

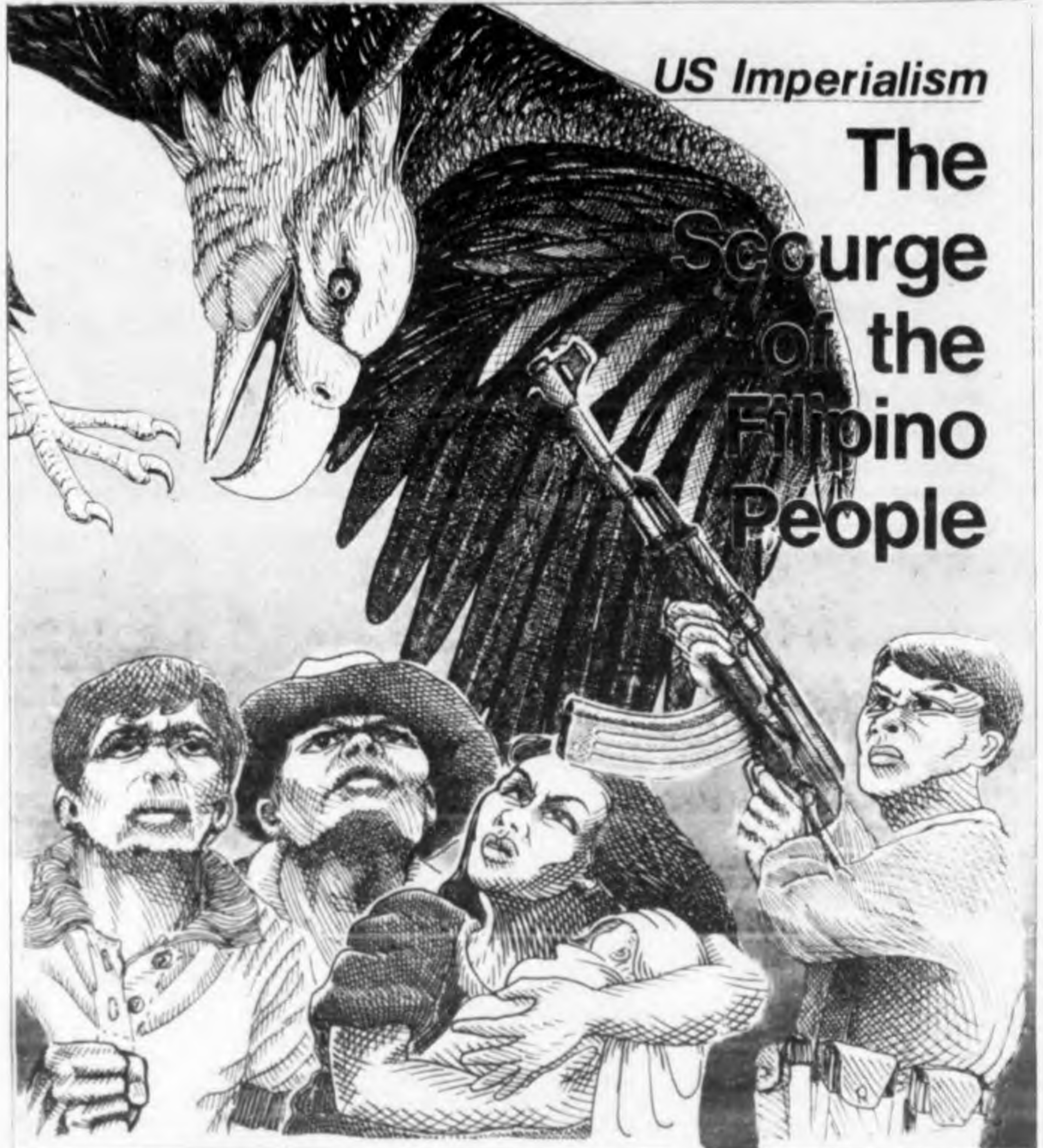
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# LIBERATION

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*US Imperialism*

The  
Scourge  
of the  
Filipino  
People



# The New Inquisition

One of the charges made against Ninoy Aquino was that he was a communist. It was a charge that was to earn him a death sentence from a kangaroo military court.

In truth, Ninoy was not a communist, as he himself maintained time and again. In fact, in not a few instances did he openly admit his differences with this political force. But it speaks well of him that he was able to transcend his personal views on this matter in the interest of achieving a higher goal — the unity of all political organizations and individuals in the struggle to end the despotic Marcos regime. And it is perhaps a measure of his greatness that he willingly risked death in order to bring home this message to the Filipino people.

Ironically, this legacy of Ninoy which is written in blood seems to have been lost on some of his professed followers. This has been most evident these past few months with the maneuvers of some persons to pit "yellow" against "red," to engage in a New Inquisition by attacking progressive organizations as "communist" and seeking their exclusion from activities commemorating Aquino's martyrdom. If they but thought deeply about it, these persons are making others a victim of the very same kind of anti-communist paranoia that victimized Ninoy during his lifetime.

Who are these professional witchhunters and why are they intent on maligning progressive and revolutionary forces?

A handful of them parade around in clerical garb and spout big words like "democracy," "socialism" and "freedom" but in reality are fascists at heart. A few are the self-anointed leaders of some political organizations who mouth the same words and are in fact closely aligned with these clerico-fascists. Some gullible elements of the legal opposition have become their unwitting or witting tools.

Many of these anti-communist vigilantes have been around a long time, even before martial law. Their resurrection at the present time is no accident. Whenever the revolutionary current accelerates in the Philippines, they are known to rear their ugly heads and intensify their attempts to discredit the national democratic movement. And in fact, the reason why they are fanning the flames of anti-communist fanaticism anew is because they seek to hold back the advance of the broad national democratic movement which has been consistently playing a leading role in the anti-dictatorship struggle.

In this respect, they are no different from the US-Marcos dictatorship which likewise seeks to isolate the progressive forces, stem the growing radicalization of the people and wreck the unity of the broad anti-dictatorship front — all in a bid to

preserve the oppressive ruling system. Again, it is no accident that this handful of pseudo-militants and the dictatorship should share the same nefarious objective. Some of them in fact are working hand in glove with US imperialism and the Marcos regime. They form the enemy's fifth column, functioning as a reactionary neutralizing force and roadblock against the revolutionary movement.

Those few in the legal opposition and the rank-and-file members of certain political organizations who have fallen under their influence are therefore well advised to expose and weed out these vermin from their ranks. Though these anti-communist diehards constitute a minority, they are dangerous trouble-makers who will unscrupulously use every opportunity to undermine the anti-dictatorship struggle.

We hold that the real issue facing the Filipino people today is not communism but the overthrow of the hated US-Marcos dictatorship. To insist that communism is the main issue is to obscure the necessity of ending the dictatorship and would only help the latter. The most important task at present is to build the broadest possible unity of all forces and individuals and to direct every attack against the US-Marcos regime — the principal enemy of the people.

While we believe that healthy competition for the people's support among different political organizations is an essential element of democracy, such competition should not be made to divide or to isolate others but should be made in the context of unity and resistance. To stress resistance solely, to the exclusion of unity, would be disastrous. For such resistance will neither be reliable nor enduring, and must sooner or later end in defeat.

However, we wish to stress that every individual has the right to his own private views about anti-communism, just as everyone is entitled to freedom of thought and belief. But when one starts practicing this negatively by exposing progressive organizations and individuals as "Reds" or by supporting suppressive counter-insurgency campaigns, he has reached the level of rabid anti-communism and is in danger of being classified alongside the enemy.

This is only to underscore the fact that anti-communism translated into political action is self-destructive. That anti-communism is a politically repressive force which has engendered countless crimes against the people throughout Philippine history. Those who persist in dividing the people on this issue will only do incalculable harm to themselves. Our best hope is that they may yet stop destroying others and start healing themselves.

## IN THIS ISSUE

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**Cover story:** US imperialism is now caught in a bind. It has adopted a carrot-and-stick policy to make the Marcos regime carry out a program of urgent "reforms" to save the present ruling system. The trouble is that the Marcos regime keeps munching on the US carrot while hardly wincing from the US attack. In this issue, LIB examines the nuances of this seeming conflict between them.

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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.*



# Squabble among predators

Marcos' unyielding stance on political reforms puts the US in a dilemma

It was a scene straight out of a soap opera. Two illicit lovers head toward a stormy quarrel. The more preponderant party moves to reduce financial support; in retaliation, the aggrieved partner hysterically threatens to cut off their relationship altogether. But before things get to a boil, a truce is called. The two lovers agree to kiss and make up, and return to each other's arms.

This drama was played to a skeptical Philippine audience these recent months. Playing the role of the lovers were US imperialism and its Filipino

atooge Marcos. The incident which drew Marcos' ire was the US Congress move to drastically slash US military aid to his regime.

The drama, of course, is nothing new to the Philippine public which has been subjected to the same rigmarole the past years. But this time around, the drama was more interesting to watch because of Marcos' theatrical antics to upstage his imperialist master.

## Lovers' quarrel

The trouble began in the US Congress. Originally, US President Ronald Reagan had asked the US Congress for an aid package to the Marcos regime for 1986 totalling \$275 million that included the record-breaking amount of \$100 million in military aid and \$95 million in economic aid. The total amount was \$48 million larger than in 1985: the military component was sought to be increased by 150% from last year's - from \$40 million to \$100 million this year. This aid package is part of the US government's continuing support for its falter-

ing client regime which is being presently battered by an intense economic and political crisis.

However, certain anti-Marcos elements in the US House of Representatives, notably Rep. Stephen Solarz, chairman of the chamber's subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, proposed an aid mix which allowed for only \$25 million in military aid and rechanneled the bulk of the amount to economic aid. The amount for the economic aid was not to be channeled through the Marcos government, but through the Catholic Church.



US intervention: Object of rallyists' ire, and subject of Reagan's (left) and Marcos' (right) brief squabble





Protagonists in political drama: US ambassador Stephen Bosworth (left); US embassy rallyists in stand-off with police (right)

His point was to pressure Marcos into seriously implementing US-prescribed reforms in the Philippine political arena.

It was when the US Congress approved Solarz's proposal that Marcos cried foul and bitterly threatened the abrogation of the US-RP Military Bases Agreement, under which the US maintains Clark Air Base, Subic Naval Base and a host of other US military installations in the country. Acting in collusion with Marcos, Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile filed a resolution in the Batasang Pambansa seeking a review of the US-RP relations and abrogating the bases agreement.

This time, there were no pretensions to "nationalism." The regime insisted on its right to the military aid as "rent" for the bases (the US calls it aid). Moping, Marcos went through the motions of playing a "Russian card" by pointedly accepting a decoration from the Soviet Union for his supposed exploits in World War II.

Officials of the Reagan administration played their own game by leaking out word that while the US bases in the Philippines were important, they were not *that* important. If the Marcos regime truly desired their removal, they could be transferred to Guam, Saipan, Tinian or some other area in the Pacific.

The Senate-House conference committee, whose deliberations are characterized by political horsetrading, later approved military aid in the amount of \$70 million — not quite the amount requested by Reagan but still \$35 million bigger than last year's outlay. At this point, with the approval of the aid mix, the Marcos clique's furor over the bases agreement lost steam.

Clearly, both sides had been bluffing in a game of political poker. In the end, although neither got all they wanted

from the other, the US and its puppet were lovey-dovey once more — for the moment, at least.

#### The US dilemma

The brief fireworks between the Marcos regime and US imperialism, while underscoring the fundamental unities between master and puppet, highlight the contradictions between them which have had a tendency to sharpen lately. It openly reveals the current US dilemma in the Philippines.

The essence of this dilemma involves the problem of limiting Marcos' dictatorial powers without weakening the government to the point where it becomes even more ineffective in dealing with the rising political unrest. To make Marcos bow down to its demands, the US has adopted a carrot-and-stick policy to pressure the regime to carry out a program of "reforms" which it perceives to be urgent to save the entire ruling system from being overthrown by the escalating revolutionary struggles.

These overt US pressures on Marcos became increasingly observable immediately after the Aquino assassination in 1983. To evade its secondary responsibility in the murder, the US distanced itself from Marcos publicly. It then also started to pressure him to institute cosmetic reforms in order to defuse the explosive political situation that developed in the aftermath of the assassination. But while holding the Marcos regime at arm's length, the US continued to shore it up, not only with military and economic assistance of its own but with assistance it solicited from secondary imperialist countries such as Japan.

Ever so reluctantly, the regime did implement some of the prescribed "reforms," specifically in the form of allowing the

legal opposition a relatively bigger number of seats in the rubber-stamp Batasang Pambansa in the 1984 elections. But it has been dragging its feet on some of the more substantial reforms demanded by the US.

Thus, the main trouble is that the Marcos regime keeps munching on the US carrot while hardly knuckling under the US stick. Although it also rabidly wants to preserve the ruling system, the regime is more frantically concerned at the moment with its own political survival. Marcos fears that once he bows down to US pressure and opens up the political system to more pro-US "moderates" in the legal opposition, he will increasingly lose his hold on power.

An American diplomat in Manila has an apt description of the US dilemma with Marcos. In an interview with *Newsweek*, he said: "Marcos just keeps eating the carrots, and nobody dares hit him with the stick. I believe he's beyond reform at this point."

To be sure, Marcos' cold shoulder on major reforms has left the US in a bind: how can it ensure the preservation of the present system, with Marcos proving so intransigent? And if not Marcos, whom can they trust to replace their weakening puppet?

#### NSSD: Carrot-and-stick policy

In an attempt to resolve this intricate dilemma, the US has come up with a document which embodies the current US imperialist policy vis-a-vis the Philippines. Entitled "NSSD: US Policy Toward the Philippines — Executive Summary" (NSSD stands for National Security Study Directive), the document is the result of half a year of discussions by a US government interagency team with representatives from the Pentagon, Treasury De-



partment and the CIA.

The document, approved by Reagan, last January, prescribed the carrot-and-stick treatment for the Marcos regime in the following words: "Reforms are likely in the short run to weaken some bases of support for the (Marcos) government, which will resist many of them. While President Marcos at this stage is part of the problem, he is also necessarily part of the solution. We need to be able to work with him and to try to influence him through a well-orchestrated policy of incentives and disincentives to set the stage for peaceful and eventual transition to a successor government whenever that takes place. Marcos, for his part, will try to use us to remain in power indefinitely." (*underscoring ours*)

At the same time, the document, far from confirming the democratic intentions of the Reagan policy, affirmed the rationale for continued US support for Marcos. "The US," noted the document, "does not want to remove Marcos from power (or) to destabilize the GOP (Government of the Philippines) . . . These efforts are meant to stabilize while strengthening institutions which will eventually provide for a peaceful transition."

While acknowledging that Marcos would "resist" many of the US-prescribed reforms, the paper expressed confidence he would toe the line because "our support is one of Marcos' largest remaining strengths."

The "reforms" the Reagan administration spelled out in its policy document are: 1) "a more open economic system that ends or substantially alters 'crony capitalism' and agricultural monopolies"; 2) "a more open political system that offers a credible promise of democratic reforms"; and, 3) "an effective military capable of carrying on the fight to the communist insurgency while controlling abuses of its own power."

For certain, what US imperialism wants are not genuine democratic reforms; like Marcos, it simply wants to retain the essential fascist structures built by the US-Marcos dictatorship over the last 13 years of martial rule. But it wants to give the *impression* of reforms - cosmetic - to defuse the people's revolutionary struggles and wean away those among the legal opposition who are drifting to the left.

Thus, with respect to the first reform, what the NSSD document calls for is not only the dismantling of the Marcos faction's sugar and coconut monopolies which have hurt the interests of certain US transnational corporations, but also allowing the national economy to "respond to free market forces." In effect, this policy will translate into greater US imperialist control of the economy.

Regarding the second reform, it is noteworthy that what the US wants are not genuine reforms (it is opposed to

these) but merely "a credible promise of democratic reforms." Specifically, the US wants some changes in Marcos' Commission on Elections (Comelec), recognition of the reformist National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel), a new election law similar to the one that applied in the 1984 Batasang Pambansa election, an amendment or reform of Marcos' decree-making powers, and "change in the media - particularly television but also radio and print - to permit opposition access."

And regarding the third reform, the US wants "a professional, apolitical leadership" in the AFP "in order to deal with the NPA threat." Specifically, the US wants Gen. Fabian Ver out as AFP chief of staff and his permanent replacement by Lt. Gen. Fidel Ramos. With such a new leadership, the US hopes that steps would be taken to upgrade the AFP's thinking, morale and war material.

even if these were to be given to the legal opposition, there would be little they could do to forestall cheating by the overwhelming pro-Marcos majority. An apt word has been coined to illustrate electoral frauds at the Comelec level: Comelection.

Also, Marcos has tenaciously resisted legalizing the Namfrel as a poll-watch body, as he rejected it in the 1984 election. The proposed new election law is still pending before the Marcos-controlled Batasan. But already, Marcos' Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL) is talking about bloc-voting, the same weapon they used to demolish Ninoy Aquino's Lakas ng Bayan (Laban) party in 1978. As for allowing the legal opposition substantial time and space in the Marcos-controlled media, the Marcos camp has further tightened - instead of loosening - its hold on these channels of communication. Early this year, Marcos' daughter



Targeting another outpost of imperialism: Student rally at JUSMAG

#### An unyielding puppet

Marcos has not complied with any of these reforms.

He has gone through the motions of dismantling his clique's monopolies in the sugar and coconut industries, but decisive control remains in "crony" hands - Eduardo Cojuangco in coconut and Roberto Benedicto in sugar. Henchmen of the clique control other major areas of the economy and continue its plunder. One "reform" the regime did start implementing with alacrity is the IMF diktat which is tied up with the country's \$30 billion-plus foreign debt - the further restructuring of the economy to allow greater US domination and control.

As regards the electoral reforms in preparation for the forthcoming local and presidential elections, Marcos' record has likewise been dismal. He has appointed a most trusted henchman, Victorino Saveliano, as Comelec chairman, and has packed the nine-man body with his other political lieutenants. There are only two seats left in the poll commission, and

Imee went on a buying spree of TV and radio stations.

In addition, Marcos is preparing the way for the reinstatement of his top henchman Ver as AFP chief of staff. He is personally supervising the defense in the Aquino murder trial to secure the eventual acquittal of Ver and other military officials. He has already extended the tour of duty of the heads of the Army, Navy and Air Force and other generals in the high command who are pro-Ver. With these moves, Marcos hopes to consolidate his hold on the military which is presently being wracked by a "reform movement" led by junior officers, with the encouragement of General Ramos and Enrile.

"Marcos is perfectly aware of the US dilemma and has maneuvered successfully around it with most of his dictatorial powers intact," said the *Philippine Report*, the publication of the Philippine Resource Center, a progressive research organization based in the US. He knows that, without any viable political alternative to him, the US will not do anything



radical or violent to weaken his government since this would lead to the further destabilization of the entire ruling system.

Moreover, as Marcos himself stated in an interview with the Agence France-Presse, US opposition to his authoritarian rule comes only from a section of the American bureaucracy, and that the US government "bailed us out when we were in terrible trouble in 1983 and 1984." Although criticisms against him continues in the US, Marcos noted, "You can expect this from the Americans; the Americans never had a united bureaucracy, but one must take all this in stride."



Anti-intervention rally in San Francisco

Marcos, of course, is right. "There are differences between the State and Treasury Departments and the Pentagon and between the Reagan administration and Congress, especially the House of Representatives which is dominated by the Democratic Party," explained the *Philippine Report*. "Marcos is also right in saying that, when push comes to shove, the US will bail him out. There is widespread bipartisan agreement between the administration, Congress, and even the media on the need to continue support for Marcos while leaning on him to help prepare the way for a successor regime."

#### Not a helpless giant

So what are we to make of all this? That US imperialism is a helpless giant in its dealings with its puppet?

Far from it.

"Marcos is still not getting everything he wants from the US," said the *Philippine Report*. "He cannot shake the American assessment that his regime is on the way out nor secure approval for his chosen political heirs. As a result, the amount of political and monetary assistance he can secure is barely enough to assure his survival, to enable him to climb out of the economic and political black hole he put himself in. A more pronounced skepticism about Marcos in Congress has re-

sulted in even smaller amounts of aid."

In addition, the differences between the US Congress and the Reagan administration on Philippine policy are marginal. There is basic agreement on overall policy. The differences have to do with how much pressure to place on Marcos and on how much economic and military assistance Marcos needs to survive.

Basically, the US continues to hold out the carrot, as evidenced by its large military aid to the Marcos regime and its continuing economic aid to it. But the stick can work in various ways.

Officials of the Marcos regime perceive the US hand in the recent exposé that Philippine military officials led by Ver diverted over \$6 million of a \$35 million contract funded by the Pentagon for military communications equipment to the Philippines. Ver reportedly awarded the contract to Amworld, an American trading firm, with the approval of Marcos. They also see the US hand in recent reports that Philippine Air Force jetfighters scrambled radio transmissions on Aug. 21, 1983 to intercept the plane carrying Aquino. The implication is that the assassination was a high-level conspiracy, reaching up to Ver.

And the regime is extremely displeased over the recent meeting in the US between high officials of the Reagan administration and leaders of a faction of the Moro National Liberation Front which wants to secede from the extremely oppressive Philippine state.

Officials of the Reagan administration, including top officials of the local US embassy, have also been tightening their links with some members of the legal opposition and the "reform movement" in the military - dubbed by the NSSD paper as "Filipinos who have been on the cutting edge of moderate reform or change."

Indeed, US imperialism has many options at its disposal, not excluding having Marcos assassinated, such as it did with its puppet Ngo Dinh Diem in South Vietnam. Or it could strangle the regime slowly by gradually withholding military and economic aid from it.

But these do not appear to be on the US agenda for now. Though Marcos has increasingly become a political liability for the US, for the moment he is still their most trusted puppet among all the local reactionary forces. None of the legal oppositionists have his capability to fully command the AFP, much less the capacity to push an intense counter-insurgency program against the surging revolutionary forces.

But whatever US imperialism does now or in the near future, one thing is clear: With its enormous interests at stake in the Philippines, the US will do all it can to preserve the present decadent ruling system - with or without Marcos. **Ambrosio Banaag**



Remembering Ninoy: Demonstrators return to the

#### MAINSTREAM

Developments in the anti-dictatorship struggle

## The people have

Rallies nationwide mark second anniversary

"*Ang bilis ng panahon,*" stated a san-tol vendor along Espana street in Manila, as he watched thousands of workers, students, church people and professionals troop past him toward Liwasang Bonifacio. "*Purang kahapon lang nila pinatay si Ninoy pero dalawang taon na pa.*"

He did not specify who "nila" referred to, but the buko vendor beside him zeroed in on the real mastermind of the killing when he added, "*Iba talaga pag presidente ka, e. Puwede kang gumawa ng kahit ano!*"

The day was Aug. 21, the second anniversary of the Marcos regime's slaying of opposition leader Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. and the throng that marched along Espana was part of the 250,000 people all over the country who joined nationally coordinated protest actions organized by the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN), the militant national multi-sectoral mass organization.

In Manila, intermittent rains failed to stop some 40,000 marchers from streaming into Liwasang Bonifacio. By 3 p.m., they crowded the plaza's wet grounds and raised the BAYAN banner on the Liwasan's flag pole amid cheers and applause. Hovering above the crowd were red, yellow and blue flags, streamers, balloons and placards. One placard read: "*Mamaga sana uli ang mukha ng pumatay*"





streets of Manila on Aug. 21; column of marchers surges through busy Quiapo district

le

## not forgotten

of Aquino assassination

*kay Ninoy.*" It referred to the mysterious illness that causes the periodic swelling of Marcos' face. Another placard read: "Ninoy - hero; Makoy - hilo!"

But more serious were the posters showing Fr. Tullio Favali's body lying in a pool of blood, his brains blown off. Favali was murdered by CHDF men in North Cotabato last April. Also heart-wrenching was the mural on the victims of the violent demolition of urban poor shanties by marine forces in Tatalon, Quezon City this July, that resulted in the death of two residents. The poster and mural showed that Ninoy's killing was but one of a string of dastardly crimes perpetrated by the US-Marcos dictatorship, and that the people had converged that day not just to demand justice for Ninoy, but for all of the regime's victims.

With voices full of emotion, the rallyists shouted: "Diktadurang US-Marcos, lansagin! Lansagin! Lansagin!" At 4 p.m., they marched to Mendiola, the bridge leading to Malacanang, the better to air their indignation and protest at the very symbol of the regime's power. Hundreds of marine, army and air force units - armed to the teeth - zealously guarded the bridge, as if to shield the dictator from the people's fury. A marcher quipped, "Kailan pa nag-declare ng state of war ang Pilipinas?" Six firetrucks

stood menacingly behind the rows of barbed wire blocking the bridge, while all other roads leading to Malacanang were also guarded by heavily armed men. Indeed, Mendiola at that time, as aptly described by a national daily, was a "war zone."

Meanwhile, in Makati, yellow confetti poured from high-rise buildings to greet participants of another rally, this time led by the Aquino family, some parliamentary oppositionists and the newly formed *Bansang Nagkakaisa sa Diwa't Layunin (BANDILA)*. Here, Agapito "Butz" Aquino, brother of Ninoy, asked the 15,000 demonstrators to continue fighting for Ninoy's cause. Cory, Ninoy's widow, also expressed in an emotion-filled speech, her gratitude to the Filipinos who have unceasingly supported and sympathized with her family.

Although physically separate, the participants of both rallies were united in demanding justice for Ninoy and in calling for an end to state repression.



Aug. 21 rallyist reading NDF statement

During these rallies, several underground revolutionary organizations such as the NDF, the *Kabataang Makabayan* and the *Makabayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan (Makibaka)* expressed their solidarity with the Filipino people through statements distributed by bekerchiefed youth activists. The NDF said that the death of Ninoy and other victims of state repression could only be fully vindicated through the overthrow of the US-Marcos dictatorship.

The NDF called on the legal opposition to unite with the struggling Filipino people and to "stop offering themselves up as instruments of US imperialism." "Let not the great unity forged in the heat of the people's anger on Aug. 21, 1983 crumble into ashes. Let not the death of martyrs like Ninoy Aquino and countless others be put to waste," said the NDF.

Elsewhere in the country, the people also registered their anger and protest. Ten thousand converged at Freedom Park in Davao City to condemn the Marcos government for the assassination of Ninoy and for the spate of killings in the provinces of Davao. In the first three weeks of August alone, at least 52 have been reported killed. In a statement circulated at the rally, the NDF committee in Davao lashed at the "peace rally" sponsored two days before by the local KBL leaders. The NDF said that "(It is ) Amazing how the country's biggest peace and order violator and trouble-maker can go on a violent spree of repression, denying the people peace one day and appearing as a (peace) 'crusader' the next."

In Cebu City, the Visayas' main urban center, 10,000 also sought justice for Ni-



noy and all victims of repression. They moreover demanded the release of Redemptorist priest Rudy Romano, the national vice chairman of BAYAN for the Visayas who was abducted by military men on July 11. When military agents nabbed two of the rallyists, the demonstrators surrounded the PC/INP headquarters and refused to leave until the two were released. The military then forcibly dispersed the crowd with truncheons and tear gas, injuring scores of protesters. Angered, the demonstrators fought back and were able to inflict injuries on their attackers.

In Iloilo City, 9,000 marchers, waving red and yellow flags, attended a rally. In nearby Bacolod City, local BAYAN leaders led thousands in holding a "public trial" of the US-Marcos dictatorship for its crimes against the Filipino people. "Diktador Makoy" was found guilty by the 20,000 who gathered at the Bacolod public plaza. They sentenced Marcos to death by burning — an effigy with the heads of Marcos and Uncle Sam was put to the torch by the participants amid loud cheers and wild applause.

In Bicol, local newspapers described the Aug. 21 rally held in Naga City as the "best ever" in the province in terms of "quantity and quality." Organized by the August 21 Committee composed of BAYAN members and other oppositionists, the protest activities started the day before and culminated in a main rally held in the evening of Aug. 21.

Rallies were also held in Samar; in Malolos, Bulacan; in San Fernando, Pangasinana; in Bataan and in the cities of Legaspi, Dagupan, Baguio, Iligan and other major urban centers.

The crowds all over the country that gathered on Aug. 21 showed that the people have not forgotten nor forgiven the regime for the brutal murder of Ninoy and other Filipino martyrs. □



Makatti rallyists singing "Bayan Ko"



NDF Panay Congress theme: "Onward to the strategic counter-offensive"

## A milestone for Panay

Revolutionary forces establish NDF Provisional Council in Panay island

From July 28 to 30 this year, the verdant hills of an interior municipality of Iloilo that weeks before, had been witness to a series of NPA tactical offensives, resounded with cries of joy, singing and laughter. On these dates, 26 people representing Panay's various national democratic sectoral and multi-sectoral organizations and territorial units gathered in a guerrilla zone to formally establish the provisional council of the National Democratic Front on that island in the Western Visayas.

Present during that historic occasion were a youth representative of the Kabataang Makabayan (KM), a health professional from the Makabayang Samahang Pangkalusugan (MSP), a woman activist from the Makabayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan (Makibaka), a teacher from the Katipunan ng mga Gurong Makabayan (KAGUMA), a priest from the Christians for National Liberation, a peasant delegate from the Pambansang Kaisahan ng mga Magbubukid (PKM) and a worker from the Rebolusyonaryong Kilusan ng mga Manggagawa. Also present were representatives from the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army and the island's legal multi-sectoral mass organization.

All these organizations, together with the various territorial units, comprise the broad grassroots base of the NDF in Panay.

Also among the participants were staffers of *Daba-Daba*, the revolutionary newspaper in the island, and a guest from a Canadian solidarity group.

The NDF Provisional Council of Panay is the second regional council of the NDF to be established this year. The first such



Panay island: Marching forward

council was set up in Mindanao last April 1. Both councils will prepare the way for the formal establishment of regular and duly elected NDF councils in their territory. Their formation signifies the relatively high level of development achieved by the people's war in their respective islands, in the spheres of armed struggle, the revolutionary mass movement and united front work.

The Panay conference boldly bannered the theme: "Establish the NDF-Panay and advance the revolutionary mass movement toward the strategic counter-offensive!" In the strategy of people's war, the strategic counter-offensive is the highest sub-stage of the strategic defensive, leading toward the strategic stalemate or parity of strength between the revolutionary forces and enemy forces.

"Our gathering is a triumphant event for the revolutionary movement in Panay," said a leading member of the NDF-Panay Provisional Council. "It comes at a time when we are entering a new period of ad-



vancing toward a strategic shift in the balance of forces in the revolution in the entire country. The establishment of the NDF-Panay will further push our revolutionary struggle in the island, to make it march in step with the overall progress of people's war in our country."

To unite the various revolutionary political organizations and forces in the conference, the objectives, tasks, functions and structures of the NDF regional council were discussed and settled. The delegates also discussed the national and regional (Panay) situation and elected the council's executive committee. They also formulated region-wide plans for coordinated mass campaigns until the end of 1985 as well as resolutions on how to deal with the coming elections.

Setting the militant and enthusiastic tone of the gathering were the stirring speeches of the delegates. Said the revolutionary urban committee representative: "The establishment of the NDF-Panay is a big step because it is the concentrated expression of the level of strength, the level of organization, the level of political consciousness that we have reached, with the required sharpness, daring and courage needed to topple the US-Marcos regime."

Added the CPP-NPA delegate: "The setting up of the NDF council is only an initial step . . . but it already contains the seeds of the provisional government that we will establish in the future. We cannot envision a people's war without a revolutionary united front. With the NDF-Panay, now there is a force, alongside our armed forces in the countryside, facing the enemy and destroying it step by step."

"We, on our part, believe that through the NDF, a political force can be built to unite all progressive and revolutionary classes and sectors, political parties and forces, organizations and individuals that adhere to and will carry out the national democratic line," declared the *Daba-Daba* representative. "We believe that through the NDF, a force in their thousands, including leaders and cadres of the revolution, will appear and the seeds of the democratic people's government will be propagated. We hope that this conference will produce a powerful force that will help shatter the foundations of the US-Marcos dictatorship."

Full of hope and optimism, the MSP health activist stated: "We are proud and happy to become part of the realization of a vision, the establishment of the NDF in Panay. After the impoverishing and terroristic rule of the US-Marcos regime, majority of our countrymen are looking for a genuine opposition group that will embody their nationalist and democratic aspirations. This conference inspires us that with a little more patience, more vigilance and thoroughness, our people's victory will soon be at hand." The formation of the NDF-Panay is indeed a forward step in that direction.

## Who's really on the run?

Escalating NPA offensives disprove Marcos' claim that "rebels are on the run"

"The initiative is in our hands . . . We will keep the rebels running until we run them to the ground!" bragged Marcos in his speech during the PC/INP anniversary celebration this August. Obviously beside himself with glee, the dictator predicted the end of the insurgency in "the next few months." But as usual, events are proving him wrong.

In Misamis Oriental last June, an intense week-long troop saturation campaign designed to crush forces of the New People's Army (NPA) in this northern Mindanao province came to naught despite the deployment of a battalion-size force beefed up by helicopters, chemite

night as the Red fighters, a mere ten meters from the enemy's quarters, opened fire. The guerrillas left as furtively as they had come. Approximate enemy dead: five.

That morning, a five-man NPA squad also successfully covered the escape of unarmed medics pursued by a platoon of Scout Rangers. Positioned atop a ridge, the Red fighters, with rifles blazing, swept back the rangers' lead scouts. The troopers retreated in disarray. Confirmed enemy casualties: nine.

In an earlier incident reminiscent of scenes in epic war movies, NPA offensives simultaneously broke out in three differ-



Battle-tested: NPA guerrillas trooping to a military operation

tanks, howitzers and mortars. Almost daily, NPA harassment teams hounded the Philippine Army's 2nd Scout Ranger Battalion with small but incessant attacks, reported the People's Information Bureau of Front 4 in Mindanao.

On June 17, the first day of the military counter-insurgency campaign, an NPA team inched its way to some 20 meters from the rear of a platoon of Scout Rangers that was on patrol in Barrio Lanisi, Claveria, Misamis Oriental. After letting loose a one-minute barrage of gunshots and arrows, the NPA team which included tribal warriors, vanished like smoke. The rangers wildly kept on firing, and later retreated to their camp in terror. At least five troopers were killed.

On June 19, another NPA harassment team silently slipped into the perimeter of Barrio Mat-i Elementary School, which quartered a platoon of rangers. Shouts and shrieks rang out in the stillness of the

ent regions in the country. In a single afternoon, May 26, 113 firearms were added to the NPA arsenal and 17 enemy soldiers were killed:

1:45 p.m. NPA guerrillas attacked the headquarters of the 234th PC Company in Bagupaye, Mulanay, Quezon. At the end of the 40-minute firefight, three soldiers lay dead, three surrendered, while the rest fled in the heat of battle. Taken by the NPAs from the subdued enemy camp were 11 high-powered firearms.

3:00 p.m. Red fighters swooped down on an enemy camp in Palapag, Northern Samar. The 25-minute gunbattle yielded 34 firearms (29 high-powered), the biggest single haul by the NPA on the island.

4:15 p.m. Two truckloads of NPAs rolled into Isabela, Negros Occidental and opened fire on the headquarters of the 3rd Scout Ranger Company and the town's police station. Eleven Scout Rangers died, including Lt. Emmanuel Ar-



## NPA TACTICAL OFFENSIVES (JANUARY TO JULY 1985)

| MONTH        |  |  |  |            |             |                     |
|--------------|---|---|---|------------|-------------|--|
|              |   |   | Killed  | Wounded    | Surrendered |  |
| January      | 7   | 31  | 36  | 8          | 94          | 174 HPRs, 1 M203, 1 M80, 1 rifle grenade, 2 grenades, 31 others  |
| February     | 10  | 31  | 57  | 21         | 68          | 85 HPRs, 2 M203s, 2 mortars, 1 bazooka, 37 others  |
| March        | 6   | 28  | 42  | 6          | 9           | 458 HPRs, 14 others  |
| April        | 20  | 11  | 79  | 48         |             | 41 HPRs, 49 others   |
| May          | 15  | 9   | 127   | 62         | 4           | 153 HPRs, 4 M80s, 5 M203s, 34 grenades, 1 other  |
| June         | 15  | 6   | 65  | 22         |             | 11 HPRs, 6 others  |
| July         | 2   | 1   |   |            |             | 14 HPRs  |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>75</b>   | <b>117</b>  | <b>406</b>  | <b>167</b> | <b>175</b>  | <b>1,889 HPRs: 6 M203s, 5 M80s, 2 mortars, 1 bazooka, 1 rifle grenade, 138 other arms, 36 grenades</b> |

*Partial tally based on available NPA field reports, Pulang Bandila tabulations and Bulletin Today news reports from April 1 to June 22*

royo, their commanding officer. One CHDF and two policemen were also killed and 10 other troopers were wounded in the simultaneous assault. Total arms haul: 68, 63 of which are high-powered, plus 10,000 assorted bullets, 30 grenades and other military supplies. The Red fighters likewise freed four political prisoners held at the police station.

### Intensifying NPA offensives

Far from being "on the run," the NPA and its escalating offensives unerringly signal more frequent attacks and even bigger arms confiscations in the days to come.

According to the NPA newspaper *Pulang Bandila*, at least 526 guerrilla assaults were launched from April 1984 to March

1985, indicating an average of 10 offensives per week. This surpasses the record of seven tactical offensives per week for the period April 1983 to March 1984. The same period also showed a marked rise in the average number of arms seized per month: a high of 175, up from the previous period's monthly average of 90.

In terms of signal achievements by the NPA, however, 1985 is beginning to clearly stand out as a watershed year. For the first quarter alone, for example, *Pulang Bandila* reported 22 major tactical offensives with a total of 745 firearms seized and 44 enemy forces killed. In these operations, six NPAs were martyred, indicating a ratio of seven enemy casualties for every Red fighter killed. This is exactly the opposite of Marcos' claim that the casualty ratio for 1985 is 71

NPAs to 10 AFP troopers.

Moreover, the number of arms seized for the first quarter alone is already more than half of the total number of arms confiscated for the whole of 1984 (about 1,200).

Also indicating the rising combat capability of the NPA and increased mass support for it is the expansion of armed struggle to new areas. In the same quarter of this year, Negros Oriental was opened to guerrilla warfare. The opening salvo: an NPA ambush last Feb. 20 on a foot patrol composed of elements from the 336th PC Company, in Barrio Kakha, Sta. Catalina, Negros Oriental.

### Other gains

The second quarter of 1985 also witnessed a number of qualitative leaps in both the conduct and projection of NPA offensives. The May 26 simultaneous raid on an AFP camp and a police station in Isabela, Negros Occidental remains the biggest and most daring operation to date on the island of Negros, employing even more complicated maneuvers than those used in the celebrated raid on the Visayan Maritime Academy (VMA) armory in Bacolod City last March 25.

In the province of Quezon, a first was achieved on May 12 when two photo-journalists covered a dramatic pre-dawn raid on an enemy military and communication station in Sta. Cruz, Guinayangan, town. The two newsmen were privileged to witness one of the biggest tactical offensives so far in Southern Luzon. The operation yielded 27 arms, surpassed only by an earlier raid in Dungawan Sentral, Guinayangan last Nov. 24, where 29 high-powered arms were seized. The media coverage also highlighted the NPA policy of leniency toward captives, as news-

## Introducing: *Pulang Bandila*

The New People's Army has come out with its own publication called *Pulang Bandila* (Red Flag). In its maiden issue dated June-July 1985, *Pulang Bandila* announced that its role is to serve as the NPA's chronicler of news about the revolutionary armed struggle and to help in the ideological, political and organizational strengthening of the NPA.

To accomplish this, the paper aims to cover the following topics: 1) NPA tactical offensives, with stress on how battles were won; 2) common as well as critical problems faced in advancing the armed struggle; 3) day-to-day activities of the NPA, and the special participation of the masses in fighting the enemy and supporting the NPA; 4) national and international developments related to armed struggle; 5) articles that will counter the enemy's disinformation campaign against the NPA, and 6) policy statements from the Communist Party of the Philippines and the *Pulang Bandila* editorial board.

In its initial issue, the NPA's mimeographed newsletter bannered the intensifying pace of armed struggle in the country and featured an article on military training in the NPA.

### *Pulang Bandila*





# And they came tumbling down

NPA blasts NPC transmission towers in Bataan to delay nuke plant's operation

The scene unrolled like freeze frames from an old war movie. In broad daylight, 3:30 p.m., the commando teams clambered up the grassy slope and divided and positioned themselves at the foot of the giant steel structures. Swiftly, with practiced ease, they planted the dynamite and dry measures of ammonium nitrate at the base of each 50-ft. tower. The earth shook as they simultaneously blew up the eight towers, which in turn dragged down eight more.

Displaying complete composure, they then darted toward different points along the mountainside and promptly girded for more blastings. After three hours, five more towers collapsed. Their cheering and clapping could not be held back at the sight of the monstrous steel structures being ripped off the ground.

Twenty-one steel towers of the National Power Corporation (NPC) were felled that day, June 28, by a combined force of NPA front guerrilla unit armed propaganda units and urban partisans. Ten more NPC towers were successfully blasted and toppled on July 1 and 9 and Aug. 16, according to correspondents of *Himagsik*, revolutionary newspaper in Central Luzon. Earlier, on June 21, four towers were damaged in the first operation.

It was, all in all, one of the most spectacular assaults that NPA forces had ever undertaken in Bataan. Their mission: to delay, if not totally paralyze, the operation of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP)

reports and photographs published the next day showed an NPA medical team administering first aid to wounded troopers.

The volume of NPA offensives reported in the controlled media during this period also indicate that legal newspapers are now sitting up and giving notice to the NPA's growing strength. Reports culled from the *Bulletin Today*, for instance, show that from April to the third week of June, 84 armed encounters between Red fighters and AFP troopers occurred, 82% of which were initiated by the NPA. The same daily reported no less than 13 ambushes, 16 raids on police stations and AFP/CHDF camps, and seven town hall raids. In these encounters, 154 enemy forces were reported killed, including seven AFP officers, four police chiefs and 10 abusive local government officials.

Indeed, Marcos can be so brazen as to announce the demise of the NPA in a matter of months. But he convinces no one, for the facts speak of another certainty: that of escalating NPA offensives and the increased annihilation of his regime's troops. **Victoria Manalo**



Felled were towers such as this in Abucay

by attacking the NPC's 104 transmission towers between Bagac and Abucay, Bataan. These towers carry the electric power lines connecting the nuclear plant based in Morong to the Luzon power grid. The blastings are a fitting coup d'grace to the successful four-day *welgang bayan* participated in by at least eight Bataan towns last June 18-21 to protest the highly dangerous and pollutive "Morong nuclear monster."

In a press statement released through

the *Balita ng Malayang Pilipinas*, the National Democratic Front expressed its full support "for the townspeople of Bataan and local NPA forces in their militant and revolutionary efforts to halt the operation of the nuclear plant." The NDF vowed to carry on the fight "by all available means" and urged the people to direct their concentrated fire on the US-Marcos dictatorship — "the principal criminal guilty of the BNPP crime."

At the same time, the NDF issued a warning to the NPC which manages the plant, to the Philippine Atomic Energy Commission which is holding farcical public hearings before issuing a license for the plant and the US firm Westinghouse which sold the grossly overpriced plant. "Do not let your greed, fear of or loyalty to the Marcos regime overrule your clear duty and responsibility to heed the people's voice and ensure the well-being of the present and future generations," admonished the NDF. "Let it be known that those participating in any favorable decision to operate the nuclear plant are considered to bear personal responsibility for such a decision."

The NDF also called on the plant's officials, engineers, and workers to "desist from working there and to refuse any participation in this anti-people project of the regime."

*Himagsik* reported that some barrio-folk knowledgeable in the use of explosives directly volunteered their services. Others living near the towers, in a show of solidarity, offered drinking water and



Signs of the times: Tank dwarfed by NPA graffiti and Welgang Bayan posters in Bataan



coffee to the guerrillas.

Estimated cost of the total damage amounts to P30 million; each tower is estimated at P1 million. "Even the slightly damaged towers will have to be replaced," a leading NPA cadre told *Himagsik*. He said it will take at least one month to repair each tower, thus further setting back the nuclear plant's operation.

As expected, the NPA's audacious assault stirred angry reactions from the regime. In a press conference, Lt. Gen. Fidel Ramos, acting AFP chief of staff, vowed to track down the guerrillas even as he acknowledged the NPA's "capability and technology to topple transmission towers like what they did in the province of southern Negros Occidental and two other provinces in Mindanao."

But the NPA is not one to be stopped by Ramos' empty threats. Last July 7, at early dawn, Red fighters raided a PC detachment at the foot of Mt. Samat in Barangay Gen. Lim, Pilar, Bataan. The guerrillas seized five M16s and ammunition and captured five soldiers in the seven-minute gunbattle. In pursuit of its policy of leniency toward surrenderees, the NPAs treated the wounded soldiers who had given themselves up. They helped the troopers board a trailer and directed the driver to bring them to a hospital. Afterwards, the guerrillas burned down the detachment.

With Bataan fast shaping up as another vigorous fighting front of the NPA, the regime's troops are in for more of such assaults. And by ignoring popular sentiments against the nuclear plant, the regime can expect an increasing deadly combination of armed and non-armed actions from the people and revolutionary forces. In the words of an NPA cadre, "*Asahan ng diktadura ang susunod pang mga pagpapasabog.*" □



Troopers block Bataan marchers



Health seminar: MSP doctor giving lecture to guerrillas in Bicol

## Physicians to the people

MSP activists implement revolutionary health care program

Unlike many of her colleagues, Angie takes the jeepney or the public bus to keep appointments in Manila. She blends easily with the crowd, whether waiting for a ride under the shadow of a Metro-rail pylon or weaving her way along a busy sidewalk. On a given day, her assignments could lead her to a house where a seriously wounded guerrilla of the New People's Army is struggling between life and death. Unlike many of her colleagues, Angie practices her profession with a heightened sense of conviction and danger.

Angie is a doctor of medicine and an active member of the Makabayang Kilusang Pangkalusugan (MSP), the national democratic underground organization of health workers. It is an organization that strives to sow the seeds of revolutionary struggle within the health and medical sector and to unify them under the banner of the NDF, of which MSP is a member.

In the MSP's view, the Marcos regime has miserably failed in its duty to provide adequate health services to the people. Simple diseases which could have been prevented have exacted a heavy toll on the people all because of the government's abject neglect of their basic health needs. Under the regime, it is not unknown to see children carried to the graveyards in small coffins everyday in every town in the country.

The MSP attacks the regime for squandering millions of pesos on showcase projects such as the Health and Lung Centers, while tuberculosis rages as the Philippines' leading killer disease. It opposes the regime's use of health programs as mere

propaganda tools, instead of addressing itself to the widespread malnutrition problem in the country.

### MSP's alternative health care program

As with many other medical activists, the path that led Angie to the MSP was the realization of all this and that one had to deal with the underlying causes rather than merely treat the symptoms of a sick society. "The wretched health conditions of the masses are related to the oppressive and exploitative system that in the first place spawned this," Angie told *LIB* in an interview. "As a revolutionary organization, the MSP seeks to overthrow this unjust system and put up in its stead a national democratic society that will guarantee the basic rights and welfare of the people. Only on this condition can we hope to achieve a comprehensive health care system where health care is truly available to all, especially the poor."

Even today, Angie noted, the MSP and the NDF are already laying the foundations of a national democratic health system that aims to be responsive to the needs of the people. Key stress is given on providing health services, training and research for the revolutionary armed struggle, in recognition of its pivotal role in the people's war. As a leading activist of the MSP, Angie, who works as a general medical practitioner in the city, is at the same time deeply involved in research and in the formulation and conduct of training programs for medical volunteers among the revolutionary masses. Most of the programs' trainees are NPA guerrillas.

"With the NPA, people-based health





First aid: MSP activist treating injured Red fighter in Panay

Programs can take firm root and flourish because the guerrillas work directly with communities," Angie said. "Peasant families, in turn, acquire a fair responsibility in securing their health welfare." An essential feature of the training program is the development of skills among the volunteers/guerrillas in the treatment of battle injuries.

For Angie's first assignment as an MSP activist, she was sent to a guerrilla zone in Samar. It was 1979 and militarization was escalating in the area. She vividly remembers the ordeal of walking through mountain routes for more than four hours to evade the enemy. Upon reaching the NPA camp, she sat down and cried while her whole body ached. "I ate kamote everyday for most of my three-week stay in the zone," she recalled.

How does the MSP go about establishing a health care network in the guerrilla zones and fronts?

Narrating her experiences in Samar, Angie said that before she and a group of nurses undertook actual training of volunteers, they had to investigate conditions in the area. "We learned that a typhoid epidemic had broken out. And that the intensive military operations were preventing community access to needed medicines. Children lay sick and dying."

"We also found out that food production techniques were crude and that food preparation practices ignored nutritional value," Angie added. Angie said the NPA fighters who shared the life of the peasants were not spared the suffering. Typhoid immobilized a number of guerrillas. The wounded took a long time to recuperate because of a low protein diet.

The MSP medical team saw that a health program was urgently needed. Thus, after conducting their investigation, Angie and the other MSP activists went on to develop a health curriculum for the area that combined basic principles and

methods of Western medicine with acupuncture and indigenous methods of cure that include herbal medicine. Later, they came up with similar curricula for other guerrilla fronts.

The target of such training activities are health volunteers who graduate into medical officers of the NPA. At present, there is at least one medical officer for every squad or undersized guerrilla platoon. These paramedics are responsible in educating the people on the practical applications of appropriate and indigenous health technology. Guerrillas have the added responsibility of demonstrating to the people what their medical officers teach — from the practice of breastfeeding infants to the construction of sanitary toilets to disease preventive measures. In Mindanao, Angie reported, surgery is performed within the confines of a mosquito net, a safeguard against germ-carrying flies and insects.

#### A rewarding life

Angie has also been involved in training medical officers in the Bicol and Southern Tagalog regions. She has also been active in building a health support network for the NPA that has links all the way to Metro Manila. Wounded guerrillas that require advanced surgery or specialized care are brought to the city where urban-based doctors and nurses of MSP take over. Recently, Angie also had the chance to revisit the same guerrilla zone in Samar where she once stayed. She happily notes that the organized masses now have cooperatives which service the basic food and medical needs of the people.

For Angie, her tasks as an MSP activist have been both painstaking and rewarding. She recalls the time when she had to make the crucial decision whether or not to continue her medical studies. She was then a full-time activist of the Kabataang



NPA paramedic at work in Mindanao

Makabayan. Martial law had just been declared and like many other activists, she went underground. Angie began to question the relevance of a medical profession in a revolutionary situation. But comrades prevailed upon her to pursue her studies. "They explained to me that the revolution needed doctors, teachers, writers and other professionals as badly as armed fighters. My parents, who were very supportive of my political involvement, prodded me as well. Doctors are meant to serve the poor, my parents said."

While in medical school, Angie saw how the idealistic dreams of nurses and doctors were slowly transformed into a desire for a profitable private practice or a lucrative career in the US. Angie resisted these subtle forms of miseducation. When the opportunity for rural medical service came as part of her school requirements, she chose to go to Bicol, where she served in the midst of a series of intense military operations in the region. After graduation, Angie also organized field trips to poor communities for nursing and medical students. "Their exposure to the problems of the masses is imperative if they are to make decisions about where they should devote their talents and skills in the future," she stressed.

In the city, Angie takes pride in being known as a street doctor, or *doktor ng lansangan*. In the countryside, she is Ka Angie, the medical trainor from Manila. She maintains a double identity, she admits. But her eyes and lips are quick to smile at the thought that she is part of the revolution taking place. **Juan Picas**



# "Education has to take a position"

An interview with the national officers of the Katipunan ng mga Gurong Makabayan

As part of its commitment to project the NDF and its member-organizations as widely as possible, LIB publishes this interview conducted this July with members of the National Executive Committee of the Katipunan ng mga Gurong Makabayan (KAGUMA), the national democratic underground mass organization for teachers. In this interview, the KAGUMA introduces itself and explains its stand on salient questions concerning the educational system, as well as on issues of national import. Excerpts:

**L: What is the role of KAGUMA in the national democratic revolution and in organizing Filipino teachers?**

**A:** In defining the role of KAGUMA, it is best to refer to its Program which sets its specific objectives: 1) to advance the cultural revolution and propaganda movement for national democracy; 2) to promote the democratic content and economic rights of teachers; 3) to promote a nationalist, scientific and mass-oriented education and lay the foundation of a new educational system; 4) to build the broadest possible unity against the US-Marcos dictatorship within the educational system; 5) to support the student movement for democratic reforms; 6) to unite with and support the struggle of the basic masses; 7) to support the revolutionary struggle in all ways possible; 8) to establish links with and win over other middle forces; 9) to gather material and technical support as well as maximize professional skills in the service of the entire revolutionary movement; and, 10) to conduct international solidarity work among teachers and other forces abroad and enlist their support for the Philippine revolution.

This program clearly defines KAGUMA's role in our people's struggle for liberation. And in consonance with this program, the KAGUMA is engaged in organizing, consolidating and mobilizing the Filipino teachers in the public as well as private schools.

**L: Who can join KAGUMA, and how?**

**A:** Any Filipino teacher who believes in the principles of KAGUMA may join it. But their acceptance will depend upon the recommendation of a member. We are also open to other nationalities so long as they accept revolutionary struggle. We already have KAGUMA members from other countries. As for administrative and non-teaching personnel, we form NDF committees at their level.

**L: How many chapters does KGM have nationwide?**

**A:** We have chapters in almost all regions of the country, but with varying levels of organizing work. The most advanced chapters are in Metro Manila, Mindanao, Negros and Bicol. There are at least 500 KAGUMA members in the country.

**L: What are the problems of teachers under the present regime?**

**A:** The teachers are the most overworked and most underpaid workers in the country. So it is understandable why they are revolting now, if only to ameliorate their conditions. Unless these conditions are changed, we cannot expect teachers to provide quality education.

Also, teachers' academic rights and other democratic privileges are slowly curtailed in the name of national security. This has become especially true now for public school teachers, the teachers' subsector most active at present. Despite the shibboleth that teachers are agents of change, they're really merely transmitters of values of the status quo and the regime. They're like a "canal." This is also most true for public school teachers, many of whom tend to blindly follow books to the letter.

For instance, we heard a teacher tell her students the NPA was *maka-ma* (bad). When we asked her if she really believed this, she said no, but this was what was written in the textbook. If education should really serve to produce critical students, then we need to produce teachers growing in critical analysis and thinking.

**L: Do you have an alternative program of education?**

**A:** Given the present educational system which serves the interests of US imperialism rather than the needs of the Filipino people, it is imperative that KAGUMA put out national democratic education curricula to put an end to our continuing "mis-education." An "ND" education is one which seeks to counteract the values that legitimize and sustain US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. As such, the KAGUMA is now in the process of advancing an alternative educational system whose thrust and goal are the ultimate dismantling of the country's three basic problems. At present, we are already implementing these through certain legal venues and programs we influence.



Launching economic struggles: Teachers rallying at education ministry (left)

**L: Wouldn't this give rise to charges of brainwashing from some sectors?**

**A:** Brainwashing connotes manipulation. The term itself imposes a negative value judgment. But the critical thinking which we seek to develop is not brainwashing. And isn't the very purpose of education the raising of consciousness? This, in fact, takes place daily in schools, churches and society. Education cannot be neutral; it has to take a position.

**L: What is the KAGUMA's role in the intensification of the anti-dictatorship struggle, considering that the present level of teachers' struggles is mainly economic?**

**A:** Our primary task at this stage is to carry forward and further intensify the widespread struggle against the US-Marcos dictatorship. Teachers play an important role in heightening the political struggle in the cities. The teachers' launching of campaigns regarding their deplorable economic conditions, absence of democratic rights and imperialist control in education, plus the sector's participation in general political campaigns against the regime, contribute to and result in added blows on the dictatorship.

Teachers and youth-students form a basic mass movement in the cities. They launch coordinated actions on various mat-



ters, and at the ripe time, these can be made to coincide with the general strike of the workers. This concerted struggle would have the potential capacity to paralyze the state machinery and shake its political control over society.

**L:** Do you have close ties with progressive legal teachers' organizations? What have you to say about government charges of subversive infiltration?

**A:** We have no formal organizational links with legal organizations. But our efforts are not incompatible. In fact, we have members functioning on both levels. The legal organizations serve as a deep reservoir for possible KAGUMA recruits.

As to charges of infiltration, that's what the regime says. But, on the other hand, we see such charges as a good measure of our effective exercise of leadership and influence. We believe our influence and leadership can't simply be reduced to charges of manipulation but understood as an ability to provide the correct direction and guidance for the legal movement. We have a basic respect for the masses of teachers to analyze for themselves their real conditions and how to proceed from these.

**L:** What do you think of comments that teachers' strikes constitute a dereliction of duty?

**A:** While teachers have a moral obligation to teach, they also have rights to protect. The public should understand that teach-



1); decriing NSL and US imperialism (right);

ers are restive because, like the rest of the Filipino people their livelihood is severely affected by the economic crisis. So when teachers go on strike, it is because they want to improve their welfare and assert their rights. The students are the ultimate beneficiaries of teachers' democratic struggles.

But we also take care to ensure a healthy balance between teaching in the classroom and going to the streets. In some schools where we have chapters, we institute the rotation system. The teachers who want to attend rallies switch subjects with others so as not to inconvenience students, parents and school administrators. In many cases, teachers are considered more credible if they practice what they teach in the classroom. You see, the teacher should be a model, an inspiration to her students; children learn from what they see.

**L:** What is your policy toward progressive school administrators?

**A:** This depends on our social investigation of them. If they are enlightened, we try to win them over through dialog. We explain to them that the bankruptcy of the educational institution is only a reflection of the entire economic system which is wracked by crisis. Collectively, we try to analyze and confront the issue, showing to school administrators the need to link up educational issues with national issues. In some schools



Students' and teachers' demand: No to US meddling in education

with an advanced level of organizing work, we have formed alliances with progressive school administrators.

**L:** The controversy between tuition fee increases and the raising of teachers' salaries can potentially be a divisive issue. How do you handle this?

**A:** There appears to be a contradiction if you're opposing tuition fee hikes but demanding an increase in teachers' salaries. To circumvent this apparent contradiction, we stress the possibility of government subsidizing the private schools. We invoke the fact that if government can bail out crony firms and banks, so should it prioritize funds on social services for private schools.

If the government says it has no funds, we propose that it lift 15% of the tax imposed on real property which is also applied on private schools as well as the 10% charge on net profits and 1% of the special fund, making a total of 26%. Then, private schools can afford to grant an increase in teachers' salaries.

This issue is very good for politicalization. Here, we can point out that the government is derelict in giving support to prime institutions of learning. We also point out that tuition fees are not the remedies for, or the causes of, bankruptcy of private education. That, in fact, it is the government which is to blame for passing on a large share of its responsibility in education to the private schools.

**L:** What is your stand on the coming local and presidential elections, considering that teachers will again be asked to man poll booths? If the teachers' economic demands are still not met by then, will KAGUMA issue a call for boycott?

**A:** We foresee the coming local and presidential elections to be bloody. We therefore deem it wise to leave the decision regarding the manning of poll booths to the different KAGUMA chapters concerned. The stand to be taken in any eventuality would therefore be dealt with on a case to case basis.

**L:** Do you support armed struggle?

**A:** The armed struggle in our country is actually directed against the US-Marcos dictatorship. It must be borne in mind that our people had been so pushed to the wall by long years of exploitation and oppression that the armed struggle has become for them the last option for national survival and emancipation. The KAGUMA, while its membership does not yet carry arms, helps the armed struggle in terms of popularizing the validity and urgency of the armed struggle. In more concrete terms, we extend material and technical support to the NPA. We also encourage our members to enlist as Red fighters, as the carrying of arms against the regime is the highest expression of one's commitment to the liberation of the Filipino people. □



## SPARKS

Newsbriefs about the resistance movement

### PEASANT LEADERS HOLD CONGRESS

Bannering the theme "Fight Repression and Exploitation in the Countryside: Advance the National Peasant Movement," more than 150 peasant leaders from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, representing 40 organizations nationwide, held the First National Peasant Congress on July 24 to 27 at Claret School Auditorium, Diliman, Quezon City.



Speaker addressing the PKM congress

The congress, aiming to establish a genuine national peasant organization, founded the Kilusang Magbubukid sa Pilipinas (KMP), an alliance of grassroots peasant organizations which addresses issues on the inter-regional, provincial and island-wide levels.

Jaime Tadeo, chairman of the Alliance of Central Luzon Farmers and the KMP preparatory committee, said that there is a need to form a genuine peasant organization because existing national farmers' organizations are not actually representative of their interests.

### MASSIVE PROCESSION HELD IN CEBU FOR FR. ROMANO

About 10,000 people marched in a religious procession in Cebu City last Aug. 6 to pray for the safe return of Fr. Rudy Romano, a Catholic priest who disappeared in the city on July 11 and appears to have been kidnapped by the military. Witnesses said that a soldier had shoved the priest into a government car the day he disappeared.

One of Romano's religious superiors said that the peaceful march was the church's response to the government's "conspiracy of harassment" against clergymen critical of the government. The march coincided with the opening in Cebu of a four-day conference of 20 Catholic bishops from Central Philippines.

### ANTI-NUKE FESTIVAL STAGED

The Anti-Bases Coalition (ABC) and the Nuclear-Free Philippines Coalition (NFPC) sponsored an anti-nuclear peace festival titled "Nukleyar: Pagtitipong Pangkapayapaan" from Aug. 6 to 9 at the Apostolic Center in Sta. Ana, Manila. Activities included betamax, slide and film showings and exhibits of peace materials and of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Lectures on nuclear power and nuclear weapons were also held.

### BAYAN - EASTERN SAMAR CHAPTER BORN

The Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN)-Eastern Samar chapter was officially launched in Borongan, Eastern Samar last Aug. 10. Some 100 delegates and guests from different municipalities and cause-oriented groups and sectoral organizations, as well as some prominent political personalities of the province,

participated. Atty. Ven Garduce, BAYAN-Samar Regional Council chairman, exhorted the delegates to maximize awareness and action against the US-Marcos regime.

### NEPA ISSUES ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIC PROGRAM

The National Economic Protectionism Association (NEPA), in a special bulletin, recently assailed the IMF "recovery program" for the Philippines as recessionary, and that it would contribute to the "de-industrialization and de-Filipinization of the economy." The NEPA published its own Alternative Program for Economic Recovery, calling for 1) the takeover by Filipinos of foreign firms; 2) the temporary restriction on the power of transnational corporations to borrow domestically; 3) the implementation of fixed exchange rates; 4) a cut-down on government deficit spending through a decrease in non-essential expenditures; 5) a renegotiation at better terms (on a nationalistic basis) of payments on the country's foreign debt; 6) the repudiation of selected loans where overpricing or misrepresentation was involved; 7) the adoption of an import substitution strategy and expanded tariff protection; 8) the implementation of export diversification; 9) the allowing of foreign investments only in areas not yet adequately serviced by Filipinos; 10) the simultaneous development of agriculture and industry; 11) the removal of "colonial mentality" through nationalist education; and, 12) the participation of genuine representatives of the Filipino business sector in the making of economic policy.

### MILITANT LABORERS PROTEST REPRESSION

Three thousand workers staged a rally at the labor ministry in Intramuros, Manila last Aug. 13 to condemn the "alarming escalation of repression of the workers' ranks" and to mark the third anniversary of the government clampdown on militant labor which occurred on "Black Friday," Aug. 13, 1982.



KMU members march to mark "Black Friday"

The Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), citing figures on picket line deaths, salvaging, arrests, and missing workers and trade unionists, said nothing seems to stop these "heinous acts of terrorism" against workers. Since last January, the KMU said, nine workers have been killed during picket line violence involving the military, police, paramilitary groups or company-hired goons. At least 21 labor leaders and active trade unionists have been salvaged, while six others are missing.

### LFS LEADS U.S. EMBASSY RALLY

The League of Filipino Students (LFS) marched to the US embassy last Aug. 9 to denounce the US government's active role in the repression of the Filipino people through massive military and economic aid to the Marcos government. The militant student organization also called for the dismantling of the more than 25 US military installations in the country and



the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant. The march, which started from Morayta, projected the unflagging efforts of the student sector in the continuing struggle for national freedom and democracy.

### ORGANIZATIONS DECRY TATALON KILLINGS



Urban poor join funeral-march for slain youths

The deaths of two youths during the violent Philippine Marine-led demolition of squatter shanties in Tatalon, Quezon City last July 23 has sparked anger and opposition from Filipinos nationwide. Various groups such as the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy, League of Filipino Students, Mag-aaral at Kabataan para sa Kalayaan ng Bayan, Coalition of Urban Poor Against Poverty, Alyansa ng Nagkakaisa sa Quezon City, CROSS, Kakabay and the Northern Police Press Club issued separate statements condemning the "senseless killings." Letters to the editors of several newspapers have poured in, demanding justice for Segundino Jacinto, 17, who was felled by a .38 bullet and Mary Grace Cruz, 12, who was shot by a Philippine Marine trooper, according to witnesses.

### EDUCATION GROUPS RAP NATIONAL SERVICE LAW

Simultaneous mass actions were staged at the Batasang Pambansa, different campuses and in key cities last Aug. 15 to repeal the National Service Law (NSL). Student organizations, teachers, school administrators and parents charged that the NSL is an insidious instrument to militarize the educational system.

The Association of Philippine Colleges of Arts and Sciences (APCAS) and the Mag-aaral at Kabataan para sa Kalayaan ng Bayan (MAKABAYAN) condemned the NSL as "immoral, unconstitutional, unnecessary, impractical, and an added burden on parents and the youth."

The protests against the NSL took an international character as the World Student Christian Federation's North American regional committee and Catholic education groups in Australia issued resolutions condemning the law as an instrument to militarize the schools and "brainwash the studentry in a (Filipino) ideology increasingly bereft of human freedom."

### CIIR CALLS FOR AID BAN TO NDC-GUTHRIE

A London-based Catholic organization has called on the British government to stop granting funds to the NDC-Guthrie Palm Oil Plantation in Agusan del Sur, according to the Media Mindanao News Service. The Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR), a human rights organization, which has been monitoring British-funded projects, noted in its 1985 report that British aid money has been invested in projects "which are associated with abuses and intimidation" as in the case of NDC-Guthrie.

The organization said it has worked in support of the local people for three years now and is convinced that the British government must be barred from spending British public funds to support such a project. The CIIR reported that the NDC-Guthrie plantation is "widely disliked in the area and identified by the public with intimidation and illegal appropriation of land."

## CRACKS

Indicators of the regime's economic and political crisis

### NO GO FOR IMPEACHMENT

A much-ballyhooed impeachment move against Marcos filed by some 50 oppositionists promptly lost wind as the KBL-controlled committee that handled the resolution immediately threw it out for "lack of merit." The impeachment move stemmed from disclosures by the US newspaper *Mercury News* that the First Couple and their cronies had close to \$10 billion in real estate and other assets stashed abroad (see page 21). The Batasan oppositionists apparently thought they could make the "hidden wealth" issue into another Watergate and manage to oust or at least pressure Marcos to resign amid all the scandal. (In 1973, former US President Richard Nixon narrowly escaped impeachment and resigned from office in disgrace after his role was exposed in the illegal wiretapping of the rival Democratic Party headquarters located at the Watergate building in Washington, DC). The Filipino oppositionists forgot, however, that they were dealing with a thoroughly shameless tyrant.

### SNAP POLLS, ANYONE?

Ever the devious opportunist, Marcos instead seized upon the opposition's impeachment move as an excuse to consider holding snap elections before the year ends. The impeachment move, said Marcos, is derailing the implementation of the government's counter-insurgency plan and economic recovery program and is leading the country towards a "crisis situation." In view of this, he floated the idea of holding snap elections, "to seek a renewed mandate from the people." If pushed through, the move could pull the rug from under the feet of the opposition as the latter would have less time to prepare for the polls. Marcos is not saying, though, whether snap polls will indeed be held or not, and this adds to oppositionists' worries. For despite the air of bravado they have been exhibiting, opposition hopefuls know that Marcos' recent actions confirm more and more his stubborn resistance to any more power-sharing schemes with the traditional opposition.



### ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN

In a further bid to consolidate his hold on power, the dictator went overboard to appoint known Marcos lackeys to the Commission on Elections and the Supreme Court. Appointed as Comelec commissioners were Mario Ortiz, Quirino Marquinez and Margontawar Guro, all closely associated with the dictator. Also named new Comelec chairman was Victorino Savellano, an Ilocano loyalist who, as former Comelec division commissioner, was notorious for deciding election cases in favor of KBL candidates.

Meanwhile, the dictator also brushed aside the seniority rule when he appointed Felix Makasiar as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, bypassing Claudio Teehankee who was next in line. Teehankee had penned decisions counter to the regime's policies in the past. Previous to this, the question of Teehankee's citizenship was raised anew in an apparent attempt to derail his possible appointment, as Chief Justice Enrique Fernando's retirement neared. The issue fizzled out; but Marcos went ahead anyway and appointed Makasiar, his close friend and for-



mer classmate. Thus with a stroke of a pen did the dictator forever bury the myth of an independent Comelec and judiciary.



Smarting from the snub he got from the Americans over the US aid issue, Marcos licked his wounds by sidling up to the Russians anew. The Russians, of course, saw in the entire affair, another opportunity to court Marcos' favor. And so it was that on Aug. 8, Soviet ambassador Yuri Sholomov pinned on the dictator the Jubilee Medal of the 40th anniversary of the Great Patriotic War, 1941-1945, "in recognition of Marcos' contribution to the victory of the Free World" as a guerrilla fighter during World War II. Marcos, the Soviets pointed

out, is the first Asian head of state to receive the medal. Whenever "disagreements" crop up between Marcos and his US patrons, expect him to do some flirting with the Russians.

#### LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS

Filipinos in the US are still talking about the non-stop food and entertainment that marked HIS and HER trip to the US. To prepare for his last one, Filipinos in Washington and the West Coast were invited to lavish parties. When she's in New York, there is even more lavish food in her suite for her friends and guests, hundreds of dollars worth of flowers on order every day, and hundred dollar bills given out as tips. Who pays the bills? We wonder. We are also told, that those fabulous parties she gives at Malacanang or at her Leyte home for her jetsetting friends are not, contrary to popular belief, funded by the people's money. Cronies vie for the honor of paying her party bills, so they are really funded by crony money - or is that the same thing?

Here's one more tidbit. When the crony papers emphasize that Mrs. Marcos went on a trip by commercial airlines, we must believe them, because she does - at least up to Bangkok. There, the rest of the passengers are transferred to other flights by harassed airline personnel, and the plane is all Madame's. It has been noted too, that every time she travels, PAL domestic schedules are disrupted, with ordinary passengers waiting four hours at airports, because planes have been diverted to ferry her party food, her silver carrozas, her friends.

## LETTERS

Comments from readers

### MORE COMMENTS ON THE NDF DRAFT PROGRAM

On the question of women, we raise these comments under the General Program. Under Point 5, Paragraph 3, the statement should read "... the DCG shall address and take steps, through legislation and an educational campaign among the people, to remove the distinct forms of oppression faced by women..." The right of women to own property under their own names should also be included.

Under Point 10, the section should include the promotion of cultural values that advance women's equality. Mention should also be made on the role of women in educating and molding children. Also, more elaboration on women workers is needed, as in the discussion on social wage, CBAs on wage setting, maternity leaves for women and the like.

On the democratic coalition government (DCG), what is the role of the NDF in the DCG? How does, "The NDF is working for the establishment of local organs of democratic power" relate with the draft's statement that "... the local organs of democratic power are already creating the basis for the DCG"?

Concerning the revolutionary army, should we not distinguish between the revolutionary army and the reactionary army by pointing out that the revolutionary army is *of and for* the people, that it is in essence a people's army? The existence of economic and political democracy within the ranks of the revolutionary army should also be pointed out, not merely their role or participation in production. In the section on rehabilitation and reconstruction after victory, preference for war veterans and the families of revolutionary martyrs should be stressed.

*Makabayang Kiluan ng Bagong Kababaihan (MAKIBAKA)*

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Under Point 7, Paragraph 3, on the "assured" market of peasants for their products, isn't that promising too much? Better a separate sentence: "Develop, strive to develop appropriate markets..."

Under Point 10, on women, we should include the promotion of a culture that advances the equality of women as well as the recognition of women's role in molding the minds of children. Also, we need to elaborate more on the rights to em-

ployment and benefits for workers particularly women's rights to employment, non-discrimination in wages, provision for nurseries and other benefits.

Under Point 9, don't you think that preference in social rehabilitation and support should be given to revolutionary war veterans and families of martyrs?

In the Specific Tasks, specify that captured armed combatants shall have "prisoner of war" status in wartime.

*Comrades from the Visayas*

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The first part has excellent, very good language.

Point 1: Is the use of the word "tyrannical" still necessary? The use of "main forces" and "significant forces" is good united front language.

Point 2: The NDF "encourages armed groups..." It should be stressed that other groups should be encouraged to support the armed struggle and actively give more support, like weapons and personnel. There have been negative experiences of other countries/liberation movements in handling/relating with other armed groups. Should the people's militia not be mentioned and projected to stress the mass character of armed struggle?

Point 3: Re system of justice: "enemies of the revolution" ... "severe punishment" ... "re-education" - these evoke images of Iran, Pol Pot, Kampuchea. It is good to mention that usual norms of international law would be guaranteed.

Point 5: Some of the main forms of distinct oppression suffered by women should be mentioned such as rape as a form of torture, double duties, etc. Let us stress the role of people's organizations in correlation with the democratic coalition government.

Point 7: Include provision for dialogue with enlightened landlords re compensation and land for cultivation.

Point 8: What does "monopsonies" mean?

Point 12: Why was "non-aligned" taken out?

Overall comment: Why is there not enough discussion on women? Previous drafts had even more. We suggest a separate section on women in the general program, to stress the importance of women strategically and their original position of equality before colonization.

*E.P. Cornelio*



## COUNTERCURRENTS

Developments in the US-Marcos regime

# Deeper and deeper into the mire

Severe economic crisis increasingly narrows regime's political options

*The Marcos regime is well known for its penchant in turning things upside down. Surveying the shambles that is the Philippine economy, it paints a picture of rapid recovery. Nothing, however, could be farther from the truth. In this article, the NDF collective of businessmen and professionals cites figures to show that the economy is in fact "in a state of severe recession and collapse." They show how the gravity of the economic decline has derailed the regime's political plans to extricate itself out of its politically defensive position.*

The Philippine economy fared dismally in the first half of 1985 and will continue to deteriorate until the end of the year. The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) estimates the growth of the gross national product (GNP) to be negative 1% for 1985 while the Center for Research and Communication (CRC) and other private research outfits project a decline of the GNP by at least 3%.

The government had assumed a flat rate of growth (0% GNP growth) for 1985 and positive rates thereafter. This flat rate of growth was premised on a strong performance in the export sector (10% per annum growth). However, instead of increasing by 10% (so that GNP level would just be maintained at the 1984 level), exports have been dropping from last year's level. Export receipts will probably fall by 10 to 15%, substantially off the \$5.4 billion mark in 1984 and the government projection of \$5.8 billion.

Thus, a more realistic estimate would be a GNP decline anywhere from 3 to 5%, depending on the drop in the export performance for the rest of the year. Recent figures show a decline of 3.7% in GNP for first quarter 1985. Real GNP levels will continue to slide, from P98.7 billion in 1983, P93.3 billion in 1984, to P88.68 billion in 1985 (if negative 5%).

A GNP level of less than P90 billion will put the economy to a level comparable to 1980, and on a per capita basis, to a level comparable to 1975. This means that the economy has shrunk by about 10% since 1983. A developing country such as the Philippines with a population growth rate of at least 2.5% per annum, needs to grow by 6% annually if there is going to be an appreciable increase in the standards of living. That GNP is decreasing, instead of increasing, amid a high rate of population growth, can only mean that the economy is in a state of severe recession and collapse.

Despite the negative economic figures, the regime continues to paint a very rosy picture of the economy. The regime's technocrats maintain that the release of \$900 million "new money" and the \$3 billion trade facility will stabilize the economy and put it back on the recovery track by 1986. These rosy projections were contained in the economic memoranda submitted to the IMF earlier this year.

### Narrowing political/economic options

The severity of the deviations in the economy's actual performance (0% projected GNP growth versus an actual 3 to 5%; positive 10% projected growth in exports versus a negative 10% actual) must

political maneuverability, aggravate its political isolation, intensify the divisions within the ruling clique (witness the Ople-Virata-Ongpin encounter) and perhaps even within the military.

In the economic sphere, the regime's options are also extremely limited. The regime cannot do any "pump-priming," (i.e., increase government spending to stimulate economic activity) because it has to meet stringent fiscal and monetary targets set by the IMF. Any increase in government deficit spending without a significant increase in exports or inward remittances from invisibles would increase imports and have a negative impact on the



Widespread poverty: Scavengers digging into Manila's garbage heaps

have contributed to the derailment of the political plans of the regime to regain the initiative. Other factors, such as the delay in the release of the "new money" and the possibility of a reapportionment of the bases "rent" money, also contributed to the regime's stiffening position on the holding of elections in 1986.

Lately, the regime has been using labor militancy as a scapegoat for the country's poor export performance. At the same time, it has been trying to project itself as totally in control of the insurgency situation in order to be the beneficiary of more largesse from the US. The synchronization of the local and presidential elections in 1986, which the bourgeois opposition demands and which some sections of the US government backs, is being used by the regime as a bargaining chip for more military and financial aid.

However, the speed and gravity of the economic slide will limit the regime's poli-

current account — a situation disliked by the IMF and the creditor banks since the country's repayment capability would be impaired. (The recent IMF relaxation on the budget deficit had to do with the National Power Corporation's [NPC] deficit, rather than a real increase in government spending.) The government cannot afford to disregard these targets as the IMF loan is to be released over a period of 18 months and the government is under continuing evaluation.)

The fall in exports has increased the pressure on the government to further curtail spending to meet the balance of payments (BOP) target (BOP deficit as a percentage of GNP) which is the only lever that it can control. In fact, the fall in GNP has made it harder to meet these IMF targets, which are expressed as ratios to the GNP. This could account for the fact that the regime has acceded to the IMF's demand to consolidate and merge





JETSET BEGGARS

government financial institutions even though this would alienate a significant portion of a highly paid, loyal group of government employees.

The regime's limited maneuverability can be seen in the fact that it has allowed the housing program (principally Pag-ibig) to decline. Its inability to provide the necessary budget support (around P2 billion) to bail out the financially troubled Pag-ibig program is contributing to the erosion of its support among developers, contractors and construction-related businessmen whose businesses have depended on government doleouts and support, not to say of the thousands of Pag-ibig members who cannot now avail of their housing benefits.

The regime's economic, and also political troubles, are magnified by the breadth of the economic decline which is not confined to a few industry sectors. The slump in the labor intensive electronics and garment industries will mean massive layoffs and intensified industrial unrest. More troublesome is the fall in coconut export receipts by 40% and the drop in copra prices from around P8 a kilo to about P3 a kilo today; this would have a telling effect on thousands of coconut farmers throughout the archipelago. The economic dislocation in the coconut industry, added to the depression in the sugar industry, makes for a potentially explosive situation and could result in bigger headaches for the regime.

Another worrying factor for Marcos must be the fact that the government had allowed rice prices to rise (to around P8 a kilo) in accordance with IMF wishes. This could only forebode unrest, especially among the non-producing, consuming sector of the urban population.

#### Problems with greater US aid

The continuing slide in the economy can only be arrested by massive infusions of foreign aid, and this fact has increased the dependence of the Marcos regime on the United States and other imperialist powers. (Perhaps this is why Phil-Am Friendship Day was celebrated with much more fanfare this year compared to last year.) The problem with foreign aid is that massive doses are needed — about \$1 billion per year to keep the economy afloat. Considering that bases "rent" amounts to only \$900 million spread over five years, the willingness and capability of the US government to give such a big amount is doubtful.



Rapping US-inspired economic policies

Another problem with massive doses of aid would be Reagan's capability to justify such big amounts to the US Congress considering the US government's own big budget deficits and Marcos' negative image. Still another problem for the Americans is the distribution problem: how the money can be effectively used for counter-insurgency instead of it being siphoned off to Bay Area, California where the Marcos faction holds substantial investments. This is the reason why US Rep. Stephen Solarz wanted the aid channeled through the Catholic Church. In fact, the distribution problem is one factor that may lead the US toward direct intervention.

Without massive economic aid from the US, the political isolation of the Marcos regime will increase. The division within its ranks, even within the AFP, will intensify even as the protest movement — both armed and unarmed — escalates, spurred forward by deteriorating economic conditions. Marcos and the KBL face certain disaster at the polls, their capability to bribe and cheat limited by the IMF conditions to ensure debt repayment and the relative disunity in the AFP.

It seems that the only option for Marcos is the military one: unleashing a massive nationwide fascist terror to silence his political enemies, preempt more protests and social unrest due to the intensifying economic crisis and hope for more support from the IMF and the US. This is a major factor behind the move of Marcos to reinstate his henchman Gen. Fabian Ver as chief of staff. On the other hand, this option is fraught with danger: it risks offending the US since this would radicalize the moderate opposition; it also makes it harder for the Reagan administration to justify increases in aid; and, it may not be supported by certain sections of the military.

The US thus faces a real dilemma. On one hand, continuing support for Marcos may mean that its political fortunes will decline with him. With the distribution problem, even all-out support for a politically isolated Marcos is fraught with problems and dangers. On the other hand, the strength of the traditional opposition is fragile; whatever strength it has is frequently eroded by internal bickerings (e.g. Kalaw vs. Laurel). The bourgeois opposition cannot be relied upon to pursue the counter-insurgency problem successfully.

At best, the US could opt for a Duarte type of solution as in El Salvador: putting up a new face but with the military really in control, with strong US backing for intensified counter-insurgency operations. At any rate, it seems to us that a total political solution to the Philippine crisis is out of the question; the conditions — and the dynamics of the situation — in fact, point to a narrowing of political options.



## GALLERY OF ROGUES



FERDINAND MARCOS



IMELDA MARCOS



FABIAN VER



JUAN PONCE ENRILE



KOKOY ROMUALDEZ



EDUARDO COJUANGCO



ROBERTO BENEDICTO



ANTONIO FLORENDO



RODOLFO CUENCA



GERONIMO VELASCO

# “The foreign banks are guilty as hell”

**NDF member cites collusion of foreign banks with Marcos regime in hidden wealth scandal**

*The current raging controversy about dollar deposits and property held abroad by the Marcos ruling faction (see “Gallery of Rogues” above) has become an explosive political football between the Marcos regime and the political opposition. The immediate issue raised is the brazenness and lack of conscience with which the highest officials of the land have transferred large sums abroad — some \$10 billion according to the San Jose-Mercury News — in the midst of an economic crisis unparalleled in postwar Philippine history. However, a recent LIB interview with the spokesman of an NDF collective of professionals has revealed a new dimension to the issue. According to Daniel (his nom-de-guerre), the massive outflow of dollars could only have been made possible through the Marcoses’ collusion with foreign banks. “These international financing agencies are as much to blame for the illegal salting of dollars abroad and the whole caboodle of ill-gotten wealth.” Excerpts:*

**L:** What is the effect of the Marcos faction’s massive salting of dollars on the present economic crisis?

**A:** These substantial foreign asset holdings of the Marcos family and their cronies must be viewed as one facet of the decapitalization process afflicting the Philippine economic system which accelerated during the martial law period. The other facet of this decapitalization process is the substantial dollar outflow — \$2.6 billion a year which represents the payment of interest on our sizeable foreign debt. In a way, the problem of ill-gotten wealth and the foreign debt problem are two facets of the same coin of decapitalization.

**L:** Could you elaborate more on the relationship between the issue of ill-gotten wealth invested abroad and the problem of foreign debt?

**A:** The ill-gotten wealth invested abroad by certain high government officials and their cronies represent the pay-off by the international usurer banks and their transnational clients to the authoritarian regime for incurring foreign loans that resulted in tremendous profits for both the banks and their transnational clients. These foreign loans were contracted by the authoritarian Marcos regime to finance the huge government deficits during the martial law period.

These deficits were incurred, not by increased spending on social or economic services, but to finance the deficits of the 13 major government corporations which include the Philip-

pine National Bank, Development Bank of the Philippines, National Power Corporation (NPC) and Philippine Export Loan Guarantee Corporation — a fact which even the IMF recognizes. In 1983 alone, the deficits of these 13 major public corporations reached P13.4 billion. In the case of the NPC, its deficit is explained by its capital investment financed by foreign loans in the technologically obsolete and overpriced Bataan Nuclear Power Plant of which Marcos relative Herminio Diñi was the agent of the American transnational firm Westinghouse.

In the case of the other government financial institutions, loan losses arising from lending to or guaranteeing the foreign obligations of crony firms like the Construction Development Corporation of the Philippines, Galleon Shipping, Cellophal Resources and Delta Motors account for the deficits. These loan losses were inevitable as the well-connected borrowers, with no intention of running viable enterprises, connived with their foreign suppliers to overprice equipment and to salt dollars.

**L:** How much have foreign banks benefited from these transactions?

**A:** Under this system, foreign banks reaped profits from interests charged on all those loans used to finance those deficits. These interests are usually priced above the London Interbank Rate (LIBOR) which generally sets the interest rates that monopoly capitalists attach on their lending operations. Foreign banks were further assured of repayment by an authoritarian government which could not be changed by democratic elections and which could use the coercive instruments of the state to raise the domestic resources with which to pay off such loans.

Ill-gotten wealth, therefore, could not have been accumulated abroad in such magnitudes had not the regime colluded with foreign banks and transnational suppliers in borrowing huge amounts over the past decade and more. So you see, it is not only the Marcoses and their cronies who are the prime culprits. International banks, especially the American offshore banking units, are as much to blame for the salting of dollars abroad. They’re guilty as hell.

Others who have benefited from the regime’s borrowing spree are the government technocrats who are supposedly above





graft and corruption. They were well compensated through board directorships in deficit-ridden government corporations and in those private corporations whose foreign loans were guaranteed by the government. This explains their subservient attitude to the IMF and creditor banks, who were also responsible for putting them in huge government positions in the first place.

**L: Do you know of any foreign bank that has colluded with the regime on this matter?**

**A:** One prime example is the Chase Manhattan Bank. It's one of the preferred banks of the Marcos family and main conduits in laundering its illegally gotten wealth. A nephew of Benjamin Romualdez (concurrently Leyte governor and Philippine ambassador to the US) works here as a top bank executive at its Philippine head office in the Family Savings Bank building at Ayala, Makati. We also have information that a Chase Manhattan executive from its loan department based in New York goes to Malacanang directly. He does not anymore pass through the Philippine home office, so the country manager has no knowledge of his activities.

Thus, these same foreign banks which have dominated the financial system of the Philippines are the main instruments of the Marcoses in bringing out their stolen wealth and investing this for them. They know of the dollar salting going on because the money passes through them. If we only had access to the books of Chase Manhattan, *alam na natin ang buong bituka ng Marcos family.*

**L: In what way is the problem of ill-gotten wealth related to the regime's total submission to the IMF?**

**A:** These foreign asset holdings of the Marcos camp may be offsetted or attached by the country and foreign creditor banks. The potential exercise of such an option is really a form of blackmail and it accounts for this regime's total submission to the IMF conditions. It is also not inconceivable for these creditor banks to know the extent and nature of these overseas investments since a significant portion was channeled or deposited through them. In exchange for not attaching or even merely exposing these overseas investments, foreign banks, through the IMF, have been able to get total compliance from the government on IMF conditions.

**L: Why do high government officials have to invest abroad when they could easily use their political power to enhance their economic position here in the Philippines?**

**A:** Decapitalization is the logic of the present system. The present system does not allow for the continuous and progressive reinvestment of capital to improve the productive capacity of the country. On one hand, domestic industries, especially the large and strategic ones, are already owned and controlled by foreign monopolies. Capital which was accumulated through partnership with foreign interests (through overpricing of equipment, and so forth) cannot be used against these very same interests.

On the other hand, new industries cannot thrive where the rural sector is characterized by low productivity, low incomes and poor markets brought about by backward landlord-tenancy relations. This backward state of the economy cannot be broken in order to allow capital to thrive and grow since the faction that seized state power in 1972 also came from the dominant class in the countryside which would be threatened by land reform.

Hence, since capital is sterile (incapable of regeneration) in the present system, it was but natural for accumulated capital to flow out of the country. In fact, graft and corruption in debt-ridden Third World countries like the Philippines is characterized by capital flight. This is not so in developed countries, either socialist or capitalist. (The Tanaka case in Japan shows that graft and corruption exist in developed countries but in Japan one doesn't hear of massive ill-gotten wealth stashed abroad.)

Of course, these overseas holdings constitute a comfortable cushion for that time when these high government officials and their cronies may have to flee the country to escape the peo-

## NDF urges confiscation of ill-gotten wealth

"The massive amount of funds cornered and invested by the Marcos faction both here and abroad represents its share of the booty for preserving a political and economic environment conducive to US economic and military interests."

So said the NDF in a press statement released on Aug. 17 through its official news agency, the Balita ng Malayang Pilipinas (BMP or Free Philippines News Service). According to the NDF, the Marcos regime has been approving laws and policies since the declaration of martial law to open up the country to greater unmitigated plunder by foreign capital. Among these are the expanded ownership privileges of multinational firms in strategic and non-strategic sectors of the economy, their virtually unlimited repatriation of superprofits and policy of heavy borrowing which has further enabled the IMF and large multinational banks to increasingly dictate terms of trade.

"In exchange for its strong fealty to US interests, the Marcos regime has been amply rewarded for its efforts," noted the NDF. "With the knowledge and collusion of imperialism, the Marcos camp has been engaging in the fat overpricing of imported equipment, securing huge kickbacks in the awarding of negotiated contracts, extracting big commissions on their guaran-

tees against, and solicitation of foreign loans."

This has been going on for over a decade, the NDF said, "the icing on the cake being the systematic transfer of billions of dollars to so-called safe havens abroad." Meanwhile, it is the Filipino people who are being made to pay the price for the Marcos regime's profligacy and utter subservience to foreign interests through higher consumer prices, increased taxes, rising unemployment and mounting business failures.

The NDF demanded that an investigative body representing a cross-section of sectors and forces be formed and those guilty be prosecuted to the full extent of existing laws. The NDF also stressed that all such ill-gotten wealth be restored to "its rightful owners, the people of the Philippines."

The NDF pointed out, however, that these can only be temporary measures at best. "In the long run, it is only when the Filipino people have completely overthrown the US-Marcos dictatorship and established a democratic coalition government that effective steps can be taken to fully account for what has been stolen from the people, and proper punishment meted out to all those responsible for these crimes, including the confiscation of ill-gotten wealth."



## VIEWPOINT

Contributions from readers

# No turning back

The middle class protest movement: From 1972 to 1983 to the present

The slaying of opposition leader Ninoy Aquino on a deserted airport tarmac on Aug. 21, 1983 was the proverbial spark that ignited the flames of the massive middle class movement against the regime. The assassination openly drew out their long simmering anger against the Marcos dictatorship which they fingered as the mastermind behind the crime. Two years after that phenomenon, the middle class and their unique modes and paraphernalia of protest have become very much a part of the anti-dictatorship scene. In this article, H. Andres del Fierro assesses the conditions and events that led to the middle forces' awakening and their present prospects for continued struggle.

Although far from the near destitution of the peasants and workers, the "middle forces" have also suffered from the political and economic blows brought about by dictatorial rule. All these years, the ranks of the professionals, middle and small businessmen, junior executives, church people and white collar employes have bitterly resented the regime's suppression of basic rights, especially of their freedom of expression, but they were not pressed against the wall hard enough to make them instantly overcome the intimidating and numbing effects of this repressive milieu.

Thus, save for an advanced section which grew steadily in open and underground struggles against the dictatorship, the middle forces in their millions sympathized but preferred to stay in the background. For eleven years, they kept their protest limited to whispering among themselves and their small circles of relatives



Emergent force: Professionals move for Marcos ouster at Makati rally

and friends.

The eleven-year period was broken for one short evening in 1978, when they came out into the streets for the phenomenal Metro Manila-wide noise barrage. They did it for the Batasan candidacy of former Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr., who articulated and embodied their own hopes for ending martial rule thru electoral politics. They had kept faith with the electoral process as that which demands the least risk and sacrifice from their broad ranks, in contrast to the more radical demands of revolution. And they believed that Aquino was the man who could beat Marcos in an election, given a fighting chance.

### Indignation explodes

The advanced sections of the middle forces, numbering in their hundreds at the onset of martial law and in their thousands by 1983, joined the anti-dictatorship struggle both as organizations and as individuals.

Notable among those active in the multi-sectoral political struggles were the church sector, lawyers and media people. Teachers, nurses and journalists also spearheaded sectoral struggles, while an increasing number of doctors and businessmen supported

the protest actions, including the armed struggle, individually and secretly.

Although the millions comprising the middle forces preferred to stay in the background as mere sympathizers as late as the summer of 1983, the number of open protesters among them made a significant leap with the movement against the presidential commitment order (PCO) and the campaign against media censorship.

Meanwhile, the broad ranks of the middle forces viewed with excited anticipation the projected return of Aquino from three years of exile. Their grapevines buzzed with "confirmed" pieces of rumor on what Aquino planned to do upon his arrival to advance the anti-Marcos struggle.

Aquino was killed when he stepped again on Philippine soil on Aug. 21, 1983, and the middle forces made a qualitative leap in consciousness. Severely disappointed over the nullified prospect of a Marcos-Aquino contest, and infuriated not only at the brutality of the assassination but also at the insulting brazenness of the instant coverup, the middle forces finally unleashed their long pent-up anger

ple's anger.

**L:** Who will shoulder the costs of this massive flight of capital, as well as the huge foreign debt of the country?

**A:** Two generations of Filipinos at the very least.

**L:** What is your group's position regarding the ill-gotten wealth stashed abroad?

**A:** We demand that these high government officials and their cronies be placed under trial and if proven guilty, their wealth should be sequestered or confiscated.

We believe that we should also address the problem of decapitalization. Firstly, we should reduce the substantial dollar outflow on the interest payments on our foreign debt by taking a firm stance advocating the national interest. Secondly, we

should break the chains that make capital incapable of progressive regeneration in the country. This means that foreign monopoly control of industry has to be terminated. At the same time, thorough-going agrarian reform has to be pursued in order to raise productivity, improve rural incomes, lower prices of raw material inputs to industry and greatly expand the market for industrial goods.

As the opportunities for capital arise and expand from the liberation of the economy from foreign monopoly of industry and landlord monopoly of land, capital will flow in, rather than out, and will thrive and multiply, to the great benefit of our country. Of course, and of necessity, these changes must be initiated and sustained by the political representatives of those groups or forces whose interests are not tied either to the foreign monopoly groups or the landlord monopoly class in the countryside. □





Nairobi, Kenya: Site of conference

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY  
*Resistance and struggles abroad*

## Solidarity at Nairobi

Filipino women join closing conference of UN Decade for Women in Nairobi

With their arms linked together and their fists clenched, the militant delegates of the General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action, or GABRIELA, dramatized their protest against US domination of the Philippines and widespread militarization in a mass action during the non-governmental organizations' (NGO) Forum '85 held in Nairobi, Kenya last July. The NGO Forum is part of the two-phase conference held from July 13-25 this year to mark the end

of the United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985). The conference was convened to strengthen unity among the world's female population and to appraise the decade's accomplishments since its first international conference on women ten years ago in Mexico.

It was in this setting that GABRIELA, a progressive multi-sectoral women's organization in the Philippines, successfully conducted its mass action dubbed "The Human Chain for Peace and Freedom."

at the Marcos dictatorship.

In their hundreds of thousands and later in their millions, they thronged to where Aquino's bloodied body lay in state, joined the longest columns of funeral marchers in history, made and threw confetti, vacated offices and whole buildings to join demonstrators on the streets reproduced and passed around a multiplicity of statements, including those from the revolutionary underground.

They rallied behind the call for justice for Aquino and for all victims of fascist repression, and the organizational expression of that call, the Justice for Aquino, Justice for All Movement (JAJA). A big number of them decided it was time to test the effect of public pressure in forcing the dictator to abdicate.

This phenomenon established the existence of a distinct force within the opposition ranks, between the national democratic revolutionaries and the old-type politicians. This force, which reinforced the ranks of the cause-oriented political organizations, came to be known as the liberal democrats.

The total effect of the activation of the middle forces in their millions, whether as national democrats or liberal democrats, contributed heavily to the acute political crisis hounding the dictatorship. Indeed, the middle forces affect to a very large extent the temper of public opinion as a whole. And in those months, public opinion was unmistakably calling aloud for an immediate end to the dictatorship.

While the mass activation of the middle forces was definitely a positive, though not necessarily long-lasting, development, it also reinforced the false hope dangled by the old-type bourgeois politicians: that of defeating the dictatorship by the sheer number of ballots cast against its candidates.

The biggest percentage of the leaders of the newly activated liberal democratic forces joined the national democrats and other progressives in boycotting the rigged elections for the powerless Batasang Pam-

bansa. But many of their followers, and those who were activated only by 1984, cast their lot with the regime's elections on May 14, 1984.

The overwhelming victory of the ruling KBL party in the Comelec count after the election and in the Comelec decisions on protest cases, and the evident powerlessness of the Batasang opposition and of the entire body itself, angrily stirred many leaders among the newly activated groupings of the middle forces. But the middle forces in their entirety, especially in Metro Manila, still have a long way to go.

### Role in the united front

The middle forces are an essential component of the anti-dictatorship and revolutionary forces. Without them in the national united front, the people's democratic revolution cannot flourish and triumph. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that many among them are characteristically individualistic, impetuous, easily cowed and prone to fall for reformist and "anti-Red" ideas.

This has not become so much of a problem in NPA guerrilla fronts in the countryside, where the extent of polarization has forced the middle forces to choose only between working closely with the revolutionary forces and working closely with the fascists, the latter option being dismissed as unthinkable.

In Metro Manila, where they have a substantial number of personalities and followers, the middle forces are subjected to the frenzied efforts of US imperialist agents and other counter-revolutionaries to make them pose as a counterweight to the nationalist and democratic mass movement. These schemes have had some successes in recent months, and fundamental conditions are there for the backward elements of the middle forces to be similarly swayed by the forces of disunity and reformism in the future.

But there are also objective bases for the middle forces to forge a firmer unity

with the broad masses of workers, peasants and students. As the economy plunges further and the Marcos dictatorship continues teaching in the negative way that armed oppression can only be defeated by armed resistance, and as US imperialism gets increasingly exposed as the single most dominant factor in semi-colonial, semi-feudal and fascist Philippine politics, more and more of the middle forces shall shun passivity, reformism and blind anti-Reddism. No one can erase from their memories what they saw and did and felt in those days of the assassination and its aftermath.

Providing the framework for firm nationalist and democratic unity among the broadest ranks of the Filipino people is the National Democratic Front. The NDF opens its arms to all of the middle forces who are willing to give part of their time and resources, whether as organizations or as individuals, to the cause of toppling the US-Marcos dictatorship and replacing it with a democratic coalition government.

The difficulties encountered in the dealings between some of the middle forces and those of the national democratic movement reflect both their inherent characteristics and the latter's lack of comprehension of these characteristics and legitimate interests. In the course of the struggle, there is a well-grounded confidence that the middle forces, as a whole, would stand shoulder to shoulder with the other democratic classes and sectors and would be instrumental in winning over to the side of the people's struggle some sections of the ruling classes and elements within the ruling clique itself.

For the time being, they seem to have calmed down from the level of agitation following the Aquino assassination. But they have already shown themselves and everybody else what they are capable of. Inspired by the overall advance of the people's revolutionary struggle, the middle forces should not only duplicate their 1983 feat. They must surpass it, and advance ever onward. N. Andres del Fierro



The demonstration sought to focus world-wide attention on US-funded militarization in the Philippines and its repressive effects on Filipino women. It received the support of delegates from other nations, mostly from the Third World, who joined in by linking arms with the GABRIELA delegation.

The GABRIELA delegation was also kept busy by the Forum's hundreds of workshops whose topics ranged from violent racism in South Africa, to female circumcision in Egypt, to the more universal problems of rape and incest. The forum's agenda offered a variety of delectable discussions "more varied than the ingredients of chop suey."

A workshop on the plight of Filipino women was sponsored by the 13-woman delegation of GABRIELA. It discussed the socio-economic roots of women's problems and related these to the pervasive and brutal effects of militarization, which is part and parcel of the US-Marcos regime's over-all strategy to halt the growing resistance movement in the country. GABRIELA demanded a stop to US military aid to the Marcos regime.

GABRIELA submitted a 77-page report entitled "Peace is an Illusion: Militarization and its Effects on Women" to the conference. This written report was made even more vivid and real when leaders of various sectoral organizations under GABRIELA spoke during the workshop. They narrated the pain suffered by women from the factory assemblyline to the

"We gained a lot of insights and knowledge from other women of the Third World on how to raise the level of women's issues to the level of national struggle, especially in the fight against imperialism, colonialism and racism," she noted. As a show of solidarity, the GABRIELA delegates expressed support and actively participated in workshops sponsored by other women struggling for independence and freedom, and endorsed calls such as the complete economic embargo against the racist minority regime in South Africa.

The themes of struggle and national liberation were also widely reflected in workshops of other countries. Latin American nations such as Nicaragua also discussed women's emancipation in the context of the struggle for national liberation. A Salvadoran woman guerrilla, braving cameras and government agents, pleaded for support for El Salvador's armed revolution, wherein the Salvadoran women are active and equal partners. The US government and its neocolonial policies in the Third World were a favorite target of attack in many workshops and activities. Several times during Forum '85, the US delegation headed by US President Reagan's daughter Maureen, came under heavy fire for its support of repressive dictatorships in the Third World. Criticizing US interventionist actions, various women's groups agreed to band together and fight the scourge of US imperialism.

If anything, the closing conference of

## TRIBUTE

*Life and struggle of revolutionary martyrs*

# Playing the lead in the theater of revolt

Merardo Tuason Arce, 1950-1985



*Portrait of a people's martyr*

Merardo "Mer" Arce was three months away from his 34th birthday when he died on Feb. 5, 1985 in Cebu City. He and a comrade, Elym Diaz, were killed in a battle with Metrodiscom troopers, in a last-ditch stand made to allow other comrades to escape to safety. At the necrological services, a friend quoted a song that has been one of Mer's favorites when, as an activist in the early '70s, he was a member of Panday Sining:

*Ang magbuhos ng dugo para sa bayan  
Ay kagitingang hindi malilimutan;  
Ang buhay na inilay sa lupang mahal  
Mayaman sa aral at kadakilaan.*

How is such total commitment to the *lupang mahal* formed? How is a life shaped that is without fear of *magbuhos ng dugo para sa bayan*?

### The beginnings of a revolutionary

Mer Arce was born on May 30, 1950 in Tarlac, Tarlac, the eldest of four children of a middle petty bourgeois family. After elementary schooling in the College of the Holy Spirit and the Don Bosco Academy in Tarlac (a medal-winner throughout, and salutatorian), he finished high school in the Don Bosco Academy of Makati with First Honorable Mention and a record as PMT squadron commander and student leader.

Like any other young boy, Mer en-



*Feisty Filipinas raise issue of militarization and missing church people*

business world to the squatter areas, under a notoriously repressive regime. Several members of the audience shed tears upon hearing these testimonies of oppression, according to newsreports.

A member of the GABRIELA delegation described Philippine participation as "very effective." One, she said, they were able to share the plight of the Filipino people with other peoples of the world. Two, the reports on the struggles of other women in other countries proved to them the correctness and strength of collective and militant action. Three, the workshop and the mass action helped to forge greater solidarity between the progressive Philippine delegation and other nations struggling against foreign domination.

the UN Decade for Women emphasized the gigantic but urgent task of improving the lot of women around the world. Forum '85 showed that the past ten years had barely made a dent on solving women's problems and that it doesn't take overnight, not even ten years, to change their oppressed status. For the Filipino women in this part of the globe, the struggle for their liberation is just gaining ground. The success of their struggle is impossible without the simultaneous liberation of Philippine society as a whole from foreign domination, feudal oppression and political tyranny. For those who grasp this essential principle, this is the direction that Forum '85 and the next years of struggle now point to. □



joyed athletic activities, especially swimming. His friends remember him as being sociable and a natural leader. His family describes him as serious and very bright.

Because he liked drawing and creative work, Mer entered the University of the Philippines College of Architecture in 1969, where he was an entrance scholar and college scholar throughout his stay there. He was a member of the Upsilon Sigma Phi fraternity.

It was in his sophomore year, 1971, that Mer awoke to the exploitative and oppressive structures that even today enchain Philippine society. He joined the *Kabataang Makabayan*, the militant national democratic youth organization which was then legal. In the same year, he helped form the KM cultural arm, the *Panday Sining* performing group, and became its chairman. With them, he worked at popularizing the national democratic movement through songs, poetry and plays that the group wrote, acted in and staged together. In 1972, in a move that marked the radical growth of his political consciousness and involvement, he joined the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Full-time in the movement by then, Mer was increasingly hounded by military intelligence agents. Upon the declaration of martial law on Sept. 21, 1972, he went into hiding to evade arrest. When, on Aug. 13, 1973, the *Panday Sining* underground house in Quezon City was raided, he hid in the ceiling and was the only one to escape. Forced to go deeper underground, he worked at other aspects of the cultural struggle.

His parents at first did not approve of his political involvement and at one time even threw his clothes out into the street. Eventually, however, they came to accept and understand his commitment, which came home to them with great force when they learned about his death — by reading it in the *Times Journal*, and seeing it reported on the Channel 4 TV news.



*Mer with his infant daughter*

No one except perhaps his wife and a close friend or two, was witness to the gradual transformation of this talented young man who could so easily have risen up the socio-economic ladder. He forsook his studies and the comforts of home, exchanging them for back-breaking work with a cultural group always in need of funding, for all-night study and discussion sessions, for all the other energy-sapping tasks of a young activist protesting the poverty and oppression around him, and feeling — as his friends put it — “that he had a part to play in the liberation of the Filipino people.”

He willingly integrated with workers and peasants, in an effort to understand more closely the people he was fighting for. Living underground, he moved from task to task, from shelter to shelter, daily risking arrest and death — all in pursuit of a commitment. As a young activist in 1972, Mer visited Mindanao to gain a deeper understanding of the face and the dimensions of the struggle. Eventually, he returned there in 1976 with his wife, and there they decided to stay and work.

#### Instrumental role in Mindanao

Those who knew him in Mindanao comment on how humble was this clean-shaven, soft-spoken young comrade and how ready he was to integrate with the local activists, cadres and peasant masses. Still the intellectual, he would stay up late at night, studying and reading amid the chirping of mountain crickets — after long days of steeping himself in revolutionary practice. They remember his quick grasp of conditions and how he consciously raised his experiences to the level of theory.

Initially, he was involved in barrio organizing work as a member of a semi-legal team. Later, he joined a full-fledged armed unit and acquired first-hand knowledge of guerrilla warfare. Having noted his qualities, veteran cadres in the countryside prepared him for more challenging responsibilities. In the First Mindanao Communist Party Conference in July 1977, he was elected alternate member of the Mindanao Regional Party Committee. By October 1977, he was made member of the Executive Committee in charge of Front 3, a guerrilla front located in the north central part of Davao del Norte. A few months later he assumed the concurrent positions of deputy secretary of the Executive Committee and district secretary of a northern guerrilla zone.

As a leader of the armed unit of the zone, Mer participated in several tactical offensives, and in the analyses and sharing of insights, as well as in the plans to strengthen the capacity of revolutionary forces to undertake guerrilla action. He was instrumental in making key decisions to create guerrilla zones through leapfrogging operations in 1977, to organize the first front guerrilla unit (FGU) in 1978, and to reinforce other fronts with cadres, fighters and arms.

His comrades assess his growth as a revolutionary as beginning from a deep caring for his comrades and a constant concern for their political development. He would seek out friends even outside of his unit and inquire after their political growth. He was a listener who was open even to those outside the organization, weighing the merits of other views, not at all the caricature “Commie” with his mind closed to all else. His inquiring mind made him ponder as well the decisions made by higher organs or even his own collective — assessing actual conditions and initiating intensive discussions to ensure the correctness of decisions. Supportive of ideas and plans which seemed to him to redound to the advancement of the revolutionary movement, he was daring in their execution.

In him is seen the judicious balancing of the elements of revolutionary action: a deep involvement in the cause of liberation, born of understanding and belief; an immersion in the practical aspects of revolutionary work, mental, organizational or combat; an analytical view of the



*Death of a revolutionary: Cebu Metrodiscom men view Mer's body*



relationship and processes between theory and practice; and finally, the decisive energy and wisdom to push the struggle forward in his area of work.

When Mindanao was divided into several regions in 1979, Mer was appointed deputy secretary of the Regional Executive Committee of Eastern Mindanao. At the same time, he also became the secretary of the Front 3 Party Committee. Under his leadership, the program at the front was intensified. A training course for all the front's military cadres, selected territorial cadres and FGUs was organized. The FGU complement was enlarged from oversized squad to under-sized platoon; widespread barrio level organizing was undertaken; and later, FGUs of other fronts were given training as well.

Despite the difficulties encountered in the establishment of the Eastern Mindanao regional organization, Mer and his comrades maintained a high degree of discipline and unwavering faith in the masses. This enabled them to face the deaths of comrades with equanimity, even while grieving for them. When he learned in 1981 that the South Mindanao Region was undermanned, Mer, known for his "*walang hindi-hindi*," unhesitatingly volunteered to serve in the new area. By November 1982, his exemplary work earned him the position of Party secretary of the South Mindanao Region. Later in 1984, Mer was transferred to higher level functions which concerned the organization and operations of the NPA.

#### The last days of a revolutionary

In February 1985, he was at an underground house in Mabolo, Cebu City when two comrades failed to return. Mer, and the other comrades left waiting, had their worries confirmed when a stranger came to the house with a letter purportedly from their missing companions. Sure that they had been found out and a raid was imminent, Mer and another comrade, Elym Diaz, evacuated all the important documents and equipment, as well as one missing comrade's family to safety. After several trips to and from the house, everyone left in two cars for the final departure. The first car had gotten away safely, but the second car, in which were Mer and Elym, was quickly blocked by a mobile checkpoint.

Aware that this meant capture, they sped past the checkpoint. Immediately, the Cebu Metrodiscom troopers ripped into the car with high-powered rifles, smashing it. Mer and Elym, wounded, ran while shooting at their attackers — buying time for their comrades in the other car. They fought back heroically in the one-sided battle and were both killed.

It was two days before the military found out who it was that they had killed — that "Ka Perry" was a high-ranking officer of the Mindanao NPA, whose



# DAVE

(In memory of Merardo T. Arce)

You played the same role over and over  
In the theater of revolt:  
A worker, oppressed, exploited,  
Who awakens and leads in crushing the enemy.  
The end was always rousing: the hammer,  
The sickle, the PSR and the gun overhead,  
The red flags waving,  
Your fist raised forward,  
And your eyes gleaming  
In victory  
As the International  
Thunders.

It was always that: a revolutionary, in the theater  
And eventually in the battlefield,  
Lugging a knapsack, gun in hand,  
A leader of the armed struggle  
And mass movement in the countryside.  
The former role became your life.  
How could they have differed? You took a single stand,  
As a character in plays  
And as a comrade who cleared a path  
In the revolutionary struggle.  
It was always that: even your murder  
By the enemy had long been acted out,  
Even the grieving over your body  
Had been replaced by the fire of revolt.  
Look: all of us, on whom your smile  
Had shone, raise our fists  
As the International thunders  
In the heart of the people.



Kris Montanez  
(Translated by Elias del Pilar)

real name was Merardo Tuason Arce and that Elym Diaz was a former philosophy teacher of the University of Mindanao who was a member of the NDF Mindanao Provisional Council.

Mer's comrades in Panday Sining and the Konsehong Tagapag-ugnay ng Rebolusyonaryong Sining (KONTRES) in the early '70s, and in Mindanao from the late '70s to the '80s, remember how Mer was always optimistic, never seeming to waver; how calm he was, and how sure that he was doing the right thing. In 1979, he had vowed not to be captured alive ("*Hindi ako mahuhuli nang buhay*"), and earned the nickname "*Palos*" (eel), because he so often and so easily eluded arrest. But, especially, they remember how he was confident of victory. "*Mananalo tayo*," he would say.

In grieving for him, therefore, and for a death of echoing significance, Merardo Arce's comrades in cultural work sounded a note of victory:

*Sa karaniwang sabi'y iniwan na niya tayo, subalit sa katotohanan, tayo'y hindi niya kailanman maiiwan. Sa aming mga dating kasama niya . . . ang kanyang pamtuno sa larangan ng makabayang kultura ay mananatiling buhay na huwarang inspirasyon namin sa pagpapatuloy ng kilusan hanggang sa ang bayan ay ganap na lumaya at maging payapa, maunlad at may katarungan. . . . Ang sambayanang Pilipino na kanyang kinabuhayan at kinamatayan ay hindi-hindi makakalimot. Ang sambayanan ang maggagawad ng katarungan.*

Merardo was right. With so many comrades like him, "*Mananalo tayo!*" □



# "Bust the bust!"

Having monuments in one's image seems to be a preoccupation with members of the Marcos clique. Gen. Fabian Ver, AFP chief of staff "on leave" because of his hand in the Aquino assassination, now also has a two-foot bust cast in bronze.

Appreciating his likeness in bronze, Ver made an allusion to "the tradition of those who have Dreams Stronger than Death." From the grave, of course, it is not a dream that Ninoy Aquino has been giving Ver and his boss, the dictator. It is a nightmare.

\*\*\*\*\*

Tourism Minister Jose Aspiras has finally come around to admitting that P3 million in public funds have been expended on Marcos' "stone face" on a mountainside in Agoo, La Union. This, after he had insisted for many years that the expenses had come from "private donations" from supposed friends of Marcos.

Taxpayers are naturally outraged by the squandering of public funds for the glorification of the dictator. But many of them are prepared to spend even more - double the P3 million to have the "monument" blown off the face of the earth. One prospective donor has offered dynamite to disintegrate "if not the entire face, then at least that silly pompadour."

\*\*\*\*\*

Incidentally, Marcos' "stone face" is not stone. It is made of concrete. But whatever it is - stone or concrete - it confirms something the people have known all these years: *kapalmoks talaga!*

\*\*\*\*\*

We have it from an *unimpeachable* source that he does not intend to die and that he even intends to run for reelection.

\*\*\*\*\*

It turns out General Ver is in the National Olympic Committee to represent the shooting sport. Of course, he doesn't have to do the shooting himself. He can always order the Avacom!

\*\*\*\*\*

The Aquino-Galman case has given prominence to a number of ladies.

The First Lady could very well have started it all with her well-founded warning (promise?) that "If (Aquino) comes back, he's dead!"

Then the "Crying Lady" shed not only tears but much light at the witness stand. She was refuted by two "Kissing Ladies" who said their testimonies were delayed (altered?) by intense fear.

The murder victims' widows have been conspicuous in their absence from the hearings. One has maintained that justice cannot be expected under the regime of her prime suspect. The other has been absent not only from the hearings, she has totally vanished.

The victim of this whole protracted affair has been Lady Justice. No, not the lady ex-Justice who emoted a birthday song and sought to clear the big guns. It is *the* Lady Justice - blindfold, scales and all - who has been seeking retribution for the evil done not only to Ninoy but to all other victims of repression. She is the lady in distress.

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Friends have been most impressed by the "ancestral home" of the Marcoses in Ilocos Norte. Guides take one around the house, and point out the place where greatness was born. Most impressive of all is the story that Dona Josefa Edralin Marcos, while walking around with a group of visitors, liked the decor so much that she asked, "*Kaninong bahay ito?*"

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You don't know Philippine mythology if you haven't read the book on *Malakas at Maganda*, commissioned by Mrs. Marcos for one past presidential birthday. It is a weaving together of Philippine myths, especially of Malakas and Maganda who, coincidentally, have FM and FL faces on them. One surprising illustration has FL and Nefertiti of Egypt gazing across the centuries.

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You've heard of the coconut palace? Well, it is bruited about that the favorite Malacanang architects are planning palaces for every major Philippine fruit - e.g., a banana palace, perhaps a mango palace, possibly a halo-halo palace. Or is that the latest name for Malacanang and all its new guest houses?

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