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"American bullets kill Filipinos"

Hardly had the blood of 27 demonstrators dried on the hot pavements of Escalante when more blood was spilled last Oct. 21 at Taft Ave. Two young rallyists were killed that day in a police dispersal operation, which is the latest in the Marcos regime's long list of bloody crimes against the people.

US imperialism cannot wash its hands off these brutal attacks of its client regime. Through the US government, American planes, tanks, helicopters, cannons, guns and bombs — a whole arsenal — are funneled to the Marcos dictatorship to be used in these killings. Mobile Training Teams (MTT), Special Operations Forces (SOF), the Joint US Military Assistance Group (JUSMAG), CIA operatives under the local CIA station chief, country agents of the USAID office of the Public Safety Division and various US military institutions teach the regime's minions the rough and fine arts of killing, torture and terrorism.

In addition, US military advisers and personnel provide tactical guidance and, in some instances, participate directly in combat operations against revolutionary forces throughout the archipelago. It is no coincidence that the more strident the US calls for "reform" and "democracy," the more violence that is perpetrated on the people by its puppet regime.

Yet ironically, this is the same imperialist power whose support certain traditional oppositionist politicians are now actively vying for. This is the same power, which early this year gave Marcos a satisfactory rating on human rights, they are relying upon to restore human rights and democracy in the Philippines. Instead of opposing US presence in the country which has become equivalent to greater repression of the people, they gladly welcome US intervention.

With the scent of elections strong in the air, the competition among these oppositionists for US support has recently become keener. Some of them make much of US pressure on Marcos to adopt "democratic reforms" which they think make the US a genuine and concerned friend of the Filipino people. They particularly take heart from a news report in the *San Francisco Examiner* about a conference last Aug. 1-3 at the US War College in Washington which discussed a "major policy shift to further distance the Reagan administration" from the Marcos government.

Attended by 50 senior US intelligence and diplomatic officials, the meeting reportedly cited several "policy options" for the country. These included the abandonment of Clark and Subic bases "which face growing risks from insurgents."

Like the National Security Study Directive which prescribed a carrot-and-stick policy on Marcos and which was

leaked to the press last March, this "new" report is undoubtedly intended to serve as a warning signal to Marcos. It is no secret that lately, US policy-makers have become worried over Marcos' stubborn refusal to grant certain concessions demanded by the US to defuse continuing political unrest in the Philippines.

However, the traditional political opposition should have no illusions that these apparent pressures on Marcos mean the US is sincerely interested in democratic changes. In reality, US imperialism's main concern in the Philippines centers on its precious military bases and vast economic interests here. Let no one be fooled by that supposed "policy option" on junking the US bases, which is patently a bluff and another pressure tactic on Marcos not to keep on using the bases as a leverage against Washington.

The Filipino people and the political opposition, in particular, should never for a moment forget that US policy on the Philippines is always based on its perceived self-interest, not on the interest of the Filipinos. The US funds, arms and trains the AFP not simply to "professionalize" it but to increase its capability to suppress the progressive and revolutionary forces which pose a serious challenge to US interests in the Philippines. The US constantly meddles in the Philippines not because of any honest desire to uphold democracy but to ensure the preservation of the oppressive ruling system from which it greatly benefits.

Propaganda and any action which tend to welcome or give undue stress on US pressures on Marcos will only obscure the villainous role of the US as the principal creator, supporter and beneficiary of the Marcos terrorist regime. It allows the US to escape the seething anger of the people against the joint US-Marcos dictatorship.

Historically, US imperialism has always been synonymous with mass terrorism and genocide. One should remember the "benevolent assimilation" by Krag-armed US aggressors at the turn of the century which directly resulted in the death of more than 650,000 Filipinos out of a total 7 million population. One should remember too the massive aggressions by American marines to carve out a hemispheric empire out of Latin America and, of course, the carnage that was Vietnam.

To date, US complicity in the war of terrorism against the Filipino people continues. As a placard at a US embassy rally aptly stated: "*Ang balang pumapatay sa Pinoy ay bala ng Kano.*" Put in another way: The US supplies the guns and the Marcos regime pulls the trigger.

IN THIS ISSUE

Cover: Rising against repression (Cover title adopted from "Sampaguita," by Lorenz Barro)

Cover stories: An alarming rise in salvagings, disappearances, political arrests and other human rights violations marks the 13th year of martial rule in the country. But as the US-Marcos regime increasingly resorts to fascist terror to preserve itself, people's resistance intensifies. In this issue, Leo dives into the regime's expanding terror network and the corresponding backlash in mass resistance that has resulted.

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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 in the Philippines and for progressive Filipino and solidarity groups abroad. It issues its beginning to the establishment of the Preparatory Commission for the National Democratic Front on April 24, 1973. LIBERATION is the official publication of the NDF.



Death in Escalante: Masterminds named in NPA poster (inset); bodies of massacre victims

COVER STORIES

On today's significant issues and events

Weaving a network of repression

US-Marcos regime scales up repression to stem rising resistance

"I panicked when they started firing at us. A man pulled me towards a ditch, shielding me with his body. Just as I reached the safety of the ditch, the man was hit in the back."

"It was the first time I saw people being shot. I was shocked. I ran away as far as I could, towards the sugarcane field. The soldiers followed us there, still firing their guns. But I was luckier because I had a place to hide. Those on the other side had no place to run except the canals."

"A man threw himself on top of me. He was shouting 'duko' (lie down). I followed his order but later, I felt something warm seeping through my clothes. I got out from under him. He had been shot."

These are the accounts of a young girl, a student and a sugar worker who survived the infamous Escalante Massacre. This chilling bloodbath erupted when the military and Integrated Civilian Home Defense Forces (ICHDF) members opened fire at unarmed demonstrators in Escalante town, Negros Occidental on Sept. 20. Bullets from an M60 machinegun perched on top of the municipal building directly

killed 12 of the rallyists. So far, 27 persons have been counted dead, 97 seriously injured and 197 still unaccounted for.

Said the National Democratic Front in a press statement released through its official news agency Balita ng Malayang Pilipinas: "The (massacre) underscores the new extremes of insanity and barbarism that the US-Marcos dictatorship is resorting to in a desperate bid to suppress dissent and hold on to power.... Given the utter barbarity with which the regime and its military men perpetrated this latest carnage, the peaceful protesters in Escalante would have been well within their rights to fight back with arms."

To be sure, the Escalante Massacre, which ironically occurred on the eve of the 13th anniversary of martial law, is neither an accident nor an isolated event. In the pages of the bloody history of US-Marcos rule, massacres and assassinations have become more the rule rather than the exception. To name a few: the Las Navas massacre in Samar (September 1981), the Langoni massacre in Negros Occidental (May 1984), the Aquino assassination (August 1983), the murder of

Fr. Tullio Favali (April 1985), and further back, the Plaza Miranda massacre (August 1971) and the Jabidah (1968) and Lapiang Malaya (1967) massacres. The Escalante carnage is simply another indisputable proof of the US-Marcos regime's policy of escalating state terrorism.

The fascist dictatorship

Like the proverbial broken record, the US-sponsored Marcos regime continues to rationalize its widespread use of violence in the name of "crushing the Communist insurgency and deterring subversion." But in truth, the regime employs violence to annihilate all opposition to its rule and perpetuate itself in power. For good reason then, it has been described as a "fascist dictatorship."

The essence of this fascist dictatorship is the rule by naked armed force and open terror where power is concentrated in the hands of an autocrat. It was on Sept. 21, 1972 that Marcos and his US imperialist master legalized and institutionalized terror. Through Proclamation 1081, signed on the 21st and

TABLE 1: SALVAGING (1973 - June 1985)

Year	Metro Manila	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao	Total
1973		1			1
1974					11
1975		11			11
1976		16			16
1977		24	21	6	51
1978	1	25	44	16	86
1979		56	38	102	196
1980		45	36	137	218
1981		65	28	228	321
1982		46	28	136	210
1983	1	62	41	165	309
1984		128	61	368	557
1985 (June)	5	33	46	135	219
TOTAL	7	512	343	1,393	2,255

made public two days later, the dictatorship discarded any further pretence of adhering to democracy. The declaration of martial law bared the crisis of the ruling system which had to resort to outright fascism because it could no longer exist on its standard tactics of bribery and deception.

However, with the full backing of the US, the Marcos regime does not use simple terror but an organized and systematic terror network which, in one command, will spray bullets at defenseless civilians or assassinate a rival politician in broad daylight. The state functions as the coercive instrument which asserts the dominance of a narrow ruling elite led by Marcos over society. Resistance from the exploited classes is ruthlessly curbed by a broad, interweaving network of troops and spies, laws and a parliament, prisons and law courts.

The reign of terror has not stopped even after the ceremonial "lifting" of martial law in January 1981. To date, the US-Marcos regime continues its violent and coercive tactics to maintain its absolute sway, launching more intensified and widescale military campaigns one after another. The year 1985 caps the regime's sordid record of violence. This year, the methods of repression have become even more vicious and brutal, a fact which in itself reflects the regime's failure to resolve the heightening conflicts in society.

In reaction to the upsurge of protests, especially following the Aquino assassination, the physical and deadly suppression of a broad range of oppositionists has mounted. The Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP), a human rights institution, has recorded a total of 219 salvaging cases from January to June alone this year. Table 1 shows that 2,255 persons have been salvaged or summarily executed from 1973 to June 1985.

But salvaging, already repressive enough, does not often simply mean being shot dead. Torture often accompanies it. Take the case of Fr. Nilo Valerio and



Negros detainee: Iron bars to cage dissent

his two comrades, all of whom were NPA members arrested in Bakun, Benguet last August. According to reports of the masses in the area, they were severely tortured, decapitated and their heads paraded around the town by sol-

diers.

The phenomenon of disappearance, however, is perhaps more terrifying than being killed at least in front of possible witnesses. Individuals are seized by the military, paramilitary or police agents of the state who secretly murder and dispose of the bodies of their victims, often after torture, always without legal process, and without acknowledgment and admitted responsibility of the state. In the Philippines, it is almost totally hopeless to find any person who has "disappeared." Fr. Rudy Romano, for example, a Redemptorist parish priest who has been missing since July 11, still cannot be located despite a Supreme Court order to the military to produce him. At the time of his disappearance, Fr. Romano was the national vice chairman for BAYAN-Visayas and an outspoken activist against militarization.

The increasing use of salvagings, assassinations and disappearances as compared to the number of other human rights abuses painfully shows that the government would rather leave no victim who can relate afterwards what happened. That terrifying accounts of torture are also found in remote barrios to highly urbanized areas indicate that they are not merely isolated events, but rather a normal routine in military operations. At the rate they are occurring, salvagings, assassinations and disappearances have become as ordinary as car accidents that the press, local or international, no longer pays attention to them unless the victims are prominent persons.

Masses: most numerous victims

Men, women or children; professionals, peasants, workers or students - the regime's terror network spares no one. Present trends, however, indicate that the victims mostly belong to the lower strata - the peasants and workers who comprise the majority of the 54 million Filipinos. In particular, the poor masses in the countryside most often bear the brunt of the counter-insurgency operations which disrupt their lives, ruin their

TABLE 2: DISAPPEARANCES (1974 - June 1985)

Year	Metro Manila	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao	Total
1974				1	1
1975	1	4			5
1976	2	33			35
1977	2	11			16
1978	2	3			10
1979	1	12	4	2	48
1980	2	17		34	19
1981	2	88		45	53
1982		16	22	24	42
1983	2	13	15	115	145
1985 (June)	3	23	18	66	110
TOTAL	22	162	64	387	634

livelihood and even threaten their lives.

Noted the TFDP head in her speech during the Transnational Institute conference in Amsterdam: "The fact that most of the victims of human rights violations until now are the poor majority of our people is a sign of both the bias of the present regime and the social order it maintains. This is a sign too of the social base of our people's movement in the Philippines."

In Misamis Occidental, the food blockade launched by the military has destroyed the peaceful life of the villages. Each family who lives in hamletted areas is now only allowed to buy a maximum of five kilos of rice a week. Anybody who buys more, according to warped military logic, is either a rebel or rebel supporter.

Hamletting had caused the farmers' harvests to decrease in number and quality because they are forced to live in town centers, away from their fields. In many instances, the walk to the fields from the center already takes more than half of the daylight hours. The peasants dare not leave their huts before sunrise or after sundown for fear of being tagged as NPAs and killed.

Farmers who protest these atrocities become targets of military attack. Down in Mindanao, peasant leader Jolo Fabro was killed by military men; his home was hit with mortar and smoke bombs. More cases are being reported of farmer-leaders being dragged out of their homes at midnight and then shot dead, sometimes with their families.

News reports of picket line violence have also become as familiar as weather reports, with the contents just as misleading and often totally erroneous. From the Foamtex attack where two workers were killed, to the Artex assault where picketeers were shot dead like ducks, to the recent violent dispersal of picketeers at Solid Appliances Inc., attacks against workers are actually led by policemen and sometimes, by Marine units, which are paid by owners of the strike-bound company. Each policeman can receive as much as P500 or a minimum of P100, while the police chief in the district gets P10,000 or more.

Since 1973, there have been 47 recorded killings of labor activists. According to the Kilusang Mayo Uno, 38 of these occurred from January to June alone this year. Nine were strike-related, equalling the total number of strike-related deaths from 1973 to 1984.

This violent practice is tolerated, even encouraged by the government to make workers toe the line and discourage them from striking or organizing. Last May 1, Labor Day, Marcos issued Letter of Instruction 1458 blatantly allowing the military to directly interfere with strikes. Apparently, the regime sees the growing militancy of organized labor as a threat to the economic interests of the



Fascist blows: Goons break up picketline of striking Interpolymer workers

Marcos ruling faction and foreign businessmen, especially Americans. Early this year, government officials debated whether to impose a three-year moratorium on strikes as these allegedly interfere with the regime's economic recovery program. To date, it is still studying ways on how to effectively curtail the right to strike. The continued implementation, however, of other anti-labor decrees in effect already serves as an unofficial strike ban.

The professionals besieged

Even then, one of the most significant trends in the regime's terror campaign since the start of this year is the arrest and killing of professionals active in the anti-dictatorship movement. These became victims often not because of their professions but for their active involvement in protest activities. In fact, trends indicate that many of the

victims from the professional sector are leaders of cause-oriented groups, notably Fr. Romano of BAYAN-Visayas and Atty. Laurente Ilagan of BAYAN-Mindanao.

The slaying of 23 newsmen, at least 13 church leaders and workers, and four human rights lawyers moreover illustrates the regime's cold-blooded, systematic policy of "termination" of any dissenter regardless of his social status or political influence. It further reveals the regime's panic and desperation at the obviously mounting awareness, unity and strength of the middle forces.

In the media scene, there are three rare cases when the newsmen becomes the news: when he is summoned for a "dialog" by the military; when he is charged with libel for an article which stepped on sensitive shoes; and, when the regime uses its ultimate weapon —



Show of force: Army tank harasses peasant protesters in Bataan



Pleading for an endangered species: Media people in protest rally

bullets — to silence him forever. Since 1978, 23 newsmen have been killed, 13 of whom were murdered this year. In most cases, the killers remain at large and with the military, claiming parrot-like, that "the Communists did it." In truth, media repression has escalated every passing year of martial law and the dictatorship has had to censor the mass media to minimize any possible negative publicity against itself.

Church people who have chosen to serve their flocks beyond saying mass have also earned the ire of the regime. Many have been picked up, detained and tortured like Frs. Edicio de la Torre, Orlando Tizon and Jun Evasco. Many have also lost their lives like Fr. Favali whose body was mutilated by ICHDF members. Meanwhile, those who have escaped detention and bullets such as Sr. Mariani Dimaranan of TFDP have Presidential Detention Action orders hanging over their heads like a sword of Damocles.

In addition, several lawyers who have defended persons charged with national security crimes have found themselves the ones in detention, charged with sedition, subversion or rebellion. Among them are Ilagan, chairman of BAYAN-Mindanao, Romeo Astudillo, Antonio Arellano and Alberto Benesa. Not so "lucky" are FLAG-Mindanao members Romraflor Taojo and Crisostomo Cailing who were murdered in April and July, respectively, this year. These incidents hammer home the point that, regardless of their profession, progressive and militant individuals among the middle forces are now an endangered species under the US-Marcos regime.

Main instrument of violence

All these acts of repression have been carried out since the start of US-Marcos rule primarily through the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) — the main pillar on which the US-Marcos dictator-

ship rests. It is the soldiers who, after proper training and indoctrination on counter-insurgency, blindly carry out the most vicious acts of salvagings, forced evacuations of thousands of families from their homes, food rationing, and strafing of barrios in the dead of the night. It was a man in uniform who murdered tribal leader Macliing Dulag in 1981; it was a military man known to the residents in the area who shot Dr. Bobby de la Paz in 1982; and it was soldiers who assassinated opposition leader Benigno Aquino Jr. in 1983.

These widespread, deliberate and calculated acts point out that state repression is not merely due to some "bad eggs" or some soldiers "overzealous" in performing their duties but is actually pre-planned with pre-defined objectives.

To build up its main pillar of support, it has become necessary for the regime to continuously expand the number of its military minions. In 1972, the AFP — excluding the Integrated National Police and the reserves — was only a force of 58,000. Ten years later, it ballooned to 146,000. And as of 1984, reports say that the AFP now to-

als more than 282,000. The budget allocation for the AFP also shot up after the declaration of martial law. Since 1972, it has topped the priority list of the national budget. It was allocated P604 million in the first year of martial law and now has a whopping P7.89 billion budget, ten times or over 1,000% of the 1972 figure.

Further boosting the gargantuan military budget is US military assistance. This assistance comes in the form of military hardware, sales credits, training of choice officers in the US on the latest crowd-control and counter-insurgency techniques, military advice and other direct and indirect financial aid. Table 3 shows the increasing military support to the Marcos regime since 1972. According to published reports, US military assistance averaged \$18 million a year from 1970 to 1979. It further soared to \$60 million a year from 1980 to 1984. For this year, US Pres. Ronald Reagan battled for the approval of \$70 million in the US Congress.

The paramilitary units also form one of the most important arms of the counter-insurgency campaign of the regime. Created by Presidential Decree 1016, the Integrated Civilian Home Defense Forces has an estimated 70,000 members nationwide. Member of Parliament Roy Padilla (Opposition, Camarines Norte) who filed a bill disbanding the group, attributes at least 2,000 cases of violent deaths to this notorious group. Its crimes are so savage that when the Metro Manila Commission suggested that a contingent be formed in Metro Manila, Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile himself was forced to state that "whoever proposed that should have his head examined."

Also part of the regime's paramilitary units is the equally notorious Lost Command composed of irregular military men which mimic guerrilla organization and tactics. Still another are the so-called religious fanatic groups which mysteriously sprout in "rebel-infested" areas and terrorize residents from helping or joining the NPA. In several towns in the provinces, their presence

TABLE 3: US MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO THE PHILIPPINES (1970-1984, in million \$)



has been noted and it is believed that they will be activated if insurgency spreads in the cities.

Among these fanatic groups are the 4Ks (Philippine Democratic Missionary Church); the Philippine Liberation Organization (PLO) which operates in Davao and is responsible for the slaying of newsman Alex Orcullo; the Sagrado Corazon Senor, nicknamed Tadtad after its practice of chopping and then eating human parts of its victims; and the Philippine Benevolent Missionaries Association which is based in Surigao del Norte. Fanatic groups have a neurotic fixation on invincibility. The 4Ks, for example, distribute a pamphlet written in Latin, the possession of which will allegedly cause bullets to bounce off the owner "like rubber balls to a cement wall."

The military has been known to supply fanatic groups with arms and money and has even incorporated several into the ICHDF. Playing on the fanatics' ignorance, the military teaches them that they will receive salvation by killing persons who do not believe in God (i.e., the NPAs). CIA chief William Casey has been quoted as saying that cultists and fanatical groups are "effectively enhancing the counter-insurgency campaign of the military in the countryside."

Recently, private armies have returned to the scene, further beefing up the dictatorship's forces of repression. These serve as the security force of Marcos cronies and certain government officials to protect their economic and political interests as well as to ensure by whatever means, their victory during elections. In Negros, the CHDF doubles up as private armies to big sugar barons like Armando Gustilo, the chief perpetrator of the Escalante Massacre. But probably, the biggest of the private armies is that of top Marcos crony Eduardo Cojuangco which spans Tarlac, Negros, and some provinces of Mindanao. Reports have it that Cojuangco's private army undergoes training under Israeli mercenaries in his estate in Palawan island.

Aside from the blatant use of brute force, the dictatorship also makes use of tactics and deception. Its most favorite tool is the classic communist bogey, primarily directed against militant labor and cause-oriented groups. In whipping up the Red scare, the regime's dirty tacticians seek to deny the indigenous roots of democratic upheavals like protests against government domestic and foreign policies, and to smear them as "foreign imports." It is intended to weaken progressive movements by unleashing irrational forces that divert attention from real issues.

In the anti-communist campaign, the mass media presently serves as the barrel from where the bullets are fired. It plays up the government side against the democratic forces which are accused of being "Communist fronts" or "Com-



Jeremiad: Church people decry regime's killings; Frs. Romano and Favali (inset)

munist infiltrated." The regime also makes use of otherwise insignificant groups which are rabidly anti-communist to spread pacifism and the theory of "non-violence" in an effort to make the people resigned to their fate without resorting to violent resistance.

The obvious purpose, of course, is to isolate progressive and revolutionary forces and undermine the unity of the broad resistance front. Anti-communist paranoia becomes especially strong whenever nationalist forces gain influence among the masses, as at present.

The dilemma of repression

That all these trends are getting stronger in double speed this year indicates the regime's growing desperation to crush its

sworn nemesis, the revolutionary forces. Besieged by a worsening economic crisis and rising social unrest, the dictatorship sees that its only way out is to intensify repression against the people. But there are limits to the escalation of fascist violence, "beyond the subjective will of its instigators and sponsors," as noted by a Filipino Marxist writer.

The more the aggressor escalates repression, the more people he angers. The moment the aggressor attacks these protesting groups, the more it is isolated politically. This dilemma underscores the fundamental contradiction of the regime's counter-insurgency program and general policy of state terror. Aimed at supporting a neo-fascist policy, counter-insurgency in fact destroys the regime to its foundations. Atrocities rule out the possibility of ever winning over any section of the people or stabilizing the beleaguered regime.

As things stand today, the regime's options in this regard are getting narrower and narrower. Under pressure from his US patron, Marcos knows he has to do more to control the rapidly rising insurgency. To simply stand still and do nothing would be fatal, to both his personal and political survival and the preservation of the entire ruling system. But in "doing more," he will only further heighten resistance to his rule and bring his "final day of reckoning" closer.

This is the piercing dilemma facing the dictatorship today as it winds up its 13th year of repressive rule and enters its 14th year. But as the mounting cases of human rights violations show, the regime has chosen to take the path of terror and repression. For a regime with very little choices left, the choice indeed appears logical. For the people struggling to overthrow it, that choice further serves to underscore the fact that: fascist tyranny is the mark of desperation of a dying regime. Liz Beltran



Urgent query from a detainee's child



Two-pronged assault: NPA guerrillas in Negros seize explosives (inset) in Sipalay raid; Bacolod marchers protest Escalante Massacre in

Salvos in September

NPA offensives and massive street actions mark martial law anniversary

The people demonstrated their intensifying resistance against the US-Marcos dictatorship in a two-pronged commemoration of the 13th anniversary of martial law last Sept. 21.

As an estimated 100,000 Filipinos took to the streets in major cities from Baguio to Butuan, the New People's Army pulled off at least three successful raids despite a red alert called by the military. Combined with the massive street actions in cities and towns, these armed operations of the NPA in the countryside succeeded in inflicting more damaging blows on the regime. They attest to the higher level of struggle scaled by the people's war throughout the country since 1972.

According to NPA correspondence reports from Negros, on the eve of "Thanksgiving Day," the Red fighters on the island carted away from a mining complex 202,000 feet of detonating cord, 190 pieces of blasting caps, 1,000 meters of non-electrical safety fuse, 323 pieces of primers for explosives, 1,685 kilos of emulite explosives, 350 rounds of ammunition for .22 magnum pistols, one base radio, 10 12-gauge shotguns plus 1,200 rounds of ammunition, four typewriters, and tools and machine parts for use by the NPA ordnance unit.

The raid at the government-owned Maricalum Mining Corp., formerly the Marinduque Mining Corp., in Barangay San Jose, Sipalay, Negros Occidental, was conducted by two squads of Red fighters aided by more than 200 militia men and women and members of local mass organizations. The NPA squads quickly disarmed the mine's security guards. They used acetylene torches and saws to break open three locks used to secure the ar-

mory where the explosives were stored.

The battalion-size composite group of militia and local masses that accompanied the Red fighters helped in loading the more than two tons of confiscated explosives aboard two cargo trucks. After a one-kilometer run, the militia and local masses unloaded the cargo trucks and carried the haul on foot through rugged mountain trails to various NPA camps in the area. Subsequent attempts by the military to recover the explosives failed, as the troopers were subjected to sniper fire by NPA teams whenever they attempted to enter the interior barrios of Sipalay.

In Sariaya, Quezon, a platoon of guerrillas, pretending to turn over to the police two hand-cuffed "prisoners," also took away 11 M16 rifles and six handguns from the police station last Sept. 23, without firing a single shot.

In another raid on Sept. 21 in Majayjay, Laguna, six more M16 rifles were added to the NPA arsenal.

Meanwhile, three separate people's strikes called by the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) paralyzed Negros island, Cebu City and Davao City, all key urban centers in central and southern Philippines. The biggest rally was held in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental on the 21st, the culmination of the three-day welgang bayan and the day after 27 persons were killed by military and paramilitary forces in Escalante, northern Negros. Over 30,000 people took to the streets of Bacolod to assail the massacre which also earned national and international condemnation. In nearby Cebu province, some 1,000 residents marched through the city streets carrying red banners and calling for the down-

fall of the US-Marcos regime. In Davao, some 8,000 marchers successfully pushed through with their rally at Plaza Magsaysay despite checkpoints and blockades set up by military troopers at various entry points to the city.

Members of BAYAN in Metro Manila, on the other hand, marched from various assembly points in the metropolis, held a short rally at the Liwasang Bonifacio and proceeded to Mendiola. However, the over 25,000 marchers heading for Mendiola were blocked at 2 p.m. by government soldiers and policemen at Legarda-Bustillos streets and C.M. Recto Ave. Notwithstanding the blockade and the heavy afternoon rain, the marchers filled Recto Ave., distributed statements to passersby and onlookers, and after a brief program, burned effigies of Marcos, Uncle Sam and the AFP. The marchers dispersed at 4 p.m. to join a scheduled noise barrage.

"Kalampagin ang Maynila! Yanigin ang Diktadura!" was the battlecry during the motorcade and noise barrage that lasted from late afternoon up to 9:30 p.m.

Officers and members of the Bayang Nagkakaisa sa Diwa at Layunin (BANDILA) earlier in the morning also staged a people's parliament attended by some 7,000 protesters at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao, Quezon City. They conducted a mock trial of the Marcos regime and pronounced the dictator guilty of high crimes against the people.

In the Bicol region, a march dubbed "Lakbay-Dalangin ng Bayan" (Lakdangin) reeled off four days before. The prayer-march that started from Legaspi on Thursday morning began with 500 participants but swelled to a 5,000-strong mass rally as the marchers reached Iriga City Friday afternoon. Led by the Bicol Ecumenical Movement for Justice and Peace (BEMJP), the mass action aimed to unite the people in the region in condemning the imposition of martial law.



welgang bayan



In Manila: Rallyists confront police near Mendiola

Marchers who came from Albay, Sorsogon and Masbate trooped to the Basilica of the Lady of Peñafrancia to make known their protest against the regime's violations of human rights. As they passed through different towns, the marchers were supported by concerned citizens who gave them food and water as well as cash donations.

BAYAN-Bicol also held other rallies exposing the farcical lifting of martial law in Albay, Masbate, Sorsogon, Camarines Sur and Camarines Norte.

Malolos, Bulacan was also the site of still another demonstration participated in by some 8,000 Bulakenos. San Fernando, Pampanga hosted over 3,000 rallyists, mostly farmers, who were blocked by the military for nearly six hours.

In Sariaya, where one of the NPA raids was held, demonstrators decided to camp out along Quezon Ave. because soldiers and policemen refused to let them proceed to Camp Nakar where the planned rally was to be held. When the participants were accused of holding a camp-out to divert the attention of the military from the NPA raid, organizers vehemently denied this and pointed out that it was the troopers who stopped them.

As the people showed their unity and opposition to the regime last Sept. 21, the state bared its fascist color anew: at the end of the nationwide commemoration, 27 were slain in Escalante, 57 critically wounded, 197 still missing; eight were injured and 84 were nabbed during the noise barrage in Metro Manila; ten youths were picked up and detained during the rally in Catbalogan, Samar; while march-rallies in several other cities were blocked.

Sept. 21 signalled 13 long years of naked terror. But on that day, the people's heightened resistance — both armed and unarmed — also dramatized the unstoppable advance of the struggle to overthrow the US-Marcos regime. □



In Central Luzon: Protesters march along highway in Bataan



In Southern Luzon: Demonstrators proceed to Camp Nakar in Lucena



NDF-Negros officers stressing a point during clandestine interview

MAINSTREAM

Developments in the anti-dictatorship struggle

Forum in Sugarlandia

NDF interim council in Negros meets the press

The dialog was held Oct. 13, a quiet Sunday morning. A four-man panel had assembled for an informal interview with members of the press. But the atmosphere was different from that of the *kapihan* or breakfast forums held in the swanky hotel coffee shops of Manila. The venue instead, was a thatched hut located in a sugar hacienda just a few minutes away from the heart of Bacolod City and the headquarters of the 331st PC Company. And the panel was composed, not of highly placed government ministers, but of members of the interim council of the National Democratic Front in Negros. They were Vince, a former priest who went underground in 1979; Carlos, a former sociology instructor; Roman, a peasant who represented the New People's Army; and Pedro, a representative of the Revolutionary Workers' Movement.

The clandestine eight-hour interview focused on the massacre of 27 demonstrators in Escalante, northern Negros during the *welgang bayan* there last Sept. 20 and the growing strength of the New People's Army on the island.

During the interview, the NDF panel disclosed that the Escalante Massacre, in particular, has resulted in a big number of men and women volunteering to join the NPA. According to Roman, "We have received many requests for deployment to the NPA. We are trying to

screen them since we cannot absorb all of them at once. We will deploy the rest to other areas where we need organizers."

But it is not only to the NPA that volunteers are flocking, reported the NDF-Negros. "A lot more have opted to join the underground mass organizations like the *Kabataang Makabayan*, the *Christians for National Liberation* and the *Katipunan ng mga Gurong Makabayan*," said Vince. "Their experience has taught them that only through a protracted people's war can the dictatorship be defeated. You see, the regime itself is the best teacher, by negative example, of the need for people's war."

The NDF members also revealed that the NPA in Negros opened a new front in August this year in the northern part of the province, making a total of four guerrilla fronts on the island. Carlos moreover announced that the NPA now has the capability to launch company-size operations aside from the regular operations of its platoons and armed city partisans.

After the series of successful offensives at the *Visayan Maritime Academy (VMA)* in Bacolod City and in *Isabela* town earlier this year, the masses are expecting another big offensive — this time, against the masterminds of the Escalante Massacre, said the panel. These are northern Negros warlord *Armando Gusti-*

lo, RUC 6 head Brig. Gen. *Isidoro de Guzman* and Escalante mayor *Braulio Lumayno*. The organizations under the NDF have not spared any effort in making known to the people the guilty parties' identities, they said. True enough, all over Bacolod City and many towns in Negros, *operasyon pinta-operasyon dikit* teams have literally left walls and sides of buildings red with slogans crying "Death to Gustilo" and "Avenge the martyrs of Escalante." As a result, said the NDF, military and paramilitary elements now refuse to patrol at night because of the writings on the walls.

Vince was explicit about the NDF policy on the perpetrators of the Escalante Massacre: "No political trial for Gustilo. His list of crimes is just too long," he said. "The least we will do is launch an operation against him, and his terrorist forces — the CHDF."

The secret of the successive victories of the NPA in Negros, said the panel, is all-out investigation and mass support. "We planned the VMA raid for two months, and this even involved sending two members of the city partisans inside the school as students. By the time we raided the compound we had memorized the whole layout and were so confident that we even had snacks at their canteen," said a partisan, one of a platoon-size unit providing security for the interview. Most of the partisans involved in the VMA raid served as members of the underground news conference's security force.

Another big factor in the VMA raiders' clean get-away was the cooperation of the masses around the city, said the panel. "They kept the guns until we could come back for them. Nobody squealed."

Mass support was also necessary for the vital element of surprise in the *Isabela* raid last May. While the guerrillas were hunched inside the two trucks they used in entering the town, all the Rangers saw were women who they thought were coming to attend another rally. By the time they saw the Red fighters, it was too late. The NPA had already positioned itself against the Rangers, said the panel.

With the revolutionary forces supported by the masses, have the hunger and poverty in Negros caused a crisis in their ranks?

"No," said Vince with a smile. "While we do need the support of the masses, we also see to it that we engage in production work, since the growth of our forces means additional necessities like food," he explained.

Pedro also pointed out that it is largely the unorganized masses that are hardest hit by the crisis. "In areas where we have established the underground movement, we can easily take over the land once the planters decide it is too costly for them to maintain."

Through individual and communal planting, we raise the food crops that we need. Sometimes, we have a surplus that we share with other areas, or else sell at lower prices," he said.

"The unorganized masses, on the other hand, have a harder time, since they do not have bargaining power, and most of the time they do not own farming implements. They do not even own simple plows. That is why we try to intercede with planters and demand that they lend the workers their farm implements," added Pedro.

Do the planters agree with this?

Most of the time, said Carlos, they do. Especially the small planters who own five hectares or less of land.

"They know that landlords who help us win the revolution will receive consideration after liberation," he said. "After liberation," continued Carlos, "the lands of the big feudal lords will be expropriated — and converted into either individual or communal farms. The monocrop economy will be abolished, and priority will be given to crops needed for subsistence. And the workers, the peasants, the students, the middle forces — all are being trained in the

democratic processes today in mass organizations and in the alternative revolutionary governments we have established in our guerrilla fronts."

The dialog ended with a note of optimism. "The liberation will not be long in coming," Carlos said. "In the comprehensive strategy of people's war, every Filipino patriot is presently doing his best to win the revolution. Already, we are preparing for the strategic counter-offensive, a higher level of struggle leading toward the stage of strategic stalemate," he concluded.

Maia Liwanag/Negros Correspondent

"Stop Australian aid to Marcos"

An interview with the NDF on the scaling down of Australian aid projects in Samar

The National Democratic Front recently welcomed the initiative of the Australian government to "vastly scale down" its aid projects in the Philippines, particularly the Northern Samar Integrated Rural Development Project (NSIRD) which involves roadwork and agricultural assistance to the Marcos regime. This unprecedented move of the Australian government was announced last August by Australian Foreign Minister Bill Hayden in the wake of "an increasingly deteriorating security situation" occasioned by NPA activities in Australian project sites which are within guerrilla fronts. Hayden ordered the pullout of 21 Australian consultants from Catarman town, one of the project areas.

In a statement released through its official news agency, the Balita ng Malayang Pilipinas, the NDF said that ever since the start of the NSIRD in 1977, "NPA units have indeed civilly approached Australian and Filipino officials and personnel of the aid project to painstakingly explain to them its deleterious effects upon our people and to persuade them from proceeding further with this." Through dialogs with

project supervisors and open letters sent to them, the NPA has time and again appealed for an end to official Australian aid to the Marcos regime. "But when their repeated requests were ignored, the NPA decided to take more vigorous steps to stop the project," said the NDF. Last Aug. 9 and 10, the NPA raided the Australian office housing the agricultural training center in Irahawan Valley in Catubig, a radio repeater base in Bayog Island and another radio facility at Lope de Vega, all in Northern Samar. No Australian or Filipino personnel were harmed, however, following NPA assurances that none would be.

This early October, an Australian journalist interviewed a leading member of the NDF regarding this issue. The NDF member said that though the Australian project to build roads and bridges may appear beneficial on the surface, "in reality, it is primarily meant to facilitate the movements of the dictatorship's AFP to carry out forced evacuation, zonings, massacres and similar acts against our people." Excerpts:

Q: Why do the NPA oppose aid projects like the Catarman venture?

A: In the first place, the NPA undertook its military-political actions on the basis of the project's adverse and dislocative effects on the people in the area and the fact that the project was patently being used by the US-Marcos dictatorship for counter-insurgency purposes. At the same time, we feel the Australian government has yet to satisfactorily answer the question as to what its real interests are in undertaking the project.

The NDF welcomes aid from parties, organizations, individuals and even governments abroad so long as these benefit the interests of the Filipino people and further their struggle for national independence and genuine democracy. Needless to say, aid that benefits the Marcos regime and perpetuates foreign domination over the country is unwelcome and will be repudiated.

Q: Does this mean that the NDF is opposed to accepting any aid from Australia?

A: Australian presence in the Philippines, if defined as the presence of Australians engaged in normal business or diplomatic activity, is permissible. It is even a fact that several Australian citizens have actively helped the popular struggle for human rights here. This kind of active assistance and involvement has been welcomed by us and contributes to the favorable regard in which we hold the Australian people in general.

However, Australian government assistance for training reactionary AFP personnel, even if on a selective basis, effectively helps prop up the hated dictatorial regime.



"Aid": Australian-made aircraft for counter-insurgency



Bicol guerrillas in river crossing

A bold push forward

NPAs in Bicol tally 59 enemy casualties, 28 firearms from May to August

The NPA in Bicol continues to chalk up impressive gains in successive military and political offensives launched since May this year. Heading its record feats is its counter-encirclement operation against a combined force of PC and Marine soldiers in Libon, Albay last June 25, which resulted in more than 30 enemy casualties.

Displaying a keen mastery of guerrilla tactics, the Red fighters were able to outmaneuver a platoon of PC troopers which had tried to encircle them. Surprised by the counter-move, the PC platoon was almost completely routed. The guerrillas also successfully turned back a

helicopter-borne reinforcement team of Marines, by shooting its machinegunner. The NPA only had one casualty in the fray, a wounded guerrilla.

On the morning of Aug. 18, the Red fighters again inflicted more damage to enemy troops. They sprung an ambush on a truckload of Marine soldiers in Barangay Bikal, Libmanan, Camarines Sur. Killed in the hour-long firefight were six troopers and wounded were ten others, including the team commander. To avoid incurring civilian casualties, the NPAs put up a streamer some 100 meters from the ambush site which read "STOP - NPA AMBUSH GOING ON."

Australia's military ties with the US make it vulnerable to entering into activities that help further US military domination of the country. When such projects take on an overt military character, the NDF and the Filipino people will at the very least look upon such activities with suspicion. The Australian government and people should not allow themselves to be drawn by the US into such adventures as what happened in Korea in the '50s, in Vietnam in the '60s and possibly, in the Philippines today.

Q: Does the NDF oppose Australian presence in the Philippines because it sees Australia as an ally of the US and therefore involved in US exploitation of the Philippines?

A: The general criterion applicable to any form of aid is whether such aid helps promote the interests of US imperialism and the Marcos regime or whether such aid directly benefits the Filipino people. The best type of aid that the Australian government can provide the Filipino people at this time is to resist US attempts to drag it into what is increasingly becoming the US' latest military adventure.

In this regard, we take this occasion to welcome the initiative of Australian Sen. Michael Tate and many other democratic Australian people to stop not only civilian but military aid to the Marcos regime.

Q: What does the NDF hope will be the future basis for relations between the Philippines and Australia now, and in the post-revolutionary era?

A: The NDF understands that the Australian government is tied down to many policies of the US government. The Australian government can choose to view matters within a long-term perspective. In which case, should it so choose, it can resist US political and military pressures to draw it into an adventure from which it has so little to gain and so much to lose.

Meanwhile, the NDF and the Filipino people welcome the support of the Australian people for the current struggle to overthrow the US-Marcos dictatorship. We assure the Australian people that such support will certainly be used for promoting the people's livelihood, rights and welfare. Such cannot be said for the US-Marcos dictatorship which has had a long history of using foreign aid and even foreign loans to line its pockets and perpetuate itself in power.

A post-revolutionary Philippines will seek normal relations with all countries as long as these redound to the parties' mutual benefit. It will certainly be open to developing even closer relations with the Australian government and people

on the basis of the principles of peaceful coexistence and mutual benefit, especially considering our two countries' geographical proximity.

The revolutionary movement will not allow any foreign power to establish military bases in the Philippines nor to carry by any means of transport, nuclear weaponry into the national territory.

Q: Did the NPAs have any real need for the equipment they seized from the Australian aid project or was their action meant to harass the project?

A: It is the policy of the NDF as a whole to confiscate property that is being used directly for counter-revolutionary purposes.

Q: Was the NDF surprised when Australia announced it would withdraw from the project in the wake of the NPA raid?

A: No.

Q: Is the NDF concerned about the negative publicity the incident has generated in Australia?

A: We understand that there would be certain sections in the Australian media which would exploit such incidents to create feelings of animosity among the Australian people against the Philippine revolutionary movement. But we are confident that as the Australian people become more aware of the actual Philippine situation and the depredations committed by the US-Marcos dictatorship on the Filipino people, the truth will out.

We appeal to the press and to media people in Australia to present the Philippine situation and current developments here objectively.

Q: Were the NPAs prepared to threaten the lives of Australians involved in the project in a bid to force its closure?

A: The NPA has not and will not threaten the lives of the Australian people on Philippine soil. It realizes first of all that such personnel believed themselves to be involved in a politically neutral project and that they were professionals doing a job. Hence, the NPA has gone to the extent of explaining its views to some of these personnel, but assuredly in a most civil and respectful but nonetheless firm manner.

However, any foreign individual or organization that would directly and deliberately involve itself in anti-people and counter-revolutionary activities shall be dealt with accordingly. □

In a bold push forward, NPA-Bicol forces, employing bigger fighting formations, also struck deep within the regime's political center. On July 22, an NPA company raided the municipal hall of Manito, Albay, seizing three M16s, a carbine, two revolvers and other equipment. On July 26, another NPA unit swooped down on the municipal hall of Jose Panganiban in Camarines Norte. They killed three policemen, including a police major, and captured eight M16s and a pistol.

The uptrend of NPA offensives was most marked in the province of Camarines Sur in July. In San Vicente on July 24, Red fighters attacked a Marine team, wounding a colonel, a lieutenant colonel and two enlisted men. In Sitio Balonbon, Caglibog, Tinambac the following day, they waylaid another Marine unit, wiping out two soldiers and seizing a grenade launcher. The NPA likewise hit the military-manned Philippine National Railways (PNR) last July 3 in Sipocot and last July 9 in Libmanan. The actions, which damaged PNR property, were undertaken as a "contribution to the valiant struggle of PNR workers for humane conditions," said the NPA in a press statement sent to a local newspaper, *Vox Bicol*.

The pace of NPA partisan warfare also stepped up from May to July in the Bicol region. On May 29, Col. Andres Bustamante was punished in Oas, Albay for his role in the murder of two people. In June, the police captain of Ligao, Albay, who was responsible for the salvaging of seven persons in 1984, was meted the death penalty. Military intelligence operations were also dealt a blow with the killing of a lieutenant and a sergeant in Ligao and Malinao, respectively. Other partisan operations mounted in July also yielded 12 M16 rifles.

Meanwhile, in a propaganda offensive that is rapidly gaining ground in many parts of the country, NPA officers invited 12 local media persons representing various radio stations and local newspapers in Bicol to an underground press conference. Dubbed "Kapihan sa Sona," the dialogue was held deep inside a guerrilla zone last May 24. The NPA-media friendly encounter, though the first of its kind in the region, is part of a string of NPA "media offensives" in Bicol. Red fighters regularly issue press statements to local papers and radio stations. One of its latest releases, dated Aug. 22, bared the dissension in AFP ranks and called on the military to "launch a real democratic and nationalist movement inside the Armed Forces of the Philippines."

This media drive, matched with the NPA's military victories from May to August (28 firearms seized, 59 enemy casualties), shows how the NPA in Bicol is gaining headway, not only in the battlefield but in the battle for the people's hearts and minds as well. □



Girding for combat: Red fighters drilling in mountain camp

Resistance in Claveria

NPA and masses in Misamis Oriental town fight "base-denial" campaign

Since March this year, the regime's military forces have been enforcing food and transportation blockades on several towns in Misamis Oriental as part of their "base denial" campaign against NPA forces in Mindanao. One town most strongly hit by the counter-insurgency drive was Claveria. The campaign, which received wide coverage in the national papers, was meant to be a major move by the military to turn the tide of battle in northern Mindanao in their favor. The military action, however, failed in its objective to crush the NPA in the area. Below is a first-hand account by LIB correspondent Celso Matutum of how the NPA, on several occasions, drove the enemy to panic through incessant sniping and harassment operations.

From June 17 to 23, a battalion of Scout Rangers, Integrated Civilian Home Defense Forces (ICHDF) and Tadtad fanatics headed by Lt. Col. Baylon Platon of the 2nd Scout Ranger Battalion, launched a four-columned pincer drive on Claveria, an upland town in Misamis Oriental noted for its abundant vegetables. Each a company strong, the columns kicked off from Balingasag, Claveria and Salay and Gingoog City. They were to converge at Barangay Pelaez, Claveria town.

The operation was the most awesome show of force the enemy had unleashed in the area. Aside from the vaunted Scout Rangers, the military array included two heligunships, two V-150 chemite tanks, howitzers and mortars. When the operation was over, however, Ka Charo, an NPA cadre, informed LIB that the huge operation had not been aimed so much at flushing the Red fighters out, as at threatening the civilians, whom the military suspected of supporting the NPA.

Claveria and the surrounding areas were considered by the military a "solid" NPA mass base, and thus, they sought to put the residents in a state of siege. The roar of heligunships, the rumbling

of tanks, the thuds of artillery and mortar shells, and the columns of soldiers armed to the teeth and without name plates, were all "psy-war" tactics designed to undermine the masses' confidence in the fighting ability of the NPA. All the while, the military fed the media with news of "victories" in which "47 subversive terrorists (were) killed."

But the victories were all on paper. Even some ranking junior AFP officers expressed doubts about the veracity of "military victories" bannered in the national dailies. In reality, the NPA succeeded in slowing down the enemy troops and wearing them down. NPA snipers in teams of three, and armed with high-powered rifles, waited in ambush or sneaked into the enemy's perimeter and subjected them to brief fire-barrages.

The opening salvo

The first harassment operation occurred on the night of June 17 in Barangay Lura. The Red fighters, after crawling to a point 50 meters from the newly finished camp, let loose a staccato of gunfire.

The following night, the snipers launched another operation. Knowing

that the Scout Rangers always "cleared" possible ambush sites by sending lead scouts, they chose an unexpected site — a plain with only tall grass behind which to take cover, and a mere one meter or two from the barangay road in Lanisi.

The Ranger platoon stopped for 30 minutes, and then entered the plain, believing all was clear. The silhouettes of the enemy column were easily discernible in the moonlight. As the lead scouts followed by the main body neared them, snipers scrambled up and opened fire on their rear guard. Quickly, the Rangers dropped to the ground, unaware that their adversaries were behind them. The NPAs then disappeared, with the enemy unable to return fire. Approximate enemy dead: five.

A company of Scout Rangers and ICHDF-Tadtads, part of the contingent sent for the "base-denial" operation in Claveria, also received a severe beating on June 18, without the Red fighters expending a single bullet. As the Rangers-ICHDF-Tadtads were negotiating a steep slope in Barangay Lantad, Balingasag, a giant log and an avalanche of boulders fell on them. Thinking at first that it was an accident of nature, the soldiers ran from the rushing rocks, but many fell into traps fitted with sharpened bamboo poles. It was an ambush set by the NPA and the armed masses. Only the next day did a helicopter fly in and cart away the casualties: 19 dead, including a captain, and five injured. The guerrillas seized the soldiers' high-powered rifles, some of which were damaged.

This guerrilla operation succeeded through meticulous monitoring of enemy movement and planning. The trap had been laid three months earlier. To lure the enemy further, a clearing resembling an abandoned road had been made. Although shrubs had already crept into the "road," it was nevertheless inviting to the enemy soldiers, who are known to prefer roads to thickets for their foot patrols. The thick cogon grass covered well the piles of rocks and the large dug-out with its hidden teeth of sharp bamboo.

More sniping operations

Two days later, the same enemy unit with new replacements, was seen at the boundaries of Salay and Lagonglong towns. The troopers were still bent on reaching Claveria. In their frustration, they burned houses along the way, but suffered real losses anew when Red snipers hit them. At least two of them were killed.

On June 20, at around 3 a.m., another sniping team attacked Mat-i Elementary School, which quartered a company of enemy troops. At first, the snipers took their time, observing the troopers on night shift. Just when a guard's duty was about to end, the snipers struck,

hitting first the sentry, then concentrating their fire on the two doorways crowded with enemy soldiers. At least three enemy troopers were confirmed killed.

Another engagement occurred on the same day, resulting in further enemy losses. A company of Rangers and ICHDFs-Tadtads were pursuing the NPA team that had sniped at the school.



Battle victories celebrated in dance

The sniping team was scheduled to rendezvous with another NPA unit manning an outpost atop a ridge in Gimbaluran, which overlooked the Barangay Mat-i poblacion. From the ridge, the Red fighters monitored the movements of the approaching enemy column with a pair of binoculars. The NPA then decided to evacuate all unarmed personnel, mostly members of the NPA medical team. Their commanding officer ordered his squad to abandon camp when he saw the enemy column split into two, one group proceeding toward their outpost, and the other taking the road, presumably to act as a blocking force.

The Rangers immediately surrounded the NPA outpost, unaware that 20 meters behind them were the four snipers whom they had been pursuing. First to fall was their lead scout who was shot just as he was about to finish his statement, "*Presko pa ang bakas...*" as he pointed at the footprints. In panic, the Rangers scampered toward the hedge for cover, some of them falling off the cliff, as they were met by fire from the blocking force. What followed was a 30-minute encounter between the Ranger assault unit and the Ranger blocking force. The guerrillas, who had already withdrawn 500 meters up the

forested hill, took time to view the clash between the two teams of Rangers, nine of whom were later confirmed dead. The enemy withdrew in disarray, pounding the area with artillery and mortar fire. They left behind the bodies of the Tadtads which were later declared to be bodies of NPAs.

Derailing the enemy's plan

Thus, even without putting any bigger guerrilla units into action, did the NPAs attritive operations derail the enemy's plan to have its four columns rendezvous in Barangay Pelaez. Instead, they met at Barangay Mat-i, 20 kilometers away, on June 23. By then, one of the chemite tanks had been temporarily put out of action. On June 20, the chemite was sent to recover a ten-wheeler truck that had rolled down a five-meter-deep embankment. While it was tugging the truck away, guerrillas fired at the tank, puncturing one of its tires and making it turn turtle.

Sniping operations, however, were just one of the tactics that frustrated the enemy move to crush the revolutionary resistance in the province. Another stratagem was the successful crackdown on enemy spies.

Even at the height of the military operation, the guerrillas did not ignore enemy informers. On June 17, a Red team surprised five informers in Lanisi. Four of them, found guilty of minor offenses, were released after being warned. One, however, a military spy who had infiltrated the Barrio Organizing Committee, was punished with death.

A sniping team, which lost contact with its comrades for three days, did not participate in harassment operations. The reason: they were occupied with guarding 20 prisoners. These were taken in, as part of a necessary guerrilla precautionary measure to monitor and apprehend strangers whose presence is suspect in areas of enemy operations. Four of the prisoners, Tadtads, were punished; the rest were later set free.

The week-long "base-denial" campaign in Claveria left at least 10 people salvaged, seven missing and 39 houses burned. Despite this legacy of brutality, the troop saturation drive failed to demoralize the masses and Red fighters in the area. To date, the enemy continues to suffer losses even weeks after the infamous "Claveria campaign." Last July 20, Lt. Caballes, a PMA graduate and officer of the 2nd Scout Ranger Battalion, was ambushed as he was leading a 30-man patrol in Barangay Umagos, Lagonglong, Misamis Oriental. He was hit on the chest, and died on the spot. His body and the bodies of the other casualties were evacuated only the next day.

Caballes' fate is a lesson to all those others working to crush the revolutionary resistance of the people of Claveria. Celso Matutum/Mindanao Correspondent

SPARKS

Newsbriefs about the resistance movement

TFD NOMINATED FOR NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

The Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, a church-related institution working for the release and welfare of political detainees, has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for 1986. TFDP was formed by the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines to help promote justice for political prisoners. It has been headed since its founding by Sr. Mariani Dimaranan, CFIC, herself a former detainee. The TFDP nomination was initiated by non-governmental and human rights groups in the US, Europe, Asia and Australia. "The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to TFDP would enable the organization to continue its work in a situation of increasing militarization," said the nominating groups.

Nobel Prizes are given annually for the most significant accomplishments in various fields such as physics, literature, peace and economics. They were named after Alfred Bernhard Nobel, the Swedish dynamite inventor who died in 1896. The awards are given on Dec. 10, Nobel's death anniversary.

METRO MANILA TEACHERS STRIKE



Teachers raise issues in Plaza Miranda "paralang bayan"

Metro Manila teachers went on a coordinated strike from Sept. 16 to 27, putting to a standstill classes in Manila, Pasay, Navotas and Mandaluyong. Among their demands were the raising of their basic pay to P3,000 and a stop to harassments of teachers and teacher-leaders.

Education Minister Jaime Laya later levelled administrative charges against the mentors after the strike was lifted. The Alliance of Concerned Teachers, one of the strike organizers, was able to secure a restraining order against Laya from the Supreme Court.

PRESS FREEDOM WEEK COMMEMORATED

Newsmen for once became *the* news as media people all over the country commemorated Press Freedom Week from Aug. 26 to 31, which also marked the 135th birth anniversary of Marcelo H. del Pilar, a journalist during the Propaganda Movement against Spanish colonialism.

The commemoration held in Metro Manila opened with a lively debate on the restraints on mass media and was capped by a march of mediamen to various newspaper offices and a vigil at the grounds of the National Press Club. Throughout the week, intense discussions on the problems of media people were held, including the slaying of 22 newsmen since 1979, the monopoly of ownership of media establishments by Marcos cronies and the meager pay yet high occupational risks that newsmen face.

"EDJOP" MEMORIAL HELD

The studentry and other sectors in Philippine society paid tribute to Edgar M. Jopson with a mass at the Ateneo College

chapel and a cultural presentation at the St. Joseph's College last Sept. 20, the third anniversary of his death at the hands of government troopers.

Popularly known as "Edjop," he was a student leader identified with the "moderates" who later joined the national democratic movement. He went underground in 1974 and helped organize workers and peasants. He played a key role in the formative years of the National Democratic Front.

SALONGA ELECTED LP PRESIDENT

Former Sen. Jovito Salonga was elected president of the Liberal Party last Oct. 5 in a party convention held at the residence of immediate ex-LP president and Sen. Gerardo Roxas, who died in 1982. MP Eva Estrada Kalaw, who, with Salonga, co-led the party since the latter's return from self-exile in the US, opted to boycott the convention.



In his speech, Salonga urged his supporters to "work with vigor to strengthen the party at the grassroots level." He exhorted them to establish alliances with democratic groups and movements. Salonga actively campaigned last year for a boycott of the 1984 Batasang Pambansa elections and has urged the abrogation of the RP-US Military Bases Agreement.

SCIENTIST STAGES HUNGER STRIKE AGAINST REGIME

"My hope is to see the end of this cruel and corrupt regime. If by my hunger strike I can contribute to this realization, then it shall not have been in vain."

With these words Dr. Patricio Mamot, who has been on hunger strike since July, expressed his outrage over the death of two youths during the violent eviction of squatters from the Bolanos Estate in Tatalon, Quezon City. Dr. Mamot, a scientist and balikbayan from the US, has already lost at least 15 pounds, according to latest reports. He could no longer stand up by himself while his eyes and cheeks have noticeably shrunk. Other members of cause-oriented groups also later went on a hunger-strike to uphold justice for the slain squatters.

CHURCH SECTOR LEADS MENDIOLA RALLY

Leaders and members of the religious sector led last Sept. 11 a rally honoring people who were killed under US-Marcos rule. Church people took turns criticizing the murder of "at least 13 martyrs" and the intensifying harassment of church leaders and workers. The rally was held at the foot of the Mendiola bridge, site of numerous bloody military attacks against unarmed demonstrators. The rallyists also condemned the holding of an expensive celebration of Marcos' 68th birthday at the Rizal Park. In his birthday speech, Marcos claimed he heard "voices" telling him that it is not yet time to leave the presidency.



Speaker denounces state violence in church rally

CRACKS

Indicators of the regime's economic and political crisis

VER IS JUSTICE?

In his recent photos in the papers, Gen. Fabian Ver has been grinning from ear to ear lately. And why not? Recently, the main evidence against him was thrown out by the Supreme Court due to a technicality. The court, in its majority decision, stated that Ver's testimony along with seven others had to be excluded as evidence because of their constitutional right against self-incrimination.

The widely criticized court decision apparently paves the way for the balding general's eventual acquittal. It further buries deeper into the ground the myth of an independent judiciary. Thus, we can perhaps commiserate with a German visitor's frustration when he asked of the Philippine Supreme Court, "Ver is Justice?"

UNCLE SAM'S INVITATION

But this has not prevented Ver from getting his biggest snub recently from no less than Uncle Sam himself.

It all started when the Pentagon issued an invitation intended for Gen. Ramos to Gen. Ver to attend the retirement ceremony of Gen. John Vassey, chairman of the joint US chiefs of staff, in Andrew Air Base in the US. Appraised of their mistake, the Pentagon, instead of informing Ver privately, issued instead a press statement admitting its "administrative error" to two Manila newspapers last Sept. 21. In their statement, they publicly withdrew their invitation to Ver, saying that the "clerical error" was due to their failure to "properly update" their list of military chiefs of staffs of other countries. They then asked the Philippine embassy to deliver their invitation to Ramos.

The invitation and its withdrawal was apparently timed to coincide with the developments of the Aquino-Galman double murder case. With Ver almost sure of acquittal, could this be US imperialism's way of sending him and Marcos a not-too-subtle hint that they don't want Ver to resume his old post?

RICE PRICE LIES



Right after deregulation of rice prices, National Food Authority (NFA) officials under Jesus Tanchangco went out of their way to assure the public that rice prices would not go up. They even went as far as saying that rice prices in fact went down immediately before and after deregulation. According to their surveys, the price of a kilo of well-milled rice which, at markets nationwide was between P7.50 to P8.00, plummeted to between P6.04 to P6.25 last week of September. They further claimed that in Iloilo, rice prices per kilo dropped to as low as P5.51. According to them, well-milled rice sells for P6.52 nationwide while the fancy varieties sell for P7.50 per kilo.

Progressive farmers under the Kilusan ng Magbubukid sa Pilipinas (KMP) declared, however, that the NFA field reports were fabricated. In their own independent surveys made in major rice-producing provinces, they discovered that rice prices per kilo nationwide ranged from P7.00 to P7.80. But the NFA still insists that its figures are correct. Given the NFA's intransigence, many angry and exasperated farmers and housewives now chant the following line whenever they refer to lying officials like Tanchangco who make people suf-

fer: "Isitid sa sako, gagawing abono!"

COJUANGCO'S DAILY BREAD



In compliance with IMF demands to turn over industries from government hands to big business and to dismantle monopolies, Marcos announced an end to the NFA's monopoly in the importation of wheat. Flour millers immediately appreciated the move, thinking that now, everybody can import wheat. Their dreams were short-lived, however, when they learned that NFA retains the right to allocate who will import wheat.

The NFA has given preference to the Philippine Federation of Bakers Association which is controlled by the United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB), which in turn is controlled by Eduardo Cojuangco's group. Cojuangco has reportedly given the PHILBAKE (the baker's federation's marketing firm) an initial wheat import fund of P20 million. Tanchangco, NFA head, for his part is set to allocate 80% of all wheat imports to them. He has thus earned the ire of the country's flour millers as the "tool of bakers" beholden to Cojuangco.

Cojuangco is very likely to take control of the flour industry. Alarmingly, he is also reported to be muscling into the rice industry by controlling rice and palay trading, particularly in Central Luzon.

Monopolies are after all, Cojuangco's daily bread.

FLOUR POWER

The importation in September of 79.8 million long tons of wheat which are milled here into flour gives us an idea of the insatiable appetite of the predatory octopus that is the Marcos clique.

With the full blessings of the dictator Marcos, the big comprador landlord Eduardo Cojuangco and Food Minister Jesus Tanchangco made a killing to the tune of P51 million, with Cojuangco clearing P41 million and Tanchangco pocketing P10 million. To further strengthen his position in the flour industry, Cojuangco has put up four new corporations, also in September. These are Oriental Winds International, Inc., Northern Negros Industries Corp., Aggregate Trading Corp. and Produce Market Development Corp.

P51 million in just one deal. No sweat. Now you'll know where to assign the blame the next time you come face to face with your ever-shrinking *pan de sal*.

ONCE MORE FROM THE TOP

Human Settlements Deputy Minister Jolly Benitez never seems to leave the headlines for long. After dodging corruption charges some months back, he's at it again. MP Hernando Perez (Opposition, Batangas) charged him with the following: 1) Benitez was allowed to leave his post as general manager and chief operations officer of the Human Settlements Development Corporation (HSDC) despite the fact that he had millions of pesos in unliquidated advances; 2) he diverted P500 million intended for low-cost housing to the construction of the "goat-project" at the University of Life; 3) under his management, the HSDC accumulated losses amounting to more than P425 million; 4) he diverted almost P2 billion to a number of firms that have since gone bankrupt; and 5) in spite of being relieved from his post at HSDC, he was allowed to use a 925-D Lear Jet owned by MHS which is for the exclusive use of HSDC personnel only.

Of course, diverting people's money and using public jets for personal use is nothing new to the regime's high officials. Jolly, after all, only took after his boss and mentor, MHS minister Imelda Marcos, also known as the *Nuestra Senora del Metro Manila*.

The story of a people's courage

How the town of Sta. Rita defied the military's hamletting program

The Philippine revolution is rich with stories of how people in different towns and villages have fought off the regime's military troops and counter-insurgency campaigns. This is the story of one such town called Sta. Rita. Based on an interview with a comrade who lives and works in that area, it tells of the awakening of a little town, how it organized itself and how it responded to the onslaughts of a militarization program devised to deprive the New People's Army of mass support. Today, it is one of the most consolidated revolutionary zones in the country.

Sta. Rita is not its real name, but it is a real town somewhere in the troubled island of Mindanao. We changed its name to protect its inhabitants. Though unique in its own beauty and history, Sta. Rita could be the story of any town in the Philippines, its people could be any people in the countryside, and the strategic hamletting program utilized there, any other suppressive campaign. But we think that the most important thing about Sta. Rita is the courage of its people and the perseverance of its revolutionary forces, which could be the courage and perseverance of other people and other revolutionary forces in any town in the Philippines which is also resisting repression.

When I first saw Jim, I thought he was a military man. Dark, short-haired, and stocky with a hint of a paunch, he also wore dark sunglasses — the kind worn by military intelligence agents when they are on overt operations to intimidate activists. Jim was different, however, because he wore a kind expression on his face, which became more pronounced when his eyes twinkled.

To my relief, I found out later that Jim was Ka Jim, a *kauban* (comrade) from Mindanao. Formerly a student activist of the Chi Rho in the south, he went underground upon the declaration of martial law. One of the pioneers in underground organizing work in Mindanao,

he is a cadre of the New People's Army.

On that cloudless afternoon in Manila, in the brief while that the LIB staff got hold of him, he was discussing a place in Eastern Mindanao called Sta. Rita. It was one of the first places in the south where the seeds of the national democratic revolution were sown, and it had been his home for many years. The people of Sta. Rita had strengthened his conviction that a people united for a just cause are invincible.

Ka Jim's account

Sta. Rita is an interior municipality built over an abandoned logging area of



A house stripped bare in hamletted area

rolling hills. It is covered with lush trees and innumerable creeks. It is also rich in gold, copper, silver, marble and coal — truly a prize for covetous foreign and local corporations. Most of its inhabitants are settlers living in dispersed farming communities.

Right after the declaration of martial law, we arrived in Sta. Rita. We were young activists driven underground by the intense repression. Although young and inexperienced, we decided among ourselves to leave the cities and help initiate organizing work among the peasantry. *Mahirap noon; walang gabay. Ang akim ko lang noon ay kung ano ang nabasa ko sa libro. Talagang lakas-loob lang.*

Initially, the people treated us with suspicion. That was understandable. The regime had not done anything for these people except spread false propaganda that the NPA and the Communist Party were composed of godless and evil men. The people, in fact, lived so far away that when martial law was declared, they asked, "Martial law? *Ano ba 'yon?*"

Given that situation, we strove to familiarize ourselves with the people's life. We joined them in their farm work and shared what skills we had. When they began to compare our actions with what the government was saying, they started to listen and to trust. With the guidance of some Communist cadres, and the experience we gained, our work steadily improved.

Our initial contact groups began to grow into organizing groups and committees in several villages. We started consolidating our areas and expanding to other villages and towns. Soon, we were able to link up with other areas which other groups like ours had initially organized for the revolution. As our organizations



Hamletting victim: Forced to live in houses fit only for chickens

flourished and became more complex, the need to specialize and devote more time to military work became paramount. We started to form several NPA squads and units to launch our first tactical offensive.

In 1979, Sta. Rita, relative to our other revolutionary zones in Mindanao, had reached a high level of organization. Almost all the villages had mass organizations for the peasants and other sectors, with organizing groups within. We had trained, armed and organized village militia who earned their positions through participation in our tactical offensives.

In the military sphere, we already had front guerrilla units (FGU) composed of well-armed guerrilla platoons. The FGUs were already into full-time military work, while our other armed units were engaged in organizing. We had achieved a strong presence in the area in the sense that the military could not remove us. We could retreat when necessary, but we could always come back.

With our help, they set up communal farms, fishponds and animal farms. We provided the people, individuals and organizations, with seeds and animals. The usual agreement was 60-40 sharing — 60% of the product would go to the masses, and 40% to us. With their landlords, it had been the opposite.

The masses were so productive and industrious that yields were usually plentiful, and no matter how hard we refused, they would always offer us contributions from their shares.

The masses had become used to being at the mercy of usurers, land monopolists and bandits. As the NPA grew in size and influence and as the masses became more politically aware and solidly organized, the situation changed. Bandits feared the armed might of the people and their army, so they fled. The people stood up to usurers and unscrupulous corn mill operators. But though these were allowed to stay, their profiteering and other negative practices were curbed. We were able to institute a fair system of justice and swift arbitration; fair wages for workers and acceptable land rents were agreed upon for the benefit of the majority.

Schools were set up. The people contributed their labor and built the schoolhouses, and also gave whatever else they could. On our part, through our legal contacts in the cities, we provided teachers and their salaries and school supplies. Of course, the schools were very primitive compared to what you have here in Manila.

We also set up mass clinics and health education on the local level. From the barrio to the Front, each level had a medical group supported by the people's contributions. The people also

formed the "Botica ng Bayan" with the help of sympathetic small businessmen.

We had painstakingly built all this over the years. We did not anticipate the gravity of the threat and the severity of the test we would go through.

The repression

The enemy launched one of its most massive counter-insurgency operations in Sta. Rita. In the second half of 1981, the military had been steadily building



Learning to read, learning to fight

up its forces around the area in reaction to our successful tactical offensives. In spite of numerous protests against their abuses, military operations in the area increased and intensified. By September of that year, there were more than 2,500 soldiers in Sta. Rita alone. They wanted to destroy the town because they knew that it was one of our most consolidated areas.

Aware of the massive support we were receiving from the people, the military turned on them and ordered almost the whole municipality to evacuate their homes and move to barrio centers — under pain of death. The hamletting of Sta. Rita had begun. Many of the people went on forced marches to live in strategic hamlets in barrio centers far from their farms. Before leaving, they had to destroy the walls and flooring of their homes as the military ordered. When they got to the military-run centers, they were forced to live in houses fit only for chickens. One family that refused to leave its home was strafed to death. As soon as the people left, the military uprooted coffee, banana and root crops, and declared the villages "no man's lands" and "free-fire zones."

In the barrio centers, a 5 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew was imposed. Farmers

sometimes had to walk as far as 12 kilometers to get to their farms, and then had to be back before 5 p.m. This gave them only three or four hours to work — during the hottest part of the day. To get to their farms, they had to secure safe-conduct passes. The trading and entry of food and supplies were monopolized or controlled by the military. The soldiers also required the people to provide labor as well as building materials for the military barracks.

These conditions, together with the lack of food, medicines and clean water, the inadequate shelter, cold weather, fatigue from forced marches, as well as fear and anxiety, conspired against life in Sta. Rita. In those days, there were usually two deaths each day. The children suffered the most.

Adding salt to fresh wounds, the military forced the masses to hold "peace rallies" — anti-NPA demonstrations in which the people were made to carry anti-revolution placards and shout anti-NPA slogans. Then they were made to "surrender" and pledge their allegiance to the Marcos government, all these under the shadow of hovering helicopters with their machine guns pointed at the people below.

Our people had never experienced anything like that before. For the revolutionary forces in particular, it was a bleak moment for all of us, even though we had anticipated the enemy's actions and had prepared for it. But we lacked experience and made mistakes. Guided by the idea which we expressed in the metaphor "*Hayaang sumuntok sa hangin ang kaaway*," we allowed the FGU to leave the front, and we evacuated our medical units and other cadres.

We should not have done that. We should have retained the FGU, at least near enough the encirclement area to harass the soldiers. Without any fear of NPA attack, the soldiers then felt free to do anything to the masses. Many activists and suspected NPA supporters were salvaged, or died under severe torture. The military was able to easily scatter its forces and enter even the farthest trails and the remotest sitios.

Worst of all, with the NPA's inability to counter the military operations with their own tactical offensives, this enhanced the regime's disinformation campaign that the "NPAs were all dead." The masses became dispirited. *Mabigat itong sinasabi nila na patay na ang NPA. Ang inisip ng masa ay alagaan at pakainin ayoy.* With the NPA "dead" or "no longer there," there was no reason why they should go back to their farms in the mountains and hills.

In spite of that, the masses who chanced upon our small armed units within their farms gladly offered their meager supplies of rice, and were content to eat root crops themselves. Some

of them even built secret supply depots in their farms, which they would replenish whenever they had the chance to smuggle out some food. Their only concern was to provide for us.

The recovery

For several months, the enemy laid waste the land. With their strategic hamletting program, the military had the upper hand. The situation was critical. It was with a careful study of these problems that we called a meeting to assess the situation. At this meeting, we laid plans for the recovery of Sta. Rita.

The recovery rate was initially slow. Because of the pounding our mass base and organizations had suffered, the semi-legal teams which we had formed to gain reentry into the areas had a very skeletal organization. We could not launch even very small-scale offensives to demoralize the enemy because we lacked intelligence information, since it was difficult at first to contact the people.

Furthermore, the masses were dispirited. Because a few of our own organizers had gone over to the enemy side, a number of people were reluctant to work with us again, afraid that their neighbors would betray them. Many times, our semi-legal teams would wait for the masses to visit their farms, and only then could they make contact.

Many among the masses, however, were very brave and the semi-legal teams were likewise tenacious. Slowly, we made some headway. We carefully planned the first of a series of successful tactical offensives. We raided the most notorious and cruel detachment and checkpoints of soldiers and CHDFs. We devastated these enemy positions with superior firepower and numbers.

The effect was electrifying.

The morale of the masses rose. *Sumigla ang pagkilos nila at lalo silang tumapang.* Those who were losing faith in us started to support the revolutionary movement again. The masses speeded up the revitalization of their organizations. Indeed, such was the tremendous impact of the resurgence of armed struggle on the people — they directly felt the presence of the NPA and its commitment to defend them against their enemies. The reactionary military and CHDF, on the other hand, which were used to oppressing the people without retaliation, became disheartened and fearful. Their morale sagged.

Gradually, the CHDF fled the villages, afraid of the rapid influx of our large guerrilla units. Incurable elements like spies were liquidated. We had many operations in which soldiers simply surrendered, aware of the NPA's lenient policy towards surrenderers in past battles. CHDFs who had not committed crimes against the people either contacted our members, or were contacted by



Developing a sure aim: NPAs in training camp

their relatives, and made to surrender themselves with their arms. Many of them provided information that led to bigger disarming operations.

The cases of CHDF surrenders and disarming became so numerous that the military was forced to pull out these paramilitary units from the villages or confiscate their arms. The military also withdrew from the villages and transferred to the larger towns. Whenever they ventured into the interior they had to come in large formations.

Mula noon, lumuwag muli ang pagkilos. Lumambot na naman ang lupa para sa pag-oorganisa. Because of the rapid development of the revolutionary forces in Sta. Rita, the military could not re-enter the town without employing large formations. If they entered it in large formations, they risked exposure in nearby areas, where we had also developed rapidly, to lightning guerrilla attacks.

Developments after recovery

Organizing after recovery, as compared to the past, was conducted on a different plane. We did not start from scratch. The masses had been tempered anew by intense militarization, and had gained more experience and consequently new skills. Their political orientation had been modified by the events, such that a new concept of mass base, organization and methods emerged.

We had begun to grasp the essential relationship between political work and military work, between the political struggle of the masses and the armed struggle. We learned that advances in the armed struggle do not only lead to further advances in that sphere, but also to further possibilities for organizing and political struggles, and vice versa.

When we reorganized, a new concept of mass base emerged. In the past, we had organized our mass base as if the

war was far away. The people were not consciously prepared to wage war. Their role had been limited to production work, contributing foodstuff to feed the NPA. Today, our mass base is prepared to engage directly in people's war, not merely to take on production tasks. With this objective, we are organizing the people's militia much more extensively. The territorial units are training the people to make homemade guns and explosives, as well as to set up efficient intelligence networks. In the past, though we also had an intelligence network, the type of information that the masses gathered was concerned solely with helping the NPA elude the enemy. Now, our civilian units conduct intelligence work oriented toward launching offensives.

Even the concept of farming among the masses has changed. Now, they think of farming as creating a local economy under conditions of war. The people are forever setting up hidden farms and houses to where they and the comrades can retreat during enemy operations. They also plant crops that are convenient, easy to care for and difficult for the enemy to destroy like root crops. The study courses of the mass organizations integrate instructions on what to do whenever there are enemy operations. People are made aware of what they should do when hamlets are set up. They learn how they should conduct the legal struggle, and how to mobilize support from the middle forces and legal institutions in the urban areas.

Given this new orientation in politico-military struggle, we have harvested many achievements and victories. For the masses themselves have grasped the essence of people's war — their direct participation in the overall revolutionary struggle. Their active participation is nowhere better seen than in our spectacular tactical offensives in Sta. Rita and

neighboring towns recently.

One of these is the raid we conducted on Barrio Infanta (not its real name) this February. Barrio Infanta is located at a strategic road intersection. One road leads to a copper mine, while the other leads to a gold mine. To protect these mines, a Scout Ranger company had been assigned there, with a checkpoint. Since most of the people there make a living by panning for gold, the soldiers' sideline is to extort gold from the people. The soldiers were very abusive and were involved in many cases of salvaging, rape and robbery. There had been petitions for their removal, and they were removed once, but later re-assigned to the area. Unknown to the soldiers, many of the barrio people are our contacts, and quite a number have relatives in the NPA.

The masses were mobilized to do intelligence work. They befriended the military, and spent many hours away from their farms talking to the soldiers. Through this, they were able to establish the soldiers' routine of leaving their arms behind whenever they ate outside the camp. During one drinking spree, the troopers revealed to the masses where their mortar was sited. Though there were supposed to be 80 soldiers at headquarters, they said several military operations in distant areas had drastically reduced their number. Thus did the soldiers themselves lay bare their weaknesses.

On the night of the attack, the masses engineered a false celebration. Several soldiers left their headquarters without their arms to attend the party; only 20 soldiers were left to guard the camp. About 120 to 140 of our reconcentrated guerrillas arrived. They were supported by a medical team, district units, the armed propaganda teams and the masses. The barrio folk had raised P1000 for the celebration and donated 32 sacks of rice and viands to feed the NPA as they waited for the appropriate moment to attack.

The plan was to hold the attention of the soldiers long enough for a striking force to enter the camp over a wall, and gain control of it. The first burst of gunfire surprised the soldiers inside. They had expected the NPA to attack them from the rear, not from the hill beyond the other side of the street. With that initial burst of firing, the NPA commanding officer shouted through a megaphone: "Narito na kami - ang sundalo ng mga api!" This encouraged the NPA comrades to shoot even more determinedly.

Suddenly, a second salvo of firing came from behind the camp. This totally confused the soldiers, and they fired wildly. Moans of the dying as well as pleas of their wives to the soldiers to surrender could be heard from inside the camp. At this, the NPA offi-

cer again called out to the soldiers, "Sumuko na kayo. Hindi buhay ang kailangan namin; armas lang. Bakit tayo maglalaban, pare-pareho naman tayong api!"

The intense firing lasted only three minutes. The striking force took less than a minute to scale the wall and take control of the camp. The soldiers who had listened to the masses and were aware of our lenient policy towards surrenderees gave up at once. We got a bazooka, two mortars and 20 rifles from the soldiers.



Father and son in the NPA

Other tactical offensives and gains

In other cases, our battles have not been as dramatic. Once we carefully planned a disarming operation. When we arrived, we just picked up the rifles in the armory as if we were harvesting rice. It turned out that all the soldiers had gone to the cockpit.

In another instance, the masses saved the day in a situation where we would have been caught flat-footed. In 1982, after the completion of an operation, we retired to a barrio near Sta. Rita. We slept, unaware that a large formation of enemy troops was heading toward us. Although it was 4 o'clock in the morning, the ever-vigilant masses informed us, and kept us continually abreast of the moves of the approaching enemy.

We engaged the enemy in rough hilly terrain for over four hours. All along, the masses never left the scene. Their children acted as lookouts. They themselves crawled into the firing area to retrieve our fallen comrades. Oblivious to the danger, they continually brought us food and water. Some of them even grabbed the rifles of dead soldiers and fought alongside us.

Without them, we would have been dead. In their next move after this operation, anticipating the military's counter-reaction, they sent petitions to prevent possible military reprisals against them to

the local government, the church and higher military authorities.

Because of our intensive organizing and consolidation work in Sta. Rita and neighboring towns, the military can no longer enter the areas. If the military wanted to penetrate our consolidated areas like Sta. Rita, they would need larger formations and thousands of troopers. They cannot do that without drastically reducing the number of troops in other areas. Their options are becoming narrower - they would either have to radically increase the number of their combatants, which would entail enormous expense, or they could keep the number of troops at the present level, and therefore remain unable to hold or check the advance of our revolutionary war.

What are the concrete gains reaped by the people of Sta. Rita in waging revolution? They have made significant advances in education and organization. They have also made improvements in their livelihood in the form of higher wages for farm workers, lowered interest rates for loans, lower corn milling payments, as well as provisions for a basic or elementary health system on the barrio level.

Most of the people in Sta. Rita are farmer-settlers. Before the revolution reached them, they were always being driven away by the concessionaires, and thus they could not farm. When the NPA arrived, we talked to the concessionaires. They were persuaded, and in some cases were forced by us, to allow the people to stay. So it came to pass that people remained on the land and made it productive. This was beneficial for us in the long run, since we now have a mass base in the mountains in this part of Mindanao.

Because of our power and political influence, the corporations here now listen to their workers. Contradictions among the people are also easier to resolve. Whenever workers and small capitalists (those not connected with foreign big business) have misunderstandings, they come to us to discuss matters. Agreements are easily drawn up, thus avoiding destructive and protracted conflicts among the people.

We are also slowly smashing illiteracy. But our efforts are still not enough. There is still much to be done in this field and everywhere.

What Ka Jim did not mention was that the revolution taught the people of Sta. Rita something no school could ever teach them completely. They were taught self-respect and dignity. They were taught to have faith in themselves - faith in their capacity to withstand the massive onslaughts of a counter-insurgency campaign, faith in their ability to change their abject conditions, faith in their power to work and fight together in order to win a revolution. **Abdul Ulap**



Solidarity: Australians picket Philippine consulate in Melbourne.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Resistance and struggles abroad

"Filipinos, we support you"

People in 20 countries join hands in an International Day of Protest

Tyrants often become enchanted with the occult, particularly with the so-called magic of numbers. And so is it with Marcos whose penchant for lucky numbers is well known. It is no coincidence that he declared martial law on Sept. 21, for 21 divided by 3 equals 7, his favorite lucky number. On the other hand, he considers 13 as one of his unlucky numbers.

This year, the 13th year of his reign as autocrat, indeed turned out to be "bad luck" internationally for the suspicious dictator. Across the world, the people of twenty countries, including the United States, Canada, Europe, Hongkong and Australia, joined the Filipino people in condemning the US-Marcos dictatorship in its 13th year of repressive martial rule. Through simultaneous protest actions, they marked "International Solidarity Week" which climaxed on Sept. 21, dubbed the "International Day of Protest."

UNITED STATES AND CANADA. In the heartland of US imperialism, the American people held week-long solidarity activities in major cities in the East and West Coasts and the Midwest. In Canada, mass actions were held in Montreal and Toronto. Called the "Philippine Solidarity Campaign '85," the nationwide celebrations were led by the Alliance for Philippine Concerns (APC), a network of over 30 organizations in North America committed to the Philippine struggle.

Bannering the theme "One with the

struggles of the Filipino people," the campaign was launched "in the firm belief that a strong anti-dictatorship and anti-US intervention movement in North America is imperative." Said the APC in a statement. "Only through a grassroots movement can overseas Filipinos help push the dictatorship to its logical end and stop the crimes against the Filipino people."

In Washington DC on Sept. 21, a march, highlighted by skits, street theater and speeches, proceeded from the World Bank building to the White House, offi-

cial residence of the US President. In New York on Sept. 20, various organizations picketed the Philippine consulate. In Chicago, the Coalition for Philippine Solidarity staged a picket in front of the federal building, then marched to the Philippine consulate where they held a 45-minute picket. The next day, 60 people attended a symposium in Chicago. Similar mass actions were also held in Minneapolis, Minnesota (Sept. 20, 170 people); Detroit, Michigan (Sept. 21, 50 people); and Cleveland, Ohio (Sept. 18).

In Los Angeles, a picnic called "Tipanang Pilipino" kicked off the protest week. Combining politics and fun, 60 people belonging to APC affiliate organizations joined the affair. On Sept. 20, they took to the streets to stage a picket in front of the Philippine consulate. On the same day, 80 people attended a forum where Roberto Ortaliz, national vice chairman of the Kilusang Mayo Uno, spoke on the Filipino laborers' plight. Ortaliz again spoke before an audience of 130 people during a "cultural night" held on Sept. 21.

In San Francisco and the Bay Area where many Filipinos also reside, protest activities were just as vigorous. Dovetailing the "Philippine Solidarity Campaign" was the Fall Tour of KMW leaders that sought to foster close ties between North American and Filipino workers. Receptions for the KMW speakers were held in San Jose on Sept. 18 (26 people attended) and in San Francisco on Sept. 19 (120). On Sept. 20 and 21, the Philippine Action Network composed of different Bay Area organizations, mounted a picket at the Philippine consulate (120 attendance) and a cultural night (150).

As part of the campaign, a petition was circulated among the American people



Bucking US aid to Marcos: Americans march to Philippine consulate in Chicago

Int'l confab held in Davao



Foreign delegates pledge to support Filipino people's struggle in confab

Support for the Filipino people was further concretized in the holding of the "Conference for International Solidarity for the Philippine Struggle" in Davao City this September. It was attended by 145 people from 26 countries representing the continents of Asia, Africa, Western Europe, North America and Australia. Stated the conference's official document datelined Sept. 20: "We have converged in order to respond to the people's call for international solidarity as we seek to concretize our commitment towards the liberation of the Filipinos."

The delegates called on "all men and women of goodwill throughout the world" to participate in "concrete action programs" to manifest their support for the Filipino people's just struggle. They vowed to: 1) launch a worldwide campaign against US military and economic aid to the Marcos regime and abrogate all unequal treaties between the regime and the US and Japanese governments; 2) expose militarization, widespread human rights violations and the worsening economic conditions of the people; 3) strengthen linkages on a sector-to-sector, program-to-program, movement-to-movement and alliance-to-alliance basis; 4) set up mechanisms of mutual exchanges like media campaigns, exposure trips, fact-finding missions and cultural programs to project the Philippine situation; and 5) work for the recognition of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) as "the legitimate representative of the people's movement working for the dismantling of the US-Marcos dictatorship."

Praising the courage and perseverance of the Filipino people, the delegates further declared: "We fully subscribe to the legitimacy of the people's struggle for liberation. More and more, this struggle has to be understood in the context of the people's right to self-determination. In our dialog with those within the broad spectrum of the population, we have realized the widening support for the armed struggle. Considering the prevalence of institutionalized violence, the plunder and deaths left in its wake, the people are given no choice but to protect their lives and those of their children."

Noting the growth of the revolutionary movement throughout the country, the delegates said: "They have started planting the seeds of a real new society that sprout today and will flourish in the days after the people have overcome. This is another sign of hope: as people destroy the structures of death, they are creating the symbols of life."

voicing opposition to US support for the Marcos regime. "As concerned Americans, we cannot countenance the spilling of both Filipino and American blood in defense of a corrupt and dying dictatorship," said the petition. "We pledge to devote all our efforts to transform US foreign policy from its present destructive course to one which would bring back our honor as a people, to one that would respect the rights of the Filipino people to determine their own destiny."

THE NETHERLANDS. Joining hands with 2,000 other Europeans, 500 people here participated in the "International Day of Protest Activities." In one forum, various Dutch political parties and fund-

ing agencies, and the famous human rights group Amnesty International, discussed how the Philippines could be raised as a major issue in the Dutch Parliament as well as in Dutch political life. In the evening, Alab, a Philippine cultural group, presented "Oratoryo ng Bayan," a drama on the repression of human rights in the Philippines. Sept. 21 marked a decade of development of solidarity work for the Philippine struggle in The Netherlands.

IRELAND. In Dublin, the city's auxiliary bishop celebrated a mass on Sept. 21 for 400 people which protested the kidnaping of Fr. Rudy Romano, BAYAN-Visayas vice chairman. From the church, a procession marched to the US embassy,

where Irish support group members, human rights activists and church people held a public meeting and 24-hour fast. More than 250 people listened to the speeches of Irish Senator Flor O'Mahoney and Fr. Louie Hechanova, chairman of the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines.

The struggle against repression in the Philippines was further given a boost when the European Parliament carried a resolution tabled by Irish member Mr. O'Donnell on the Romano case. The resolution called on: 1) the Foreign Ministers Meeting on Political Cooperation to intercede with Filipino authorities for the return of Fr. Romano; 2) the European Economic Commission (EEC) to review its trading relations with the Philippines, in the absence of any acceptable response on the case from the Marcos government; and 3) the EEC to halt all aid to the Marcos regime until "this outrageous breach of human rights is rectified."

ENGLAND. A Philippine Action Week climaxed in London with a picket in front of the US consulate on Sept. 21. Bishop de Wit, superior general of the Mill Hill fathers and former bishop of Antique, led the participants in a vigil which began with a minute of silence for the dead and missing in the Philippines.

SWEDEN. In Stockholm, the Swedish Association for the Philippines presented a two-hour militant street play portraying the Filipino people as prisoners in their own land on Sept. 21.

GREECE. In this sunny country, a



Unity across the seas: Filipino residents join picket

Filipino speaker decried US intervention and US bases in the Philippines in a national festival of the PASOK, the country's ruling party.

SWITZERLAND. On Sept. 21, 70 persons held a vigil in front of the Swiss parliament and then proceeded to the Philippine embassy carrying crosses and streamers. The latter were attached to the fence surrounding the embassy, and called for justice for the victims of militarization and solidarity with the people's movements in the Philippines.

HONGKONG. Led by the Committee for Philippine Concerns, a picket was staged on Sept. 20 at the Philippine consulate where a protest letter was presented to consulate officials demanding an end to militarization in the Philippines, the restoration of freedom and democracy and an end to US intervention. A copy of the letter was also sent to the US embassy. At the consulate, the picketers were coldly snubbed and not allowed to read their protest statement.

The picket was part of the week-long "International Solidarity Campaign for the Philippines" aimed at generating consciousness among the people of Hongkong about the oppressive Philippine situation and imminent direct US intervention, and at soliciting solidarity support. It was supported by 15 local and Hongkong-based international organizations like the Asian Students Association, World Student Christian Federation for Asia/Pacific, International Movement of Catholic Students of Asia, Young Christian Workers of Asia and Concerned Clergy for the Philippines. Prior to the



in Chicago

BBC interviews Jalandoni

The National Democratic Front stepped into the international spotlight last Sept. 20 with the interview of NDF international representative Luis Jalandoni by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Jalandoni, whose office is based in Western Europe, was interviewed in London by Hugh Pryor Jones, anchor-man of the newscast "24 Hours." Excerpts:

BBC: How much support does your organization claim to have?

LJ: Well, our estimate is that after more than 12 years of work, (since the founding of the NDF in April 1973), we would have by this time about 10 million activists supporting us in more than 600 towns out of 1,540 towns in the Philippines.

BBC: Is the NDF prepared to cooperate with traditional politicians like Mr. Salvador Laurel and his UNIDO party, if only to get Mr. Marcos out of power?

LJ: The NDF would be prepared to cooperate with other parties, including the UNIDO, as long as there is a principled basis for such a cooperation. For example, the firm position of the Filipino people against the presence of US bases and US troops would not be negotiable. On this point, we would also want a firm position from UNIDO and others before we could collaborate (with them).

BBC: Do you think there's going to be a constitutional transfer of power, though Mr. Marcos shows few signs of wanting to leave voluntarily? How will it go?

LJ: I believe there's a good chance of a constitutional transfer of power because of the strong pressure from the United States. But there are other possibilities which we have to consider, like the possibility of Marcos declaring some kind of martial law again in order to stay in power. But then, without the support of the United States, he would not last long.

BBC: Do you fear that if things go wrong, the United States will be tempted to intervene militarily? This has been suggested by some voices, not necessarily influential voices, but some voices in Washington.

LJ: Yes. We consider it a big danger because of the record of intervention of the United States in Grenada, and now in Nicaragua. There are already about 20,000 troops deployed in the Philippines as well as Special Operations Forces, (which are) secret units specially trained for intervention. Therefore, we have to prepare our whole country and people for such a danger.

picket, forums were held on various Hongkong campuses.

The campaign culminated on Sept. 21 with a solidarity night for the Philippines titled "Filipinos, We Support You." It featured slide shows, songs, poems, reflections and a drama presentation by the Hong Kong University Student Union.

Other sources reported that similar activities also took place in Japan, Thailand, India and Nepal.

AUSTRALIA. In an unprecedented move, seven Labor parliamentarians called on the Australian government to immediately cease all military aid to the Marcos regime. In a joint statement, the politicians also pledged their opposition to any form of Australian military intervention in the Philippines.

Further dramatizing support for the Philippine struggle, Australian support groups organized protest actions on Sept. 20 and 21 in the major cities of

Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Perth and Canberra. In Melbourne, a two-day picket was held outside the Philippine Air Lines office, featuring KMU and Australian trade union representatives. On Sept. 20, protesters marched to the Philippine consulate where they burned an effigy of Marcos, then marched on to the Melbourne city square. Speakers included Fr. Brian Gore, a progressive priest who was deported from the Philippines last year, a federal senator, and delegates from the KMU and Philippine Action Support Group.

Combined with the intensifying political and military struggles on the homefront, these solidarity offensives of people abroad contribute to the rapid erosion and isolation of the US-Marcos regime. Neither the use of numerology or magic powers can stop this solid phalanx of support presently building up in the international arena. □



Luis Jalandoni



Fr. Pites: "A revolutionary, tested, purified and emboldened"

TRIBUTE

Life and struggle of revolutionary martyrs

A priest to the poor

Fr. Pepito Bernardo, 1950-1985

To the Dumagats, to the Igorots and to other people whose lives he touched, he was known simply as Father Pites. Soft-spoken and gentle yet cheerful and brave, he epitomized the image of a priest of, and for, the people. His death in a vehicular accident on June 8 this year was a big blow to them, as it was too for his comrades in the Christians for National Liberation (CNL), the revolutionary underground organization of church people.

In these pages, LIB pays tribute to Fr. Pepito "Pites" Bernardo, a revolutionary martyr and courageous servant of the masses. The story of his life is the story of a man who dedicated his entire life and priestly vocation to the poor and to the advance of the revolutionary movement.

Born on Feb. 23, 1950 in Penaranda, Nueva Ecija, Fr. Pites was drawn to the priesthood at an early age, serving as a sacristan at the parish church. It was in high school that he decided to become a priest, convinced that this was the best way for him to minister to the people, especially to the poor and underprivileged. He entered the Minor Seminary of San Fernando, Pampanga and later moved to the Major Seminary of Guadalupe, Makati.

A firm believer in the revolutionary values of love for the poor, nationalism, truth and justice, Fr. Pites eventually rebelled against the restrictive strictures of the religious formation in the Major Seminary. Together with many of his classmates who felt and thought like him, they fought for reforms in the seminary. With some progressive professors, they also demanded a relevant formation responsive to the needs and situation of the people. Their activism caused them to be reprimanded by the late Rufino Cardinal Santos who ordered

them to try other formation houses. Fr. Pites and the "Famous 11," as their group was dubbed, then had no option left but to transfer to the Maryhill Seminary in Taytay, Rizal and onwards to the seminary in Tagaytay.

He was ordained a priest on March 25, 1974 in his hometown. He was assigned to Gabaldon and Dingalan, somewhere in the boundaries of Nueva Ecija and Quezon. Here, he immersed himself in the plight of the Dumagats, a minority tribe. His active Christian ministry to the poor soon earned him the ire of the military. He was detained twice, the first time in 1980 at Bicutan, Taguig and the second time in 1982 at Camp Olivas, Pampanga. In prison, he filled his days by writing poetry that spoke of freedom, love of country and national liberation.

After his second release, he was placed under the custody of the bishop of Pampanga. He worked as a chaplain in the Pampanga provincial hospital and as a part-time instructor in the seminary. During all this time, Fr. Pites continued to actively practice his ministry to the people, effectively combining his legal work and underground activities as a CNL member. After a short stay in the United States for a medical operation, he came back to involve himself more deeply in the people's movement for national freedom and democracy, until his untimely death in Nueva Ecija.

LIB publishes these two articles which speak of Fr. Pites' life and struggle. These were written by two of his comrades in the CNL and were read during a CNL memorial service for him last July. The first article was written by a priest from Central Luzon, and the second by a nun.

"Higit sa lahat...matapang siya"

Wala pa akong kamuwang-muwang ukol sa kalagayan ng bansa nang unang makilala ko si Pites. Siya ang nagtalakay ng "nat sit" (national situationer) sa isang ligal na pag-aaral ng isang grupo ng mga seminarista na naghahanda sa kanilang "summer exposure-apostolate."

Ah, ang tindi ng reaksiyon ko noon. Hindi naman takot kundi matinding pag-suspetsa. Sari-sari ang pumasok sa isip ko. Brainwashing ito, sabi ko sa sarili ko. Masyadong one-sided. In-exaggerate nila ang sitwasyon. Buong akala ko, magre-recollection kami bilang preparasyon para sa apostolate. Bakit biglang pinasukan ng pulitika? Sino kaya ang

may pakara nito? May suspetsa akong infiltrated kami. Mina-manipulate nila ang discussion. Ginagalit talaga kami para maniwala na armed revolution ang tamang solusyon. That is very unchristian. Basta Christianity is for non-violence. Very obvious talaga ang leftist leanings ng paring ito. Akmang-akma doon sa description ng mga Jesuits.

Kinuli: ko talaga sila nang husto, pati ang ibang facilitators na madreng aktibista. Ibinuga ko nang husto ang nalaman ko sa eskuwelahan tungkol sa "taliwas" na pilosopiya ng "dialectic materialism" at "godless ideology." "Christians can never be for violence!" Kahit nag-

papantig na ang mga tenga nila, hindi ko sila tinigilan. "Christianity should neither be in the right nor in the left. We must be in the middle. We must offer a Christian solution, a third option which is for non-violence."

Bilib na bilib talaga ako sa sarili ko noon. Si Fr. Pites naroon lang sa isang sulok, ngumingiti, hindi natuksong maki-pag-debate sa akin, basta na lang tumahimik.

Natakot ang mga facilitator sa akin. Siguro, magkahalong takot at inis. Nauulinigan ko pa sa isang tabi iyong ibinulong ng isang madre: "Pinasok yata tayo ng Socdem!" Inurungan ako ng isang

"You came as a friend..." spilling their blood like water for the land they love.

For you Pites -

A day was like a thousand years,
So intensely did you live your life . . .
Every minute of your day
Every beat of your heart
Every word from your lips
Every step of your journeying
was for the burning cause of Freedom,
Freedom for our people!

Pites, what you have done, endured and achieved
During the thirty-four years of your life
Others could not have achieved even in a hundred years
Like Christ, you were the lowly, suffering
servant of the people.

You came promptly at our beck and call
You came as a friend to a friend
Sharing your flaming dreams, your glowing hopes
for our people.

You came as a strong wind of the revolution,
arousing, mobilizing, organizing
To fight for justice and liberation.

You came as a prophet, denouncing and announcing
with words of fire -
the arrogant and complacent that -
"Convents and rectories, palaces and courts
will be turned into tombs and cemeteries
if religious and leaders will not write God's laws
in their hearts.
Rosaries and medals will be their grinding stones
that will bring them down to the bottom of
alienation
if they will not give way to His Penetrating Voice."

In the hospitals, seminaries, convents, barrios, urban
poor communities, parishes and the ancestral hills where
our minorities have been pushed -

You won the appreciation and adulation of hundreds.
You were sent as an envoy to friendly people abroad
to plead the cause of our anguished brothers . . .

But the call and needs of our struggling brothers
lured you back to the mountains,
to share the pain and poverty
of your brother peasants
to be close to our fighting men and women

Pites, above all you came as a REVOLUTIONARY -
tested, purified and emboldened -
in the prison camps of Bicutan and Camp Olivas.
You were a revolutionary fully armed for the struggle
fearless, joyful and undaunted
before the mercenaries and enemies of the people.

On that fateful day - June 8, 1985 at 5:30 p.m.,
Death overtook you along a road in the countryside
For a long time now - you were being watched -
There - your flesh was torn into shreds,
your blood spilled in the roadside.
You fought the good fight
You ran the race to the finish
You kept the faith to your last breath!

It was no mere coincidence
that your body was laid to rest on June 12 - marking the
87th year
of the Proclamation of our Independence from Spanish
colonizers.

No, it was pre-ordained by the Lord of History
that your burial would signal the approaching end
of five centuries of dependence
on foreign imperialists, greedy dictators
and shameless puppets -
So that freedom can blossom at last in our land,
in all its beauty, purity, radiance and GLORY!

Pites, you lived as a peasant among the peasants,
you died and you were buried in a lonely barrio
amidst the peasants.

In life, you chose to belong to the peasants,
In death you belong to each and everyone of us.
You belong to the mountains and the seas,
To the barrios and the cities,
To the huts and the temples
To factories and the slums.
You belong to the whole Filipino people.

Finally, we pray that you, Pites -
Give us the broken Bread of your Body to eat
Give us the burning wine of your Spirit to drink.

Transform us into true REVOLUTIONARIES like you.

kaibigang dumidikit sa akin. Pero si Fr. Pites, para bang hindi natigatig kahit kon- ti sa pambubulabog ko. Marahil nakita niya na naghahaglap talaga ako, nagat- tanong. Maraming duda at suspetsa, pe- ro di pa naman ganap na sarado.

Pero batid niya na wala itong kala- kip na karanasan at praktika, puro mga lumulutang na konsepto, malayo sa mga tunay na problema ng bayan. Hindi siya natuksong makipagbuno sa akin sa paraang gusto ko. Palagi ang sagot ni- ya ay ganito: "Pasensya ka na, hindi ko napag-aralan ang sinasabi mo. Puwede mong ipaliwanag sa akin, makikinig ako. Baka sakali matuto ako."

Mga sagot na sa halip na makapanla- ki ng ulo, nakapanlilit. Lagi at lagi, ang sagot niya sa mga teoriya ko ay ha- mon, isang hamon na huminto muna sa pagasalita at makibabad, makipamuhay, makinig, at matuto sa mga tao, kahit hin-



An anthology of poems by Fr. Pites

di sila nag-aral sa sikat na unibersidad na tulad ng pinagmulan ko. Naalala ko pa ang isang tanong niya na umuukilkil ta- laga sa konsiensya ko: "Para kanino ba tayo nagpari? Sino ba ang paglilingku- ran natin? Ano ang kalagayan ng mga taong nangangailangan ng ating pagliling- kod? Anong uri ng paglilingkod ang ma- ibibigay natin?"

Tinanggap ko ang hamon ni Pites. Sinunggaban ko ang bawat pagkakataon. Bawat exposure, sinalihan ko. Bawat symposium, dinaluhan ko. Bawat rally, pinuntahan ko. Pero hiwalay pa rin ako sa pangyayari, dahil puro panonood at obserbasyon ang ginawa ko. Minsan nga napagkamalan pa akong ahente ng mga nagrarali. Kundangan kasi'y napakalakas ng takot ko sa komunista. Para silang multo na inaabangan ko sa dilim, di ko naman makita. At dahil bugoy na bugoy ang uri kong pinagmulan, napapaatras

ako kapag sumisigaw ng "Lansagin" at "Ibagsak." Kinikilabutan din ako kapag iwinawagayway nila ang mga pulang streamers. Bakit kailangang sumigaw? Bakit kailangang pula? Ba't di na lang berde, o dilaw? Mahusay sumagot si Pites ng mga ganitong tanong.

Unti-unti, nahulog din ang loob ko sa pagkatao ni Pites. Nawalan ako ng depensa. Natuto akong humanga sa kasimplehan ng kanyang pamumuhay. Walang luho; hindi mahilig sa pera o kahit anong bisyo. Tahimik, mabait, matulungin, maalalahanin, higit sa lahat . . . matapang. Di tulad ng mga paring alam ko. Dahil sa antas pa ako ng paghanga, para bang nasabi ko: heto ang talagang pari! Ganoon nga marahil tayo. Nakikinig sa salita, pero tumitingin sa buhay ng nag-sasalita. Kapani-paniwala ba? Oo, kapani-paniwala si Fr. Pites.

Sino ba'ng hindi takot mamatay? Pero mamamatay naman talaga tayo, di ba? Mas mabuti nang mamatay na naglilingkod kung mamamatay din lang.

Minsang sumakit ang tiyan ko, naglaga siya ng mga dahon ng avocado, bayabas at camote. "ABC iyan," sabi niya. "Matinding di hamak kaysa Diatabs at iba pang gamot ng mga korporasyong multinasyonal. Natutuhan ko iyan sa masa, walang bayad, madali pa ang lunas." Habang iniinom ko ang mainit na katas, sinabayan pa niya ng acupressure, at napakahusay na paliwanag sa bukok na sistema ng ating lipunan na siyang nagiging dahilan kung bakit kayraming namamatay na hindi nabibigyan ng lunas sa mga ospital. Sistematisiko ang pagkakapaliwanag niya, pawalis (sweeping), pero mahusay ang pagkakalahad ng mga "ugat na suliranin ng ating lipunan."

Lulubog, lilitaw. "Palitaw" ang tagwag namin sa kanya noon. Minsan, bigla na lang susulpot, makikitulog, makikikain, manghihiram ng piso, pamasaha.

Nasa Bicutan na siya nang sumunod kaming nagkita. Unang pagkakahuli sa kanya. Teka, una nga ba? Ewan, ang dami na nga kasing beses nahuli ang tanong ito. Pinalaya din naman siya noong bago dumating ang Papa sa Pilipinas. Laking tuwa niya nang makalaya. Pero sa kabila ng payo ng maraming kapwa pari na mag-"lie low" muna siya, patuloy pa rin siya sa gawain. Minsan nata-nong ko siya: "Di ka ba takot mamatay?" Nangiti siya. "Takot din, sino ba'ng hindi? Pero mamamatay naman talaga tayo, di ba? Mas mabuti nang mamatay na naglilingkod kung mamamatay din lang. Hindi naman orig sa akin iyan. Galing iyan kay Hesus." Tapos bigla niyang naitanong: "Kristiyano ka ba?" Buong pagtataka akong sumagot ng "Oo." At bigla siyang nagtatawa. "Akala ko kasi alam mo na iyon."

Ikalawang beses, dinampot na naman siya. Ah, nakalilito, ilang beses na nga ba? Nagtagal muna sa safehouse bago

nalagay sa diyaryo at natunton. Ibinartolina, tinortyur nang husto. Di naman nagtagal, pinalaya siya under the custody of the Archbishop of Pampanga. Minsan, naukwento niya ang mga tortyur na dinanas niya. Mga pasakit na umukit na rin ng permanenteng marka sa manipis niyang katawan. Kapag di na raw niya makayanan ang sakit, inuusal niya ang ilang mga salita sa Bibliya, mula sa mga panulat ni San Pablo: "Kung ang Diyos nasa panig natin, sino ang laban sa atin? Sino ang maghihiwalay sa atin sa pag-ibig niya?"

Isang bagay lang ang itinuro sa akin ni Pites. Ang maging Kristiyano; ang mabigyan ng laman at dugo ang pananam-palataya sa isang tunay at di-makasariling paglilingkod sa sambayanan. Hindi bilang tagatubos, kundi bilang kasama, kabahagi sa paghihirap at pakikibaka ng

sambayanan. Tinulungan din ako ni Pites na maunawaan ang sarili kong pag-uunawa. Ang masuri ang sarili kong pag-iisip, pananaw at orientasyon. Ang magduda ukol sa sarili kong mga suspetsa. Ang magtanong ng mga tunay na tanong na hindi sa loob ng paaralan binigkas, kundi sa bukid, sa pilapil, sa pagawaan, sa kalsada, sa konkretong mundo. Mga tanong na hindi sa ideya nilalapatan ng kasagutan, kundi sa konkretong buhay.

Ang huling pagkawala ni Pites ay hindi dahil sa militar. Kinailangan niyang maoperahan sa puso doon sa Estados Unidos. Hindi naglaon, buo na naman siya. Tulad ng dati, masigla. Pantalalon na maong, isang permanenteng ngiti, banayad na pagsasalita, at motorsiklong luma. Bahagi ng mundo si Pites, pari ng bayan. Isang paring kinuryente ang ari, winater cure, pinahiga sa yelo, na-plastic-bag treatment, ginawang "live ash tray," ibinartolina, at marami pang iba.

Patay na si Pites. Aksidente daw. Aksidente nga ba? Ewan. Nagdiwang ang pasistang kaaway. Nirebyu ang listahan: Zacarias Agatep, Godofredo Alingal, Edgardo Kangleon, Caloy Tayag, Gerry Aquino, Tullio Favali, nawawala: Rudy Romano; nakapiit: Ed de la Torre, Orlando Tizon, Ted Remigio, at iba pa . . .

Patay na raw si Pites. Iyon ang akala nila. Katawan lang ang kaya nilang ipiit, tortyurin, patayin. Di ba sabi ni Hesus: "Huwag kayong matakot doon sa mga pumapatay lamang ng katawan at wala nang magawa pa . . ."

Buhay si Pites . . . patukoy siyang nabubuhay sa atin. Sa marami pang iba sa atin na laang mag-alay ng buhay para sa bayan. Ang dugo ng ating mga martir at bayaning tulad niya ang didilig sa mga bulaklak ng katarungan at kalayaan tungo sa mapulang bukas! □

CULTURAL

Art and literature in the movement

Songs forged

A review of *Mga Kanta ng Rebolusyong*

In the guerrilla zones of the Philippine revolution, no prompting is needed to make the people sing revolutionary songs. Out there, the masses, Red fighters, activists and cadres of the national democratic struggle would sing whenever the occasion presents itself — before and after meetings or group sessions, during weddings and memorial meetings, or for plain relaxation. These songs fortify, inspire the people and imbue them with a sense of solidarity. They serve to infuse revolutionary spirit in the people and in all their undertakings.

Mga Kanta ng Rebolusyong Pilipino (Unang Seleksyon) or *Songs of the Philippine Revolution (First Selection)* document these songs in two cassette tapes with an accompanying songbook. Selected from several hundred songs collected from various regions in the Philippines, the forty songs in this set are representatives of the kind of music that the present national democratic revolution has been singing since the late '60s. This selection of songs is meant primarily for popularization, and translations of songs into Pilipino and other regional languages are provided in the songbook.

While many of the songs are recent compositions, they are strikingly interspersed with songs dating as far back as the Philippine Revolution of 1896 and the Japanese Occupation. Moreover, not all songs were composed in the countryside. Some were composed in detention centers and in the course of the developments of the mass movement in the cities. Despite this seemingly broad source, these songs can be said to have been forged in the crucible of the revolutionary struggle and share a common scientific outlook and a proletarian standpoint. Ideologically, then, the collection is as authentic as its source. The songs, in sum, are expressive of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and anti-fascist struggle of the Filipino people.

Aside from songs in Pilipino, there seems to be a preponderance of songs in Waray and Cebuano in the collection. On the other hand, not one song in Pampango is represented, and there is only one song in Ilocano. It is hoped that succeeding selections would include songs in Pampango and Ilocano.

Musically, the songs made use of both Filipino and foreign forms that are popular among the masses from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. These include the familiar militant march, the light and appealing waltz and pop ballads, the lyrical

in the struggle

Pilipino (Unang Seleksyon)

and sad *kundimans* and *uyayis* (lullabies), as well as the not so familiar but equally indigenous materials from the Philippine cultural communities or nationalities such as the Kalinga-Apayao in the north and the Manobo, Tingguian and Muslims of the South.

To some critics and artists, the musical forms of the national democratic movement as reflected in the collection may not be as revolutionary as their content. As one composer, upon hearing them, commented, there is a discrepancy in form and content especially from a strictly musical point of view where music itself is content. But in the experience of the practitioners and audiences of protest and revolutionary music, both in the urban centers and the organized countryside, such a qualification is unnecessary. As this collection has demonstrated, traditional and foreign forms can be revolutionized and made effective vehicles for new politics and revolutionary practice.



The spirit of struggle on tape

This may be true for a time. Once these melodies, rhythms and harmonies become overly used and familiar (as in the case of the marches of which the collection has too many) — such songs will lose their freshness and impact.

Hence, the need to compose new forms and tunes to new music. Or better still, the need to be more creative in using the indigenous musical forms that the Philippines is so rich in, to better capture the revolutionary character of the Philippine struggle, this time not just in the ideological content but in the musical language as well.

Musically, too, the performance can still be improved particularly with regard to intonation, diction and expression. Some of the lyrics need better articulation and phrasing. The singers' voices are of good quality but sound too tense at times. Obviously, some training in voice production is required. The cassette production as a whole needs improving. The sounds do not come out vibrant or natural and sometimes seem muffled and poorly recorded. Such technicalities must not be ignored for they affect the delivery of the revolutionary message.

It is not enough, then, that the political line of the songs is correct and emphasized. Songs are weapons for winning the battle for the hearts and minds of the people. Their message, to be effective and worthy of our revolutionary commitment, must at all times be conveyed with beauty and art.

Kris Makabayan

AN APPEAL FROM A CHILD OF MARCIAL'S



i was born
inside an arsenal
my pillow a grenade
my feeder a machine gun
i was given toys too
M16 magazines
and Garand bayonets

instead of crying
the first thing i uttered was amen
that was why the gold
on the captain's teeth glistened

and the midwife died in 1972
when she pulled me out
of my mother's womb
of heart attack they say
and extreme shock
because i was born
without tongue
without eyes
without ears

my father Marcial
laughed in glee

they confined us
Marcial's children
in boxes
to shield our minds so they say
from microbes
that was why we became nitwits
cowards and like machines
docile to him

i appeal then
to those who are not his children
to save us
thousands of siblings
from rotting
inside these boxes
where our father Marcial
has confined us

our grenade pillows
have heated up
our machine gun
feeders have turned bitter
and we have become the toys
of these M16 magazines
and Garand bayonets

C. R. Abelardo
Translated by **A. R. Cerrazon**

Second

The Escalante Massacre

Escalante mayor Braulio Lumayno is now not only known for his complicity in the massacre of unarmed demonstrators in his town, but also for his frequent "massacre" of the English language. Here are some juicy samples:

While addressing a gathering: "Fellow teachers, fellow workers, fellow *municipal building* . . ."

While boasting about gains made by substitute teachers under his administration: "Before my *menstruation*, there are many *prostitute* teachers. During my *menstruation*, the *prostitute* teachers become permanent."

In answer to a query about violence in Escalante: "Indi ko kabalo maggitara, *violence pa*."

Over the objections of broad sections of Bacolod residents, the city government went ahead with the annual celebration of the "Maskara Festival," their version of the Mardi Gras. But owing to the severe crisis, the festival was not as lavish and well-attended as in the past, with most civic groups refusing to participate. More popular with the crowds that went to the Bacolod City Plaza was an exhibit and picket staged nearby to protest the Escalante Massacre and other military atrocities. This led one jeepney driver to quip, "It's really a Masker Festival, not a Maskara Festival."

The denial in the papers that Mrs. Marcos owns the building at 66th Street in New York is true. That was the original Philippine consulate, until it moved to the Philippine Center on Fifth Avenue. However, Mrs. M has remodelled it into a townhouse. In fact, the seamstresses she brought in to do her curtains have been staying in New York for a year. Some curtains those must be!

Perhaps they're also doing the curtains for the house of George Hamilton, which she bought, remodelled and, it is said, presented back to him as a munificent gift.

Better even than being a crony, it seems, is being a First Son-in-law. In these days of dollars so scarce that manufacturing concerns cannot get any for raw materials, a license to import \$1 million worth of chocolates was given to Tommy Manotoc. To protect this enterprise, the "informal" importing of chocolates in small lots being done by airline personnel is being stopped at the airport.

The other Son-in-law of note, Gregg Araneta, is reported to have bought out one of the largest video-taping enterprises. To protect this again, other similar enterprises are being "persuaded" to sell out and move to other businesses.

A comrade's son, three-year-old Ding, has coined a new name for Prime Minister and concurrently Finance Minister Cesar Virata.

Overhearing the Prime Minister's name mentioned on the TV news one evening, the boy turned to his mother and said, "Si *Virata daw*."

In reality, such notorious pirates in history as Bluebeard and Captain Kidd are mere penny-ante crooks compared to

such present-day big-time buccaneers as Virata, his master Marcos and their US imperialist masters, considering the wholesale plunder they have been perpetuating on the Filipino people.

Appearing recently on the American TV talk show "Nightline," Marcos was not unlike the little boy in the story who whistled, knees quaking, as he negotiated his way through the dark.

Trying to put up a confident front, Marcos told the interviewer that Red fighters of the New People's Army have been "on the run everywhere" and "surrendering in droves."

Of course, the interviewer didn't believe Marcos' prattle, and neither did Marcos himself. He knows - from the annihilation of AFP units - that the NPA is stronger, and its morale, higher than ever before.

In a few years the NPA will have accumulated enough strength to launch the strategic counter-offensive nationwide. And then we'll see who is "on the run everywhere" and "surrendering in droves."

In the same TV show, Marcos held up a copy of a Manila daily and called attention to a particular news item.

"Isn't that one of *your* newspapers?" the interviewer asked.

"Yes, it's one of our newspapers in the Philippines," Marcos replied, *patay malisya* style.

The interviewer wouldn't let him off the hook. "What I mean is, isn't that one of *your* crony newspapers?" he persisted.

No more wisecracks from Marcos, just a sheepish grin on his face. The newspaper referred to was the *Daily Express* owned by Marcos and the comprador-landlord crony Roberto Benedicto.

AIDS has long been ravaging the Philippines, haven't you noticed? AIDS, of course, stands for Acute Income Deficiency Syndrome.

BUST THE BUST!

