang pambansang awit!*' (Comrades, let us sing the national anthem!)

"Everyone stopped in his tracks. We sang the national anthem and when we came to the last line, '*... ang mamatay nang dahil sa iyo,*' (to die for you), I couldn't believe it. Was I actually going to die? Now? When the singing was over, another voice commanded: '*Mga kasama, ibaba natin ang mga silya at mesa. Magtayo tayo ng barikadal!*' (Comrades, let us bring down the chairs and tables. Let us put up the barricades!)

Thus related a participant in the Diliman Commune to the rapt audience that night. Sharing his views on those 10 days of February 1971 were former UP President Salvador P. Lopez and Dean of Student Affairs Armando J. Malay who said that the incident remains a high point in the history of the university. More importantly, Lopez said, the issues that sparked the Commune as well as the First Quarter Storm that preceded it are still very much with us. He added

that now more than ever, the students should be more militant in asserting their rights.

Malay recounted that nowhere was the unity of the university community more evident than in those times. Students, faculty members, employees and community residents were one in resisting military intervention in the campus, he said.

### Campus unity reaffirmed

That unity was felt once more during the commemorative night. Community residents turned up to take part in the celebration while UP employees belted three Tagalog songs to the delight of the crowd. In a surprising move, the UP police force agreed to reroute traffic so that the students could assemble on the street fronting the College of Arts and Sciences.

As the audience settled down, songs were sang, poems were read and plays were presented. Teatrang Mulat, a theater outfit, specializing in children's plays, presented a story about the struggle for power between a mouse and a lion. The play stressed the need for uniting in the struggle against tyranny which was symbolized by the lion. It was followed by another play depicting the plight of women forced into prostitution.

Participants in this year's observance of the First Quarter Storm remarked that it was a particularly creative and daring commemoration. Indeed, with conditions more repressive than they ever were during the demonstrations and the barricades of the early '70s, today's youth activists have had to devise more creative, though no less daring forms of collective protests.

The years immediately following the imposition of martial law on Sept. 21, 1972 were marked by widespread arrests and suppression of the most basic rights. As a result, public protest actions were banned. But even this did not stop the youth from expressing their opposition to fascist rule.

In the early years of martial law, protest actions in the universities were muted. Dissent could be discerned through such actions as the wearing of black arm bands and ribbons during key events like the



declaration of martial law. In the dormitories, students clanged their spoons, forks and plates to the beat of the slogan "Marcos-Hitler-Diktador-Tuta!" This would last for a few minutes.

In strategic places across the campus, paper tapes calling for the overthrow of the US-Marcos dictatorship were pasted on classroom walls, the comfort rooms and the waiting sheds. The signs would become bigger and more conspicuous in the years to come. In 1974, UP Fine Arts students hung a Marcos effigy from their building where it attracted the attention of countless students who were going to the main library.

### The historic La Tondeña strike

The turning point for the open mass movement in the cities was the workers' strike at La Tondeña factory on Oct. 24, 1975. The strike signalled the resurgence of an open united front among different sectors of society. Stretching the limits of "legality," workers, students, progressive churchpeople and other groups coalesced to stage joint rallies. Serving as the common target of their protests was US imperialism and the Marcos puppet government.

The historic strike was soon followed by an assembly of 700 people on Nov. 26, 1975, inside the Sta. Cruz church. On Dec. 6 that year, the first biggest multi-sectoral rally attended by at least 6,000 people was staged at Plaza Bustillos. By the late '70s, as the rallies and other open protest struggles began to draw in bigger and bigger crowds, the regime resorted to arresting demonstrators and speakers. In several instances, huge rallies attacking the dictatorship were met with water tanks and truncheon blows.

To these repressive measures, the youth and student sector devised a new method of propaganda and agitation: the lightning rally (*raling iglap*). This particular form of protest action was carried out by activists of no more than fifty who would meet at a busy public place at an appointed time. At a signal, the leaders would clap their hands to start the rally. The protesters would then come out of the crowd, band together and run down the streets, chanting, painting revolution-

ary slogans on the walls and distributing leaflets to onlookers. All of these would take place in a matter of minutes and be over by the time policemen and intelligence agents arrived at the scene.

Another propaganda and agitation method used was the lightning play. Revolutionary stage artists would put up make-shift theaters in market places or on busy streets to attract the attention of passersby and to explain the standard issues of the day. Because the plays mirrored the lives of the ordinary people, it was not difficult for the audience to identify themselves with the characters.

The plays were sometimes amusing, at times agitating. But always, they showed the people's conditions and the urgency of changing the present system. In addition, songs voicing the plight of the oppressed were composed and sung in public gatherings. These included love songs that tell of love between comrades who find their relationship even more complete because of their commitment not only to each other but to the people as well. Even the countryside rang with songs celebrating the victories of the New People's Army (NPA) in its tactical offensives against government troopers and in its broad mass support.

### New forms of protest actions

In recent months, creative modes of expression have been developed such as the use of ethnic music to

keep aflame the spirit of popular resistance. Last Jan. 17, for example, student demonstrators at UP Diliman urged their schoolmates to join them in their protest action, not by the usual sloganeering but by means of singing, playing native instruments, clanging keys and clapping their hands.

In the mass meeting that followed, more original songs were sung and a *tanaga* (an ethnic poem consisting of seven lines, each made up of seven syllables) was recited. Between these cultural numbers, speakers exposed the fake lifting of martial law on Jan. 17 last year and denounced the establishment of the New Republic as the institutionalization of fascism.

As the revolutionary mass movement gains ground nationwide, more varied forms of propaganda are being developed. Enriched by their experience with the masses, activists have come to devise ingenious ways of explaining and promoting the national democratic struggle through songs, chants, poems, plays, posters and the written word.

With repression always looming over the slightest sign of dissent, progressive writers and artists realize the need to integrate with the masses, to learn from past experience and to constantly evolve new methods of expressing protest and resistance. The First Quarter Storm of 1970 made possible the widening of the people's struggle for their national and democratic rights; today's various forms of collective actions will deepen that struggle. ▲



Students march around UP campus to rally more people for vigil.



The year 1981 was a turning point for the revolutionary forces in the Philippines.

The most important development of 1981 was the entry into the advanced substage of the strategic defensive of the Filipino people's war against the US-Marcos regime. This entry into a qualitatively new and higher phase of struggle was announced by the central committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) last Dec. 26, the 13th anniversary of the Party's re-establishment and was reported by *Ang Bayan*, official CPP publication.

Considered "the biggest leap so far in the history of the reestablished Party," the entry into the advanced substage was marked by:

- ▶the frequency of guerilla operations and the vigorous growth and expansion of the New People's Army (NPA);
- ▶the establishment of revolutionary mass organizations and the launching of many mass actions in both urban and rural areas;
- ▶the close coordination among the various segments of the revolutionary movement; and
- ▶the setting up of a more definite organizational form of the revolutionary united front.

#### Conditions for revolution

The growing strength of the revolutionary forces comes at a time when the entire country is reeling from the worst economic crisis since the second world war. Politically, the national situation is characterized by the sharp polarization between the Filipino people on one hand and the US-Marcos dictatorship, on the other. Even the anti-Marcos politicians are now intensifying their opposition to the regime. For its part, the Moro National Liberation Front has persevered in armed struggle and it scored significant military and political victories in the past year.

A rough indicator of the increasing success of the resistance forces is the frequency and regularity with which the controlled media reports NPA offensives against the enemy. Even the establishment press can no longer ignore the growing strength

# 1981: A landmark year

By DELLA MIRANDA



of the people's army as it almost daily reports raids, ambushes and disarming operations conducted by NPA guerillas.

The year 1981 was a landmark year for the New People's Army as that year saw the launching of more developed and more frequent tactical operations compared to the previous years. Guerilla operations were conducted in more and more areas in the country, in practically all major islands and provinces.

*Ang Bayan* reports that in 1981, at least 324 rifles and handguns were seized by the Red fighters in 90 successive operations in 29 provinces. While the enemy forces were better-equipped in terms of war material and number of personnel, the people's army was able to overcome these tactical disadvantages through its high morale, strong sense of discipline, mastery of the terrain and mass support, *Ang Bayan* added.

The NPA's higher level of military capability is also evident in its capacity to maneuver and creatively use different forms of fighting when it sprung ambushes on small and medium-sized enemy formations last year. Sparrow operations conducted by one or a few Red partisans or even mass activists also contributed a significant number of arms to the NPA arsenal.

But equally important, *Ang Bayan* noted, is the fact that these

disarming operations contributed not only to the NPA's firepower but also to its range of combat experiences.

#### Advance of mass movement

Away from the battlefield, the pulse of the revolutionary movement also throbbed with life with the launching of many mass actions. Hundreds of thousands of Filipinos in cities and barrios marched out into the streets last year to fight for their national and democratic interests. These mass actions were organized and coordinated at higher levels, mobilizing people in bigger numbers and expanding to wider areas, the CPP publication stated.

The mass actions peaked from March to June last year as the people surged forth in their numbers to take part in rallies, demonstrations and marches to denounce the regime's series of "fakes" — a fake lifting of martial law, followed by a fake plebiscite and election and culminating in the inauguration of a fake New Republic.

While the boycott campaign mobilized various sectors and classes, sectoral issues also roused and mobilized masses of people into action. Workers demanded their rights to higher wages and better working conditions in at least 257 strikes that rocked factories and offices throughout the country, causing a loss of three million manhours.

On the other hand, peasant struggles centered on the demand for genuine land reform and the resistance to fascist repression. In the more advanced NPA guerilla fronts, the peasant masses openly confronted their landlords and demanded a reduction in land rents.

For their part, students throughout the nation launched boycotts, marches and rallies to demand lower tuition fees, autonomous student councils, campus press freedom and other democratic reforms in the educational system. Jeepney drivers denounced the regime's rerouting scheme which would drive them away from Manila's major thoroughfares while teachers demanded salary increases which were long due them. Other professionals and groups, including newspapermen and political detainees, also launched protest actions to advance their rights. ▲



# Countryside medics of the NPA



*Female NPA medic extends dental care to farmers.*

By RUTH PLARIDEL

Countryside medics trek the hills of their barrios in Eastern Mindanao to make a house call on a sick villager. Strapped across their shoulders are small, worn-out bags filled with antibiotics, tinctures, homemade herbal preparations and acupuncture needles. They are also armed with a good dose of knowledge in folk medicine, acupuncture and acupressure.

The medics are members of health committees serving two guerilla fronts in Eastern Mindanao. The region, which includes the provinces of Agusan del Sur, Agusan del Norte, Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental, Surigao del Norte and parts of Misamis Oriental, has always been neglected by the health care system ran by the government. Thus, the New People's Army (NPA) undertook the task of initiating a medical program in the region. With volunteers from the masses, they established medical teams and committees that respond to the needs of the barrio people to whom doctors and nurses as well as hospitals and expensive medicines, have always been beyond reach.

## Peasant medical activists

There are 63 medical activists, divided into 39 medical teams, in the two guerilla fronts. This is a far cry from the government's ratio

of one public health physician for every 5,300 people in Mindanao. None of the countryside medics are graduates of medical schools. All children of peasants, they received very minimal formal education. Of the 63, only six finished high school. Yet, they are all skilled in dentistry, midwifery, suture of wounds and clinical diagnosis of simple diseases.

The medical activists do their rounds in high spirits and with sincere concern for the well-being of their patients. They do not charge exorbitant fees for their services; as volunteers, they do their work for free. But they cannot help it when people they have cured rush to them in gratitude and give them chickens, eggs and vegetables as *utang na loob*. Yet, they get their utmost satisfaction in knowing that they are helping poor folk like themselves rise from the mire of poverty and ill health.

Excitement hits a medical team when they are called upon to treat a wounded guerilla of the NPA. Here, they put their surgical skills into practice as they remove a bullet embedded in the comrade's muscle, or as they apply first aid to broken bones. Treating comrades in the NPA is their direct contribution to armed struggle.

The Red fighters, like the common folk, are also frequent

victims of schistosomiasis (a parasitical disease that is common in Mindanao), tuberculosis, rheumatism, whooping cough and ulcer. Because the guerillas live as the masses do, they also share the diseases that easily breed in the poor living conditions of the people.

## Continuous training

The training of more and more medical activists is a continuous undertaking. When there are enough volunteers from the rural folk, the medical units conduct a six-month training course. To the new students, they impart the skills they have learned from the initial training given by the NPA medics. The training course is outlined in a manual called the *Batayang Kursong Medikal* (Basic Medical Course).

In contrast to the westernized and commercialized values and methods taught in formal schools of medicine, revolutionary medical training stresses the principle of service to the people, the importance of proletarian values in medical work and the correct attitude regarding health care. The students also tackle how the health program can serve armed struggle and how, in turn, armed struggle paves the way for a just and democratic society where the basic needs, including health care, will be available to all Filipinos.



Part of the health campaign launched by the Eastern Mindanao health committee last year was the staging of mass education, seminars on health care and proper nutrition. Held in three towns, the seminars were attended by a total of 543 peasants, including men, women and young adults.

Collectively, students and teachers identify common folk remedies and superstitions. They debate the scientific merits of old beliefs and practices, but those without true value, they discard. Gradually, the chains of ignorance and superstition which have for centuries bound the minds of poor peasants, are being unshackled.

Armed with their knowledge, the medics help organize the people to undertake disease-preventive measures such as building simple latrines, digging compost pits, regular cleaning of houses and yards, and planting of vegetables and medicinal herbs.

#### Mass support

The success of medical activists in the countryside provides a stark contrast to the dismal failure of government health programs. The admirable quality and quantity of support enjoyed by the revolutionary medical program is something that will amaze public health personnel who have found people apathetic to government health programs.

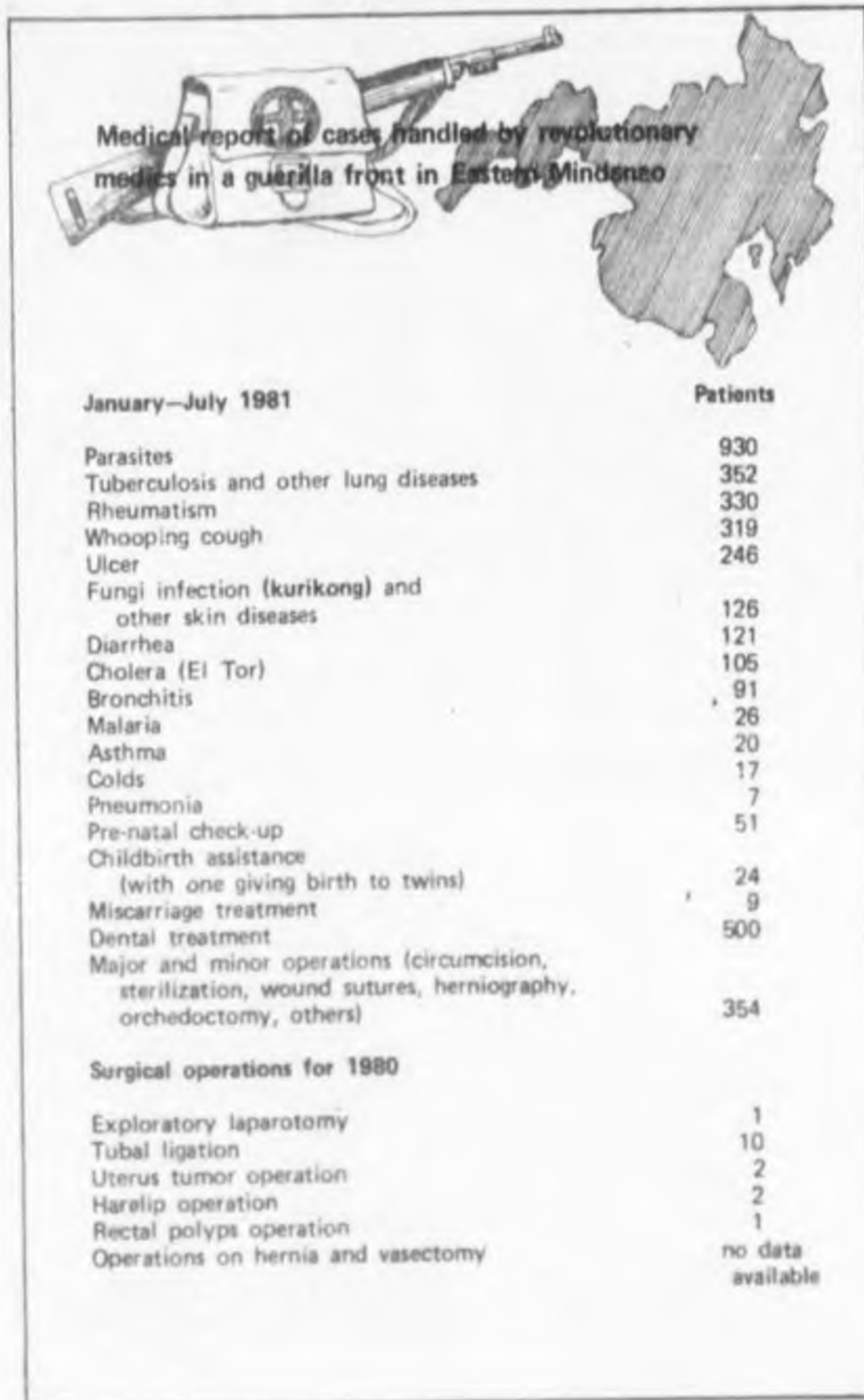
The factors for the revolutionary health program's success, however, are easy to comprehend. First, because of its sincere concern for and its trust and reliance on the masses, the revolutionary medical program is supported and accepted by the masses themselves. The program, in its few years of existence, has taught the people how to achieve self-reliance in health care. Extensive use of herbal medicine and simple but appropriate medical technology has greatly reduced the people's dependence on expensive foreign drugs and medical equipment. The services offered by the volunteer health workers have freed the barrio-folk from the clutches of medical extortionists.

Since the start of the revolutionary health program, the people now have more trust and confidence in themselves and have a better grasp

of their problems. They have long tired of government medical personnel whose concept of health care is an erratic doling-out of medicines. "We don't need those Myracofs and Chloromycetins," the barrio-folk once told a group of government doctors. "What we need is land."

Secondly, unlike government health programs, the revolutionary

health programs does not pretend to be the solution to the people's problems. Revolutionary medics realize that bringing health care to the people is only one aspect of a protracted struggle against injustice and poverty. True liberation from disease cannot be achieved unless the political and economic conditions that breed ill health among the poor are eliminated. ▲







IN NORTHERN LUZON

## Mang Teban, peasant medic



Mang Teban and his wife live in a little barrio at the foot of the Sierra Madre mountains in Northern Luzon. Both 50 years old and of peasant stock, husband and wife are health workers who have undergone training in basic medical skills given by the local health program. Daily, they walk through the familiar paths of their barrio and answer the calls of duty. Like other barrio health workers, they serve their community as conscientized medical workers committed to improve the lot of their hardworking but impoverished people.

"When we learned that the program really helps the poor, we became its ardent supporters," Mang Teban says, his twinkling eyes adding a glow to his face topped with cropped white hair. As patients suffering from weak lungs, he and his wife came to know about the health unit. When they got well, they eagerly volunteered for training. Now, Mang Teban only shrugs at the time before the program when he had to bring his sick child down the steep mountain trails and across the river, to see the town doctor. He remembers well the raging thunderstorm that day as he carried his son slumped across one shoulder while his other arm held on to a frail umbrella.

But Mang Teban, together with his neighbors who share his thinking and enthusiasm, has learned to transform painful memories into vigorous revolutionary action. With his children grown up, he and his wife devote most of their time to the activities of the community.

The people in Mang Teban's barrio have organized themselves into three different *samahans* (organizations), one for the men, another for the women and a third

for the youth. Part of these organizations' collective fund is used to finance the medical training program offered to new batches of health workers once or twice a year. Another portion is given to the local units of the NPA. The remainder is allotted for other community projects.

Mang Teban recalls the first time the NPA unit came to their barrio in 1979. He had just finished supper with his wife and family when he was summoned by a neighbor to an "emergency meeting" at the barrio captain's house.

The barrio official's humble home was dimly lighted with gas lamps when Mang Teban arrived. He recognized several of his neighbors, but they were all mysteriously silent. Then the barrio captain called their attention and quietly announced the presence of their young guests: a unit of the NPA.

The farmers discussed with the guerillas the conditions prevailing

in the barrio. They were then particularly troubled by the government's land reform program. Gradually, the farmers had fallen out of grace with the local Samahang Nasyon, unable to pay all the the high dues required to be a member of good standing. The dream of finally owning their land as promised by the regime was not only more remote, they now also found themselves heavily indebted to government institutions and rural banks.

After the talk, the farmers realized that they could do more than just brood over their problems. They decided to back out from the Samahang Nasyon and instead channeled their energies into organizing among themselves.

Mang Teban says he is happily involved in the movement despite the ominous presence of a military detachment nearby. The barrio people, he says, do not feel as hopeless as before, now that they have found strength in themselves and have their own army to defend them. A



Revolutionary health worker trains new batch of farmer medics.



# SPARKS

## ALLIANCE DENOUNCES ANTIQUE MASSACRE

The Panay Broad Alliance for Justice and Peace, composed of Panay lawyers, priests, nuns, professionals and students, demanded an immediate investigation of the Culasi massacre and the punishment of the military personnel who were responsible for it.

Five people were killed and scores of others were injured when Philippine Constabulary (PC) troopers sprayed armalite bullets at some 500 demonstrators in Culasi, Antique last Dec. 19.

The demonstrators were marching towards the Culasi municipal hall when a contingent of PC troopers blocked their way and demanded to talk with their leader. The marchers shouted in unison, "We are all leaders" and some of them tried to lift the bamboo pole with which the troopers had blocked their way. At this point, the soldiers immediately started firing, instantly killing the five farmers who had attempted to lift the bamboo pole.

The barriofolk of Culasi had decided to hold the rally to denounce the deployment of a new PC company in the area, the forced evacuation of residents in the remote barrios which were suspected of harboring NPAs and the seizure of private property by the soldiers. They were also demanding a reduction in municipal taxes on vegetables and other farm products.

## CAGAYAN CHDF DESERT FROM PC

The Philippine Constabulary disarmed all the members of the Civilian Home Defense Forces (CHDF) in Lasam, Cagayan after 10 CHDF members deserted their posts last October.

The 10 CHDFs engaged troopers of the 51st PC ranger battalion in a battle last Oct. 29 when the latter tried to arrest the deserters.

According to *Baringkuas*, mass newspaper in Northeastern Luzon, the CHDF men brought along their rifles when they went to barrio Magsaysay, Lasam to make contact with the New People's Army.

Here, they encountered the PC troopers. A battle ensued and up to the present, it is not yet known how many of the CHDFs died.

The 10 CHDF members decided to desert because the PC did not give them their salaries and they were treated by the PC troopers "like animals and ordered around like servants." (BMP)

## NPA<sub>s</sub> DISARM CHDF IN PAMPANGA

Five firearms in five minutes — this was what an NPA unit in Western Central Luzon achieved when it swooped down on a CHDF detachment in San Juan, Mexico, Pampanga last Dec. 14.

The disarming operation yielded three M-16 rifles, one Garand rifle, one carbine and many bullets.

Not a single shot was fired during the offensive.

## KMU HOLDS WORKERS' FORUM

Some 500 workers from 60 unions held a labor forum last Jan. 28 at St. Joseph's College, Quezon City. Here, Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) leaders assailed the anti-labor and anti-strike laws imposed by the regime.

The regime has now resorted to institutionalized forms of suppression to stop intensifying labor unrest, the workers said. They cited Batasang Pambansa 130 which they claim is as repressive as the previously enforced law, Presidential Decree 823. While PD 823 banned strikes in so-called vital industries, the newly-enacted BP 130 empowers the labor minister and the president to declare illegal any strike in whatever industry for reasons of "national interests."

KMU also assessed its performance last year and discussed ways of dealing with threats on and arrests of union leaders and members and of counteracting management-initiated violence at the picketline. (BMP)

## QUEZON RESIDENTS DENOUNCE MILITARIZATION

Seven relatives of victims of military atrocities and two persons who were shot during a rally in Guinyangan, Quezon last year, confronted Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and other top defense officials at Camp Crame last Jan. 11 to demand action on intensified militarization in Quezon.

Enrile met with the Quezon residents and promised to "look into the matter."

Also presented to the officials was a letter condemning massacres and other atrocities committed by the military in Quezon. The letter was signed by 3,250 residents of Gen. Luna, Guinyangan, Macalalag, Tagkawayan, Buenavista, Calauag and Lopez, all towns in Quezon. It also contained a list of military abuses perpetrated against the people in the province. These abuses include "salvaging" (summary execution), kidnaping, torture and harassment of barriofolk. (BMP)

## NPA STATEMENT ON THE MANGOC "KIDNAPING"

The following statement was released by the National Democratic Front (NDF) in relation to the "kidnaping" of a group of businessmen with the "kidnaping" of Gerry Santos.

Officially deny that the New People's Army (NPA) had anything to do with the so-called Mangoc "kidnaping."

The killing for jewelry is not a preoccupation of the NPA for it consisted with the principle of uphold.

However, we sympathize with the Mangoc family as they have been terrorized by the Mangoc widow's emotional and arrogant use of power.

The most pathetic victim, Teresita Mangoc, must now face scrutiny for telling a story that is incredible to be believed. A.



## CROSSCURRENTS

THE FARMERS OF HACIENDAS SAN ANTONIO-STA. ISABEL

# "Must we inherit oppression?"



Above: Hacienda farmers ponder their fate. Right: 13,000 hectares of the biggest tobacco plantations in the country.



By LEON FORTALEZA

In the northwest corner of Isabela province, in the verdant Cagayan River Valley, are nestled the vast tobacco haciendas of San Antonio and Sta. Isabel. For hundreds of years, any weary traveler who paused to rest at the crest of any of the hills in the haciendas beheld the same rustic scene: huge trees, overgrown with vines, towering over dusty mountain roads; small rivers and streams twisting through the land like threads of silver; farmers laboring knee-deep in the brown mud of their paddy fields; old women squatting in the tree shade and smoking big tobacco cigars; barefoot children chasing cackling chickens with bamboo sticks.

But these days, the peaceful scene has changed. Some of the farmers no longer go out to the fields. Armed men prowl around the barrios, accosting frightened farmers. Outsiders, including priests and even weary travelers, are unwelcome. At twilight, the children and the barrio folk rush home to beat the 8 p.m. curfew. By nightfall, the country lanes are deserted except for armed patrols. Lights start winking out in thatch-roofed huts.

Through the night, the barrio folk tensely listen for the inevitable sound of guns being fired in the air. Sometimes, they hear the pounding of rifle butts at the door of one of their neighbors. At other times, they fearfully watch orange tongues of fire leap into the night sky as the armed men burn down the house of yet another farmer. And always, during these nightly rituals of violence, there is the ominous rumble of laughter, curses and gunshots from the armed men.

### Anca brings troubles

The armed men sowing terror in the haciendas are the security guards of Anca Inc., an agribusiness firm owned by coconut magnate Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. and lawyer-businessman Antonio Carag. (see related story) Anca hired the guards after it purchased in April 1980, the 11,000-hectare Hacienda San Antonio and the 2,085-hectare Hacienda Sta. Isabel from the Compañia General de Tabacos de Filipinas (Tabacalera), a wholly-owned Spanish company which had acquired the estates in 1891 through

a royal grant. Carag completed the purchase of the estates from the Manahan family, long-time administrators of the haciendas, for the reported amount of P80 million.

Anca plans to develop the haciendas into modern plantations of coconut, coffee, cotton, yellow corn and mongo beans. The 5,000 tenants will be reduced to agricultural laborers who will be paid daily wages. The key to the project will link the two haciendas to the chain of coconut estates and coconut-related businesses controlled by Cojuangco and Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile.

The Tabacalera-Anca deal caught the farmers by surprise. For nearly two centuries, they endured the infamous labor discipline and hardships under the Tobacco Monopoly (1781-1881) and Tabacalera (1881-1981) in the hope of owning the land they had tilled and planted their dreams on for generations. They still remembered the promise handed down by their ancestors that in the 100th year of Tabacalera, the land would be given to them.

Some of the farmers had even pinned their hopes on a presidential directive issued by Marcos two weeks after the declaration of martial law ordering the acquisition of the Tabacalera property for distribution to farmers. (DE, Oct. 6 '72) But nothing came out of the measure and the farmers saw the folly of relying on the regime's laws. They realized the directive was but another propaganda gimmick and another broken promise.

In 1981, the 100th year of Tabacalera came but there was no rejoicing among the farmers. Only Tabacalera and the Marcos regime celebrated the occasion. The dictator paid tribute to Tabacalera and granted the firm an award with the "hope that it will have another 100 years more in the Philippines." (BT, Dec. 23)

It is a hope not shared by the farmers. For them, Tabacalera is the very epitome of the oppressive Spanish colonizer. For one century, the company had harassed and cheated them out of the real value of their tobacco produce. They were required to work on a share basis on an average of one to three hectares each and to pay high land rent. Like the workers in the almacén (warehouse), they were given less than their just share and were usually paid only after several months' wait, putting them at the mercy of users who charged interest from 30 to 50 percent every



six months. Some of the women workers were sexually abused by the Tabacalera administrators and supervisors.

The farmers have no reason either to celebrate the Tabacalera-Anca deal and set their hopes on it. For them, the deal means the acquisition of a new master who is as exploitative and even more oppressive than the masters of old. "Must we inherit oppression, not land?" a wrinkled old woman asks bitterly in Ilocano. "What has become of our hopes and dreams?" For now, their hopes and dreams seem to be as hazy and ephemeral as the tobacco smoke curling from their cigars.

#### The yoke of agribusiness

The farmers' alliance, the **Alyansa ti Mannalon ti Asyenda San Antonio-Sta. Isabel**, harbors no illusions that Anca's agribusiness venture will bring them prosperity and progress. The Alyansa says the project will only mean "severe economic and social dislocation for the 30,000 inhabitants of the two haciendas." The Alyansa also contends that agribusiness in general, which is part of the regime's export-based economic strategy, will only concentrate large landholdings in a few hands and strengthen agricultural monopolies.

There is a validity to the argument of the Alyansa. Already, Anca has sent feelers to owners of contiguous properties in Isabela regarding the firm's expansion plans. To be sure, the Anca

scheme will further tighten the yoke of semi-feudalism in Cagayan Valley. Of all the regions in the country, Cagayan Valley is already the most heavily dependent on agriculture, fishing and logging. Its farm workers number 67 percent or 778,000 of the 1,633,144 regional population. Only some 26.1 percent or 185,000 have other work aside from farming. In the province of Cagayan alone, there are 437 landlords who own from 50 to 7,000 hectares of land; 15 of them own 1,150 to 7,000 hectares. Isabela has 45 landlords who own from 50 to 7,527 hectares.

Who will benefit from the Anca project? "Certainly not the farmers," says the Alyansa. "Only the local comprador-bourgeoisie like Cojuangco and the foreign monopoly capitalists will benefit." The Alyansa adds that the Anca scheme also means low wages for the peasants who will be turned into daily wage-earners, a huge army of unemployed workers will also be created as a result of the mechanization of farms. A look into wage and employment conditions of farm workers bears this out.

The average net income of the small coconut landowning peasant relying solely on his own and his family's labor is only P5,908 a year. This is way below the P9,663 set as the subsistence minimum for a family of six in the rural areas. Existing agribusiness firms in Cagayan Valley employ only 14,363 workers or 6.7 percent of the labor force in the region.

#### New counter-insurgency tactic

Agribusiness has another use in the countryside aside from raising greater profits for big landlords and capitalists. Agribusiness has also been employed as a counter-insurgency device to liquidate backward relations of production which are the root cause of peasant unrest. This is especially significant since Isabela is known to be "NPA territory."

Counter-insurgency forces have already crept into the woodwork. Last August, Roy Whittaker, a vice-consul of the US embassy in Manila, sortied to Hacienda San Antonio. According to **Baringkuas**, mass newspaper in North-eastern Luzon, Whittaker was sent by the embassy to investigate the growing strength of NPA in Isabela and the effects of Anca's plans and policies on this growth.

The US embassy is not the only one concerned with the outcome of the Anca project. Cagayan Valley is also known as "Enrile territory." Enrile, a Cagayeno, holds substantial interests in Anca through his frontman Antonio Carag. Enrile has also been cabinet coordinator of the Cagayan Integrated Agricultural Development Project (CIADP) since 1978. The CIADP is heavily bankrolled by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF) of Japan.

These agencies work hand in glove with the Marcos regime in building irrigation systems, electrification units, roads and bridges, power plants and other rural "development" projects. The underlying purpose of these projects is twofold: to service the needs of big foreign and local corporations which have enterprises located in the area and to wean away the peasants from the NPA and the revolutionary mass movement. Since 1979, the farmers of Cagayan have vigorously protested the CIADP scheme which will flood some of the lower portions of the province and destroy their farmlands.

#### Carrot-and-stick policy

The Anca corporation has roped into its side high-ranking government and military officials in Isabela to back up its project. These include provincial governor Faustino Dy, PC provincial commander Lt. Col. Oscar Florendo, Ilagan Mayor Manuel Binag, retired Brig. Gen. Tomas Diaz and his son-in-law Major Manay. Detachments of the 21st

*"We don't need Anca. We need land."*





Infantry Battalion and the CHDF and a military intelligence network have been set up in the haciendas.

To whip the farmers into line, Anca has adopted a carrot-and-stick policy. At first, the corporation tried soft-selling the advantages of moving to relocation sites with school buildings, clinics, roads, water systems and recreational facilities. The farmers, however, learned that contrary to Anca's promises of sumptuous relocation sites, they will be banished to cabeceras which are less fertile, more isolated and hilly. "The land there is so sandy, one can put up a hollow blocks factory," says a farmer in disgust. In the case of Hacienda San Antonio, families of 27 cabeceras will be dumped into 5 cabeceras; in Sta. Isabel, families of 18 cabeceras will be crowded into one.

When the farmers refused to be baited by Anca's "carrot" and began to put up organized resistance, Anca shifted tactics. A reign of terror was unleashed. Houses and crops were bulldozed. An 8 p.m. curfew was imposed. Anca security guards forced farmers at gunpoint to sign blank "voluntary emancipation Patent" papers. Almost every night, the guards would fire indiscriminately into the air. From August 29, 1981 to Nov. 16, 40 people have been arrested, said the **Timpuyog ti Cagayan Valley**. Three farmers (Romy Baengan, Rodrigo Binalay, Romy Calle) have already been killed and a fourth (Avelino Gumalot) has been missing since June 15 this year.

At Hacienda San Antonio, a hollow block fence has been erected around the area to keep off outsiders, especially support groups. Four cabeceras in the hacienda have already been forcibly relocated. There is still no sign of relocation benefits. "In San Antonio and Sta. Isabel, there is no justice, there is no government," lamented a young farmer. "The haciendas have become the republic of Anca."

#### Repression of church people

Anca also clamped down hard on the church people actively helping the farmers. Ilagan Bishop Miguel Purugganan and the priests have been told by Anca guards not to enter the haciendas without prior permission from Anca. The guards led by Ismael Bumagat have threatened to padlock the hacienda chapel and to throw into the river anyone going to the chapel. They even confiscated the anti-tuberculosis medicines prescribed by the Medical Missions



*Anca security guard bars farmers from joining rally.*

Sisters for three TB patients, claiming the drugs contained marijuana which made the farmers resist Anca.

On Dec. 3, the guards disrupted a symposium in Sta. Isabel-Sur attended by some 500 farmers and 57 church people and other supporters. They fired their rifles into the air and beat up a helpless farmer. After the support group left, the emcee of the symposium, Gregorio Acosta, was dragged to the guards' casa and tortured. The boatman who ferried the visitors was slapped by Bumagat and threatened. That night, the guards burned down the meeting house and the newly-built dwelling of one of the farmers.

As a protest against all these injustices and the violations of human rights committed by Anca personnel, Purugganan and the religious of the Ilagan diocese suspended the traditional midnight mass on Christmas eve. This drastic measure, along with the sustained publicity on the farmers' plight, has produced a noticeable ebb in the violent tactics of Anca.

The anti-Anca propaganda offensive, meanwhile, has prodded the faction of Gen. Fabian Ver and the Romualdez family to enter the fray and play its hand against the rival Cojuangco-Enrile faction. Reliable sources report that Ver recently sent Col. Ernesto Sacro to see Purugganan in Ilagan. Sacro reportedly encouraged the bishop to write a letter of complaint to Marcos. Sacro promised that Ver will personally deliver the letter to the president.

#### Action calls

Such evident splits within the Marcos camp can be effectively utilized by the farmers' organizations and the various support groups to expose and isolate

further the Cojuangco-led Anca group. Any political action in this regard would complement the ongoing farmers' campaign to gain attention and broaden support in the regional, national and international levels. Positive response has already been given by Bishop Aloysius Soma of Nagoya, Japan who cabled Cojuangco and Dy last Nov. 20 appealing for a stop to military harassments of farmers.

At present, the farmers continue to launch open mass actions and other forms of legal struggle which they hope can provide a continuing check to Anca's terror tactics. The immediate demands bannered by these collective struggles include the security of land tenure for tenants and a halt to eviction, the stoppage of militarization inside the haciendas, the punishment of the perpetrators of atrocities and the indemnification of their victims, and a halt to the Anca project which is the cause of the present unrest and trouble in the haciendas. The strategic demand of "land to the tiller" is still vigorously pursued but on a long-range basis.

The farmers recognize that their struggle is linked to the nationwide anti-militarization and anti-fascist campaign. And like the other victims of militarization and the regime's "development" projects, the farmers of the two haciendas are determined to fight back. In a meeting of village elders this year, an apo (elder) urged the youth to remember how their forefathers cut down countless trees when they opened the land. "Not one single bit did the Spanish help us except to whip our hands if anything did not please them," the old man related. "Now, we are still here to witness the fruits of our labor grabbed from us. We will not allow it even if we are already weak."▲



"Old oligarchs change, yielding place to new."

To this adage would swear the new oligarchs who have flourished under martial law and displaced the tycoons of old. But there is one oligarch to whom this adage does not apply: Eduardo Cojuangco Jr.

Cojuangco belongs to the "old rich" who have survived and made it very big under martial law. Of Chinese mestizo stock, his family derived its wealth sometime in the late 19th century from sugarlands in Central Luzon and interests in banking. Their interests have since multiplied and are reputed to be so vast and diverse that the Tobacco Monopoly and Tabacalera of old would pale in significance.

#### The Marcos connection

Cojuangco owes his present financial success to his connections with Marcos. Unlike the family of his cousin Jose Cojuangco Jr. who lost political favor with the Marcos regime due to its affiliations with ex-Senator Benigno Aquino Jr., Eduardo and his brother Ramon cultivate close relations with the Marcoses. Both their wives belong to Imelda's select group of "Blue Ladies."

Cojuangco's closeness to Marcos dates back to pre-martial law years. Even then, he was already an established oligarch who commanded a private army which included the "Monkees," a band of army deserters responsible for the murder of innocent peasants in Central Luzon. Backed by his army and his PC connections in Camp Olivas, Cojuangco won as congressman in Tarlac through massive vote-buying and terrorism.

Under martial law, Cojuangco added new titles to his name. He was appointed an AFP reserve colonel, Tarlac assemblyman, presidential director for basketball and lately, an ambassador. He also added more landholdings and corporations to his stockpile, with the regime's full backing and protection. Today, he ranks as one of Marcos' biggest and most trusted business and financial partners and frontmen.

#### Coconut kingpin

The touchstone of Cojuangco's wealth, power and prestige is the multi-billion coconut industry. He and Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile, a close associate, exercise control over the industry through interlocking institutions. Cojuangco is president of the United Coconut Oil Mills (UNICOM) and United Coconut Planters

# COJUANGCO:



## Old oligarch in the New Republic

By LEON FORTALEZA

Bank (UCPB) and chairman of the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA); Enrile is chairman of both UNICOM and UCPB. The UCPB is owned by the Cojuangco family and is today one of the country's largest banking institutions.

Cojuangco's shift from the sugar to the coconut industry was timely since coconut-based products have dislodged sugar as the country's leading export.

Cojuangco is also the principal owner of Anca Corporation, the agri-business firm which took over Haciendas San Antonio and Sta. Isabel in Cagayan Valley from Tabacalera last year. The other registered owner of Anca is Antonio Carag, a lawyer, businessman and official of the Cagayan Sugar Corporation. Carag is a known dummy of Enrile. The Anca project director is Tomas Diaz, former PC brigadier general in Central Luzon and a Cojuangco man.

Through UNICOM, the Cojuangco-Enrile camp controls 13 big oil mills all over the country which represent more than 80 percent of the entire industry's milling capacity. Among these oil mills are Legazpi Oil Company, reputedly the largest coconut oil mill in Southeast Asia and which has the biggest copra-buying network nationwide; Granexport Manufacturing Corporation, ranked 19th among the country's top 1,000 corporations in 1978; Cagayan de Oro Mill, ranked 56th; Southern Islands Oil Mill Corporation, ranked 46th; Pilagro Edible Oil Inc., rank-

ed 174th in 1977 but was left out of the 1978 list.

#### Other holdings

Some of Cojuangco's other holdings were reported by *Ang Bayan*, organ of the Communist Party, in its Nov. 30 issue:

► He and his brother Ramon are listed as owners or the co-owners of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), Northern Cement Inc., FILSOV Shipping Co., United Amherst Leasing and Financing Corp., Paniqui Sugar Mills, Agricultural Investors Inc., United Plaza Properties Inc., and Philippine Bank of Commerce (merged with the Philippine Commercial and Industrial Bank).

► In Palawan, he has 15,000 hectares planted to coconut. A new variety of coconut is being planted here which will be sold and distributed nationwide. This project is financed by the levy which is shouldered mainly by coconut farmers and is expected to net Cojuangco no less than P40 million a year.

► In Negros Occidental, he has 867 hectares in the towns of San Enrique and Pontevedra and in the cities of Bago and La Carlota. These sugarcane lands will be converted into coconut plantations by Eduardo Cojuangco & Sons Agricultural Enterprises. The project would cost almost P40 million. The corporation expects to harvest 19 million nuts annually and process 4,769 tons of copra a year. UNICOM will buy the produce.

► In Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, he has 300 hectares tilled by about 126 peasants.

A member of the Isabela Priests' Assembly, a group active in the farmers' struggle against Anca, has caustic words for Cojuangco's array of corporations: "Big as the Cojuangco monopoly is, it is very clear that Cojuangco and his cohorts are mere servants of foreign big business, especially American and European." He adds, "For in the last analysis, what do they really do?"

"They export our copra, desiccated coconut, coconut oil — all cheap raw materials — to industrialized nations who transform these into costly processed goods like soap and washing detergents. The factories which manufacture these goods are owned by foreigners, not Filipinos. For instance, Procter and Gamble (US), Philippine Refining (European) and Colgate-Palmolive (US) control 90 percent of the soap industry," he revealed.

We have big landlords, compradors and Marcos cronies like Cojuangco to thank for this pitiful state of affairs. ▲



## INTERNATIONAL

Their eyes peering out of grotesque skull masks, the black hooded figures snaked through the streets carrying a small mock nuclear missile on their shoulders. Behind them followed a massive column of people waving streamers and placards. They marched to the funereal beat of a drum and rumble of angry chants: "No to the nukel" "We don't want to fight Reagan's war!" "No Euroshimal!"

This graphic depiction of a holocaust due to the proliferation of nuclear weapons echoed across Europe during the recent months. More than two million people in the capital cities of at least seven different countries took to the streets to express their indignation over the US government's plan of deploying nuclear weapons in the continent.

On Nov. 21, a one-and-a-half kilometer procession of some 300,000 people marched in two routes and converged at Museumplein (museum square) in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Sponsored by the Ecumenical Council of Churches, the march was the biggest postwar demonstration ever staged in Europe. Some 300 Dutch soldiers defied a government ban by marching in uniform.

### Broad cross section

Like the anti-Vietnam war movement of the last decade, the anti-nuclear movement in Europe was made up of a broad cross section of society. There were housewives, students, intellectuals, professionals, clerics and unionists who felt that Europe would be the first victim of a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union.

They view the deployment of new missiles in their continent as part of a plot to stage a limited nuclear war in Europe and keep it well out of the US. For this reason, the anti-nuclear movement, which has drawn millions more of signatories to its cause, is pushing not only for the blocking of new weapons but for the ouster of all nuclear weapons already stationed in Europe, including Soviet nuclear weapons.

For more and more Europeans, while the US government has constantly rattled about the defense of a "free" Europe, it is equally true that the main reason behind the growing US aggressiveness in the area is the protection of about \$114 billion in trade that crosses the Atlantic ocean every year.

Similarly, the presence of nuclear arms in other parts of the world was cri-

# NO to a Euroshima

By MINDA RODRIGO



*Germans march against nuclear weapons: "Not another war." (Photo from Newsweek)*

ticized by those who saw in them the "possible extinction of humanity."

Boone Schirmer, member of the Standing Committee of the Friends of the Filipino People (FFP), a US-based support group, said that Reagan's policies all point to his country's active preparations for a nuclear war. "US strategy has changed from one of mutually assured destruction (MAD) to one of a limited nuclear war," Boone said.

### US nuclear strategies

Explaining the difference between the two strategies, Boone said that under the MAD policy, nuclear weapons were to be held in reserve as a threat or deterrence. Because the policy implied an all-out nuclear war which neither the US or the USSR could hope to win, it was essentially a policy of non-use. Thus, MAD supporters, glossing over the underlying insanity and criminality of nuclear arms, see it as a means of restraining the outbreak of a nuclear war.

Under the new policy of limited nuclear war, however, nuclear weapons would now be used in areas pinpointed by the US Defense Department. These probable areas are Korea, the Middle East and Europe. Propping up the grow-

ing aggressive stance of the US, Boone said, are the American corporate and military rulers who have anticipated the possibility of great turbulence in the Third World in the 1980s which threatens their sources of cheap labor, raw materials, investments, military installations and spheres of influence.

As a counter-weight, the US military-industrial complex has turned to a policy of military intervention and nuclear war, using Soviet intervention in Afghanistan as a convenient excuse. Major General Kelly of the US Marine Corps was specifically quoted to have said before the US Congress that his country was entering the '80s with a sharper focus on the Third World and that we would do well to sharpen that focus before we let the thing slip through our fingers.

In holding on to the Third World, the US is said to be ready to wage a limited nuclear war with the Soviet Union and sacrifice the lives of 20 million Americans, a figure which was deemed "acceptable" by Reagan's war theorists.

Recently, in an increased show of belligerence, the biggest military budget in US history was approved. Of the \$208.7 billion appropriated for the mili-



tary, \$2.4 billion will be used to finance the construction of strategic nuclear bombers while \$1.9 billion will be spent for the development of the MX intercontinental ballistic missile. The huge amount earmarked for military hardware means that the Reagan government will be spending at least \$180 billion in the next six years to modernize its strategic nuclear forces.

**The Philippine factor**

Another part of the US nuclear strategy involves the Philippines. The presence of nuclear weapons in the country is something that the Marcos government keeps hidden from public view. But there are strong evidences showing that the Philippines is well within the US nuclear belt.

High-echelon US military officials, for example, have continually stated the importance of military bases in the Philippines to the US nuclear strategy. In Congressional hearings, the Philippines has always been recognized as an area strategic to US imperialist designs.

In 1981, a document was reportedly drafted containing the instructions that will be followed in case of nuclear leaks or accidents in the bases. A significant point in the instructions orders the authorities to immediately issue a denial should an accident ever take place.

In addition, aircrafts and vessels capable of carrying nuclear weapons have constantly gone in and out of the country through the US military bases. Clark Air Base is home to the F-4 aircrafts which are known to possess nuclear capabilities while Subic Naval Base is the docking area of the US Seventh Fleet and of many Polaris submarines which also carry nuclear weapons.

The presence of nuclear weapons in the Philippines makes the country an automatic target for a nuclear attack by the enemies of the US in a war which does not really involve Filipinos. But if the Reagan administration could think nothing of 20 million Americans dying in a nuclear war, it is highly doubtful if the plight of the people living thousands of miles away ever crossed its mind.

"The belligerent US nuclear policy is a problem that Europeans and we Filipinos hold in common," said a Filipina student active in the anti-nuclear campaign in the Philippines, especially against the construction of the nuclear power plant in Bataan. "Europeans say no to a Euroshima, and we say no to a Filoshima." ▲

# FLOWERS

By SERVANDO MAGBANUA

flowers of my motherland :  
 through the ten vivid years  
 have i seen you grow from seed  
 to sprout to scarlet fragrance  
 out of the quagmire that was  
 the tyrant's greed  
 out of the rain that were  
 the masses' tears and sweat  
 out of the storm of bestial fury  
 in the highlands and plains . . .

the beast with feet of clay  
 in its long lunatic vigil  
 still stalks you in the piling ruins  
 of this total and final war.  
 what does it know of your immortality?

o flowers of my motherland  
 sons and daughters of the revolution!  
 from song and tears and rifle fire  
 have come your budding strength  
 and your horizons shall be  
 the quintessence of the brightest red

and your seasons shall be forever!

- 26 December 1978







## Imelda's treasury

In a tender moment, Marcos embraced his wife and said: "My treasure!" Imelda replied, "My treasury!"

Talking about money, Imelda spent P212 million on the rush construction of the Manila Film Center. She splurged P178 million on staging the Manila International Film Festival (MIFF).

Who foots the bill? Imelda's real treasury: the Filipino people.

From the vantage point of the upper floors of the nearby Philippine Plaza Hotel, the three shifts of 10,000 workers who labored round-the-clock to finish the construction of the Film Center looked like slaves building the pyramids of Egypt. Except this time, it was the workers who were buried and not the Pharaohs.

Many of the construction workers who fell into the quick-drying cement when the upper floors of the Film Center collapsed were covered with more quick-drying cement to save time and effort from digging them up. Foreign wire reports say that at least 47 workers were killed, but only seven were reported killed by the local press upon orders from Malacañang.

That's the regime's brand of compassionate propaganda.

The accident conspicuously kept away presidential spokesman Adrian Cristobal from the Film Center. He said he refuses to enter the "house of death."

Spanish actress Barbara Carrera arrived in Manila for the MIFF extravaganza with only \$25 in her wallet and not much else. She was told by the organizers that everything — including her gowns and pocket money — would be "provided for."

By whom? Imelda's real treasury, of course.

International nymphet Brooke Shields did not show up at the MIFF. Somebody probably did not pay up (or pocketed?) the \$40,000 Brooke was charging to grace this year's affair.

Imelda gave strict instructions to the architect of the Film Center that it must be the replica of the Parthenon and six times the size of that Greek temple.

To which goddess is the Philippine Parthenon consecrated? Need we ask?

Of course, the Marcos regime deserves a lot of credit. In fact, it cannot go along without it.

Who says only student activists can stage demonstrations? In Davao City, the military staged a demonstration complete with streamers and slogans. Shouted the soldiers: "Itaguyod ang diktadurang EU-Marcos!" "Mabuhay ang imperyalismo, pyudalismo at burukrta kapitalismo!"

Our favorite mailman, Mang Tambo, says the opposition is like a carrot. What counts is what is underground.

What's the difference between the woman who quarrels with her husband and the Marcos government? The woman runs to mother. The government runs to Uncle.

Why will the next president be like an indulgent parent?

Because he'll be picking up the pieces.

In 1945, Irving Berlin composed a short song, "Heaven Watch the Philippines." Under the US-Marcos regime, it should be renamed "Heaven Help the Philippines."

While watching a bishop deliver the invocation at the inauguration of the New Republic, a little boy whispered to his father: "Is he praying for the President?" His father replied: "No, sonny. He's praying for the country."

