

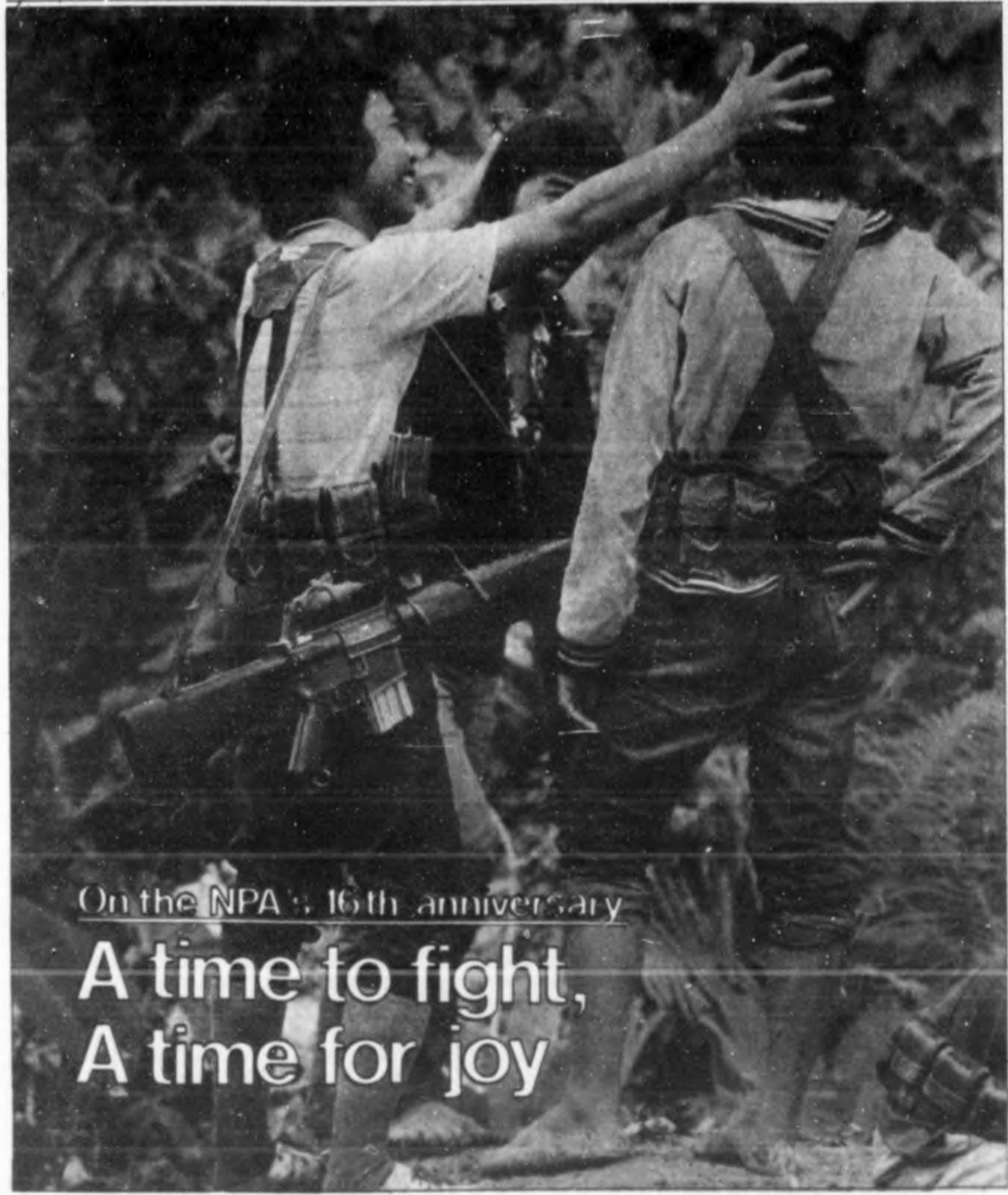
34/03.16
MAIL LIBRA

LIBERATION

VOL. XII NO. 2

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT OF THE PHILIPPINES

MARCH-APRIL 1985



On the NPA's 16th anniversary

A time to fight,
A time for joy

A Salute to NDF-Mindanao

This April, the NDF Provisional Council for Mindanao held a press conference, the first by the NDF, in a guerrilla front somewhere in the Zamboanga Peninsula. The affair was widely publicized here and abroad, getting considerable mileage in amplifying the political objectives and projecting the growing strength and confidence of the people's revolutionary movement.

The press conference highlights the many achievements of revolutionary forces in Mindanao.

Today, the NPA has grown to over 9,000 full-time and part-time guerrillas organized mainly in platoon and company-size formations. They operate in 19 guerrilla fronts spread across the length and breadth of the island. Tactical offensives have not only become more frequent; these have also grown bigger and more daring. Armed city partisans and organizers of the NPA, the people's militias and self-defense corps are waging and developing guerrilla warfare in the cities and other urban centers.

Side by side with the NPA, the Moro National Liberation Front and its military arm, the Bangsa Moro Army, have proven resilient in the face of the dictatorship's ruthless military onslaughts and treacherous machinations after the Tripoli Agreement. They have shifted to more flexible formations, enabling them to foil various encirclement campaigns while inflicting heavy damage on the enemy.

Closely complementing widespread military offensives, open mass struggles in the island entered a new and higher level — a general and multisectoral form of mass struggle combining the crippling impact of labor and transport strikes with street and community barricades, student boycotts, marches and demonstrations. In the last quarter of 1984 alone, at least 13 city- and town-wide people's strikes erupted in different urban centers of Mindanao. And on Nov. 27, the upsurge of people's strikes reached a historic milestone with the launching of the Mindanao-wide people's strike.

Other forms of open mass struggles — long marches and coordinated workers' strikes — were tested and forged last year, mobili-

zing thousands from the various sectors as well as legal opposition forces in the island. In the process, sectoral and multisectoral, legal and underground mass organizations were invigorated, many more emerged and expanded.

Indeed, the establishment of the NDF-Mindanao signifies a new strength for the national democratic revolution not only in the island but in the whole country. It shows a trend throughout the entire archipelago in favor of higher and more comprehensive forms of people's revolutionary organizations and the revolutionary united front.

Everywhere, the armed struggle is growing by leaps and bounds. More and bigger regular formations of the NPA are emerging and local guerrillas are becoming more numerous and widespread. Sectoral and multisectoral mass organizations keep on multiplying, their membership rapidly expanding. And more and more organizations, groups and individuals from the upper strata of society are expressing willingness to join, or are actually joining, the fight for national liberation and democracy.

The NDF stands as the broad and comprehensive revolutionary united front organization that continues to gather all these forces and attract others in increasing numbers, molding them into a more powerful force for revolutionary victory. With such tremendous gains over the past two years, NDF leadership bodies are now being established at the municipal, provincial and regional levels to further consolidate the many people's organizations and coordinate on a higher plane the people's political and military offensives against the US-Marcos dictatorship.

In the NDF, all patriots from all walks of life, in fact the entire Filipino people, have an organization to rally to and channel their energies and dedication to the struggle for national emancipation and democracy.

Certainly, the further spread and development of the NDF in Mindanao and throughout the archipelago, at all levels, from regions down to the municipalities, will unleash far bigger, bolder and more intense political and military offensives in the few years to come.

IN THIS ISSUE

Cover: Youth and laughter in a guerrilla zone (Photo by Balagtas)

Cover stories: The NPA marks its 16th anniversary this year amid great strides in all fields of endeavor in the people's war. In this issue, LIB reviews the many advances by the NPA especially in spreading armed struggle to the cities and towns. Also covered are the stunning NPA offensives in Bacolod, Mountain Province and Samar in the first quarter of 1985 and a special interview with a woman guerrilla.

In the Mainstream section, LIB presents an exclusive interview with leaders of the MNLFBMA which also celebrates its founding anniversary in March.

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The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDF) serves as the organizational framework and channel for the unity, cooperation and coordination of all anti-imperialist and democratic forces, including overseas Filipinos. It traces its beginnings to the establishment of the Preparatory Commission for the National Democratic Front on April 24, 1973. LIBERATION is the official publication of the NDF.



Bigger and better armed: NPA company in Mindanao displays increased fighting prowess

COVER STORIES

On today's significant issues and events

Extending the frontiers of struggle

NPA celebrates its 16th anniversary as armed struggle spreads its reach to urban areas

Gubat is a word which breathes and speaks of armed revolution in the Philippines. In Tagalog, it means forest, the endless expanse of wooded land and dark rugged hills, where the jungle floor stretches up to hug mountain peaks. It symbolizes the green cradle where the fledgling New People's Army, hunted and lonely, first made its home.

In Cebuano, *gubat* has a broader meaning — war. And it is in this tongue that armed revolution has acquired its deepest and most contemporary meaning. *Gubat* denotes the sweeping, all-encompassing state of people's war. It is both forest and city, mountains and plains. It is the unity of mountain villagers and city folk, of the peasant guerrilla with the student demonstrator. It embraces a vast arena of human life and struggle, where the battlefield knows no boundaries.

To the NPA, which celebrates its anniversary this March 29, no other word could perhaps so richly sum up its 16 years of existence. To them, *gubat*, in its fullest meaning, has come to mean more than a

word. It stands for a belief, a commitment, a history, a vision come to life. It symbolizes a kind of rites of passage of a forest-bound guerrilla band of 60 men which has blossomed into Asia's fastest growing insurgent army, now operating in the heart of towns and cities.

Poetry of numbers

NPA detractors and admirers alike have found a strange fascination in keeping track of its growth, as if mesmerized by the poetry of numbers. And why not? By the regime's own grudging admission, the NPA gains are impressive, a fact which the government's disinformation drive is finding more and more difficult to conceal. Disclosed Marcos recently: "From 1981 to the present, a span of only three-and-a-half years, there has been a pervasive increase and intensification in military casualties and in overall NPA activities. The grave dimensions of the problem of insurgency facing us now are real."

Marcos, indeed, has much cause for worry. Established in 1969 as the military arm

of the Communist Party of the Philippines, the NPA presently ranks as the most formidable and only nationwide armed force fighting the US-Marcos regime. It also stands as the main armed force within the National Democratic Front's broad array of political forces.

According to the latest official figures from the NPA, revealed in a recent interview with LIB, NPA operational areas now cover 80% or 58 of the 73 provinces in the Philippines. Together with the NDF, it jointly administers 57 guerrilla fronts nationwide, which span 10,000 barrios in 35 cities and 634 towns. Each front consists of about 190 barrios and has its own local NPA command, guerrilla forces, people's militia, NDF committees and revolutionary mass organizations. These fronts encompass not only mountainous areas but flatlands, coastal areas and urban centers as well.

Political and organizational advances in the guerrilla fronts have boosted the combat strength and capability of the NPA. Starting from only six squads and 35 rifles



Auxiliaries of the revolution: People's militia shore up NPA ranks

in 1969, the NPA today boasts of 12,000 full-time, well-armed guerrillas, organized mainly in company- and platoon-size formations. Further beefing up the NPA ranks are 20,000 part-time fighters belonging to the people's militia and self-defense units. They serve as the strategic reserves and auxiliaries of the full-fledged guerrilla units as well as the defense corps of barrios and revolutionary mass organizations.

As a result of these gains, tactical offensives multiplied in size, frequency and scope in 1984. A partial tally of data gathered by LTB from underground publications indicates that no less than 349 NPA military operations occurred from March 1984 to March 1985. Killed were at least 873 enemies, 73% of whom are soldiers and 21%, CHDFs and policemen. Seized were about 1,680 firearms, 86% of which are high-powered, and thousands of assorted ammunition and military equipment. This quantity of arms surpasses last year's arms haul of 1,000 and constitutes the biggest annual arms seizure ever in NPA history.

Stunning as these figures are, incoming reports from LTB correspondents in the regions indicate that NPA battlefield victories are certainly bigger. In Mindanao, the country's spearhead force in the intensification of guerrilla warfare, Red fighters scored 450 military operations from January to December 1984, captured a total of 800 arms, exceeding their 1983 record feat of 600 arms. In Negros, from February to October, guerrillas annihilated 62 troopers and wounded 22 others, and bagged 80 firearms in 47 offensives. In the Montañosa sub-region of Northern Luzon, despite massive counter-insurgency operations last year, the NPA mounted 29 military operations from March 1984 to March 1985, killing 47 enemy troops and seizing

76 firearms.

According to acting AFP chief of staff and PC head Gen. Fidel Ramos, 745 PC and police personnel were ambushed and killed during the first nine months of 1984. The average frequency of operations in 1984, the NPA said, leaped to 12 to 13 times a week, a pace double the rate of six times a week in 1983.

Increasing military expertise

This accelerated pace of offensives is not a simple increase in number. More importantly, it signifies the NPA's increasing mastery of guerrilla tactics and higher level of fighting capacity.

In most of the battles, the guerrillas had the initiative, seizing every opportunity to inflict greater damage on puppet troops and to add more arms to the NPA arsenal.

A RECORD RASH OF RAIDS

(staged on townhalls from March '84-March '85)

1. Apr. 15. Las Navas, Northern Samar
2. May 11. Leon, Iloilo
3. May 23. San Agustin, Surigao del Sur
4. July 15. McArthur, Eastern Samar
5. July 29. Pantukan, Davao del Norte
6. Sept. 24. Arteche, Eastern Samar
7. Oct. 4. La Paz, Agusan del Sur
8. Oct. 14. Liliw, Laguna
9. November. Lawaan, Eastern Samar
10. Dec. 2. Lupon, Davao Oriental
11. Dec. 22. Dumalag, Capiz
12. Jan. 5. Tabina, Zamboanga del Sur
13. Jan. 22. Bunawan, Agusan del Sur
14. February. Esperanza, Agusan del Sur
15. Feb. 9. Sadanga, Mt. Province
16. Feb. 21. Iging, Cagayan
17. March. Banagon, Bukidnon
18. March 8. Mainit, Surigao del Sur
19. March 18. Flora, Kalinga-Apayao
20. March 23. Sarianga, Mt. Province

In cases when Red fighters were put on the defensive, they were able to seize the initiative or make an organized withdrawal with fire-and-maneuver action and the support of nearby units. Well-trained and highly disciplined, they made up in resourcefulness what they lacked in arms and personnel. At all times, they strove to keep losses at a minimum.

Fueled by all these positive factors, NPA offensives reached a higher scale in March 1984-March 1985. Employing bigger guerrilla formations and its fiercest firepower, guerrillas struck at bigger enemy targets, not only in remote areas but even within the regime's centers of political and economic power. They executed more creative and bold guerrilla tactics such as: combining numerous and widespread small operations with attacks on platoon- and company-size enemy forces; coordinating inter-provincial and inter-regional tactical offensives and counter-campaigns; synchronizing urban partisan actions; overrunning town halls and enemy company headquarters and then wiping out enemy reinforcements; harassing and blocking the main force of enemy convoys or columns to crush its advance or rear units; and disarming enemy troops without firing a shot or with a minimum of firefights.

Some concrete testaments to the NPA's greater effectiveness in battle are the several outstanding offensives from March 1984 to March 1985 and the 20 raids on townhalls, 10 of which occurred in Mindanao (see tables). Another tangible proof is the series of sabotage and commando operations unleashed against government infrastructures and agribusiness and mining ventures that have victimized the people.

No less than P300 million worth of damages was wrought against the following: the National Power Corporation substation in Davao del Norte; Eduardo Cojuangco's agricultural corporation in Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur, his farm in La Carlota, Negros Occidental and mining firm in Davao del Norte; the multinational NDC-Guthrie palm oil plantation in Agusan del Sur; and the Apex and Sabena mining firms in Davao del Norte and Marinduque Mining in Sipalay, Negros Occidental.

To date, NPA assaults continue without let-up, increasingly sapping the strength of the AFP. In the first week of April, in an unprecedented Holy Week offensive, Red fighters sprung 17 more military operations, killing 54 enemy troops and capturing 65 firearms, according to newspaper reports. In two surprise raids, NPA company-size units overran the townhalls of Tagbina, Surigao del Sur (April 1) and Jose Dalman, Zamboanga del Norte (April 3). On April 4, four NPA teams with a combined strength of 250 carried out simultaneous dawn raids on CHDF detachments in the border barrios of Bagong Baguio in Sergio Osmeña town, Zamboanga del Norte; Napangan Poblacion in Don Mariano Marcos town, Misamis Occidental; and Dawa in Josefine,

Zamboanga del Sur. They killed 24 CHDF members and carted away 42 firearms.

Partisan warfare steps up

Further highlighting the March 1984-March 1985 offensives was the upsurge in urban areas of partisan actions, which in fact comprised most of the offensives. This significant trend manifests the relentless advance of the guerrilla forces in the countryside to the towns and plains as well as the urban and rural masses' increased support for armed struggle. It will surely contribute to the further dispersal and dissipation of enemy troops and to the general advance of people's war.

From small-scale arms confiscation and punishment of local informers, the NPA partisans increasingly took on bigger targets in daring ambushes and raids staged in the heart of towns and cities. No doubt the most stunning of these actions was the May 24 assassination of Police Gen. Tomas Karingal in a small restaurant in Quezon City. The incident astounded Manila residents. Remote from the war, many could not believe the NPA's capacity to mount an operation of such sophistication and skill and their audacity to do it in the very seat of Marcos' power.

The intensification of partisan warfare has spurred the formation of partisan fronts. These are strategically situated right in urban centers and along major highways and lines of communication. Their development has been most marked and rapid in cities like Davao and Butuan which have extensive semi-rural areas, are adjacent to or near guerrilla zones, and are subjected to intense repression and exploitation.

With the emergence of partisan fronts, NPA partisans now have a ready base in urban communities and no longer have to move back to the hills after every operation. In cases when they are forced to retreat,



Keeping fit: Red fighters doing early morning exercises in forest clearing

they can always run to the adjoining guerrilla zones which offer a reliable rear.

Leading the thrust to bring the guerrilla war right into the enemy's homegrounds is the sprawling, southern city of Davao. It stands out as the first to initiate and develop widescale urban guerrilla warfare in the country. It also stands out as a trail-blazer in heightening the political struggle in urban centers by coordinating armed actions with non-armed forms of struggle. This, it accomplished during the series of people's strikes (*Welgang Bayan*) that swept Mindanao in the last quarter of 1984. In a salvo of operations, NPA partisans punished 12 soldiers and military agents and helped armed masses burn down two military jeeps.

This year, Davao City partisans pulled

off more offensives which further attest to their rising skills in executing complicated battle plans against a far superior enemy force. Last Feb. 14, four partisan teams staged synchronized operations in various points along Quezon Blvd., a street located at the heart of Davao City which teems with military outposts. Arriving in one jeep at 5 p.m., they swiftly scattered, each with its own target to pursue within the 500-meter stretch of road. A few minutes later, four CHDF informers lay dead from four shots fired hardly five minutes apart from each other. The four teams then calmly boarded the motor vehicle and sped away.

Again, on a single day, March 12, NPA partisans simultaneously carried out eight liquidations, two harassment operations

Outstanding offensives of March '84 - March '85



- March 16. Raid on army detachment. Rosario, Tubay, Agusan del Norte. 5 soldiers killed, 30 high-powered rifles (HPR) seized.
- Apr. 5. Coordinated raids on PC detachment and Cojuangco mining firm. Mabin, Davao del Norte. 28 HPRs captured.
- Apr. 14. First river ambush in NPA history. Guadalupe, Esperanza, Agusan del Sur. 28 soldiers killed.
- May 13. Ambush on army convoy. Banawe, Ifugao. 16 soldiers killed, 21 HPRs and 1,757 ammunition rounds seized.
- June 5. Coordinated raid. Pantukan, Davao del Norte. Sta. Clara, Zamboanga del Sur. 32 firearms seized.
- July 29. Coordinated raids. Pantukan, Davao del Norte. 31 firearms and other military/office equipment seized.
- Aug. 26. Ambush on PA-PC-INP convoy. Guadalupe, Libacao, Aklan. 18 firearms seized, 17 enemies killed.
- Oct. 24. Ambush. Lacub, Abra. 16 marines killed.
- Nov. 3. Raid on army camp. Lianga, Davao del Sur. 18 soldiers killed, 13 HPRs captured.

- Nov. 24. Raid on army detachment. The first operation in Guinayangan, Quezon since 1982. 30 HPRs seized, the biggest haul ever in Southern Luzon.
- Dec. 2. Townhall raid. Lupon, Davao Oriental. 2 soldiers killed, 37 HPRs and thousands of ammunition rounds seized.
- Jan. 5. No-shot raid on townhall and armory. Tabina, Zamboanga del Sur. 102 firearms and thousands of bullets seized.
- Jan. 20. Simultaneous raids. Kumalarang and Aurora towns, Zamboanga del Sur. 26 HPRs seized.
- Feb. 9. Townhall raid. Sadanga, Mt. Province. 44 HPRs seized.
- Feb. 24. Raid on military camp. Elizalde, Maco, Davao del Norte. 12 soldiers killed; 22 HPRs seized, including first 2 mortars and bazooka in NPA history.
- Feb. 27. Encounter. Ibayawan, Cauayan, Negros Occidental. 20 troopers killed and 15 wounded.
- March 8. Ambush. Gattu, Pamplona, Cagayan. 38 soldiers killed, 11 firearms seized.
- March 25. Raid. Vnayan Maritime Academy, Bacolod City. 429 HPRs seized.



"Without the people, we are nothing": Members of barrio mass organizations providing food for NPA trainees

and an ambush. The toll: six soldiers and six CHDFs killed.

In all, 69 soldiers and policemen were killed in Davao City from January to December, reported the *Bulletin Today*. So regular have the partisan actions been that the flag at the PC Metrodiscom headquarters is always at half-mast to indicate the death of troopers. "We can't recall a time when the flag stood at full-mast ever since NPA assaults intensified in the city," a resident said.

Equally punishing are the blows inflicted on the enemy command in other parts of the country. This Jan. 21, a partisan unit ambushed Brig. Gen. Pedrito de Guzman, PC-INP regional commander in Region 10 who had committed many crimes against the masses. They sprung the daring attack on the national highway just 200 meters away from the gate of the PC regional camp in Cagayan de Oro City. In February, partisans gunned down two colonels (one from the NISA) in General Santos City and Butuan City.

Incalculable political victories

These military victories are only one side of the picture. At the other side is a bigger yet related achievement which the regime and its abusive troops have no hope of ever attaining — the boundless support of the basic masses, especially the peasantry. In the guerrilla fronts today, over five million masses are directly influenced by the NPA. At their core are 500,000 active members of revolutionary mass organizations. They constitute the firm foundation and main

strength of the NPA.

"Without the people, we are nothing. We cannot sustain military operations without a mass base," said Ka Reming, an NPA cadre in an interview with LIB. The masses provide the guerrillas with food and shelter, information on enemy movements, take care of their wounded and organize their communication lines.

With the masses behind them, the guerrillas have found a true home. "We have no homes, but all homes are ours," said



Young NPA guarding guerrilla camp

Ka Reming, quoting from a poem of NPA martyr Emmanuel Lacaba.

No doubt, their concrete promotion of the agrarian revolution is one of the strongest reasons behind the people's enthusiastic support of the NPA. In coordination with the NDF, the NPA implements the revolutionary land reform program whose minimum goals are to reduce land rent, eliminate usury and raise farm workers' wages. In barrios under the NPA and NDF's firm control, guerrillas help the masses combat feudal exploitation through secret mass campaigns or open confrontations with landlords.

The NPA also helps the masses in production work and in organizing their cooperatives and associations. They also help raise their political consciousness through political education as well as to teach illiterate peasants how to read and write, and attend to their health problems.

By serving the needs of the people, the NPA has broadened popular support for armed struggle. This can be seen in the steady stream of peasant recruits flowing into the NPA whose main force is comprised of the peasantry. This can also be seen in the rising incidence of small-scale military operations initiated by the masses themselves. "The extent of the people's participation is such that even children have taken to harassing enemy outposts in Davao City with slingshots and *lumbang*, a homemade pillbox made of nutshell," related Ka Reming.

A young man with short gray hair and a broad grin, Comrade Reming has been with the NPA for over 13 years. He joined the

revolutionary movement during the First Quarter Storm in 1970 when he was still a student in Mindanao. There has been no turning back for him since. Recalling his first years in the NPA, Reming said much has changed in the guerrilla army.

"With the overall advance of the armed struggle, the NPA organizational structure and work are rapidly expanding and specializing," he said. Operational commands are being systematized at various levels in each region and front. Backing these up are the appropriate support units for logistics, intelligence, ordnance, medical work and politico-military training.

Bigger fighting formations, especially at company level, are also being regularized. Organized into Main Regional Guerrilla Units (MRGU) and Secondary Regional Guerrilla Units (SRGU), these highly mobile formations usually operate within a region or inter-front territorial scope. They give form to the NPA as a regular fighting force. As of mid-1984, the NPA reported 14 companies in the country, mostly based in Mindanao and Visayas.

Also manifesting the general advance of the revolutionary armed struggle is the emergence of guerrilla bases. Found deep within extensive guerrilla fronts, a guerrilla base is the most solid area of a front where the enemy forces have been defeated and forced to retreat and replaced by the people's own organs of political and military power. These bases serve as the reliable operational center and stable sanctuary and rear of the NPA and revolutionary forces in their performance of strategic tasks. "In many guerrilla fronts," said the CPP organ *Ang Bayan*, "the basic conditions for base-building have already been achieved, paving the way for the emergence of more guerrilla bases throughout the country."

Advancing toward a higher level of struggle

All these developments — combined with the advances in the open mass movement, in the expansion of the broad united



A time for singing: NPAs momentarily exchange their rifles for a guitar

front, in the widening rifts within the Marcos camp and the extremely defensive position of the regime — are important specific factors in intensifying the revolutionary situation. They directly provide the conditions which will enable the people's war to reach a new and higher level of struggle, and bring it closer to the strategic stalemate within the next few years.

Militarily, the NPA is already preparing for this higher substage as it raises its capacity to undertake regular mobile warfare, such as wiping out large enemy forces and seizing big towns and cities. Politically, urban revolutionary forces are hastening its realization with the escalation of open political struggles into popular uprisings and insurrections that are coordinated with the intensification of the armed struggle in the countryside.

"As long as we persevere in all fronts, the regime cannot stop this inevitable course of the revolution," said Ka Reming. But what if the US pours in greater military aid to thwart this? "True, US aid will pose a problem. But so long as we keep on the right track, the amount of US aid will ulti-

mately come to naught. The US and Marcos are faced with a different kind of enemy. It's a people's war they are confronting. Their enemy is everywhere. They try to contain them in one area, and they're in another area."

"*Parang biganteng nakabiga ang kawayan*," described the NPA leader. "Though big, it cannot move. Yes, it can hurt us, and suppress and weigh us down. But its motion is slow, stodgy. It just waits for us to strike him anywhere."

Badly demoralized, and increasingly bloodied in the battlefield, more of Marcos' military brass and rank-and-file soldiers are echoing the same sentiments. Revealed a high-ranking officer in a magazine interview: "It's a no-win situation. The government has failed to bring itself closer to the people. Military abuses are compounding the problem. Unlike before, it is now harder to identify the enemy. He may not even carry a gun, but just be anti-Marcos. And he may be your brother or your son."

It does not take a seer to divine Marcos' falling political fortunes. The signs are everywhere. In the surging armed and political struggles, in the expanding open and underground movement, in the advancing rural and urban fronts — all of which make up the powerful components of people's war.

Indeed, Marcos can brag all he can that his is the only government in Asia to have captured and killed communist and NPA leaders. As the NPA history has proven to this day, the regime's repression of revolutionary leaders has failed to block the advancing tide of the revolution. A popular activist adage best describes this situation: "A tree dies, a tree is born, the forest lives forever."

In the flourishing *gubat* of people's war, Marcos and his US patrons have no way of ever winning against an enemy who is everywhere, yet nowhere, who is everyman, yet no man, whose life is without end.

Leon Fortaleza



A time for feasting: Kitchen detail prepares food for 16th anniversary celebration

A harvest of plenty

Red fighters in Bacolod reap biggest arms haul in NPA history



In high spirits: A column of guerrillas on the move in the interiors of Sugarlandia

Many expected the NPA in Negros to strike as March 29, their founding anniversary, neared. Many thought that, going by tradition, they would launch an attack in some far-flung barrio in southern Negros—perhaps to disarm a CHDF unit, or waylay an army jeep or overrun an isolated military outpost.

On March 25, the guerrillas proved everybody's expectation wrong. They staged a daring raid at the armory of the Visayan Maritime Academy, a school for seamen located just nine kilometers from the heart of Bacolod City.

At 7:15 p.m., right after a city-wide brown-out, several pistol-armed guerrillas knocked at the school's front gate, disarmed two security guards and one Navy petty officer, then opened the gate to admit a score of their other comrades who came boarded in a truck. Swift and precise in their moves, they immediately opened the vault of the VMA armory. One of the guards, upon seeing that the guerrillas brought an acetylene torch, volunteered to unlock the vault himself.

Within half an hour, the whole operation was over. The Red fighters carted off 400 Garands, nine Thompson submachineguns, five M16s, five M1 carbines, two grease guns, two .22-cal. handguns, thousands of assorted ammunition and several hand grenades and military equipment. The haul is the biggest in a single operation in the 16-year history of the NPA. The previous record was about 100 weapons seized from the armory of the Philippine Military Academy at Baguio City over 14 years ago by former PC Lt. Victor Corpuz.

The news of the raid, aired in all local radio stations the morning after, came as a welcome surprise to Negros residents. The audacity displayed by the guerrillas notwithstanding, making the news was the fact that the VMA owner is no less

than Ambassador Roberto Benedicto, a Marcos crony and director of NASUTRA, the government monopoly corporation in sugar trading. Benedicto and the NASUTRA have lately been the target of the ire of the sugar planters and workers of Negros, a one-crop province most affected by the present slump of sugar prices in the world market. To many, Benedicto's NASUTRA exacerbated the current crisis embroiling the industry.

An NDF source told LIB that a sizeable number of the arms confiscated in the VMA personally belonged to the ambassador. These arms, the source said, were kept there for safekeeping and were about to be distributed to CHDF units in Benedicto's haciendas and also to his ward-leaders to be used in his campaign in the coming local elections.

Taken aback by the unprecedented offensive, the local PC command tried to play it down by spreading the lie that the confiscated firearms lacked bolts and firing pins. Brig. Gen. Isidoro de Guzman, head of Regional Unified Command 6, rushed to Bacolod City two days after the incident and went on local TV to repeatedly assure the public that "the military is on top of the situation." In another fidgety reaction, acting AFP chief Gen. Fidel Ramos ordered the recall of all military firearms issued to school administrations for cadet training.

To counter the disinformation drive of the military about the raid, the NDF committee in Negros and the local NPA command immediately released separate statements confirming the successful operation and the number of arms seized. Said the NPA statement, "The success of the VMA raid is a result of thorough investigation of the conditions of the target, meticulous planning, strong mass support and the high morale of NPA guerrillas." The NDF statement was distributed during a 5,000-strong farm workers' rally at the city plaza last March 29.

Flustered, some military men wildly chased two KM activists who were distributing these underground leaflets in the city's busy shopping center.

Meantime, AFP companies continue to scour certain nearby barrios of Bacolod which are known NPA strongholds "to get back the arms before they fall into the hands of other people," said General de Guzman. But it seems the military's retrieval effort has come too late. With 150,000 sugar workers of Negros just laid off this month and facing starvation, 427 rifles would certainly vanish quickly like grains of sugar in the eager hands of thousands waiting to be recruited into the ranks of the NPA. **Alfredo Amuyao**

A red-letter day

CNL hails NPA on its 16th anniversary

"Cherish the New People's Army!"

Thus proclaimed the Christians for National Liberation (CNL) in a statement circulated last March 29 in celebration of the NPA's 16th anniversary.

Calling the event a "red letter day," the national democratic underground mass organization for church people stated that, after 16 years of hard struggle, the present strength of the NPA shows that the Filipino people can dismantle the dictatorship and begin to build their own social structures based on justice and freedom. In this process, the CNL, which is also an NDF member, cited the indispensable role played by the NPA: "The NPA is but an extension of the people in the defense of their rights."

The CNL said Christian traditions prevail among the peasants who compose the majority of Red fighters. There are also a number of revolutionary Christians among the NPA, all of them united by the NDF program for the revolution and by a deep commitment to serve the people.

On the significance of revolutionary armed struggle, the CNL said: "The US-Marcos dictatorship knows only one kind of violence, and that is the violence that kills life. The people know another kind of violence, and that is the violence that brings forth life of a new society from the jaws of death. To Christians, this is what March 29 means."

The revolutionary church organization thus pledged its total support to the armed struggle, particularly by being active in the anti-imperialist and anti-fascist open mass movement in the cities. To show its oneness with the Red fighters, it pledged to gather all types of support, placing top priority on providing shelter to fighters who stay temporarily in the cities.

Urging greater support for the NPA guerrillas, the CNL noted: "Great things are being done in the guerrilla zones. Those who visited there have been permitted a glimpse of the future. The future is coming in step by step." **Abdul Ulap**

The taking of Sadanga

Guerrillas and people's militia occupy strategic mountain town in daring operation

The night's darkness covered them well, a mass of men in arms, moving silently but surely toward their objective. It was the 9th of February, and comprising the armed men was a large contingent of full-time NPA guerrilla units and more than a hundred people's militia, composed of local tribesmen from the surrounding areas. Their objective: the town of Sadanga, Mountain Province.

Nestled on top of a high mountain, Sadanga has a commanding view of the nearby barrios and mountain trails, as it is located on the borders of Mountain Province and the sub-province of Kalinga, and on the mountain route leading to Abra. Because of its strategic location, the area tops the list of towns targeted for control under the counter-insurgency program being implemented by the PC Provincial Command.

For a long time, revolutionary forces in the area had found it difficult to penetrate the town because of the presence of several well-armed PC and CHDF detachments. Since Sadanga was crawling as well with civilian informers employed by the military, revolutionary organizers had to meet with the NPA outside town for their own safety. The local population suffered from numerous human rights violations at the hands of the military.

For these reasons, the NPA decided to conduct a raid on the town to "open up" the area, and enable cadres to conduct more systematic political work among the people. There was also the further prospect of beefing up the NPA's supply of weapons through arms confiscations that would follow in the course of the operation. With this in mind, the Red fighters continued their journey to Sadanga.

The NPAs reached their destination at midnight. They divided into two company-size formations, one group heading for the town plaza beside which the PC and local police were sound asleep, and the other for the town proper located just below the municipal hall, where the houses of the CHDF were.

Everything had been meticulously planned. Two months earlier, the district guerrilla unit had begun clearing surrounding areas of civilian informers and other forces hostile to local revolutionaries. Those who somehow escaped their fate at the hands of the sparrow units were



Highland guerrillas: Trekking mountain trails to spread revolution

paralyzed with fear.

The NPA had also patiently conducted a detailed investigation of the area, and drawn an accurate map indicating the different trails leading to the town. They had checked and counter-checked the numbers of enemy troopers and their weapons, had anticipated everything that could happen during the raid, and planned for every eventuality. From all indications, the raid was certain of success.

It took only 30 minutes to encircle the area. A "blocking force" was quickly set up along the major roads and exits to deter any enemy reinforcements that might arrive. All vehicles heading for Bontoc, where the PC headquarters were located, were stopped, while vehicles heading in the opposite direction were allowed to pass.

By 3 a.m., the raid began. The NPA group surrounding the town plaza made their presence known to the PC and police by shouting at them to surrender. Shocked awake, the enemy troopers shouted back, cursing the guerrillas. All the shouting made the dogs bark and howl, and the noise was deafening. The "shouting war" went on in the wee hours of the morning, when suddenly the enemy opened fire on the NPAs. The latter answered with gunfire from their BARs, M14s and M16s. It seemed as if the municipal hall would fall to pieces as bullets riddled the walls and shattered the glass windows.

Meanwhile, consolidation teams took the town residents to areas of safety, calmly explaining to them what was going on, and what the purpose of the entire operation was.

Back at the town plaza, the enemy guns fell silent, and signals of surrender were tendered. "Come out! Don't be afraid. You will not be harmed," the Red fighters called out. Slowly, the PC

and police came out of the wrecked municipal building, half-naked and shaking with fear. They were taken prisoner and their arms confiscated.

It was 5 a.m. when the second NPA group surrounding the town proper began their operation. They had already surrounded the mayor's house, and those of the other local officials and CHDFs. They convinced the mayor to surrender, and he in turn ordered the CHDF to lay down their arms. Seeing that they were outnumbered, the CHDF surrendered to the raiding party.

There was one last thing to do. The town's ex-mayor had to be captured. He had committed many crimes against the people, making use of his office to extort money from the townspeople and engaging in petty graft and corruption. On numerous occasions, he had abused women. His most serious offence was to willingly guide the military into areas under his jurisdiction during the regime's large-scale military operations in the Cordilleras in July 1984. His activities had caused untold suffering among the masses.

The Red fighters found him hiding in his house with the chief-of-police, but despite entreaties from the NPA, he refused to surrender at first. After a while, however, he surprisingly offered his Garand rifle as a gesture of surrender. The Red fighters knew that he owned more than one firearm, and demanded: "Is that all? Where's the other one?" He then surrendered an M16, which belonged to the chief-of-police. Aware of the trick, the Red fighters threatened to shoot him on the spot if he did not stop deceiving them. Reluctantly, the ex-mayor gave up his other firearm.

By 12 noon, the disarming operations were completed.

The whole town population, with the

Salvos in Samar

Escalating NPA offensives net more gains for the revolution

While the military in Samar scours the countryside like mad, trying to hunt down the NPA, the Red fighters attack enemy strongholds right in the towns.

Such was the case last March 25 when NPA guerrillas on the island raided a military camp in San Andres, Western Samar, which is only three kilometers away from the RUC 8 General Headquarters in Catbalogan. At the time of the raid, the AFP was in the midst of a much-publicized encirclement campaign against NPA camps in the province's mountainous areas. The troopers failed in their mission when they were met with sniper fire by the guerrillas. Back in San Andres, however, soldiers who were left behind to man the military camp were also being routed by the Red fighters.

The raid started inconspicuously enough when guerrillas who posed as *istambays* entered the AFP camp. Four of them engaged the enemy soldiers in a drinking bout. The soldiers, sensing that their new-found drinking companions had a lot of money to spend, sought to wheedle the Red fighters into buying them more drinks and cigarettes. The guerrillas readily obliged and the drinking bout lasted for a few more minutes.

Later, however, the *istambays* drew from their pockets, not more drinking money, but guns, which they pointed at the startled troopers. Quickly, the other mem-



Combat ready: NPAs in training camp

bers of the NPA raiding team arrived and confiscated the soldiers' firearms. The operation yielded eight M16s, one .38 revolver and 1,251 bullets.

That same day, another raid was launched,

this time on the municipal hall of San Roque, in neighboring Northern Samar. For the noonday military operation, the Red fighters commandeered a dumptruck, which they used in entering the town. Four soldiers of the 19th IB (PA) assigned to guard the NPA target sighted the dumptruck as it rolled toward the municipal hall, but paid no attention, thinking that the men aboard it were laborers.

But as the vehicle came to a halt beside the municipal building at around noon, the guerrillas opened fire on the troopers, killing three and seriously wounding the other. Another team of Red fighters quickly jumped out of the dumptruck to position itself in the town plaza. In a span of nine minutes, the town was under control. A soldier inside the municipal building who tried to escape was met by the NPA blocking forces. They seized his .45 pistol.

From the municipal hall arsenal and the slain soldiers, the guerrillas confiscated three M16s, four M14s, one M203, 17 Garands, two M1 carbines and two .38 revolvers — a total of 29 firearms.

The victorious Red fighters left the town also aboard the dumptruck amid cries of "Long live the 16th anniversary of the New People's Army!"

LIB correspondents also reported an ambush on troopers of the 15th IB (PA) staged by the NPA last Feb. 12 in Barangay Kabak, Laoang, Northern Samar. In the 13-minute firefight, six enemy troopers were killed, while five M16s, one baby armalite and several rounds of ammunition were seized.

Victoria Manalo

local officials, PC, police and CHDF, were then assembled for a mass meeting and cultural presentation courtesy of the NPA. The latter explained the reason for the raid, and condemned oppressive local officials and the military. They urged corrupt officials to reform. They called for the overthrow of the US-Marcos regime, and exhorted the townspeople to join the national democratic revolution, and to wage armed struggle.

The guerrillas also convened a people's court to try the town's former mayor. They presented their findings to the masses, and explained why he should be punished. The NPA contingent condemned him to die, but respecting the people's will and local customs, left them to decide his fate. The people did not agree with the death verdict, but said, "If he commits grave abuses again, we will take care of him ourselves."

After teaching the people a few revolutionary songs, the Red fighters left.

The masses in the nearby consolidated areas celebrated the successful raid with feasting, singing and dancing. The number of rifles seized in the raid constituted one of the largest hauls in the Cordilleras: 43 assorted firearms and 1,260 rounds of ammunition, as well as cash, paper, typewriters, office equipment,

and others. On their side the NPA had used up only 207 bullets, averaging one bullet per fighter. More importantly, they were able to open up yet another strategic area for the revolution. In the process, they also brought to the fore the weakness and vulnerability of the regime's armed minions in a place touted as a showcase of the government's counter-insurgency program.

The raid, the result of patient and persistent work, also showed the massive popular support of the national minority masses for the NPA. The Red fighters were able, for example, to mobilize more than a hundred local tribespeople to support them in this tactical offensive. They were able to move in and out of Sadanga with ease, because their eyes and ears — their great rear, the masses — were always with them.

On the other hand, the local troopers were so isolated, so stricken with fear, that they were only able to report the incident the next day. They exaggerated the number of raiders to cover up their ineptitude, reporting to the Bontoc PC headquarters that the reason they could not possibly fight back was that they were encircled by 1,000 NPA guerrillas.

Later, the military offered to set up

more military detachments in the area. The residents flatly rejected the offer, saying that this would create more chaos and trouble in the town. They bluntly told the military: "If you want to capture the NPA, look for them in the mountains and set up your detachments there, not here!"

The military, however, continues to maintain its oppressive presence and sow fear among the tribal residents. This prompted the people to send a petition to Brig. Gen. Tomas Dumpit, RUC I commander, asking him to pull out the military and abolish the ICHDF in Sadanga. During Dumpit's visit to the town after the raid, the people fearlessly protested against military abuses.

Reinforcements came after the raid: 300 men from different military units accompanied by a chernite tank and a helicopter for air support — even though these did not encounter the Red fighters, who had long made good their retreat. A military vehicle carrying the advance guard of the enemy troopers fell off a cliff while negotiating a difficult passage along the mountain highway. It seemed yet another grim symbol of the fate that befalls the people's enemies. Abdul Ulap

Trekking the rugged trails

Women take on revolutionary tasks in the struggle for their and the people's liberation

On the dirt floor of the *abung* (hut) sat a brown-skinned, slightly built, soft-spoken woman in her early '30s. As she talked, she would nod her head and her shoulder-length hair would catch streaks of sunlight peeping through the reed walls of the hut. To her right was a newly polished M2 rifle, and beside it lay a black canvas bag containing two changes of clothing and a few other provisions. To her left was an olive-drab ammunition belt. Occasionally, her eyes would sparkle as she talked about her work and her nine-year-old child, and it seems she is not much different from other women. But LIB's interview with her would give away the fact that hers is a unique life.

She is Ka Celia, a Red fighter. Since the early '70s, she has made the mighty Cordilleras her home and its native people, her adopted *kailians* (townsmates). With them, she has lived and fought for more than a decade. In these mountains, she met her husband and bore a daughter. Besides being a guerrilla, wife and mother, Ka Celia is also a leading cadre, who for the past seven years has been a member of the revolutionary organization which administers one of the guerrilla fronts in Northern Luzon.

There were many things to show that Ka Celia does not fit into the stereotype image of a petty, frivolous or retiring middle-class woman. Having survived the rigors of guerrilla life in the harsh and often inhospitable climate and terrain of the Cordilleras, she comes through as one who, though frail-looking, is robust in spirit. That she has stayed all these years in the forefront of the revolution in these rugged mountains and plateaus, is proof of her determination to overcome the limitations of her bourgeois background. But then, even as a university student back in the '60s, Ka Celia was not given to patterning her life in the traditional mould.

For one, she was enrolled as an engineering major, taking up a course normally thought to be a male's domain. For another, she also refused to go the way of the ordinary coed for whom campus involvement usually meant joining socials and sororities. Instead, she joined the *Kabataang Makabayan* chapter in her school and helped set up several national democratic sectoral organizations for students enrolled in science and technology courses.

As a student activist, she also helped organize KM chapters in communities out-



A long way travelled: Woman Red fighter transcends traditional roles

side Metro Manila. But the myriad tasks facing her soon firmed up her decision to become a full-time activist. Shortly before the declaration of martial law in 1972, she dropped out of school and immersed herself totally into organizing youth and students for the national democratic movement. After a few more months, she opted to go to the countryside to join the NPA, and was assigned to an expansion area in Northern Luzon.

In her place of assignment, the NPA unit in the locality was only an undersized platoon and based in one small barrio. At

this time, Ka Celia remembers being involved in a little of everything. "I was into organizing, medical work, education, and even tried my hand at making explosives," she recalled. "With the local masses, we dismantled land mines left behind by the Japanese during World War II and tried to extract some materials to make our own explosives. But we were more successful in making cauldrons, spears and bolos out of the iron we salvaged," she laughed. "It was also then that I learned to eat ants, termites, snails and even ferns."

There is one more vivid detail, though, that Ka Celia remembers about those early years. "Most of the NPAs were men. There was a handful of local women in the NPA at this time but I was the only woman from the lowlands. I had to face the problem of being both a lowlander and a woman guerrilla working among fiercely traditional tribal people," she said.

"Thus, though I had an extremely difficult time adjusting to the terrain, I never let out a word of complaint. I had to prove that even a lowland woman could survive in terrain where one had to walk for hours along very steep and rugged mountain trails. The local women guerrillas, of course, had no problem with the terrain, and could easily outwalk the men from the lowlands even while literally shouldering heavy loads. But the women in our unit faced yet another problem."

For the local masses, the spectacle of women bearing arms and fighting alongside men was at first difficult to accept. They were, after all, steeped in the tradition that it was men who became warriors and went to battle while women were left behind in the village with the children.

"The female guerrillas, especially the tribeswomen, were ridiculed. We were derisively referred to as *balon ti NPA*, meaning we were supposed to have been brought along by the male comrades to satisfy their sexual needs while they were in the field. The military had a lot to do with fanning the flames of this age-old prejudice among the tribespeople by deliberately spreading such black propaganda," said Ka Celia.

But with the rise of the overall prestige of the New People's Army, the cultural prejudice against women guerrillas was slowly shattered. In many instances, it was the women Red fighters themselves who helped eliminate or reduce the bias against them through their gallantry in combat.

News of the women's participation in raids, ambushes and other tactical offensives spread fast among the villagers. Gradually, they began to accept and admire the women fighters, and this led to an increase in the number of women NPAs. By the time Ka Celia left to undertake expansion work in a nearby province, the local masses' perception regarding the women guerrillas had considerably improved.

But when they marry and start a family, women guerrillas face what is perhaps their biggest problem — how to arrange for the care of their children when it is time for them to return to the front. "When this problem occurs, the concerned unit always sees to it that a viable plan regarding child care as well as the woman's perspective in the struggle, are discussed thoroughly," said Ka Celia. "The women, especially leading cadres, are always encouraged to return to the field. In my case, I was fortunate to have supportive parents who were willing to care for my child when she was little so that I could resume my work. La-



Women workers joining march-rally



Tribal women asserting rights



Woman professional in protest fashion show

ter, as members of the urban committee secretariat charged with guerrilla zone building in another province, I and my husband had the chance to take care of our daughter ourselves."

But apart from child care and the cultural bias she had initially encountered, were there any difficulties women faced with the male comrades within the NPA itself? To this, Ka Celia smiled and carefully pondered her words. "I would not be totally accurate if I told you that there were no other problems," she answered. "Yes, there is still a tendency among the men to be too protective of the women in their units," said Ka Celia.

"In camps, for example, women are generally placed in the middle. In marching, the women guerrillas stay in the middle of the file, because this happens to be the safest position. In planning guard duty schedules, women are also usually assigned to keep watch during the 'safe hours,' when there is the least likelihood of enemy attack. And although many women guerrillas have risen to become squad leaders and vice squad leaders, still it is mostly the men who get the chance to occupy positions of responsibility. Also, women often wind up doing medical work, as if it were a matter of course," she pointed out.

"But," Ka Celia hastened to add, "the situation has not led to serious antagonisms. The men are not deliberately over-protective and neither is it a conscious policy to prevent women from acquiring experiences that would enable them to advance to more responsible positions. I think it is more a matter of the men still having traces of feudal values within them. This sort of thing does not disappear overnight. I believe, though, that the issue deserves serious study and that the movement should systematically adopt ways to eradicate such practices."

"But one cannot deny that the NPA and the national democratic movement on the whole, have done a lot in teaching equality not only in theory but through actual practice," asserted Ka Celia. "The number and quality of women cadres and guerrillas have steadily risen and improved. In some mass organizations, women even outnumber the men. Women have proven that they can perform any task just as well as the men. Women also have shown as much courage and daring in the face of enemy onslaughts. Even in their personal relationships with men, women have emerged stronger and more assertive. In a significant sense, it is the revolution that has provided women the chance to work for their own as well as the Filipino people's liberation," she concluded.

The way has been as steep and as rugged as the mountain trails of the Cordilleras, but more and more women have beaten the path to their and the Filipino people's emancipation by joining the revolutionary struggle. With the way being paved for other Filipino women to follow, Ka Celia's life and achievements will not be so unique. Victoria Manalo



Signal event: NDF-Mindanao leaders and guerrillas meet media people in makeshift press center

MAINSTREAM

Developments in the anti-dictatorship struggle

Another first for Mindanao

NDF Provisional Council of Mindanao holds unprecedented press conference in a guerrilla zone

It's a season of firsts for Mindanao.

First in successfully launching the people's strike or *welgang bayan*, it also ranks first in spurring urban mass struggles to a higher level. First in the national effort to intensify guerrilla warfare, it also leads in accelerating the tempo of urban partisan warfare.

Recently, revolutionary forces in Mindanao scored more firsts in the overall projection and advance of the revolutionary struggle. Last April 7, they announced the formation of the first region-wide council of the National Democratic Front in the first press conference ever of its kind in the underground movement.

Held deep in the hinterlands of the Zamboanga Peninsula, the unprecedented affair was attended by seven foreign and local journalists. They

trudged with armed guides for three hours across woodlands and mountain streams to reach a makeshift hut which had been put up in a guerrilla zone as the site of the meeting. There, six members of the NDF-Mindanao Provisional Council, representing various sectors and political forces, warmly welcomed them. Some council members, to protect their identity, covered their faces with dark glasses, colorful native cloth and knitted masks.

Lucas Fernandez, introduced as the council chairman, gave an overview of the national revolutionary struggle and that of Mindanao in particular. He said that the Provisional Council was set up in September 1984 "to keep pace with the demands of an advancing struggle and to strengthen the levels of cooperation among various political forces in the island." The 12-man

council operates as the central command, coordinating and directing all forms of political struggle, both open and underground, by revolutionary forces.

Comprising the backbone of the NDF in Mindanao are the *Katipunan ng mga Rebolusyonaryong Manggagawa*, *Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid*, *Kabataang Makabayan*, *Moro Revolutionary Organization*, *Katipunan ng mga Gurong Makabayan*, *Christians for National Liberation*, *Communist Party of the Philippines*, *New People's Army* and the *Samahan ng Makabayang Kababaihan*.

Fernandez said the NDF has established itself as "the broadest organized resistance force in Mindanao." It counts on the support of 20,000 national democrat mass activists and an organized mass base of around

170,000 spread across the island. The NDF also enjoys leadership in virtually all major sectoral mass movements in the islands as well as in the broad multi-sectoral movement. It exerts effective influence among workers in over 150 factories and plantations and among students in over 80 schools.

"In many parts of the island, the seeds of the democratic coalition government are already being sown," he added. "In over 1,100 organized barrios, NDF committees — the nucleus of the democratic coalition government — have emerged as the new organs of the people's power. These committees are also rising up at the municipal, district and regional levels."

While the NPA presently stands as the only armed force within the revolutionary united front, Fernandez said, "the NDF maintains a healthy fraternal relationship with the MNLF-BMA and expresses full support of the armed struggle of the Moro people for self-determination and democracy." He revealed that the initial groundwork for this is already developing at regional and local MNLF-BMA and NDF and NPA levels. In relation to this, he stressed: "Revolution in the Philippines cannot be a monopoly of a single revolutionary group. It has to be the joint effort of all progressive forces and sectors."

When asked about the possibility of liberating Mindanao before other parts of the country, the lanky chairman answered: "The strategic role of Mindanao is to draw in the enemy forces to give the NPA and national democratic forces relative ease in building up strength in Luzon and Visayas. It's bad strategy to let the enemy concentrate here without liberating the whole Philippines."

As expected, the successful press conference drew fire from government propagandists, especially as news of this was quickly played up by major foreign and local publications. Information Minister Gregorio Cendana fretfully dismissed the NDF media blitz as a "transparent propaganda ploy to counter the growing effectiveness of the government counter-insurgency measures."

Cendana and his co-peddlers of disinformation have much reason to fret. The Mindanao press conference is but more proof of the regime's losing course in the propaganda war
Leon Forteza



Igorot students: Dramatizing the struggle for self-determination in a play

The children of the Cordilleras

DATAKO congress marks intensifying movement among Igorot youth

They met secretly. There was to be no celebration, no clanging of gongs and jubilant cries. Their voices were subdued even during the busiest hours of a mist-filled day. They had to put up a front so that even the merely curious would not discover their precious activity. Even then, the difficulties that are normally part of the concealment of revolutionary activities did not prevent the young delegates from appreciating the significance of the occasion.

On March 27, somewhere in the Cordillera mountain range, the revolutionary Cordillera youth formally launched the Demokratiko a Tignay Dagiti Agtutubo ti Kordilyera or the DATAKO, the underground national democratic mass organization of the Cordillera national minority youth and students. DATAKO is also the youth arm of the Cordillera People's Democratic Front, the revolutionary united front organization in that area which is a member of the NDF.

In view of the rapidly intensifying movement among the tribal youth in the area, the holding of the founding congress is timely. It marks DATAKO's broadening organizational perspective by clarifying its role in the Cordillera people's struggle for self-determination within the context of the overall national democratic revolution.

In a message of solidarity, the Kabataang Makabayan, another revolutionary youth organization and NDF member, praised the swift organizational growth of DATAKO since the formation of its first propaganda-organizing team in Baguio City in 1981. "DATAKO's founding congress," said the KM representative, "signals a higher level of unity in orientation and methodology toward strengthening and expanding the

Igorot movement for self-determination and democracy." The KM said the DATAKO now has the responsibility of hastening the development of the national democratic movement among the national minorities in their region. It called on DATAKO to strengthen its ties and coordination with the Moro youth and other national minority youth.

In their message to DATAKO, the national democratic Moro youth and students, on the other hand, called the congress, "a high point in the struggle of the national minorities for national freedom, self-determination and democracy."

During the congress, which was held March 25-27, the minority youth delegates discussed the national political situation, the politico-military conditions in Northern Luzon and the Cordilleras, the history of organizing work among the Cordillera youth, and reviewed and ratified the DATAKO constitution and program of action. They elected seven Cordillera council members among themselves to constitute the leading and implementing body for the whole regional organization. They left two more positions vacant for the youth representatives of the Cordillera town centers, who were unable to come because of the massive militarization in their areas. Later, in simple rites, the delegates recited a pledge of commitment and affixed their nom-de-guerres on congress documents.

• A brief history

The involvement of the Cordillera youth in the revolution dates back to pre-martial law years. In the late '60s, a time of great popular ferment, Cordillera youth activists organized the Kilusan ng Kabataan sa Kor-

dilyera which was based in Manila. In Baguio, other students called "highland activists," also formed a similar organization. In 1971, these two groups merged. Upon the declaration of martial law on Sept. 21, 1972, they were forced to go underground like other national democratic mass organizations. A number of activists persisted, however, in organizing in the cities while others joined the armed struggle which had begun to step up in the countryside.

In 1976, the Chico Dam issue exploded, touching off a sensitive — and angry — chord among the Cordillera people whose ancestral lands and livelihood became threatened by the dam's construction. In quick succession, other issues like the Ceilophil menace in Abra followed. This marked the

popularization of a "Kaigorotan unity and consciousness."

Thus, 1981 saw the formation of the first DATAKO propaganda-organizing team (POT) in Baguio City, distinct from the territory's KM organization. From there, it set up other POTs which expanded to major schools in that highland city. When the DATAKO cells were fused together into a chapter, it became possible to launch bigger and better organized mass actions. The DATAKO members formed the backbone of the anti-Grand Canao movement which protested the commercialization and debasement of Igorot culture and identity. They expanded swiftly, organizing minority youth in areas in the Cordillera outside Baguio, and were even able to organize

The present gains necessitate adjustments in orientation, organizational structure and methods of work. There is a compelling need to conduct deeper social investigation into the particularity of the Igorot youth-student situation; as yet, this movement is not Cordillera-wide. In particular, there is an overriding need to advance this protest movement in the Cordillera town centers which even now, are assuming increasing importance as the people's war advances.

Despite such enormous responsibilities, DATAKO members remain undaunted. Before the historic congress ended, the delegates came out with a number of resolutions. The congress declared March 27 as the official founding day of DATAKO.



Combining tradition with militancy: Barrio people protest militarization; Kalinga youth performing ceremonial dance

start of the snowballing political movement among the Cordillera mountain tribes for freedom against national oppression and the US-Marcos regime. Through the efforts of activists from among the minorities themselves, this movement became a very significant and inextricable part of the national democratic struggle. Many youth and students, as well as the middle forces in the Cordilleras, became involved in the intensifying campaign. The youth, whose political involvement was deepened by these struggles, carried the KM as their organizational identity.

To consolidate all these efforts, a group was set up to study the particularity of the Cordillera national minority situation. They later drafted a paper which provided the basis for the clarification of the orientation of the Cordillera people's movement. The paper also laid the basis for the setting up of a distinct Cordillera-wide organization of national minorities, particularly the formation of a revolutionary youth organization. The task of the youth movement was clarified: the projection and

Igorot students based in Manila.

Since the beginning, however, coordination and complementation with the KM has been very close. The first DATAKO POT was composed of KM members. But with the growth of DATAKO, the KM concentrated on student and national issues while DATAKO focused on national minority concerns. During the boycott campaign last May 1984, DATAKO took charge of mobilization and other significant tasks while the KM helped provide political guidance. The student movement led by the KM provided the favorable environment to arouse and mobilize the Igorot youth for their particular struggles.

Tasks ahead

For sure, the formalization of DATAKO will pave the way for even greater and more organized youth participation in the broader struggle of the Igorot people for self-determination and in the national democratic revolution. At present, however, myriad problems and greater tasks await DATAKO members.

to be celebrated by the revolutionary Igorot youth in the years to come. Participants also declared their recognition of, and support for, the Moro people's struggle for self-determination within the context of the national democratic revolution. They declared their support for the revolutionary efforts of the national democratic Moro youth and the Moro Revolutionary Organization (MORO). They also unanimously endorsed DATAKO's affiliation with KM, in recognition of the fact that the Cordillera youth is but a part of the Filipino youth and in recognition of the KM's leading role in the Filipino youth's revolutionary movement.

Finally, the congress saluted the NPA on its 16th anniversary, hailing its indispensable role in the revolutionary struggle and for self-determination. They pledged their continuous support for the NPA and for the armed struggle.

Soon, we will see the revolutionary efforts of the DATAKO bear fruit and blossom as abundantly as the sunflowers that dot the Cordillera mountains. **Abdul Ulap**

Resurgent tides of rebellion

An exclusive interview with MNLF-BMA cadres

Seventeen years ago on March 18, an event occurred in the small rocky island of Corregidor that would violently change the face of Muslim politics in the Philippines. On that day, 28 Moro youths were cold-bloodedly executed by Marcos' military men for refusing to embark on a secret mission. This mission dubbed "Operation Merdeka" and its military arm, the "Jabidab" — had the sinister intention of infiltrating the state of Sabah to create internal chaos there, preparatory to a full-scale military invasion of Philippine armed forces to seize the state from Malaysia. Upon knowing the ulterior motives of the operation, the Moro youths, mostly unlettered, refused to join. All of them were then killed in what has now become infamously known as the Jabidab Massacre.

The incident ignited the already seething conflict between the Muslim people and the Marcos regime. Two months after the massacre, disgruntled elite Muslim politicians founded the Muslim Independence Movement, later renamed the Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM). Towards achieving a separate nation, they sent 90 Muslim youths for military training in the forests of Malaysia near the Thai border. There, the Group of 90, as it came to be called, was trained by hired British mercenaries and some Palestinians from the last part of 1969 to late 1970. The group included a former University of the Philippines political science student and activist named Nur Misuari. In early 1971, upon their return to the Philippines, Nur called a meeting in Zamboanga City which was attended by progressive elements of the Group of 90. Seeing no clear MIM program and criticizing the collaborationist tendencies of some supposed pro-independence Muslim politicians, they organized their own solid politico-military corps of fighters to advance the Moro struggle. Thus was born the Moro National Liberation Front and its military arm, the Bangsa Moro Army.

Under the leadership of the MNLF-BMA, fighting escalated against the Marcos regime's military forces, heightening after the proclamation of repressive martial law. In October 1972, the Marawi Uprising erupted. Muslim students barricaded and occupied the Mindanao State University and seized the radio station. The PC barracks at Camp Keithley were burned down with the help

of the Shock Troops and Revolutionary Army. Soon after, uprisings flared up in Basilan, Zamboanga and Jolo. The regime brutally retaliated in a series of arrests, massacres, arson and other atrocities against the Moro masses. But this only served to further stoke the raging fires of the jihad, the Muslim holy war against the regime's forces. As the Moro struggle continued without let-up, the Marcos regime working in close collaboration with the US adopted new tactics to quash the rebellion. On Dec. 23, 1976, it signed an agreement with representatives of the MNLF and the Organization of the Islamic Conference at Tripoli, Libya, pretending to grant regional autonomy to some Muslim provinces in Mindanao as well as a cease-fire in hostilities.

But hardly had the ink dried in the Tripoli Agreement when between Jan. 20, the supposed start of the ceasefire, until Sept. 28, 1977, the AFP staged 703 violations of the ceasefire, killing 612 civilians, wounding 367 and arresting 270 people. Topping the regime's treachery was the holding of an illegal and fraudulent referendum in April 1977. The Tripoli Agreement was a failure even before it had begun, a bitter lesson to those who had relied on a regime whose word of honor is made up of lies. Denouncing the regime's perfidy, the MNLF-BMA immediately stepped up the tempo of battle. To date, the Moro struggle persists. However, internal conflicts, fueled by the underhanded moves of the US and the Marcos regime, have caused divisions in the MNLF-BMA. Despite this, and the continued deployment of enemy troops and war materiel, MNLF-BMA forces under Nur Misuari and other progressive leaders have kept up a bruising fight against the regime's soldiers. One of their latest victories is the 76-Days Battle fought in Lanao del Sur in the middle of last year, resulting in many enemy casualties.

To mark the 17th anniversary of the infamous Jabidab Massacre and the Moro people's continued revolutionary struggle for self-determination and freedom, **LIBERATION** publishes the following interview with two leading cadres of the MNLF-BMA under Nur Misuari. It is based on interviews conducted separately, but with the same persons, by Mindanao, the NDF publication in that island, and **LIBERATION** in January and April respectively this year. Excerpts:

L: What are the objectives of the MNLF-BMA?

A: Our objectives are to gain independence, to establish an independent and self-determining Bangsa Moro nation as well as to firmly establish an Islamic state.

L: What do you mean by the term "Bangsa Moro nation"?

A: When we speak of this, we refer to the establishment of a Moro nation comprising the islands of Mindanao, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Palawan.

L: What is your program of government?

A: After liberation, we will establish 15 federated states. All will be given a certain degree of autonomy in recognition of the pluralistic nature of the Bangsa Moro nation and society. The states will encompass mainland Mindanao, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Palawan.

L: What happens when conditions of national oppression cease under the national democratic society, would you still press for secession?

A: Officially, we will stop at nothing but independence. Should a national democratic revolution succeed in the Philippines, the issue of whether we will go on or not (with our struggle) will depend on the national democratic government's handling of the Bangsa Moro issue and it will also be heavily dependent on the

political power we shall wield in the future.

L: What do you mean by "political power"?

A: This would depend on our organization, political influence and military capability. Our capacity to bargain would depend on our internal strength and the support we shall get from sympathetic countries. Any revolutionary group under the same circumstances would make that the very precondition too.



MNLF fighters discussing military tactics



BMA fighter: Keeping the fires of jihad burning

L: Wouldn't the Christian population of Mindanao object to a Bangsa Moro nation, considering that they comprise the majority in the island, with the Muslims comprising only 2.5 million or about 25 percent of Mindanao's 12.7 million population?

A: In the first place, the term Moro does not necessarily mean the Muslim population of Mindanao alone. It also includes the indigenous cultural tribes that are neither Muslim nor Christian as well as the Christian populace who might opt to be a part of the Bangsa Moro nation. For those non-Muslims or Christians who have settled in Mindanao and want to remain but do not want to be a part of the Bangsa Moro nation, they may stay but will be treated as foreigners.

L: Why? Don't you consider yourselves as part of the Philippines? Weren't your struggles part of Philippine history too?

A: We as a people have a historical experience distinct from that of the North Filipinos. And we maintain that race is not a basis to claim that the Moro people are part and parcel of the Filipino people. Even before the Philippine nation came into being, we were already Moros. Even if you go back to your history books, you'll see that *Filipino* referred to the Spaniards born in the Philippines or the mestizos and indios.

The Moro struggle against the Spaniards, the Americans and Japanese were wars we had to fight because they encroached on our homeland. In the 1896 Revolution, Aguinaldo sent emissaries

to the Moro people to join the struggle against the Spaniards. The Moro representatives answered, we have been already fighting since the first Spaniard stepped on our lands.

L: Why have you renewed your struggle against the US-Marcos regime despite the Tripoli Agreement promising regional autonomy to Muslim provinces in Mindanao?

A: Because Marcos has not been sincere in his implementation of the Tripoli Agreement. He has subverted its provisions and unilaterally implemented it to suit his own wishes. In fact, the lull in our fighting only took place during the negotiations; as soon as these bogged down, we resumed our fight against the regime's forces.

In the first place, we never really believed Marcos would carry out the Tripoli Agreement. The MNLF signed the agreement only because of pressure from the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

For us, the dictatorship is like the sun at 5:30 in the afternoon. Papalubog. It is sinking. Why should we ask autonomy from a regime already on its way out?

(We believe) the Tripoli Agreement is a bygone thing. A tactical thing that has been bypassed by events. It has outlived its significance. Collantes first abrogated it, then we abandoned it.

For us, the dictatorship is like the sun at 5:30 in the afternoon. *Papalubog*. Why should we ask for autonomy from a regime already on the way out? We are returning to our struggle for self-determination and independence.

L: Are you willing to establish close relations with the NDF?

A: As of this time, we feel it an exigency to support all groups that are opposed to the US-Marcos dictatorship, revolutionaries and reformists alike, regardless of political creed or affiliation. By reformists, we refer to groups like the bourgeois reformists' political parties, any group for that matter fighting the dictatorship.

L: Why does there appear to be many factions dividing the MNLF?

A: Such fragmentation is not free from US interference. With vast economic and political interests to protect in the Philippines, particularly in Mindanao, the US in fact has been trying to misdirect the course of the Moro revolutionary struggle since its intensification in the early '70s. To undermine the revolutionary unity of the Moro people under the MNLF, the US has masterminded the formation of reformist Muslim organizations.

L: What are the prospects of reconciling these factions?

A: Maybe it's just like reconciling the US and USSR. In any case, we believe that this (state of disunity) is an internal problem the Moro people must themselves solve, without any interference from outside forces.

L: What is your position vis-a-vis the US?

A: We are against US imperialism and any form of imperialism for that matter. We are for the dismantling of the US bases in the Philippines.

L: What is behind the reported mass surrenders from among the MNLF-BMA?

A: This is a normal part of the cleansing process any revolutionary group will have to undergo. Even the CPP (Communist Party of the Philippines) had them (surrenderees) with the likes of Caspe, Melody and Pusa.

Their surrender is determined many times by their class origin. They had not transcended this, their weaknesses had persisted, and their positive qualities eaten up by their negative reactionary inclinations. Take the case of Abul Khayr Alonto (former MNLF leader). Look at his background . . . he could not withstand the

hardships of revolutionary life. A similar case is that of Jimmy Lucman who, again, belonged to the ruling class, being a part of the prosperous Lucman clan. He had many weaknesses.

You know, many people join the revolution for various reasons. Some join out of frustration, some for ideological reasons, others to avenge the death of relatives. After achieving what they want and getting lucrative bribes from the regime, they leave the MNLF.

But there is a good trend, a revitalization now going on in the MNLF-BMA. One political scientist is calling it the Second Wave. The First Wave was composed of the early organizers of the MNLF, including the surrenderees. The Second Wave comprise those who have continued in the struggle and those joining the MNLF today. The Second Wave resembles the rectification movement of the CPP in 1968 after the old Party (Lava) became moribund and decadent.

L: Is there any truth to reports that Islamic states and organizations are no longer as warm or receptive to the MNLF and to Nur Misuari?

A: That's not true. In fact, at the recently concluded Islamic Conference at North Yemen, Nur was given the longest time to give his speech. After his talk, the Organization of the Islamic Conference adopted a resolution expressing indignation over the persistent refusal of the government headed by Mr. Marcos to implement the Tripoli Agreement. The resolution also urged all OIC member countries to extend financial, material and moral support to the MNLF and to allow the MNLF to establish liaison offices in all member nations of the OIC.

L: What is the role of the Islamic Conference in the MNLF?

A: The question should be the other way around. What is the role of the MNLF in the Islamic Conference? IC evolved from the felt need for Muslims to organize, not only in the Philippines but also in the Middle East, especially among the Palestinians. The MNLF is a member of the IC. The influence of the IC on us can be compared to the influence of the United Nations on the Philippines, which is a member of the UN.

L: Are you not constrained in your decision-making with your membership in the Islamic Conference?

A: We do not think so.

L: What about reports that the MNLF has suffered big casualties in recent battles?

A: As far as we're concerned, we have adopted purely guerrilla tactics. We do not launch big offensives, since these are too costly. We are now concentrating on consolidation work.

L: What can you say about Muslims joining other revolutionary organizations?

A: I have been dreaming of a situation where every Muslim would fight under the MNLF-BMA.

L: What is your guiding ideology?

A: We (the MNLF) are guided by Islam. You have to know it, to appreciate it. The Koran tells us:

*"Fight in the cause of God
Those who fight you,
But do not transgress limits,
For God loveth not transgressors; . . .*

*"And fight them on
Until there is no more
Tumult or oppression,
And there prevail
Justice and faith in God.
But if they cease
Let there be no hostility
Except to those
Who practice oppression*

SPARKS

Newsbriefs about the resistance movement

MILITANT GROUPS FORM NEW COALITION



First Bayan-sponsored rally streams toward Liwasang Bonifacio

Members of various cause-oriented groups formally launched a broad coalition called Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) last March 20. The new organization aims to utilize a combination of "pressure politics and electoral process in toppling the US-Marcos dictatorship," and usher in an "era of popular democracy." Elected as officers of BAYAN were former Sen. Lorenzo Tanada, former Sen. Ambrosio Padilla, Loretta Ann Rosales of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers, Rolando Olalia of the Kilusang Mayo Uno, Agapito 'Butz' Aquino of the August Twenty-One Movement, and Sr. Christine Tan of the Ecumenical Movement for Social Concerns.

As its first major activity, BAYAN led some 3,000 protesters in a march-rally from the Welcome Rotonda to Liwasang Bonifacio last March 28 to denounce the repression against mass actions in recent weeks, particularly the violent dispersal of an urban poor rally last March 15 and attacks on the picket line of striking workers of Shoemart department store.

NEPA ASSAILS IMF

The National Economic Protectionism Association (NEPA), a Filipino businessmen's group, criticized the terms in the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) "economic recovery program" for the Philippines, saying that these "ignore Philippine economic history and misinterpret international economic relations."

NEPA deplored in particular, the IMF view that relaxation of tariff controls will lead to the creation of "efficient" local industries by virtue of foreign competition. On the contrary, said NEPA, IMF impositions which require the Philippines at the same time to increase cost of credit and exercise restrictive monetary policies, have led to higher interest rates, higher energy costs and onerous domestic taxes. These policies have put local industries at a disadvantage in the face of foreign competition.

ANTI-NUKE GROUPS FORMED IN CENTRAL LUZON

A new Central Luzon-wide anti-nuclear coalition called the Lupon ng Nagkakaisang Tinig na Anti-Nukleyar (LUNTIAN) was launched last March 24 in San Fernando, Pampanga. During the opening ceremonies, one of the keynote speakers, Dr. Francisco Arcellana of the Health Alliance for Democracy, called on the new coalition to pursue a vigorous educational campaign on the costs of, and the health hazards and dangers brought about, by the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant. "We cannot get rid of the US military bases once the nuclear plant starts operations," he said, adding that the main beneficiary of the BNPP will be the US bases.

Also in the same town, a province-wide anti-nuclear alliance was formed. Called the Pampanga Anti-Nuclear Alliance (PAMANA), it aims to put up a united and militant stand against the BNPP and all nuclear weapons reportedly stored in the two US military installations in the region, Subic Naval Base and

Clark Air Base.

In a related development, 150 residents of Bataan and members of cause-oriented groups, accompanied by victims of the atomic bombs dropped on two cities in Japan during World War II, staged a march-rally from the Welcome Rotonda to the US Embassy last April 9. They demanded the dismantling of the BNPP.

LAWYERS MARCH TO MENDIOLA



Lawyers demand end to PDA in Mendiola march

About 300 lawyers and professionals, all in barong tagalog, held a rally at Mendiola last March 29 to campaign for the abolition of the Preventive Detention Action (PDA), which they said, is "repressive and unconstitutional." The lawyers, who were led by retired Supreme Court Justice J.B.L. Reyes, marched through various routes to reach Freedom Park in front of Malacanang, where the rally was supposed to be held, but were barred by anti-riot policemen. They instead held their protest action at the foot of Mendiola bridge.

20,000 PROTEST PRIEST'S MURDER

Some 20,000 people, including church leaders from various parts of Mindanao, joined a funeral procession last April 19 to condemn the killing by CHDF troopers, of Italian priest Fr. Tullio Favali in Kidapawan, North Cotabato. Earlier, on April 17, some 500 priests and nuns picketed Camp Crame in Quezon City to denounce the killing. Father Favali had responded to a call for help last April 11 from one of his parishioners who had been shot and wounded by the CHDFs, when he himself was killed and his motorcycle burned by the paramilitary men. The church people also demanded the disarming and dismantling of the CHDF in the country saying that these are being used by the regime to terrorize people in the countryside.

On March 29, some 300 priests, nuns and seminarians, as well as members of various Protestant churches also held a march-rally from Quezon City to the US Embassy. During the protest action, dubbed "Sinakulong Bayan," the church people unfurled a mural-like streamer showing the crucified Christ and the suffering Filipino people.



Church people stage picket in front of US embassy

NEGRENSES HOLD MARCH-RALLY

More than 3,000 residents of Cauayan, Hinobaan, Ilog, Candoni, Kabankalan and Sipalay towns in Negros Occidental staged a march-rally last April 5 to denounce escalating militarization in their areas. The protesters, many of whom started marching from their mountainous barangays as early as 5 a.m., were led by the Hugpong-Nationalist Alliance (HNA). During the rally held at the town plaza of Hinobaan, speakers from the HNA, the Alliance of Negros Teachers and the League of Filipino Students took turns in assailing military abuses, as well as US intervention in the Philippines.

GABRIELA HOLDS WOMEN'S RALLY, CONGRESS

The celebration of International Women's Solidarity Week in the Philippines was capped by a 3,000-strong women's rally along Mendiola last March 8. The rallyists were led by the General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action (GABRIELA). Earlier, on March 2 to 3, GABRIELA held its Second National Congress, during which a ten-point resolution was passed. Congress participants resolved to fight for, among others, the right to just compensation and equal opportunities for women, the right to full protection from sexual violence, the right to be free from the total responsibility of housework and child care to freely participate in economic and political activities, and the right of all Filipinos to live decently and humanely and to be free from imperialist domination and local despotism.

CL GROUPS PICKET CAMP OLIVAS



Rally in front of Camp Olivas assails militarization

Hundreds of Central Luzon residents belonging to militant groups marched to Camp Olivas in San Fernando, Pampanga last April 8 to demand an end to intensifying militarization and rampant military abuses in the region. The protesters picketed Camp Olivas where their representatives held a dialogue with military officials led by RUC 3 commander Brig. Gen. Jose Magno. Meantime, six farmers from Bataan were arrested by military agents while they were on their way to join fellow rallyists in Pampanga. The arrests sparked protests from cause-oriented groups from Bataan and Central Luzon.

ICFTU HITS REGIME'S LABOR CODE

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) accused the Philippine government of "fundamental" violations of trade union rights in a formal complaint filed with the International Labor Organization (ILO). John Vandemeken, ICFTU secretary-general and signatory of the complaint, cited provisions in the Philippine Labor Code which restrict the Filipino workers' right to strike and to self-organization. The ICFTU also singled out for criticism the regime's denial of the right to organize in the public sector through Article 277 of the Labor Code which prohibits unionism among an estimated one million government employees, mostly public school teachers.

In addition, the ICFTU also cited cases of harassment, arrest and illegal detention of trade union members included in a report

submitted to and investigated by the ILO in 1984. The ILO report, which was based on complaints filed by the Kilusang Mayo Uno, recommended that the Philippine government revise laws contravening ILO conventions, especially those that restrict freedom of association, the right to organize and to collectively bargain with management.

WORKERS STAGE MARCH-RALLY



Workers demand wage increase in Plaza Miranda march

An estimated 3,000 workers belonging to the militant Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) marched from the Welcome Rotonda to Plaza Miranda last March 10 where they held a rally. During the protest action, KMU chairman Rolando Olalia criticized traditional politicians busily preparing for possible "snap elections" this year. He said that these moves could not truly free workers from the "claws of foreign exploitation in collaboration with its local cohorts." Olalia stressed the need to restructure the present system that exploits and oppresses the working masses. The workers also denounced recent arrests, detentions and killings of striking workers, which they said, were tactics used by the Marcos regime to sow fear among their ranks.

FARMERS DEMAND FERTILIZER PRICE ROLLBACK

Several hundred farmers of the Alyansa ng mga Magsasaka ng Gitnang Luzon (AMGL) staged an eight-day camp-in in front of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAF) main office in Quezon City to press for the rollback of fertilizer and pesticide prices to 1983 levels. A rollback, according to AMGL spokespersons, would ease the farmers' burden and allow them to plant their rice crop.

The farmers' protest action began with a 25-kilometer march from Meycauayan, Bulacan to the MAF office last Feb. 5. Upon meeting with the farmers, however, MAF Minister Salvador Escudero rejected their demands, claiming that it would cost the government P280 million in losses. This caused the farmers to barricade the MAF and briefly occupy the ministry's compound on Feb. 11 to further press their demands. They were unable to continue their camp-in, however, when riot police dispersed them in a pre-dawn raid last Feb. 13, during which AMGL chairman Jaime Tadeo was arrested. The farmers launched an indignation rally that same day to protest the dispersal and to press for Tadeo's release; he was freed the following night.

BLTB WORKERS STAGE SUCCESSFUL STRIKE

Workers of the Batangas-Laguna-Tayabas Bus Company (BLTB) staged a successful strike from March 8 to 14, which paralyzed almost all mass transport in the entire Southern Tagalog region. Despite intense harassment from company guards and PC-INP troops, BLTB drivers, conductors and other employees affiliated with the National Federation of Labor Unions and the Kilusang Mayo Uno (NAFLU-KMU) staged the work stoppage to protest management's union-busting activities and violation of labor agreements. The strikers, whose mass action cost BLTB some P3 million in revenues, succeeded in reinstating dismissed or suspended officers and members of the Tinig at Lakas ng Pagkakaiba ng Manggagawa sa BLTB.

CRACKS

Indicators of the regime's economic and political crisis

THE AXE FALLS

There is no freedom after all. This, Arturo Tolentino, erstwhile Minister of Foreign Affairs, belatedly realized after Marcos fired him from his post on March 4. Sacked barely nine months after his appointment, the "outspoken devil's advocate in the KBL," as he likes to call himself, got his walking papers for wagging his tongue once too often against some of the dictator's policies, and for taking too much initiative in putting his ministry in order. In a move to "streamline and clean up" his ministry, he had objected to the appointment of Marcos cronies to high posts under his jurisdiction, and eventually stepped on the toes of "big people." The lone KBL survivor in the Batasan elections in Metro Manila had also often spoken out his views against Amendment 6 and the continued absence of a vice president.

Within the same week, Labor Minister Blas Ople also offered to resign after having been reprimanded anew for issuing speeches which were not made in consultation with the dictator. In one speech, Ople had deplored the present political system as being "heavily dependent on patronage."

THE MAIN EVENT

Who says the Batasan is just a rubber-stamp? It's more than that, it's also a sports arena.

Omar Dianalan and Macacura Dimaporo, both KBL from Lanao del Sur, came close to a boxing match on the floor of the Batasan over the matter of who should succeed as speaker pro tempore after the death of Salipada Pendatun. Marcos had announced that Dimaporo would be the successor in a KBL caucus last Feb. 19. Later, at the Batasan, Dianalan, in a fit of rage, charged that the Muslim solons were never consulted and that the criteria for the choice had never been made clear.

In another event, another near-brawl ensued when Marcos crony Roberto Benedicto blew his top while answering charges of mismanaging the Nasutra and masterminding the sugar price-fixing scandal which ruined the country's sugar industry.

With all that action, Batasan promoters should start putting up streamers announcing the day's main event.

HEADING FOR A WHITEWASH

Marcos is reported to be very distressed over the way the Sandiganbayan is moving so slowly in clearing Gen. Fabian Ver from the charges against the latter's role in the Aquino assassination. Observers say Marcos has ordered some of his aides to relay to the court that "in the interest of justice, the investigation should be speeded up."

The Sandiganbayan, in turn, is itself beleaguered by the scanty turn-out of witnesses that a whitewash done with finesse is becoming too difficult. Days before the Lenten season, however, the Sandiganbayan finally made a breakthrough. Roberta Maxi-bay, daughter of Rolando Galman, retracted vital portions of her testimony previously given before the Agrava Board after she was reportedly threatened by military agents and dragged away from the Galman family lawyer Lupino Lazaro.

In another development favorable to the military, self-confessed hitman Jose Fronda Santos, who is seeking asylum in the United States and who gave corroborating testimony against the military men charged in the murder case, was turned over to US intelligence after he was accused of being involved in a theft syndicate operating in that country.

Weeks earlier, the Sandiganbayan could not locate vital witnesses Efren Ranas, Olivia Reyes and Ramon Layoso who had

testified before the Agrava Board that Aquino was still with his escorts when he was shot on the service stairs of China Air Lines. Two ground engineers of the Philippine Airlines, Ruben Regalado and Celso Loterina, who gave testimonies to the Agrava Board that ran counter to the military's version of the killing, also could not be found.

In the meantime, the 22 military men accused as principals and who are now under the custody of their commanding officers at Millamor Air Base, are having the time of their lives. Sandiganbayan Justice Manuel Pamaian reportedly found them watching television under "heavy guard" from the 526th Honor Guard Squadron when he paid them a "surprise visit" on Feb. 23. Last March 17, Sgt. Filomeno Miranda, one of the principal accused, married his girlfriend in an improvised chapel adjacent to the roomy "detention hall," with General Ver as one of his special guests, and even had his honeymoon at the officers club.

BUYING MEDIA OUTFITS WHOLESALE

Imee Marcos-Manotoc is facing a stumbling block in her buying spree of radio and television facilities. Though she has succeeded in lapping up the stations at Broadcast City, she was reportedly stumped when owners of GMA Radio Television Arts (Channel 7) refused to sell out. She had asked her uncle, *Times Journal* publisher Benjamin Romualdez to negotiate with GMA owners on the price of the facility, but Romualdez was reportedly slapped with: "Tell us how much your *Times Journal* costs. It should not be too difficult for you to decide to sell it, for after all, it is not making money."

Nonetheless, the GMA management has decided to follow a policy of extra-carefulness lest it lose out on a technicality. It has refrained, for example, from airing a meaty interview portion of a program featuring ex-Sen. Jose Diokno. It abides strictly by the *Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas* ban on any program directed by Lupita Aquino Kashiwahara, sister of slain Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr. It has to pre-tape its talk shows and edit out all "censurable" items. As a result, GMA news editors are also reportedly having difficulty editing videotapes of the dictator because of a guideline saying that Marcos should always be projected as a healthy person.

SAME DOG, NEW COLLAR

What can one do when caught espousing a very unpopular scheme? Easy. Quickly deny having done so, but proceed with it just the same, only give the plan a different name.

This is exactly how the Metro Manila Commission's (MMC) scheme to set up CHDF units in Metro Manila metamorphosed into a supposedly different plan to organize the Barangay Security Force (BSF). The MMC's original plan was to put up the CHDF in Metro Manila as a result of the recent transfer of operational supervision and control of police forces from the PC to city and town mayors. But when the scheme came under heavy attack from several quarters, embarrassed Metro Manila Vice Governor Ismael Mathay Jr. promptly disavowed any such plan. Which would have been the end of it, except that Quezon City Mayor Adelina Rodriguez later complained that she was not consulted about a (new) MMC plan to set up armed Barangay Security Forces in Metro Manila, with Quezon City as the pilot area. The BSF was supposed to replace the Barangay Tanod, which, the MMC reasoned out, was ineffective in fighting crime because it was not armed.

Again barraged by angry reactions from the citizenry, the MMC, through its legal counsel Fiscal Sergio Apostol, later announced that the BSF will no longer be issued firearms. "We just floated the idea to gauge the public's reaction," Apostol sheepishly explained.



LETTERS

Comments from readers

As part of its commitment to generate the broadest discussion on the new draft of the NDF program, **LIBERATION** is publishing the following comments from various comrades and allies. All of these comments shall be considered by the Drafting Committee of the NDF Secretariat. We enjoin all other revolutionary organizations, comrades and allies to send to us, through their nearest NDF contact, their own suggestions and criticisms which should be duly signed with their revolutionary names. These comments will greatly help in further enriching and improving the program and hasten its ratification.

WHAT ABOUT CREATIVE FREEDOM FOR THE ARTISTS?

The program is very clear on what it demands from artists and writers. However, it tends to neglect the needs and demands of artists and writers. What does it have to offer or promise to artists and writers in particular? There is a specific mention of *academic freedom* for teachers and students; there is a general mention of *free speech and free press*; but what about *creative freedom* for the artist in particular? There are fears among artists of petty-bourgeois and national-bourgeois origins that the NDF will merely institute a censorship more severe and Gulag-like than the censorship now prevailing. How do we allay such fears among our artist-allies?

The program also says that the democratic coalition government shall promote "Filipino" as the official language nationwide. What does it mean by this term "Filipino"? Is this the artificial hodgepodge mandated by the Marcos constitution? Note that there are debates and controversies regarding "Filipino" and "Pilipino." Does the NDF mean to take sides in this controversy by its use of "Filipino"?

JOSEPH

SOME SUGGESTIONS ON TERMINOLOGY

1. General impression: The 1982 draft program was, with due respect, better in content and form. Why not retain as much of it as possible?
2. Page 1: "Ours is a history with a heroic tradition of revolutionary armed struggle we are justly proud of." This is a potential source of controversy because the slant is in favor of revolutionary armed struggle. Perhaps it can be reformulated to reflect people's war which is a combination of various forms of struggle led by the armed struggle. Historically, a number of significant historical movements did not fall under revolutionary armed struggle. For example, the Propaganda Movement, the Philippine independence movement, and the Ninoy Aquino movement.
3. Page 2: "The overwhelming majority of our people have awakened and are demanding the overthrow of the hated dictatorship . . . Furthermore, the principles and bases of popular unity have been understood and accepted by almost all . . ." Is this not an overestimation?
4. Page 2: "Yet many Filipinos are still searching for an answer to the crucial question: exactly how do we overthrow the U.S. - Marcos dictatorship and build a new Philippines?" Actually, there are three important questions as discussed in *Ang Bayan*, June 1984, pp. 6-7:
 - a) Who are our enemies? Whose dictatorship are we up

ERRATUM: NDF Draft Program, page 22, under General Task No. 12: "The people's democratic republic will work for the removal of the reactionary forces of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) . . ." The correct word is *features*, not *forces*.

We apologize for the typographical error.



INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY
Resistance and struggles abroad

'Victory is born even in the bi

Guatemalan people close ranks in the face of growing repression of US-backed Mejia

The popular revolutionary movement in Guatemala, the largest and most strategic country in Central America, has entered a qualitatively new phase. Boosted by the victory of the Sandinista forces in Nicaragua and the revolutionary upheaval in El Salvador, Guatemala's revolutionary struggle has broadened to include not only peasants, workers, women and church people, but most importantly, the indigenous people, who compose the majority of the population.

The guerrilla movement of the 1980s is very different from that of the 1960s

when bands of army deserters and middle class youth first took up arms to fight repression. Today, thousands of Guatemalan Indians, have joined the revolutionary struggle against US imperialism and its allies among the Guatemalan ruling classes. For the Indians, their participation was spurred by the ruthless genocidal policies unleashed against them by a succession of colonizers collaborating with the local ruling classes and lately, by a series of US-supported regimes which have been described as the most brutal in all of Latin America.

against? What is the basis of the dictatorial regime's political power?

- b) How is the enemy to be removed from power?
- c) What setup are we striving to build?

5. Page 3: "It (the NDF) wages armed struggle — specifically a people's war . . ."

The impression created is that the people's war is a specific form of armed struggle. This is not accurate considering that it is armed struggle that is the principal component of people's war.

6. It is a good thing that the discussion under General Task No. 1 anticipates post-Marcos U.S. schemes.

7. It is not explicitly stated under General Task No. 4 that the NPA shall be integrated into the single national revolutionary army. Shall the NPA be dissolved?

8. Page 12: "In general, however, the trading, refining and processing of major agricultural products . . . shall be turned over to the state . . ."

Shades of NASUTRA and UNICOM?

9. A matter of style: the discussion under General Task No. 8 is too detailed, especially in comparison with discussions under other general tasks.

10. Page 15: "Civil Service personnel of the overthrown government — except those accused of serious crimes — will be urged to continue manning their offices and serving the public . . ."

This connotes that not all parts or aspects of the enemy state machinery will be destroyed, and that some such parts or aspects will even be used by the new state.

11. Several passages of the program deal with the country's natural resources and environment (under General Tasks Nos. 7, 8 and 9). There is specific reference to marine resources (in page 12), but no such reference to forest resources and conservation. The problem of forest conservation deserves more attention.

K. ANTONIO SANDOVAL
Naga City

NEED TO STRESS POLITICO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

1. More emphasis should be given on the present political and economic conditions which prompted the revision of the old program. More specifically, the new program should elaborate on the military situation and the gains achieved so far by the progressive armed forces. It can then call on the people to hasten the doom of the US-Marcos dictatorship by intensifying armed struggle. It should also elaborate on the qualitatively more intense economic crisis of the country beyond mere gen-

eralities of rising unemployment and underemployment, etc. It should emphasize that this crisis is deeply rooted in our semi-colonial and semi-feudal system and can only be resolved by terminating the political rule of US imperialism and its local allies.

2. "After due trial by the people's court, all ill-gotten wealth and assets of the fascist clique shall be confiscated by the state."

Perhaps, the underscored phrase has to be inserted in order to clarify that confiscation will come only after due process is followed and that it is not arbitrary and discriminatory. However, the actual mechanics should be such that the state will takeover these properties immediately, and compensation or non-compensation will be determined later by the people's court.

3. "Nationalized enterprises shall be under the supervision of state boards composed of government officials and people's representatives, which shall be held accountable to the people through duly-constituted bodies." or accountable to duly-constituted representative bodies.

4. "Monetary and fiscal policy shall be utilized by the new government to promote economic development, national industrialization and agricultural cooperativization and modernization. Interest rate levels shall be set at a level that will spur both savings and investment. This can be done because severe decapitalization of the economy will be put to a stop: remittances of the super-profits of the foreign monopolies shall be ended and interest payments on foreign debt, now running at almost half our export revenues, shall be reduced on the basis of national interest in accordance with the debt payment policy of the new government."

This suggestion can more clearly illustrate how the democratic coalition government can embark on a monetary policy that is promotive of economic development without fueling inflation and negative effects on our balance of payments position. And certainly the very first step of any new government must be to reduce the debt burden. Our present foreign debt is huge compared with foreign investments of \$3B.

5. Shouldn't there be a section in General Task No. 1 about making use of splits within the ruling class and isolating the fascist diehards?

6. The term "popular culture" should not be used: it is not scientific. It could mean Sharon Cuneta movies as Sharon is quite popular. Better term is "pro-people". I am also not quite sold on the term "patriotic" as it implies simple love of country. Even Marcos can claim to be "patriotic". Nationalist is still the better term.

JJ

Interest hours'

regime

From conquistadores to United Fruit

The Indians in Guatemala today are the descendants of an ancient society known as the Maya. According to historians, before the first Spanish conquistador arrived in Guatemala, the Mayan Indians had already possessed the most brilliant of all neolithic civilizations. But with the coming of the colonizers, the Indian population was subjugated and its culture suppressed. The Mayan civilization soon gave way to the needs of Spanish mercantile capitalism and later, to the industrial capitalism of Britain, Germany and the United States.

Almost from the date of the conquest, Spanish settlers in Guatemala set up a cash crop economy aimed at production for export. The main industries were the raising of cattle for hides, the production of dyes such as cochineal and indigo, and the growing of cocoa and sugar, which remained the principal industries until the 19th century.

After 1890, the discovery in Europe of synthetic dyes destroyed Guatemala's cochineal industry. Consequently, the production of sugar, cotton and especially coffee was stepped up, which brought important changes to the social fabric of Guatemala. Because coffee production required much larger landholdings and greater capital resources, more land was made available for this purpose. Such land was incorporated into the *latifundios*, or large estates, resulting in the concentration of agricultural land in fewer hands. Indian communal holdings and even church lands were seized. Peasants, most of whom were Indians, were forced to become migrant workers. Debt slavery, wherein peasants were tied to particular estates through hereditary debt to landlords, was institutionalized. The ruling classes continually thought of sophisticated ways of squeezing more labor from the peasants.

By 1914, coffee brought in almost 90% of Guatemala's export earnings. Nearly half of this coffee was produced on foreign-owned lands, mostly German, but most of the individual Guatemalan entrepreneurs who prospered did so because they acted more as agents for foreign capital rather than compete with them, thus cementing the dependency of the local ruling class on imperialism.

By the 20th century, the North Americans had replaced the European capitalists as plunderers of much of the wealth created by Guatemalan labor, and in deciding who should sit in the presidential palace. In 1901, the US-owned United Fruit Company began its operations in the country



Forging unity: EGP cadre with Indians in a guerrilla front in southern Guatemala

and eventually became Guatemala's biggest landowner, taking over all of Guatemala's railways and the country's only Atlantic port. Using its control of the transport system to drive competitors out of business, United Fruit then secured a monopoly of the export trade in bananas. It was United Fruit that made Guatemala and many other Latin American countries notoriously known as "banana republics." Today, the company is known as United Brands, and it still dominates food processing, distribution and marketing in much of Central America.

Dictatorship of the generals

From the late 19th century to the early '50s, US imperialist exploitation of Guatemala grew more intense, and majority of the population became more wretched than ever. Under pressure from land theft and population growth, the indigenous subsistence economy existing in the Indian villages was breaking down and malnutrition spreading. The Guatemalan economy was structured specifically to provide foreign capital with rates of profit which regularly ran at twice those obtainable in developed countries. During this period, the rising workers' movement was brutally suppressed. But from 1944 to 1954, reformist governments, the last of which was headed by Jacobo Arbenz, took some steps to nationalize lands held by United Fruit and give recognition to the people's basic rights. This short-lived liberal era in Guatemalan history ended when Arbenz was overthrown in a CIA-backed and organized coup in June 1954.

Since then, a series of dramatic developments have substantially modified the country's economy and society. The rapid and

uneven development of international and domestic capitalism further shifted the balance between city and countryside. The position of traditional Indian and peasant economies was undermined, encouraging the growth of large-scale capitalist agriculture geared for export. This, in turn, however, created a larger and more militant working class, while tying Guatemalan industrialists closer to transnational capital. This also stimulated the creation of a mass of semi-employed and unemployed people in the towns and countryside who served as a pool of cheap labor for transnational corporations. All these changes led to the further impoverishment of the Guatemalan masses and sharpened the contradictions within Guatemalan society.

This kind of system now existing in Guatemala is being protected and maintained through a succession of military dictatorships that have managed to earn the dubious distinction of having the worst record of human rights violations in Latin America. In 1983, Amnesty International reported that Guatemala had more human rights abuses than any other country worldwide. Mass repression and systematic terror unleashed by the government and its military and paramilitary forces against the civilian population, especially the Indians, presently characterize Guatemalan politics.

Between 1966 and 1976, according to Amnesty International, over 20,000 people were killed in various incidents of political violence. During Lucas Romeo Garcia's dictatorial regime, more than 6,000 Guatemalans were abducted and killed by government forces. The first six weeks alone of the Efraim Rios Montt regime which took over from that of Lucas Garcia in 1982 saw an estimated 3,000 Indians and



The women of Guatemala: Replacing the loom with a weapon turned against their oppressor: right: funeral for a priest slain by the military

peasants killed. Rios Montt was later deposed by his own defense minister, Gen. Oscar Mejia Victores in August 1983, but the repression continues to escalate.

Victims have included student leaders, trade unionists, lawyers, journalists, factory workers, peasants, church people—in short, anyone whom the government has labelled an enemy of the state or a subversive element.

Resistance and revolution

The Guatemalan masses' answer to large-

scale political repression and economic exploitation is "popular revolutionary war."

Today, four major guerrilla groups operate in practically all of the country's 22 provinces, challenging a counter-revolutionary strategy aimed at eliminating all those who struggle to create a new Guatemala. On Feb. 8, 1982, a unified armed resistance front, the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (UNRG) was formed, signifying a level of coordination never before seen among politico-military forces opposed to the US-backed dictatorships in Guatemala.

The UNRG, composed of the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP), the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR), the Organization of People in Arms (ORPA) and the Guatemalan Workers Party (PGT), adopted a five-point program for building a "popular, revolutionary, democratic and patriotic society." The UNRG program calls for 1) the elimination of repression and the guarantee of the right to life and peace; 2) the elimination of both foreign and local oppression and exploitation over the people of Guatemala; 3) and end to cultural oppression and discrimination and a guarantee of equality between Indians and *ladinos* (those of mixed Indian and European ancestry); 4) the establishment of a government where all patriotic, popular and democratic forces are represented; and 5) the adoption of a foreign policy of non-alignment and international cooperation.

The formation of the UNRG is part of a process that began after the CIA-backed counter-revolution of 1954. In the late '50s, most revolutionary groups, including the PGT, concentrated on surviving the government's repressive measures which reversed the reforms initiated in 1944, and could take few political initiatives. In 1960, a small group of army officers fed up with the ruling classes' corruption and subservience to the US launched an uprising now known as the Nov. 13th Movement, but met little success. Later in the decade, the Rebel Armed Forces was formed and was able to establish three guerrilla fronts. But government forces wiped them out in an "extermination campaign" launched in the mid-'60s. Since then, however, the guerrilla movements in Guatemala have regrouped and

EVEN BENEATH THIS BITTERNESS

Otto René Castillo

At the bottom of the night
the footsteps descend and retreat

Shadows surround them
streets, drunks, buildings.
Someone running away from himself.
A broken bottle, bleeding.
A widowed paper, sailing around a corner.
A freethinker pissing on the grass,
where tomorrow the well-dressed children
will play beside the dew.

Far away something screams, dark metal,
genital.

Asphalt and blind stones, sleeping air,
darkness, cold, police, cold, more police.
Streets, whores, drunks, buildings.
Police again, soldiers, again police.
The statistics say: for every 80,000 officers
of the law
there is one doctor in Guatemala.

Otto René Castillo, one of Guatemala's leading poets, was killed in 1967 while fighting with the guerrilla movement.

Then understand the misery of my
country,
and my pain, and everyone's pain.

If when I say: bread!, they say
Shut up!
And when I say: liberty!, they say
Die!

But I don't shut up and I don't die.
I live
and fight, maddening
those who rule my country.

For if I live
I fight,
and if I fight
I contribute to the dawn.
And so victory is born
Even in the bitterest hours.



class contradiction, and the correct way of posing and solving both contradictions in terms of the totality of national problems, is one of the keys to revolutionary strategy and is what makes the Guatemalan revolution unique."

Thus, the oppression of the indigenous half of the population has been emphasized and groups like the EGP have successfully included speakers of Indian dialects in their armed propaganda actions. In recent years, Indian involvement with the guerrillas has deepened, with the social fabric of the Indian communities becoming closely wedded to the popular revolutionary movement. This has come about primarily because of the extreme poverty and exploitation of the Indians, but also because of the realization on the

part of the revolutionary forces that without them, a revolution is impossible.

Resistance, however, has not been limited to armed struggle in the countryside. In the last decade, the radicalization of ever-larger sections of the Guatemalan working class and agricultural proletariat has led to the creation of a number of important workers' organizations. In addition, gains have been made toward the achievement of a revolutionary united front of all patriotic, popular and democratic forces in Guatemala.

In 1976, several workers' organizations formed the National Committee of Trade Union Unity (CNUS). Rural workers also entered a new phase in their struggle in 1978 with the creation of the Committee of Agricultural Workers' Unity (CUC). In

Anti-Marcos protest mount in the US



US groups picket Philippine consulate in San Francisco

developed new impetus. Today, both the FAR and the PGT continue to carry out armed actions. In addition, two new armed groups have emerged—the EGP, formed in 1972 and the ORPA, which carried out its first offensives in 1979.

The '70s also saw the integration of the reality of Guatemala's multinational character to the specific practice of its revolutionary war. The country's revolutionary intellectuals have identified the "ethnic-national contradiction" as one of the fundamental factors to consider in bringing about revolutionary change in Guatemala. This political conviction is based on the fact that more than half of the Guatemalan population is Indian, and that the majority of them are wage or semi-wage workers.

This "ethnic-national contradiction" is seen in the domination of the Indian peoples and their ethnic-cultural identity by the "dependent agro-export capitalist system which the ruling class has historically created . . . and the need to eliminate the economic and political base on which this domination rests," according to *Companero*, an EGP publication. The resolution of the contradiction is to be found in the overthrow of the "present pro-imperialist and landowner-bourgeois regime and the carrying out of an agrarian, anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist revolution." In terms of revolutionary political strategy, this means that the worker-peasant alliance must be complemented by the great unity of Indians and *ladinos*. "The double condition of the Indian as exploited and oppressed, the clarification of the specific nature of the second contradiction, the comprehension of the ethnic-national contradiction as the basic complement of the

US-based anti-dictatorship groups launched successive mass actions from February to March to protest human rights violations in the Philippines and to lobby for the cut-off of US military aid to the Marcos regime.

In March, representatives of the Philippine Lobby Group composed of the Church Coalition of Human Rights in the Philippines (CCHRP), the Philippine Support Committee (PSC), the Washington Forum, Friends of the Filipino People (FFP), the Committee for Philippine Concerns, and other militant groups pitched camp at the US Congress building to dramatize their demands for a stoppage of aid to Marcos.

In the same month, PSC and FFP members picketed the Philippine Embassy in Washington, DC to denounce the Marcos regime for "consistently breaking up legitimate rallies and mass actions." They cited the violent dispersal of the recent farmers' camp-out, student march, and transport strike, during which mass leaders Jaime Tadeo, Dante Laya, Leandro Alejandro, J.V. Bautista, Lino Brocka and Behn Cervantes were arrested. The picket ended in a scuffle when embassy guards roughed up the picketers after an intelligence officer attached to the Philippine embassy's trade section tried to grab a banner from one of the protesters.

Earlier, in February, the Alliance for Philippine Concerns, an umbrella organization of anti-dictatorship groups in North America, also picketed the Philippine consulates in Washington DC, New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco and organized letter-writing campaigns to assail the increase in police violence during urban protest actions in the Philippines. During the campaign, four San Francisco Bay Area organizations, the League of Filipino Students-Bay Area, the Philippine Education Support Committee, the Filipino East Bay Network and the Church Network on the Philippines condemned the violent dispersals of mass actions and the arrests of rallyists, saying that these "confirm a pattern of escalating repression by the US-Marcos dictatorship to suppress an ever-growing and popular protest movement." In calling for a halt to US aid to the Marcos regime, the Bay Area groups said that the granting of the IMF stand-by loans and the increased flow of military aid from the Reagan administration "have emboldened the ruthless dictator to heighten its repression of the Filipino people."



Hope for the future: Guatemalan guerrillas mass up for a meeting; Guatemalan Indian children from a refugee camp

1981, the Jan. 31 Popular Front, a national coordinating body of several Guatemalan mass organizations, was formed. Known as FP-31, the new united front organization commemorated the heroism of 36 peasants and sympathizers burned to death by Guatemalan government forces on Jan. 31, 1980 when they occupied the Spanish Embassy building to protest the genocidal war waged against Indians in the northeastern part of the country. The goal of FP-31 is the broad participation of the Guatemalan people in the popular revolutionary war. Together with another mass coalition, the Democratic Front Against Repression (FDCA), FP-31 formed the Guatemalan Committee for Patriotic Unity (CGUP) as a first step toward the establishment of a National Patriotic Front united on the basis of the UNRG's five-point program.

The Guatemalan people's struggle is part of the common struggle of the peoples of Central America and the Caribbean against exploitative and unjust social orders perpetrated by US-sponsored regimes in their countries. Ranged against them, however, is the ever-present threat of direct US military intervention as seen in recent US actions against Free Nicaragua (see LIB, Jan.-Feb. 1985). But with the advance of the popular revolutionary war, with the developments in the process of unity among the revolutionary, popular and democratic forces of Guatemala, and with the effective support and solidarity of the peoples of other countries, prospects are bright that the Guatemalan people will be able to contribute to the worldwide defeat of US imperialism. With their victory, another front in the defense of the dignity and sovereignty of the peoples of Latin America will become a reality. **Manolo Tierra**

European groups decry repression in RP In the Netherlands

A day of fasting and other protest actions in support of the Philippines were held last April 5, Good Friday, in seven different places in the Netherlands—in Arnhem, Heerlen, Eindhoven, Broda, Assen, Hengelo and Purmerend. The activities, coordinated by Simbayan, the ecumenical solidarity group for the Philippines in the Netherlands, focused on the campaign for the release of all political detainees in the Philippines.

In all the gatherings, there were sharings and reflections about the suffering and struggle of the Filipino people. Slideshows and videotapes on the Philippine situation were also shown. At 3 p.m., a station of the cross based on the militarization of Negros was held in many places.

On the same day, people wrote protest letters to the Philippine government and military authorities and to Dr. Henri Van Broek, the Dutch minister of foreign affairs. Letters of support to detainees, with special attention to those in Mindanao, were sent. Some 500 cards and petition letters demanded the release of Judy Taguiwalo and other detainees.

In Arnhem, a group of 25 people started a fast the previous night and held an overnight wake. In Heerlen, 50 people joined the fast from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., and another 100 joined in later. In other places, the number of fasters varied from 25 to 50.

The activities were noted by local and regional papers and a regional radio station in the south. A solidarity message from the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines was read before all fasters.

In Italy

A more organized level of support for human rights struggles in the Philippines was achieved when prominent personalities from the political, cultural, church and labor sectors in Italy came together to form the Comitato Contro la Repressione del Popolo Filipino (Committee Against the Repression of the Filipino People).

The committee, officially organized last Feb. 13 and launched on March 15, is headed by Giancarla Codrigani, secretary general of the Italian parliament. Among the members of the committee are Lucianna Castellina of the European Parliament and Gianni Tognoni, secretary general of the Permanent People's Tribunal.

During the launching, which was covered by the major Italian dailies, a Filipino priest gave a report on militarization throughout the Philippines, concretizing this with an account of his personal experiences on the island of Samar. Codrigani also stressed the urgent need to undertake activities denouncing military abuses against the Filipino people. She added that among the committee's objectives would be to mobilize public opinion against the ongoing repression in the Philippines and to lobby with institutions, trade unions, political parties and other significant organizations for the release of all political prisoners in the country.

A dark, grainy black and white photograph of a landscape. In the foreground, there is a dark, flat area. In the middle ground, several silhouetted figures are standing on a ridge or path. The background shows rolling hills under a dark sky. The overall mood is somber and dramatic.

RED HILLS

From a seed of 60 men
and 35 rifles
a mighty force is born —
Red as the price of blood
Staunch as a blacksmith
that moulds hills
into bastions;
Vivid as an artist
who paints famine
into green.

The hills have broken
their cast of silence;
dried of tears
they speak like cracks of fire,
foreshadowing the raging storm.

The Red hills have echoed
to the plains below.

Dagum Diwata

Battalion boo-boos

The 8th Infantry Battalion is very famous in Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur. Whenever they encounter NPAs, they immediately lay down their rifles and put up their hands. The masses call them the Surrender Battalion.

Equally "popular" is another battalion in Mindanao. Instead of fighting the NPAs, this unit occupies its time setting up checkpoints on highways and getting money from hapless passengers. The masses call them the Extortion Battalion.

Here's one for Ripley's. In his two year stay with the NPA, a military defector has participated in 87 offensives. In his eight years with the AFP, he experienced only three operations against the NPA!

Suggested new motto for Marcos' military troops:

NPA: Handang mamatay

AFP: Basta mabuhay

After attending a dinner hosted by the First Lady at Malacañang, several guests had to be rushed to the hospital. No, the culprit wasn't the food Imelda served. It was her mindless speech which caused untold brain damage.

Because of this, her critics recommend that she learn haragei. That's a Japanese form of communication whose essential element to being understood is silence.

The three lies most often told by Marcos are: 1) The NPA and revolutionary forces are losing the war; 2) Martial law will not be reimposed; and 3) I'm your man in Malacañang and I'm there to help you.



Here's an entry for the Guinness Book of World Records: Only in the Philippines can you find the biggest tax evader who is himself the biggest tax collector.

Q: What do you think would be Imelda's first executive act if elected President?

A: She will abolish auditing of government funds.

Ten urgent tips to fawning KBL politicians and aspiring Marcos sycophants on how to stay in good graces with the dictator:

1. Never mention sickness, illness, disease, including kidney ailment and Lupus, with the name Marcos in one speech.
2. When coming face to face with Marcos, volubly compliment him on how healthy he looks with his chubby cheeks, how sexy and lusty his voice sounds, how thick and lustrous his hair looks and how sturdily he walks across the room.
3. Tell him how strong the KBL is in your bailiwick, how much the people love the President and how everyone hates the opposition.
4. Be sure to smear the NPA and anything which sounds communist and looks red.
5. Do not wear yellow in his presence, especially come August 21. Remove any sign of yellow ribbons, streamers or paint from your car.
6. Do not grant interviews with foreign journalists without first checking their political sympathies. In case the article comes out critical of your master, sue the magazine for false reporting and libel. Tell Marcos the money you'll win in the case will go to his coffers.
7. Whisper in his ear that he is your idol, that his father is your father's idol, that his mother is your mother's idol, that his wife is your wife's idol, that Borgey is your grandson's idol.
8. When he starts coughing and can't seem to stop, cough with him as a show of support and solidarity.
9. Promise him that he has your full support in 1986, 1987 and beyond.
10. In case he has trouble believing you, swear to him that you'll stake your life on it. Then prove this right before him by committing hara-kiri.
He'll never find a better Marcos loyalist than you.
The best Marcos loyalist is a dead one. Good riddance!

