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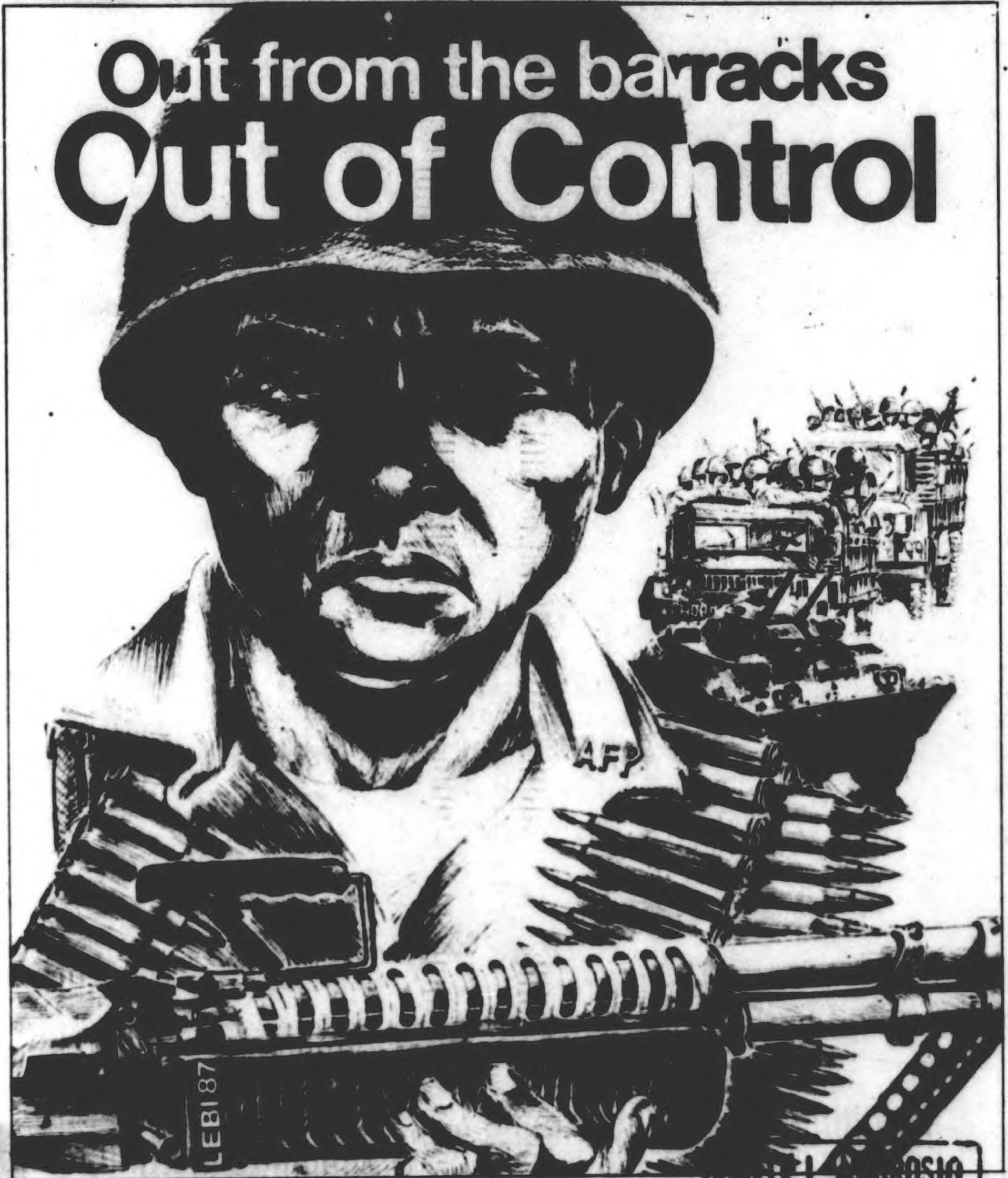
LIBERATION

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Out from the barracks Out of Control



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KOL FKS YON

"Rally around the emerging people's government"

The fast-unravelling events after the bloody failed coup of Aug. 28 show up US imperialism's intense maneuvering to arrange a compromise between the colliding factions within the present regime.

Already the US-Aquino regime has moved further to pamper the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Mrs. Aquino has given the latter free rein in conducting "total war" against the impoverished masses of the people, who are pressing forward with their revolutionary struggle for a better life. This means intensified armed repression and more human rights violations by Mrs. Aquino's soldiers. The AFP budget is up for a hefty boost, while more US military aid will be put on-line.

The reorganized Cabinet will have more conservatives who will continue to insure the protection of the economic and political interests of the US and of the traditional elite — particularly those belonging to Mrs. Aquino's faction — against the onslaught of the popular movements for thoroughgoing change.

These moves, however, will only accelerate the isolation of the US-Aquino regime from the people, as they further expose its true character, of being no different from the Marcos dictatorship. Consequently, these maneuvers will push the economic and political crisis deeper towards national disaster.



The signs are very clear. The US-Aquino regime cannot rule in a "liberal-democratic" way (if at all it intended to do so). All the reactionary factions, whether for or against Aquino, are one in pushing for the adoption of armed repression as the main form of rule. In the legislature and other conservative bastions, agitated landlords and big capitalists are calling for the regime to unite its forces, politically and militarily, against

the advance of the revolutionary movement.

Therefore, the National Democratic Front of the Philippines now calls on the Filipino people to prepare for more militant resistance, both in the countryside and in the cities, to frustrate the regime's march to an open fascist rule.

The people must rely on their own struggles, not on the old ruling classes nor any faction thereof, to bring about genuine change. Therefore, the NDF pursues unrelentingly its general and specific programs to save the country from the disastrous programs and policies of the US-Aquino regime, while patiently constructing a really new political, economic and social order.

We are appealing to the people to support the revolutionary people's government now emerging throughout the country as the alternative to the bankrupt and worn-out ruling system.

COVER STORIES

On today's significant issues and events

"The center cannot hold"

August 28 coup attempt signals imminence of military takeover

Things fall apart; the center cannot hold

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,

The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere

The ceremony of innocence is drowned.

— William Butler Yeats

The newspapers called it "Bloody Friday." On that day, August 28, close to a thousand troopers from Fort Mag-saysay in Laur, Nueva Ecija rolled into Manila in the pre-dawn darkness to hurl the military's biggest challenge to date against Corazon Aquino's regime. Aboard several army trucks and two commandeered Baliwag Transit buses, the soldiers, who were led by erstwhile EDSA revolution "hero" Lt. Col. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan, swooped down on Malacanang Palace, Villamor Air Base, the government TV station Channel 4 and the defense department headquarters at Camp Aguinaldo.

The coup plotters evidently enjoyed the support of many AFP units based in other regions. In Cebu, the entire PC-INP command under Brig. Gen. Edgardo Abenina, defected to the rebel side. The military mutineers met no opposition as RUC 7 chief Gen. Romulo Querubin declared that he "respected" the stand of Abenina and the rebel soldiers under Honasan. In Pampanga, Lt. Col. Reynaldo Berroya, a Honasan supporter, wrested from Brig. Gen. Eduardo Taturan, control over the PC headquarters at Camp Olivas. In Bicol, some 80 soldiers and policemen from the Albay PC-INP command attempted to reinforce rebel forces in Manila when they were intercepted at Legazpi City. In Southern Tagalog, six truckloads of soldiers from their military base in eastern Quezon were also set to attack Camp Nakar in Lucena City when they were spotted and arrested.

At the Senate and House of Representatives, practically the entire military security force abandoned their posts and defected to the rebel side. In Camp Aguinaldo, one of Defense Secretary Rafael Beto's closest aides made public his alliance with the mutineers. At the Philippine Military Academy in Baguio City, majority of the cadets declared their support for Honasan.

For 30 hours, most of Manila was gripped in terror and anxiety as fire-fights erupted in many areas. The "Bloody Friday" coup attempt, the fifth to rock the new government in 18



"Bloody Friday:" Civilian casualties rose as factional strife intensified

months, left a record 55 dead and more than three hundred wounded.

Previously, the closest brush most Metro Manilans had ever had with events of this kind were the relatively peaceful EDSA uprising of February 1986 and the series of failed coup attempts that ensued, whose conduct and outcome sometimes verged on the comical. To casual observers, none of these events prepared them for the shock of "Bloody Friday." But to those who have been closely following developments involving the military for the past several years, the August 28 coup was not entirely unexpected. If anything, the coup attempt merely brought to the fore, the growing imminence of a military takeover amid the worsening crisis in the ruling system.

Ascendancy of the military

The road leading to the August 28 coup had been paved as early as September 21, 1972. The brashness with which the coup plotters had attempted to seize the reins of government is a logical consequence of the military's systematic empowerment and politicalization during more than a decade of martial rule.

When Marcos launched his own coup 15 years ago and destroyed the trappings of elite representative democracy, he turned the military into his main base of support by pampering it and giving it roles normally assigned only to politicians and civilian bureaucrats.

UP political scientists Drs. Carolina Hernandez and Francisco Nemenzo have described the process by which the military was strengthened vis-a-vis the civilian institutions during the Marcos dictatorship. In a paper entitled "A Season of Coups," Nemenzo said: "(Under martial law), the AFP assumed judicial powers through the military tribunals which had jurisdiction over a wide range of cases. Officers in active duty were named to sensitive diplomatic posts. A number of colonels and generals were appointed to the directorates and management staffs of developmental and government-controlled corporations. Two provincial commanders became concurrent provincial governors. Six of the 12 regional development officers (who were authorized to exercise presidential powers on matters pertaining to socio-economic development) were military men. With the civilian politicians sidelined, the local commanders became the chief dispensers of political patronage."

The military's role expansion during martial law, said Hernandez, "enlarged the publics it dealt and continues to deal with and had consequently involved it in political matters." That the military had also begun to relish its new roles is further seen in an article from the *Philippine Military Digest*, quoted by Hernandez in her paper. The article



Death machines: US helicopters for AFP's counter-insurgency drives

envisioned a "more delicate role" for the AFP "to act as the *main agent* in effecting changes in the political, social and economic structure of the country." (underscoring ours)

Consequently, such role expansion was accompanied by rapid increases in military benefits. Basic pay for the AFP was raised three times between 1972 and 1976, outstripping that of civilian institutions. The military budget increased severalfold, from P800 million in 1972 to P6 billion in 1982. The AFP's size also grew tremendously, from 62,000 in 1972 to 158,000 a decade later. Investment opportunities for the military were also opened through the PEFTOK-IDC, and the awarding of seats in the boards of state-run corporations.

The making of the military into Marcos' power base was, however, done through "grand-scale cronyism." According to Nemenzo, "officers who demonstrated unbending loyalty to Marcos and then AFP chief of staff Gen. Fabian Ver, were assigned to safe and remunerable positions." Cautious of the possibility that an emboldened military might someday turn against them, Marcos and Ver utilized the "discriminate allocation of the special allowances and opportunities for corruption" as a means of nurturing personal loyalties and ensuring control.

This system of institutionalized corruption, which discriminated between favored officers on the one hand, and most of the rank-and-file on the other, eventually caused massive demoralization within the AFP. Added

to this was the AFP's rank unpopularity as a result of the public's growing awareness of the rampant abuses of human rights committed by soldiers.

One way by which the military coped with sweeping demoralization was the formation of fraternities. As early as 1976, the "El Diablo" fraternity was established in Maguindano by an enlisted man, PC M/Sgt. Liborio Jangao. Many other fraternities eventually sprang from the ranks of the military, such that by the time of Marcos' downfall, one estimate put the number of such groups at around 60.

Significantly, it is from these fraternities that new hierarchies developed and unofficial chains of command emerged. There arose the phenomenon of "armies within an army." By 1986, El Diablo (later renamed the "Guardians Brotherhood, Inc." or GBI) and other military fraternities could claim membership of up to 70% of all AFP personnel. On February 22 of that year, it was a GBI sergeant who led 69 members of the Military Police Brigade in Camp Aguinaldo to abandon their pro-Marcos commanding general and join the Enrile-Ramos rebellion.

Thus, after years of being pampered by Marcos and Ver, the powerful military was no longer a monolithic institution loyal to the commander-in-chief and the chief-of-staff. The conditions for insubordination to the established chain of command had now seeped in, turning it into a formidable force, too unwieldy even for the two men who were responsible for creating this military leviathan.

Instrument for regime survival

That it was the military that was chosen by Marcos as his main base of regime support is not accidental. Historically, it is the military that has time and again been utilized by ruling systems in crisis to forestall their impending collapse.

Functioning as its main instrument for coercion, the military serves as the major pillar of the oppressive state to maintain the ruling classes in power. Often enough, the degree to which military coercion is unleashed against the people is directly proportional to the threats posed by the organized assertions of the dominated classes. Thus, when in the late '60s and early '70s, Philippine society was swept by a mass movement that questioned and rejected the oppression and exploitation perpetuated by the ruling system, and posited a genuine people's democracy as the alternative, martial rule was imminent.

Cognizant of this trend, noted historian and political analyst Renato Constantino predicted the coming of martial law two years before its declaration. In his essay "Fascism: Prospect and Retrospect," written in 1970, he said: "Democratic rights, which have only an abstract significance for the majority, are allowed to exist as long as the status quo remains unchallenged. But when these democratic rights begin to be utilized on a more or less general scale, the normal repressive measures of the state give way to more systematic and openly terroristic methods in order to cow the people back into submission and to restore the status quo ante." As Constantino described it then, the harnessing of the military in 1972 to quell "threats to national security," was "anticipatory counter-

revolution."

The declaration of martial law was therefore a welcome move to all forces fearful of revolutionary change — among them big business groups, big landlord interests and the conservative Catholic Church hierarchy, and especially, US imperialism. Eventually, however, naked repression ceased to be a viable means of preserving the ruling system.

By this time, the AFP had become sufficiently empowered and politicized to consider arrogating unto itself the role of power-broker, if not that of power-wielder. On February 22, 1986, it actualized this perceived role by booting out Marcos, and giving way to the popularly acclaimed president, Corazon Aquino. In the face of the massive people's uprising that took place, the military mutineers of EDSA temporarily shelved their plans of declaring a junta.

"Sugar-coating"

Upon her assumption to power, Aquino faced the difficult task of rehabilitating a ruling system that lay in shambles. Marcos' openly authoritarian rule had been discredited, and the ruling classes harkened back to the era of pre-martial law politics. Utilizing the mantle of her popularity to full advantage, Aquino proceeded to strengthen her own hold on power and restore the traditional institutions of elite democracy that Marcos has abolished.

In order to buy time to consolidate her position and rehabilitate the ruling system, Aquino tried to disarm the revolutionary forces of the NDF and the MNLF and the restive Filipino masses by undertaking limited reforms. Political prisoners were released; some of Marcos' repressive laws were repealed;

and a human rights committee was established to probe abuses committed by government men. Glowing speeches were delivered by Aquino on the "restoration of democracy," the "reorientation of the military," and the "need for reconciliation" among all sectors of society. A ceasefire was negotiated and peace talks were held with the NDF and the MNLF, pending the consolidation of the AFP and the arrival of additional economic and military aid from the US.

The Aquino government and the AFP high command also rushed to clean up the military's sordid image and to arrest widespread demoralization. A series of promotions of AFP officers was announced by Aquino. Improvements were made in the delivery of logistical support to the war-front. Pay hikes for military troops were granted twice in 18 months. A P30-million fund was set aside for AFP housing projects. The delivery of P3.9 million in Pag-IBIG death and retirement benefits for about 8,000 AFP personnel was expedited, as were provisions of US medical equipment and supplies for the AFP worth at least US\$6.04 million. In addition, some 30,000 soldiers stand to benefit from an agreement between the Department of Agrarian Reform and the DND giving AFP personnel priority in the distribution of sequestered lands. More recently, an P11-billion military budget for 1988 was approved, reflecting an increase of about 20% over this year's allocation.

Meanwhile, the military continued its counter-insurgency buildup in the countryside even during the ceasefire with the NDF. Troops were positioned close to identified guerrilla strongholds in preparation for launching offensive operations. Military surveillance was intensified on NDF personalities who surfaced during the peace talks, to identify and target them for arrest or liquidation. Prior to this, the Aquino government had also endorsed the formation of anti-communist vigilante groups nationwide to boost the military's counter-insurgency efforts. By the time the ceasefire had ended on February 8, 1987, the military was already in position to implement Aquino's call for "total war" against the revolutionary forces and the organized masses in NDF areas.

Aquino's role as the "sugarcoating on the killing blade of the military" has been amply demonstrated. While she continued paying lip service to the cause of human rights, organizations such as the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP) and the Ecumenical Movement for Justice and Peace (EMJP) painted a bleak picture of the human rights situation in the



Military might: Oppressive state's main instrument for coercion

country. From March 1986 to the present, various human rights groups have documented 136 cases of political detention; 72 cases of involuntary disappearance; 190 cases of salvaging; and 351 cases of torture. In the first quarter of 1987 alone, there were seven massacre incidents involving the death of 40 persons and more than 8,000 individuals affected. The Ecumenical Commission for Displaced Families and Communities, on the other hand, reported as many as 120,000 individuals or 24,000 families forcibly displaced by militarization and related causes for the period January to October 1986 alone. Said the TFDP: "(The first year of) the Aquino regime was marked by an unbroken trend of repression which, in some regions, escalated beyond the brutality and breadth that characterized such repression during the past regime."

In a sea of hostility

But if Aquino were to be successful in her bid to save the ruling system from collapse, the military she had inherited from Marcos also had to be rehabilitated to turn it into a more effective force for counter-insurgency. Thus, the AFP high command and the defense department embarked on a number of moves designed to "professionalize" and "streamline" the military into a "lean and mean fighting machine."

Last June, AFP chief of staff Gen. Fidel Ramos announced a military reorganization affecting nine "top and sensitive positions" following reports of military involvement in election frauds during the May 11 polls. Prior to this, another planned reorganization last May would have resulted in the phaseout of all Air Force personnel assigned to secure airports all over the country, thus depriving the airmen of a lucrative source of graft money. Earlier, in January, Ramos had also announced that AFP personnel would no longer be entitled to receive donations, commissions and rebates from suppliers or dealers of military materials and equipment.

Also, in a continuing bid to "demilitarize" his department and other civilian offices, Iletto ordered groups of military officers detailed at the DND to return to their mother units. Apparently sensing that the orders were being ignored in many areas, Ramos later assumed a tougher stance by announcing that enlisted men and officers who were still holding civilian positions in government without clearance from AFP headquarters will be declared absent without leave or even court-martialed if they failed to report back to their mother units to accept their new assignments. On top of

this, military men cringed as Iletto announced some months back that he "welcomed" the investigation of human rights violations by the AFP "to help us discipline our troops," adding that discipline within the AFP "is not total."

What Aquino had not bargained for was that the AFP had already become too steeped in its own power and corruption that any move towards reform would have been met with resentment by the men in uniform.

The AFP did indeed express this resentment in various ways. In May, AFP officials in Central Luzon led by the region's PC chief Brig. Gen. Eugenio Ocampo, exposed poll irregularities in Pampanga, thus incurring the ire of staunch Aquino supporter and provincial governor Bren Guiao and embarrassing Aquino herself, who had described the elections as "the cleanest and fairest" in the country's history. The issue was resolved by transferring the maverick general (also a former head of the Reform the Armed Forces Movement or RAM) to Southern Luzon, where he later died in a helicopter crash. Also in May, AFP personnel voted overwhelmingly against the administration's candidates, favoring the opposition Grand Alliance for Democracy. Earlier, in February, a strong "no" vote was registered by the military against the Constitution whose rati-



PMA cadets: Potential coup plotters?

fication Aquino had personally campaigned for.

Meanwhile, the depth of the socio-economic crisis and the consequent inability of the Aquino government to arrest the growth of the revolutionary movement was causing widespread demoralization among military ranks. It thus became easy for the opportunistic and ambitious group of Col. Honasan to turn this resentment into hostility and to translate hostility into military action. Last August 28, the fractious and unwieldy AFP found its second victim in Corazon Aquino.

Imminent danger

The developments related to August 28 all point to the imminence of a military takeover. This has also been acknowledged by no less than noted political analyst Amando Doronila, who said in his *Manila Chronicle* column last September 9 that: "Any further attempt to unseat this government enhances the rule of the Ramos bloc as savior of the republic. Any further coup involving larger forces than the last and shedding more blood will offer Gen. Ramos the excuse to take power in the name of restoring public order. And any further coup that may succeed in toppling the Aquino government would install an alternative junta run by Honasan and like-minded officers." At the very least, Doronila has predicted a power-sharing scheme between Aquino and a Ramos-led junta.

Significantly, the August 28 coup has also shattered the illusion of the Aquino regime's "centrist politics." If anything, the recent military rebellion has succeeded in making Aquino rapidly shed the little that is left of her liberal facade and in pushing her farther to the right.

Already, Aquino is rushing a 60% increase in the salaries of enlisted men as well as a P6-billion hike in the military's budget for 1988. If passed by Congress, this will mean a huge P17-billion defense allocation, 35% higher than what was approved last July and P4 billion more than the P13-billion budget the AFP had originally requested for 1988.

Designed to mollify her restive troops, the unprecedented budget increase will certainly enhance the military's wherewithal for repression. But in the end, increasing the soldiers' pay and attending to the troops' other requirements will not be enough to arrest the steady ascendancy of the military, in whose favor the balance of power has been shifting for the past decade and a half. It is only a matter of time before the military leviathan succeeds in devouring its new victim—Corazon Aquino **Victoria Manalo**

Buckling down

• Aquino revamps Cabinet amid pressure from rival political factions

• *Parade of military hardware*

The elusive Lt. Col. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan may be in hiding. But even from his lair, he has already succeeded in manipulating Corazon Aquino and bending her according to his wishes.

Recent developments indicate, however, that Honasan's clique is not the sole actor in this ongoing drama. The congruence of demands made in the wake of the coup by the military, big business, the conservative Catholic Church hierarchy and certain government officials for the ouster of some members of Aquino's Cabinet or for a total government revamp, is particularly significant.

For one, "moneyed groups" were supposedly among those who spearheaded the campaign to oust Executive Secretary Joker Arroyo, whose resignation had also been sought by the military rebels. Named by Arroyo as the masterminds behind this plot were Cesar Buenaventura, president of Filipinas Shell Co.; Raul Concepcion, president of Concepcion Industries, Inc. and brother of Trade and Industry Secretary Jose Concepcion; and Rizalino Navarro, president of the giant Sycip, Gorres and Velayo accounting firm.

Even Representatives Emigdio Tanjustaco, Tezile Oreta and Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, all of them Aquino's relatives representing big business and

landed interests in Congress, joined the clamor for Arroyo's ouster, along with other "leftists" in government.

So shaken by such calls was Aquino that a day later, she announced the resignation of her entire Cabinet plus the heads of various government commissions. Not surprisingly, the move was hailed by business groups and by Brig. Gen. Eduardo Ermita.

The developing affinity between big business and the military was also evident when entities such as the Makati Stock Exchange, the Solid Mills Groups and the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. responded enthusiastically to a fund drive entitled "Project MATE (Martyrs of August Twenty-Eight)" organized by businessman and Presidential brother-in-law Paul Aquino. Project MATE, which ran from Sept. 1-8, allotted three-fourths of its targetted collection of P4 million to families of military and police casualties, despite the fact that the majority of those who perished during the bloody coup were innocent civilians. In an interview during its launching, Aquino did not discount the possibility that the military beneficiaries of Project MATE may also include rebel soldiers.

Speculations were also rife about the involvement in the coup of big landlord groups who felt threatened by the Aquino government's land reform moves. Weeks before, several big landlords had signed blood oaths and

vowed armed resistance to the regime's Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

Not to be outdone was the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines which reportedly asked Aquino to remove Arroyo and Presidential Special Counsel Teodoro Locsin "for the sake of God and country." Jaime Cardinal Sin's passive call for "prayers" during the height of the coup, in contrast to his urgent call for "people power" in February 1986, plus his reference to the August 28 event as an aborted "miracle," fuelled suspicions that conservative church elements may have had their fingers dipped in the coup mess.

Another likely conspirator, if not expectant beneficiary, was Vice President Salvador Laurel, whose actions before, during and after the coup betrayed some hidden agenda lurking behind his studied smiles. For one, on August 27, one day before the coup, Laurel had met with Ileta, Gen. Ramos and National Intelligence Coordinating Authority (NICA) chief Maj. Gen. Rodolfo Caneso in a closed-door conference. None of them disclosed what had transpired during that meeting, save to say that it was a briefing on "national security" and that they had agreed on the formation of armed "neighborhood associations" to combat insurgency. Hours later, the mutineers struck.

During the coup, Laurel displayed

his opportunistic streak for all to view when he opted for a conciliatory approach towards the mutineers, while others in the Cabinet demanded firm and decisive action against them. In another instance, Laurel also reportedly tried to send feelers to the revolutionary underground, inquiring about the NDF's plans regarding the coup.

Most telling, however, was his conduct of a "dialog" with military men after the coup. In these "dialogs," Laurel asked a series of leading questions like "Should the President remove Communists in government?" and "Is Gen. Ramos weak?" to which the military men answered a resounding "yes!" It was not difficult for observers to note that Laurel was deliberately fomenting dissension within an already deeply divided and hostile military, presumably in a bid to score points with the AFP and be included in a post-Aquino settlement.

Reports also indicated a probable role by the US in fuelling if not planning the coup. US officials, including Ronald Reagan, were quick to declare their support for Aquino after the coup. But sources spoke of mysterious phone conversations between US embassy officials and Cardinal Sin at the height of the coup, where the former tried to convince Sin to talk Aquino into agreeing to a military junta. Other sources also reported that US embassy officials had called Malacanang, offering to evacuate the President and her

family like they did Marcos. Reports said 31 planes were flown from Kadena US Airbase in Japan for this purpose, but Aquino refused the offer.

Sen. Raul Manglapus of the Senate's Committee on National Defense and Security also accused two US right-wing groups, the International Security Council and Causa Internationale, plus the Central Intelligence Agency, of possible complicity in the coup.

Manglapus revealed that US academicians from the ISC had conducted seminars at the National Defense College last year, where they espoused "the use of force and authoritarian methods in defending the state against subversive elements."

The congruence of interests among all these forces is of course, not new. It is a disturbing echo of the not-so-distant past, when the various sections of the ruling elite found the wielding of the military's full might a welcome intervention in the face of a people's revolution.

Aquino is well-aware of this. Thus, she lost no time in revamping her Cabinet along the lines that had been prescribed by Col. Honasan and his group. Among the first to go was Customs Commissioner Alexander Padilla. Padilla, who used to be an officer of the militant Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy, stepped on a lot of sensitive toes when he took action to clean up the corrup-

tion-mired Customs Bureau. Predictably, among those he antagonized were military-led or -protected smuggling syndicates. Arroyo and Locsin were sacked the next day. Both Arroyo and Locsin, but especially the former, had long been in the military's hate-list for being "leftist" and "anti-military." In truth, they represented the last vestiges of bourgeois liberalism within Aquino's Cabinet.

On the other hand, Aquino also had to grant some concessions to the popular will by firing Finance Secretary Jaime Ongpin and accepting the resignation of Vice President Salvador Laurel from his post as Secretary of Foreign Affairs. Ongpin had been under fire for his disastrous economic policies which led to the unjust oil price hike, while Laurel was sacked for his inept and highly inflammatory handling of his "dialogs" with the military, as well as his biting criticisms of Aquino's national security policies.

Laurel's resignation from the Cabinet, however, is thickening the plot. Speculations are rife about an emerging political alliance between himself and Enrile, who has been named by Honasan as one of the members he would like to include in his planned military-civilian junta. Willing to go to all lengths to survive in the post-Aquino period, Laurel, whose name has not been mentioned at all by Honasan, is now deserting the sinking ship of the Aquino regime and latching on to other entities whom he believes will buoy him up in the turbulent days ahead.

More revealing about the post-coup scenario are the replacements that have been named by Aquino. Padilla has been replaced by Salvador Mison and Laurel by Manuel Yan. Both Mison and Yan are retired generals of the AFP. Ongpin, on the other hand, has been replaced by his ideological confederate, Vicente Jayme. Jayme, a member of the ultra-conservative Roman Catholic group Opus Dei and the so-called Council of Trent, represents the interests of both US and local big business and the conservative Catholic Church hierarchy.

The composition of Aquino's newest Cabinet betrays not only her continuing attachment to the disastrous economic policies blazed by Ongpin, but also her buckling down to military demands for bigger and bigger shares of actual political power. It is her most Rightist Cabinet to date.

But as Aquino continues to capitulate to the military's demands, she is at the same time rapidly eroding her own power base. Soon, she may find herself eased out of her presidency altogether, the unenviable victim of the murderous rivalries among the contending factions of the ruling elite. ©



Likely plotters: Rallyists hot on Uncle Sam as power behind putsch

"The blood-dimmed tide"

Assassination of BAYAN leader Lean Alejandro recalls destabilization patterns in Third World fascist states

The destabilization process that could pave the way for a bloody military takeover has already begun. On Sept. 19, Leandro Alejandro, the 27-year-old Secretary General of the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) was brutally murdered right in front of his organization's headquarters. Even as Alejandro's slaying drew bitter condemnations from spokespersons of other cause-oriented groups, Gen. Ramos spoke at a press conference, warning the public not to take part in a *welgang bayan* ostensibly planned for Sept. 21. Military sources also deliberately planted rumors of an alleged impending attack by "communist terrorists" the day after Alejandro's brutal slaying.

The destabilization moves in the Philippines closely fit the patterns observed in other Third World countries which have also gone through the harrowing experience of a military takeover. To be sure, the revolutionary and progressive forces in the Philippines face grim prospects in the event that a military junta is set up, as attested by the experience of other Third World countries whose ruling elites had sought the same recourse. Political analyst and former CPP chairman Jose Ma. Sison foresees the threat to the Aquino regime from rival reactionary factions as "running ahead of the possibility of the victory of the armed revolution or even only of the attainment of strategic stalemate."

In Thailand, a brief three-year dalliance with "liberal democracy" ended on October 6, 1976 when more than a hundred members of the National Student Center of Thailand (NSCT) were killed and 3,059 students and supporters arrested in the now infamous Thammasat University Massacre. The massacre was the culmination of a two-year destabilization campaign by US and Thai right-wing forces. The plan included economic sabotage; an anti-communist crusade spearheaded by the elite-owned mass media; the formation of quasi-fascist or vigilante groups to give the illusion that there was a wide, popular backlash against the progressive movement; and selective assassinations of mass leaders and activists as well as bomb and grenade attacks against political gatherings and headquarters.

On the afternoon of the Thammasat Massacre, a "National Administrative Reform Council (NARC)" headed by the military, seized power on the pretext of preventing a "Vietnam-



Indonesian Army: Spearheading a holocaust in the wake of dubious coup

backed communist plot." The constitution was suspended, Parliament abolished, political organizations banned, curfew and rigid censorship imposed.

It is interesting to note that, like the Aquino regime, the "liberal" period in Thailand which ended in October 1976 came about on the crest of the 1973 popular uprising against the intensely repressive and crisis-ridden government of Thanom Kittikachorn. But this brief liberal interlude came to an end when the Thai right, led by the military, perceived the consequent rise in student activism and labor militancy and the successes of left-wing political parties in the 1974 elections to be a menace to their own specific interests.

An even more ominous scenario is posited by the case of Indonesia. Before the massive repression which started in 1965, Indonesia under President Sukarno had a coalition government where the military had much power and influence, even as the Partai Komunis Indonesia (Communist Party of Indonesia or PKI) enjoyed the status of an open party. The growing strength of the PKI, however, threatened the interests of the military, the conservative Islamic religious leaders and business groups. No less troubled by these developments was US imperialism.

Thus, on October 1, 1965, a CIA-instigated coup d'etat was launched, ostensibly by left-wing and PKI forces. The failed coup (which is believed to have been staged by the Indonesian army) was used as an excuse by the military to slaughter hundreds of thou-

sands of people belonging to the PKI and its affiliate mass organizations. In a few months time, at least 300,000 people were killed and scores of thousands were imprisoned. Other estimates place the death toll to as high as 500,000.

Soon after, President Sukarno was forced to cede important emergency powers to the army commander, General Suharto. By February 1967, Sukarno had become powerless and Gen. Suharto was President of Indonesia.

In the Philippines, military dissidents like Honasan have displayed an obvious impatience, nay, contempt, for even the token liberalism of Aquino. As implied in Honasan's manifesto given out a week after the coup attempt, they would have implemented in place of Aquino's liberal posturings, openly fascist measures such as the rearrest of released political prisoners; the commission by soldiers of human rights violations with impunity, as was done under the Marcos regime; the vigorous application of the military's full might against the insurgents; the re-adoption of Marcos-style national security laws to crush the revolutionary movement; and the suppression of militant and progressive legal organizations.

As it was in Thailand, Indonesia and other Third World fascist states, the deepening crisis of the ruling system in the Philippines will push the military, as the main pillar of the oppressive state, to move fast and proclaim itself as the savior of a dying order. ■

Looming specter of martial law

NDF official Satur Ocampo warns against return of open fascist rule

As press conferences go, it was hardly a familiar site. A forest clearing with a rough wooden table and long benches. Young men with firearms slung on their shoulders. But for the press people gathered that morning of September 12, it was a familiar face that greeted them—Satur Ocampo of the NDF. Also present in that press conference which was held in a guerrilla zone south of Manila was Gregorio Rosal or "Ka Roger," NPA spokesperson for Southern Luzon. Excerpts:



NDF official Satur Ocampo

Q: What did you mean when you called on the people to prepare for more militant resistance?

A: There are two aspects of resistance: one, armed resistance by the NPA and its other units — the militia, the armed city partisans — both in the countryside and the cities.

Secondly, there is the unarmed resistance, the political struggles of the people such as protest marches. Our call is for the intensification of political struggles even beyond the Welgong Bayan . . . Welgong Bayan hits the mark, and the government responded to it in fact. So, it's clear that it's one area where people could benefit from, although we are not confident that it is enough to effect the change we all want.

Q: Can you elaborate on your statement — that the events after the failed coup "show up US imperialism's intense maneuvering to arrange a compromise between the colliding factions within the present regime?"

A: That's a general statement, that implies our analysis of the national situation, where the US government plays a very important, and oftentimes, critical role in the resolution of national political questions.

For us, knowing the pattern of behavior of the American government in the entire Philippine history, we cannot remove the fact of American involvement in the coup. More so, in trying to bring about a situation where the US can exert more pressure on the Aquino government to undertake certain policies or measures that would better promote American interests in this country.

The coup sort of catalyzed the situation. It has provoked the Aquino government into reorganizing the Cabinet. It has practically driven Mrs. Aquino to give the AFP a free hand in the conduct of the total war campaign against us. *Kahit na sinasabing nabigo ang Gringo coup, malaki ang pakinabang ng Armed Forces. Pinagbigyan sila ngayon.*

Here, the NDF warns of a trend giving the Armed Forces a bigger role in running the government . . . We foresee that, unless the people's resistance is intensified, we will be going back to open fascist rule, like the Marcos regime.

The revolutionary forces, the organized masses, the people who are opposed to a return to such type of rule — where armed repression is the dominant characteristic — must unite and prevent (this). It's not the Aquino government that is capable of preventing such a situation. In fact, it would be the government which would bring it about. . . unless the people's resistance countervails.

Q: Were the blowing up of bridges in Bicol part of that "increased resistance?"

A: In Bicol, it's not the NDF forces or the NPA (who blew up the bridge). We're investigating other groups (who) also have the capability to do so, and may have the intentions of

destabilizing the government.

Ka Roger: But the bombing of a bridge here in Real (Infanta, Quezon) was our work, and it was part of a military operation. Before the August 28 coup, the AFP was keeping massive troops—more or less one brigade—in the Real-Infanta-Nakar area.

During the coup, most of the government troops were withdrawn. The NPA's objective was to prevent the return of those forces. Those who were left behind . . . one platoon of the 59th IB, were ambushed.

We would like to ask for understanding though, from the people and the businessmen who were inconvenienced by our action (that) blowing up the bridges was part of our military effort to stop the return of the government troops.

Q: How has the coup changed your policy?

A: The coup did not cause remarkable change in us, because even before the putsch, there has been a directive to our forces to intensify all struggles — political and military.

But of course, the coup exposed the deep divisions within the Armed Forces of the Philippines. And we say, it is a good opportunity to advance our struggle. Any military tactician would recognize that as a good opportunity. So we also made a call to men and officers of the AFP to stay away from the fighting and not allow themselves to be used as pawns. . . .

Whatever the result of such factional collision will not benefit the revolutionary movement. Their major point of difference, after all, was how to effectively suppress the revolutionary movement. If Honasan won, the (war) would indeed be bloodier. But, even as they (rebel troops) lost, we see the Aquino government going the same way.

In seeking to resolve their conflicts, the Aquino government tries to arrive at unity by giving in to the demands of the rebel troops. They are being united to make them stronger against us.

From a strategic point of view, the AFP are still on the offensive, we on the defensive. Therefore, our taking of tactical offensives is still part of a defensive strategy to safeguard our gains and advance them, and to prevent the enemy from consolidating as a stronger force to crush us.

Q: How do you look at Cory's peace initiatives? Government peace negotiator Alan Bengzon said the government will now strike more at the root causes of the insurgency rather than resort to negotiations. He said the government will negotiate when it is ready.

A: It is a realization that they were not prepared or not sincere in the first round of our talks.

We saw Mr. Bengzon's memo to Mrs. Aquino. Whichever way you look at it, there was nothing that they can offer. In fact, our general interpretation of the peace proposal was: it's a peace proposal for war.

You should also look closely into the "principles underlying the quest for peace." Bengzon says there should be a balance (between) peace and order, and the demands for socio-economic change. ("Peace is not security, neither is it accommodation.") If undertaking social change like land reform would destabilize the situation. . . (their proposal is self-negating).

Secondly, he says the government will seek all avenues to peace, but all these must be within constitutional constraints. That's also self-negating. So we say, there was no change from their old framework: do everything within the confines of the Constitution.

Q: Do you foresee the downfall of Mrs. Aquino before her term ends?

A: It's very difficult to say that (the government) will fall, because it will not fall on its own. Of course, there are countervailing forces.

But its internal weaknesses and problems will not be resolved during the period. We see the continuing decline of the ruling system and the Aquino regime. The decline will continue no matter if Mrs. Aquino is overthrown or refuses to run in 1991.

If the socio-economic program and the military policies against the people are not changed, that decline will be faster. It will depend, on the other hand, on the strength of the people's forces.



Hastening the regime's decline: Another Cory promise gone awry

Q: Is there any possibility of (NDF) support for Mrs. Aquino?

A: For us, it's not a choice between the Cory faction or the Honasan faction or other ultra-rightist groups. What we offer is our program. Since we cannot say that we are strong enough to take the place of the Aquino government, *magpapatuloy kami magpapalakas.*

Tag malinaw na kung saan pumanig ang pinakamalaking bahagi ng kaaway, puwede. Pero ang layunin ng NDF ay hindi para suportahan ang Aquino faction, kundi talunin ang mas malakas na faction; tapos, tuluy-tuloy na lalabanan.

Ang NDF laban sa dekwang 'yan (Aquino and Honasan factions). Ngayon, kung sino ang mangingibabaw, 'yun ang main enemy. Sa ngayon, nangingibabaw ang Aquino regime (kaya) doon ang direction ng laban. When it becomes clear that the faction represented by Honasan has won, we may indirectly support the Aquino government because we shall fight the dominant faction. But the objective is not to sup-

port the Aquino faction, but to fight the dominant faction. The NDF is against both, and whoever is dominant is the main enemy. Right now, the Aquino regime remains our main enemy.

In the countryside, there is no difference between open fascist rule and the rule of President Aquino. They are both vicious.

Q: That means you will support the Aquino government in its fight against the coup plotters?

A: The point is not to support, but (to determine) the direction of the attacks. In case the faction represented by Honasan dominates, it becomes our main enemy, thus indirectly helping the Aquino faction. But the intention of the revolutionary movement is not to help Mrs. Aquino, but prevent it from becoming stronger and retaking power.

Dapat ang laging tungkulin ng rebolusyonaryo, palakasin ang sariling puwersa ng mamamayan, hindi 'yung palakasin ang kalaban niya dahil mas malaking kalaban ang isa. Kundi sisirain mo ang sarili mo.

'Yung iba, may tendency na tignan na tinutulungan namin ang Honasan faction dahil nilalabanan namin ang Cory government. Ang patakaran namin, mas malakas na bigwas sa mga pasista - Honasan, etc., pero hindi nawawala, na ang pangunahing kalaban pa rin ay ang nakatayong gubyerno.

Q: That is so for the underground left, but for the legal left, it's harder.

A: Yes, that's true. The legal left will always have such problems because they operate within the legal framework. But we speak only for the underground, which is the stronger movement and the more decisive.

The underground can even build an alternative government. In fact, this has been formed - and we call it, an emerging government.

Q: What organizational level have you reached?

A: Municipal level. There are clusters of NDF municipal committees moving towards the provincial level.

Q: You say you cannot rule out the possibility of US involvement in the coup attempt. Please substantiate.

A: Honasan and the RAM boys were constantly in touch with the US embassy. *Sa US naman, sa loob ng CIA, Defense Department, sa Pentagon, mayroong groups na ang trabaho ay alagaan ang iba't ibang factions ng ruling class sa mga client states. Hindi nila pinababayaan na ang isang paksyon, kahit na pro-US na hindi nasusulsulan o nari-rendahan. It's part of US tactics.*

So we can say that Honasan has some US backing. As to whether that is the dominant view in Washington seems unlikely because Reagan's dominant support is still for Mrs. Aquino.

Q: What is your policy towards Honasan? Will you go after him?

A: One possible refuge for Honasan is Cagayan. The NDF in Far North Luzon has issued a statement that they will attack Honasan and his group when they're spotted in the territory. **Ka Roger:** He can also hide in the Sierra Madre. Here, there are also NPA forces, and we will attack - whether Honasan's or Mrs. Aquino's group.

Q: Since the coup, was there qualitative change in your struggle?

A: Whether our military offensives were faster, or more - not really. *Hindi naman ora-orada ang NPA operations. They are planned. All commands, regional, front and district commands, have plans.*

Generally, our target is to get more arms, increase our forces, train them and eliminate bad elements in our territories to allow more freedom for people's organizations.

Q: If US military aid for the Aquino government is increased and the Honasan threat has been eliminated, are you also open to seek military aid from other countries?

A: The insurgency war is not simply Filipinos fighting Filipinos, because the United States is very much involved. The US clearly by its statement, supports Mrs. Aquino. The truth is, they are already launching a total war. *Kung mas mahina ang capability ng guberno, hindi na namin kasalanan kung ga-noon sila. Kung nauupakan sila, nababantayan sila, huwag sisihin ang NPA, dahil kung sila naman ang nakakatiyempo, kami naman ang kawawa.*

If we are to decide, we really want the US out of the picture. No outside country must intervene.... But the US is meddling in this war, and we are forced to seek support, political and military, from a broad anti-US imperialist movement.



Defense man Ileto: US boy

Q: Do you foresee another martial law?

A: Look at the signs. Defense Secretary Rafael Ileto and the others were saying that if conditions get worse, martial law will be justified. Right now, they're saying not yet. That is self-contradictory. On the one hand, they're saying they are prepared to recommend stronger security measures, but they would not admit that they are losing to the point that they have to resort to that.

The internal weaknesses within the ruling system have become glaring. If they cannot resolve the contradictions among the factions, as well as the economic and political crises, there will be more pressure towards a state of emergency.

They call it a "state of national emergency," but it could mean a "limited martial law," with Congress' (approval). The danger is that, the AFP, which is used to martial law repression, will implement it and will not see the distinction anymore.

Ka Roger: Here in the countryside, there is already an existing state of martial law. There are three battalions of enemy troops in Quezon province alone, and that is more than at anytime in the past. There are also more salvaging cases today in Southern Tagalog than at anytime during Marcos' martial law period. The only difference we see is that there is no formal declaration of martial law, and that Mrs. Aquino is a popular president.

Q: Since you foresee a return of "open fascist rule," are you prepared for it?

A: The legal left is (the one) really in danger. But for us in the underground, it will hardly matter because we are (already getting) the worst from the Aquino government.

Q: Do you foresee an escalation of guerrilla action against a divided army?

A: The call is out for an escalation.

Ka Roger: Even before the failed coup d'etat, the call to intensify military action had been made. Since July, our tactical offensives have been continuous and increasing.

Q: How widespread is your provisional government?

A: Essentially, NDF committees are in areas where people's organizations — peasant groups, women's groups, youth organizations, etc. — are relatively well consolidated. The people are able to elect officers in the barrio. There is a militia, programs for health care, education and emerging socio-

economic programs.

In highly populated areas, these committees are concentrated. In some areas, they are far apart from each other. (They have) different levels of development, and different problems. Our concern now is to build up from municipal level to provincial level committees or governments.

Ka Roger: There are some areas where there are yet no formal structures and programs such as those mentioned by Satur, but the authority recognized is that of the NDF and not of the Aquino government. In some barrios, there are still barangay captains, barangay councils, but the decision-making has long been made by the people through their organizations under the NDF, which are clandestine. Military operations such as hamletting can destroy these underground structures — but in the people's hearts and minds, the NDF is the recognized authority.

Q: You have called for an escalated war or struggle; can you sustain that in terms of ammunition?

Ka Roger: *Hindi pa nauubusan, umaani pa.*

Q: What countries and governments can possibly help you militarily?

A: We cannot comment on that. We don't want to prejudice the international diplomatic work of the NDF.

Q: Surely, the arms you seize from the government will not be enough.

A: *Sa naagaw, puwedeng tapatan 'yon.* But now, they introduce fighter planes, artillery, heligunships. We need armaments to counter that: *kung makaagaw man kami, konti lang 'yon.*

But as of now, we just try to minimize the damaging effects of these war materiel. But we also recognize that they have to be effectively neutralized, because government soldiers are very easily demoralized if the NPA is able to seize, say mortars — and is able to use these against them. So, *'pag tumaas ang level ng armaments namin, mas mabilis ang demoralization ng kaaway. Sa dami na lang idinadaan ngayon.*

Q: How successful has been the low intensity conflict?

A: LIC is a long-term program, which includes a socio-economic aspect. We think it has not been fully implemented for lack of resources. On the whole, vigilantes have not affected our growth, they are on the way to self-destruction.

Q: Gen. Ramos has confirmed reports for the first time that Russian ships have unloaded arms for you. Is that true?

A: We deny that now in this press conference.

Q: What can you say about Mrs. Aquino's Council of State?

A: Well, there are representatives of the military, big capitalists and the church, but no representatives from the basic masses. These are the groups to whom Mrs. Aquino has consistently run for help.

Q: Do you foresee victory in three to five years?

A: (It's) not very far from now. In future years maybe, we shall be able to tell (exactly when), after a qualitative change shall have occurred, and a new balance of forces shall have become evident. That will determine how fast the NDF will develop or how fast it will be weakened. We say that from a strategic point of view, although there are short-term indicators that we are tactically stronger or weaker.

Q: Would you say you're growing more rapidly now?

A: We say we have continuing growth. In 1986, there has been a relative lag in our growth due to the confusion whether to regard Mrs. Aquino as ally or enemy. The ceasefire also stunted our growth. But since then, we have been consistently gathering strength. ■

MAINSTREAM

Developments in the people's movements

Thunder before the storm

Oil price hike protests indicate rapid erosion of Aquino's popularity

It was a grim-faced President Aquino who appeared on national television on August 25, ordering a reduction in oil prices by an average 50 centavos per liter. In what was seen by many as an adroit move to preempt a brewing political storm, the President took pains to underscore that the reduction would entail a yearly loss of P1.7 billion in government revenues.

In the same televised speech, Aquino also belabored several justifications for having raised oil prices by 93 centavos to P1.32 last August 15. She insisted that although government was aware that the oil price hike was "bad politics," it was "a necessary measure at the time it was made." "We are not an oil-producing country, nor are we a debt-free country," explained Mrs. Aquino defensively. "We must roll with every punch delivered by developments abroad even as we carry the burden of the debt we inherited."

But no matter, a broad cross-section of the Filipino people rallied to the *welgang bayan* call of the Coalition Against the Oil Price Increase (COAPI), the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) and the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), the next day. Despite the well-publicized oil price reduction and the threats of reprisal from the military and government, August 26 saw the country's key city centers coming to a

near-standstill as various organizations ranging from conservative to the Left held joint protest actions to demand the complete rollback of oil prices.

The *welgang bayan* featured the most crippling transport strike ever since the early '70s. In Metro Manila, the dailies reported a 95% to 100% standstill. In the cities of Davao, Bacolod, Iloilo, General Santos and Iligan, and the provinces of Bulacan and Bataan, transportation was paralyzed.

Alongside the transport strike, march-rallies, factory strikes, walk-outs and work stoppages were simultaneously launched across the archipelago. Among the biggest establishments hit by workers' strikes were the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company (PLDT), the Philippine Air Lines (PAL), the Atlas Mines in Cebu, the Philphos Mines in Leyte, and electric companies in Iloilo and Leyte. So sweeping was the impact of the *welgang bayan* that it caused a 60%-65% non-attendance in government and private offices, the early dismissal of employees in most firms, the suspension of classes in all levels even without an order from the Department of Education and the disruption of certain strategic activities including long distance telephone services, airline flights and power-generation.

In all, the protest action, which

generated widespread spontaneous support highlighted the erosion of the Aquino government's much-vaunted popularity. Its move to partially roll back oil prices was a clearly defensive reaction to stem the surging tide of protest. Not even the moves of local government officials in Metro Manila and elsewhere to field alternative vehicles could diminish the success of the people's strikes.

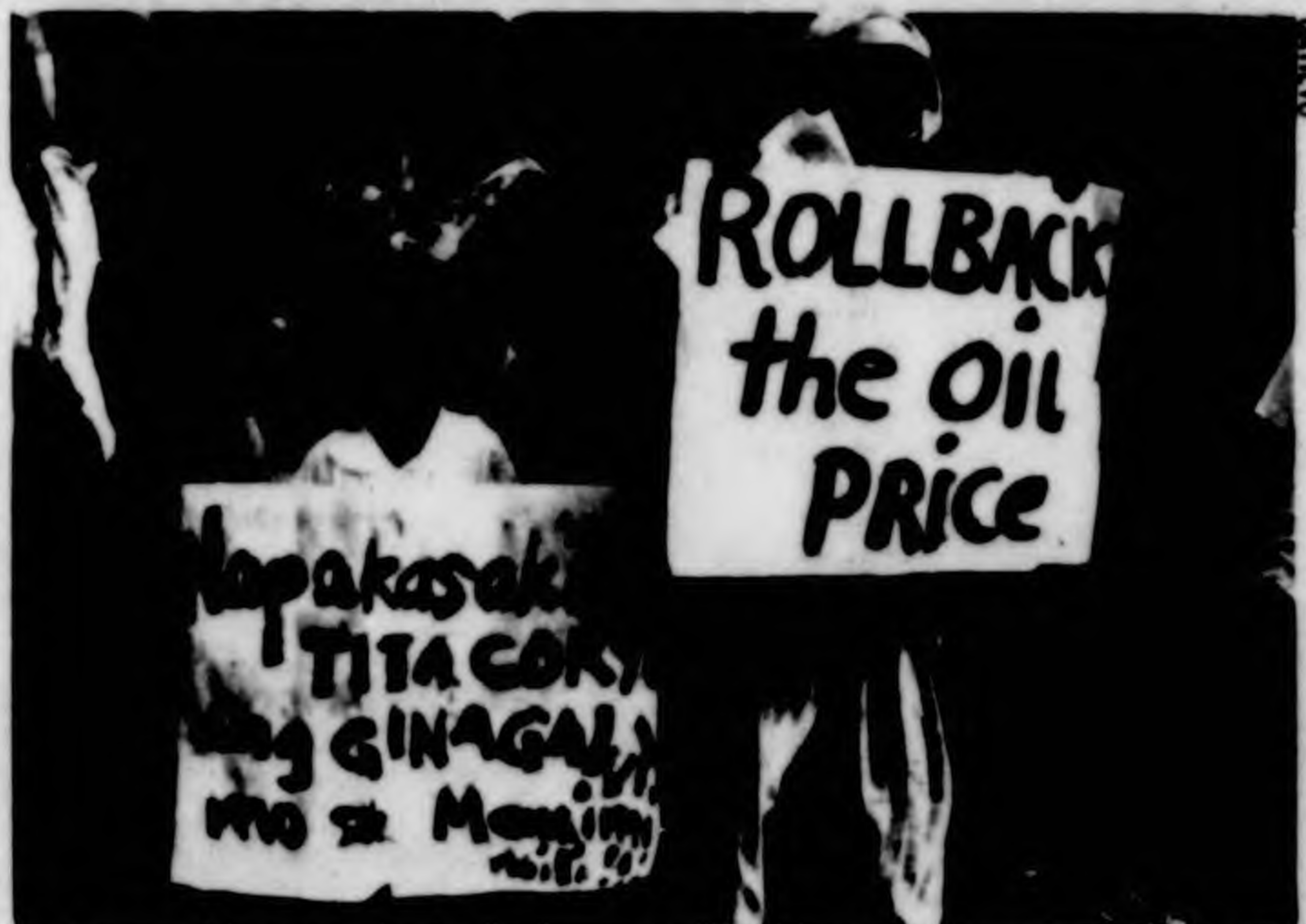
The wave of violent dispersal operations undertaken by fully armed AFP soldiers and policemen against several barricade centers and march-rallies in Metro Manila, Cavite, Cebu and other areas, plus the arrest of some leaders of the striking organizations further underscored the desperation and weakness of the government. Had President Aquino succeeded in convincing the nation to "roll with the punches" inflicted by the "weakness of the economy," August 26 could have been just another ordinary day. The fact, however, is that, the government underestimated the people's awareness of the real issues behind the oil price increase.

In preparing the masses to more decisively act on their economic interests, militant organizations have time and again stressed that it is the government's subservience to multinational oil companies that spurs the imposition of oil price hikes. In a statement released on August 28, the KMU and the LFS (League of Filipino Students) asserted that there was no truth to the claim of Shell, Caltex and other big oil conglomerates that they were losing because of adverse developments in the oil market. The KMU and the LFS underscored that the oil companies simply wanted to pass the burden of higher production costs to consumers, to maintain the profitability of their business.

When finally the issue came to a head on August 15, the unleashing of the people's growing discontent over the policies of the Aquino government was made possible by sufficient political preparations that exposed the pro-imperialist bent of the present state. In the end, even the conservative sections of the labor front were forced to join the popular anti-oil price hike movement.

As the Aquino government continues to hold on to the IMF-World Bank-inspired economic recovery program and its disastrous prescriptions which uphold foreign and local big business above all else — it can expect a groundswell of more economic protests in the months to come. The August 26 *welgang bayan* is only the thunder to a bigger storm that cannot but come with the fast deterioration of the people's economic conditions.

Andrea V. Jacinto



Welgang bayan barricade: Effecting a standstill in Manila and elsewhere

Escape from a web of intrigue

Former CPLA military chief bolts out of Balweg's group

"The CPLA is rotten to the core and only those susceptible to corruption can still stomach the organization."

Concluding thus, Ka Wanas, chief of staff of the Military Commission

and a founding member of the Cordillera People's Liberation Army (CPLA), terminated his 14-month adventure with this new CHDF-type appendage of the AFP. His four-page statement dated August 8, 1987 is a

telling expose of the CPLA's internal disintegration as viewed from within, as it is the story of ethnic revolutionaries caught in a destructive web of intrigue and sabotage.

When in April last year, the CPLA led by Conrado Balweg broke away from the NPA, Ka Wanas thought they were sincerely helping out resolve certain "unhealthy relations" between them and "some comrades in the (Communist) Party's territorial leadership." "Our act (meant to be a temporary withdrawal) was essentially addressed not to the Party as a whole, but to this said leadership," he said.

However, the military was quick to exploit the brewing differences. It cunningly made use of two confirmed AFP deep-cover agents—"Libnap" (Mailed Molina) and "Fara" (Loida Agaluos)—who were entrenched in the CPLA leadership even before the open split. "Looking back, I recognize the enemy's role in aggravating the situation (as) opportunists among us manipulated things (leading us) away from the correct path of . . . resolving our organizational contradictions and reuniting our revolutionary ranks," recalled Ka Wanas, who like Balweg is a Tingguian from Abra. "With the actual founding and cooptation (of the CPLA) into the service of the enemy . . . the forces of reaction created greater and greater confusion among us and among the people."

Records from the Cordillera Operational Command of the NPA show that CPLA ringleaders and die-hard followers are guilty of factionalism leading to armed mutiny and mass desertion, espionage, collaboration with the enemy and blood debts, including petty crimes. Not only had the CPLA sown confusion, it had in fact turned against the people of the Cordillera. Under the NPA rules of discipline, one or a combination of these crimes can be meted with capital punishment; minor offenses are treated leniently.

But the burden of guilt falls on the shoulders of Conrado Balweg. Describing him as a "pseudo-revolutionary," Ka Wanas accused Balweg of misleading and using the guerrillas and the masses for his own selfish ends. "The focal point of Balweg's thesis (that there are no antagonistic class contradictions in the Cordillera) is not the actual situation obtaining . . . but an imagined reality. He must fake such reality in order to negate the necessity of armed struggle in achieving self-determination in the Cordillera," said the

Towards a progressive CPLA wing?

LIBERATION welcomes the following letter of Joven Peleador which seeks to clarify the actual situation within the CPLA organization. Peleador is the former Kabatnang Makabayan general secretary who resigned from the KM last year because of internal problems. We are reprinting his letter in full.

Dear Editor,

Revolutionary greetings!

I would like to raise a few points regarding your article on the Cordillera in your June-July issue.

The CPDF concludes that the CPLA has degenerated into a counter-revolutionary force. On the other hand, it does not state its own role in the development of a right-wing tendency within the CPLA.

The CPLA, after splitting from the NPA, is still at a process of defining its role in the revolutionary struggle. Within the CPLA, there is a tendency towards being a genuinely independent revolutionary organization (the second scenario raised by the CPDF at the outset). This tendency has been critical of Conrado Balweg's open anti-CPD pronouncements by arguing that this will only benefit the Right. The CPDF knows about differences within the CPLA, as could be read from its previous media blitz on the "factions" within the CPLA. However, instead of assisting this progressive tendency, it pursued the policy of eliminating the CPLA wholly while it is still split.

The CPDF-NPA staged an ambush on CPLA and CBA men in Abra, killing not only CPLA fighters but also non-armed CBA leaders. The irony of it is that one of the CPLA leaders killed is Ka Angat, who has been one of Balweg's critics. Before the ambush, Ka Angat took a month of leave of absence from the CPLA because of his criticisms. One of these criticisms concerns the attitude towards the NPA. Although Ka Angat is convinced that the CPLA should remain independent of the NPA, he is open to forging good relations with it. So, how can you expect this progressive tendency within the CPLA to flourish?

Also, the ambush has all the more hardened the position of the staunch anti-NPA elements within the CPLA. In a situation where their lives are at stake, what do you expect?

If the CPDF is sincere in resolving its differences with the CPLA, it should admit its mistakes in the past. Fr. Eddie Balicso's statement that the "Party dictatorship" in the Cordillera is a "false charge" is a total lie. The CPDF should not use the pretext that criticisms against it would weaken their position and strengthen the enemy. On the contrary, the people would appreciate self-criticism as a posture of sincerity.

Thank you very much. I hope my friends in the CPDF read this letter.

In solidarity,
Joven Peleador

former CPLA commander.

That is why, in practice, according to Ka Wanas: "Balweg and other CPLA stalwarts are a collection of reactionaries and political opportunists. They hide behind revolutionary terms such as 'socialism' while insisting that this could be achieved through mere negotiations with a government dominated by landlords and compradors who shiver even at the idea of pre-socialist land reform and nationalization of big business!"

The logic behind this, which escaped Ka Wanas at that time, finally became clear with the mutual signing of Aquino's executive order creating the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR). This paper meant "the final surrender of the CPLA to the regime's divide-and-rule strategy . . . in the Cordillera." Above all, said Ka Wanas, "It exposed the CPLA's or Balweg's struggle (as) nothing but an effort to wrestle economic and political favors . . . a chance to bag for themselves bounty shares from the Aquino government."

Undoubtedly, discovering Balweg's underhanded game has been a painful experience for Ka Wanas and other comrades. He personally witnessed how the Military Commission which he headed "turned lameduck" as Balweg monopolized decision-making and imposed "virtual dictatorship" over the CPLA. Moreover, their lives had been put on the line because Balweg deceived them into becoming "targets of the revolution."

However, discovering brings enlightenment, and with it, courage. Feeling deep remorse for his involvement, Ka Wanas expressed willingness to atone for it: "(I would like to) make public my wish to return to the mainstream of the revolutionary movement . . ." As for comrades still in the CPLA, he advises them to "get out before it is too late." ■



CPLA chief Conrado Balweg: Lost cause



NPA fighters: Collecting a string of victories

A show of liberating courage

NPA in Negros stages daring raids against military and vigilante groups

"We will punish the AFP and anti-communist groups that are serving as tools of American imperialism, the feudal landlords and (exploitative) capitalists."

Thus blared a voice over radio in Sugarlandia on August 14. Sepa Liwanag, an NPA spokesperson, echoed the vow of the New People's Army in Negros to heighten their offensives and erode the economic and military power base of repressive rule in the island.

Following her pronouncement, the national papers came out with successive news of daring NPA assaults in Victorias, Manapla, Cauayan and La Carlota towns. A total of at least eight NPA raids on police stations, municipal halls and sugar centrals were reported in Negros Occidental during the last two weeks of August.

The big news about the offensives started with the August 16 raid on the country's biggest sugar central and the warehouse of the Planters Cooperative and Marketing Company in Victorias. At about 6:30 p.m., the NPAs carted away in less than an hour, two shotguns, a .38 and a .32 caliber pistol and P2 million worth of radio electronic equipment, foodstuff, clothing materials and vehicle spare parts.

On August 23, 200 NPAs raided the town hall and police station of Manapla. When the policemen insist-

ed on putting up a fight, the guerrillas were forced to throw molotov cocktails that burned the buildings and razed the nearby houses of Manapla's officer-in-charge and municipal board member.

The Manapla raid, the biggest of recent attacks in Negros, yielded office supplies and equipment for the NPA and three casualties on the side of the military. A day after the encounter, four more battalions of Constabulary and Army soldiers, backed by helicopter gunships, were rushed to Negros Occidental.

To block the massive reinforcement of AFP troops and war materiel, the NPAs blasted a major bridge in Barangay Manoling, Cauayan on August 28. Other diversionary operations were also confirmed by a comrade from the Visayas NDF to ease the pressures and difficulties that were mounting on the besieged NPA unit in Manapla.

Finally, on August 28, while Honsan's forces were staging a coup attempt at the regime's seat of power in Manila, about 100 NPAs engaged an equal number of AFP troops in a non-stop 17-hour battle in La Carlota, south of Bacolod. Despite its use of two helicopter gunships and two V-150 armored personnel carriers, the AFP failed to capture and kill a significant number of NPAs and thus break the military's end-August record of successive defeats. ■

"No more compromises!"

MNLF withdraws from peace negotiations with Aquino government

Three decades ago, a general based in Camp Murphy (now known as Camp Aguinaldo) was asked what he thought was the best answer to a brewing Moro rebellion in the South. His answer: Drop an atomic bomb on Sulu!

Crazy though his answer might have been, it reveals the historically violent response of successive Philippine governments to the Moro people's demand for their right to self-determination. Under the Aquino government, the response has remained basically the same. This is reflected in the escalating hostilities in Mindanao following the failed peace talks between the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the government.

Reminiscent of the earlier NDF-GRP peace negotiations, the signs of its impending failure were evident from the very start. Observed Ike de los Reyes, a member of the NDF-Mindanao Council and NDF-Ranao Regional Secretariat: "The government did not hold the NDF-GRP and MNLF-GRP talks simultaneously, but it used the same approach for both. From the beginning, the Aquino government was not sincere in dealing with the MNLF. As in our (NDF) case, it insisted on using the Constitution as the ready-made framework for the talks."

"MNLF field commanders had no illusion that they could get anything out of the talks," de los Reyes said. "But they were good soldiers enough to follow the MNLF Central Committee. They wanted to show the Moro masses that they are also interested in peace."

That road to peace started late last year when MNLF chairman Nur Misuari toured the Moro areas for public



MNLF chief Nur Misuari: No illusions

consultations. The culminating site of these dialogs should have been in Zamboanga City, but the AFP demanded that Misuari reduce his 1,500 security force to 250 men. The MNLF saw this as an insult that they did not have actual control and influence in the Bangsa Moro homeland.

But still, the Moro fighters persevered to get the peace talks going. On February 9, a day after the final collapse of the NDF-GRP negotiations, the MNLF and government panels formally met. The MNLF by then had scaled down their demand for secession and focused instead on winning autonomy or self-government for the 23 provinces of Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan, as provided for in the Tripoli Agreement. This agreement was inked by both the MNLF and the Marcos government on Dec. 23, 1976. Marcos, however, violated it by creating two "autonomous regions" in only 10 provinces, instead of one autonomous region composed of 23 provinces as the agreement prescribed.

Even with the MNLF's concession though, the government was dead-set in confining the talks within the strictures of the 1986 Constitution which was then yet to be ratified. Misuari demanded that the Charter's provisions on Moro autonomy be suspended or excluded from the plebiscite. The MNLF through its chief negotiator Habib Mujahab Hashim also insisted that the government-proposed referendum be held in only 10 provinces and that the 13 others would be governed by the Tripoli Agreement. Still, the government would not budge on either point.

The final straw came when the Aquino government refused to transfer the next round of talks to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, ignoring the status of belligerency that the MNLF enjoys. According to MNLF lawyer Didagan Dilangalen, the MNLF had been accorded the status of belligerency in 1976 when Marcos and Misuari inked the Tripoli Agreement in Libya. At the same time, the Organization of the Islamic Conference recognizes the MNLF as the representative of the Moro people in articulating their demands for self-determination.

Finally, in June, after 90 days of on-again, off-again peace talks, the MNLF told Aquino: "No more compromises!"



They gave talks a try: BMA fighters marching to dialog site

"Fearless and principled"

NDF pays tribute to Desdemona Tan-Misuari (1947 - 1987)

Last July 4, Desdemona Tan-Misuari, 40, wife of Chairman Nur Misuari of the Moro National Liberation Front, died in a Pakistan hospital after a week in coma. She had not recovered fully from a gall bladder operation when she left the Philippines on May 8, following the collapse of the Aquino govern-

ment's peace negotiations with the MNLF. She was a founding member of the Bangsa Moro Women's Organization which rallied Moro women behind the MNLF's fight for self-determination. Following is the NDF's statement on her death:

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines conveys its deepest condolences to Chairman Nur Misuari of the Moro National Liberation Front on the death of his beloved wife and comrade-in-struggle, Desdemona Tan. We also convey our condolences to their families and to the rest of the Bangsa Moro people.

We in the NDF knew and respected Desdemona as a consistent militant in the struggle of the Moro people for self-determination. Those of us who knew her from her student days at the University of the Philippines remember her warmth and wit and admire her transformation into a fearless and uncompromising fighter who refused to surrender her principles till the very end.



Sister in the anti-imperialist struggle

In the last days of her life, Desdemona worked for a just and enduring peace for the Bangsa Moro people — a principle which the NDF shares with and fights for alongside our Moro brothers and sisters. We will always remember and be inspired by her words about the enemies of the Moro people, which includes US imperialism: "If we will not lick them now, we will lick them later. We will fight to the last man and woman."

The National Democratic Front mourns Desdemona's death not only as a great loss to the Moro people and to the Moro struggle, but to the overall anti-imperialist struggle in the Philippines. We salute our sister Desdemona Tan-Misuari as a heroine in our joint struggle for freedom, democracy, justice and peace. ■

Noted Narciso Estenzo, another member of the NDF-Mindanao Council: "Even Brother Misuari had no illusions about the talks. But there are people in the MNLF Central Committee who have been influenced by GRP panel member Norberto Gonzales, who insisted that the Moro revolutionaries give in to the Aquino government." Gonzales is a known right-wing leader of the social democrats whom many suspect to have dubious connections with the CIA.

But as the adage goes, experience is the best teacher. And to the MNLF, their bitter experience in dealing with the Aquino government has only taught them who are their real enemies. "The talks collapsed because of the insincerity of the Aquino government. The present government has shown it is worse than the Marcos government as far as resolving the Moro issue is concerned," said MNLF chief negotiator Hashim in what is considered the MNLF's strongest words against the Aquino regime.

To assert their position, the MNLF bared their last words on the failed peace talks: "The Aquino government wants us to surrender. But we are revolutionaries and not fools." ■



A failed truce: Bitter lessons reminiscent of the NDF experience

SPARKS

Newsbriefs about people's struggles

MASSIVE FUNERAL MARCH HELD FOR LEAN



Final tribute: March-rally weaving through Manila

Some 10,000 mourners accompanied slain Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) Secretary-General Leandro Alejandro to his final resting place in Navotas last Sept. 29. The marchers chanted "*Lean, Lean, itutuloy ang laban!*" as they traversed the 20-kilometer distance from the University of the Philippines where Lean lay in state, to the former youth leader's hometown in Navotas, where he was buried. Residents of Malabon and Navotas lined the streets in their thousands to witness the torch-lit funeral cortege make its way to the San Jose Cemetery. Prior to this, the marchers made a brief stopover at Mendiola, where speakers assailed the Aquino regime for Lean's murder.

Lean was killed in an ambush by suspected military agents last Sept. 19 in front of the BAYAN office in Quezon City.

NEPA HITS AUGUST 28 COUP ATTEMPT

The National Economic Protectionism Association (NEPA) condemned the August 28 coup led by Col. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan as a "ruthless attempt to reimpose dictatorship." In a statement issued after the coup, NEPA said that while the coup failed, this should not lead the people to complacency about the dangers posed by those who would impose a mailed-fist solution to the current political and economic crisis.

The nationalist businessmen's group also blamed the current crisis on the Aquino regime's inability to fully dismantle the institutions of the past dictatorship and to heed the legitimate demands of the people. NEPA moreover cited the government's economic policy which, it said, is no different from that of the Marcos regime's economic program in its subservience to the dictates of the IMF and World Bank. NEPA said that because 35% to 40% of the proposed budget for 1987 and 1988 was allocated for debt service, funds for land reform, health, education, housing and other social services were limited.

In the same statement, NEPA called on the people to unite and struggle for 1) the dismantling of the dictatorship's apparatus of repression; 2) the reform and reorientation of the military in the people's service and the purging of all fascist elements; 3) the implementation of a nationalist and pro-people economic program which rejects dependence on foreign capital and subservience to foreign dictates; 4) the termination of foreign interference in our internal affairs; and 5) the achievement of a genuinely democratic government that is truly responsive to the people's needs and aspirations.

EDJOP REMEMBERED

Annual commemorative rites for revolutionary martyr Edgar "Edjop" Jopson were held last September 19-21 to mark his fifth death anniversary. Edjop was a leading NDF cadre and nationalist who was killed by the Marcos regime's military forces on Sept. 21, 1982 in Davao City.



During the commemoration, the Edgar M. Jopson Memorial Foundation, Inc. (EJMF) launched a regular discussion arena called the "Forum," with its first topic "First Quarter Storm Revisited." The following day, ribbon-cutting ceremonies marked the formal opening of the EJMF's Nationalist Library and the foundation's first anniversary. On Sept. 21, a mass was held at the Ateneo Chapel in Loyola Heights, Quezon City for Edjop and other people's martyrs.

KGM ASSAILS OIL PRICE HIKE

The Katipunan ng mga Gurong Makabayan (KGM) branded the Aquino government's move to increase oil prices and its adamant position in refusing a total rollback as "callous." In a statement dated August 25, the KGM said the move underscored the Aquino government's subservience to its foreign masters, particularly the oil giants Shell and Caltex.

The KGM also belied Aquino's claim that oil companies have been incurring losses. It cited Caltex as number two and Pilipinas Shell as number five in the list of top 500 money-makers for 1986. "Yet the Aquino government wants the poverty-stricken Filipinos to subsidize and guarantee the profits of these oil companies via the Oil Price Stabilization Fund," said the KGM.

The underground teachers' group called on all Filipinos, especially Filipino teachers, to actively expose and oppose the unjust oil price hike.

LETTERS

Comments from readers

MISSING LINES

Dear *LIBERATION*,

I have read the August issue and noted in the land reform article that there was an inadvertent omission in the fifth paragraph on page 3 of a few lines, resulting in a statement that is completely opposite in thought (with serious implications on the logic of the entire paragraph) to the original one. The entire paragraph on the World Bank stand is reproduced below as it should correctly read with the missing lines in the August issue underscored. I hope that a correction could be made in your next issue for the benefit of the readers, especially as the paragraph concerned was intended to put the stand of the US on land reform in proper perspective:

"In the same vein, the World Bank, which represents the global interests of US monopoly capitalism, criticized the earlier land reform proposals, sounding even more radical than the Aquino government itself by batting for the earlier and speedier implementation of the reform in non-rice and -corn areas and lower retention limits (seven hectares). The overall preservation of the monopoly position of US imperialism in the Philippine economy is the primary objective; and in the calculus of finance capital, small-sized owner-cultivated farms need not necessarily constitute an impediment."

Federico Campos

We regret the error - LIB.

"Pukaw"

How the people of Samar awakened to the call for revolutionary change

Several years ago, Jawo, an officer of the First Guerrilla Front in Samar, wrote a letter that was broadcasted on the airlines of Eastern Visayas. It was a response to a military demand for the New People's Army (NPA) to surrender. Said Jawo: "When the dear colonel made the silly demand for the guerrillas to surrender, the mountains and the forests of Samar resounded with revolutionary laughter." A few weeks later, the NPA mounted a series of daring raids in town centers of the island.

Today, Samar is a place where the national democratic movement has taken deep root. This is seen in the capacity of the revolutionary forces on the island to advance the armed struggle, establish structures of alternative government on various levels and deliver socio-economic services for the people. How the people and the revolutionary forces struggled to achieve this is the subject of this special report by LIB staffer Juan Picas, who made a four-week study tour of the island.

In the wide geographical embrace of the Samar guerrilla zones, the signs of change are distinct and inescapable. So often in a day, the familiar greeting of "Mabuhay!" from Red fighters is answered with the vibrant "Isulong!" by the barriofolk.

And wherever goes the person carrying the native "katupis" (rattan backpack), a functional symbol of being actively engaged in revolutionary work, the houses in the countryside offer safe refuge and warm company. Even the songs and poems have undergone a transformation of sorts: from cloying to heroic, from despair to celebrations of love and struggle.

"Pukaw." In the Waray dialect of the Samar people, it literally means "awake." But its meaning has evolved with the coming of the revolution; it now connotes intense awareness of social conditions and keen discernment of the political interests of the masses.

"Pukaw." For Charlie, leader of a barrio youth organization, it is the justification for joining the movement, with his parents giving their wholehearted consent. For Nelia, it means giving up a teaching career and the comforts of middle-class living in order to take charge of an NPA medical station in a mountain redoubt. For Randy, it is the reason that moved him to return to Samar and become a Red fighter after working for two years in Manila as a construction worker.



Samar guerrillas taking a break: "I could feel sincerity within them"

Thousands have been brought together in Samar by the revolution. Theirs is a story that springs from modest reckonings and flourishes with each test of will.

Beginnings

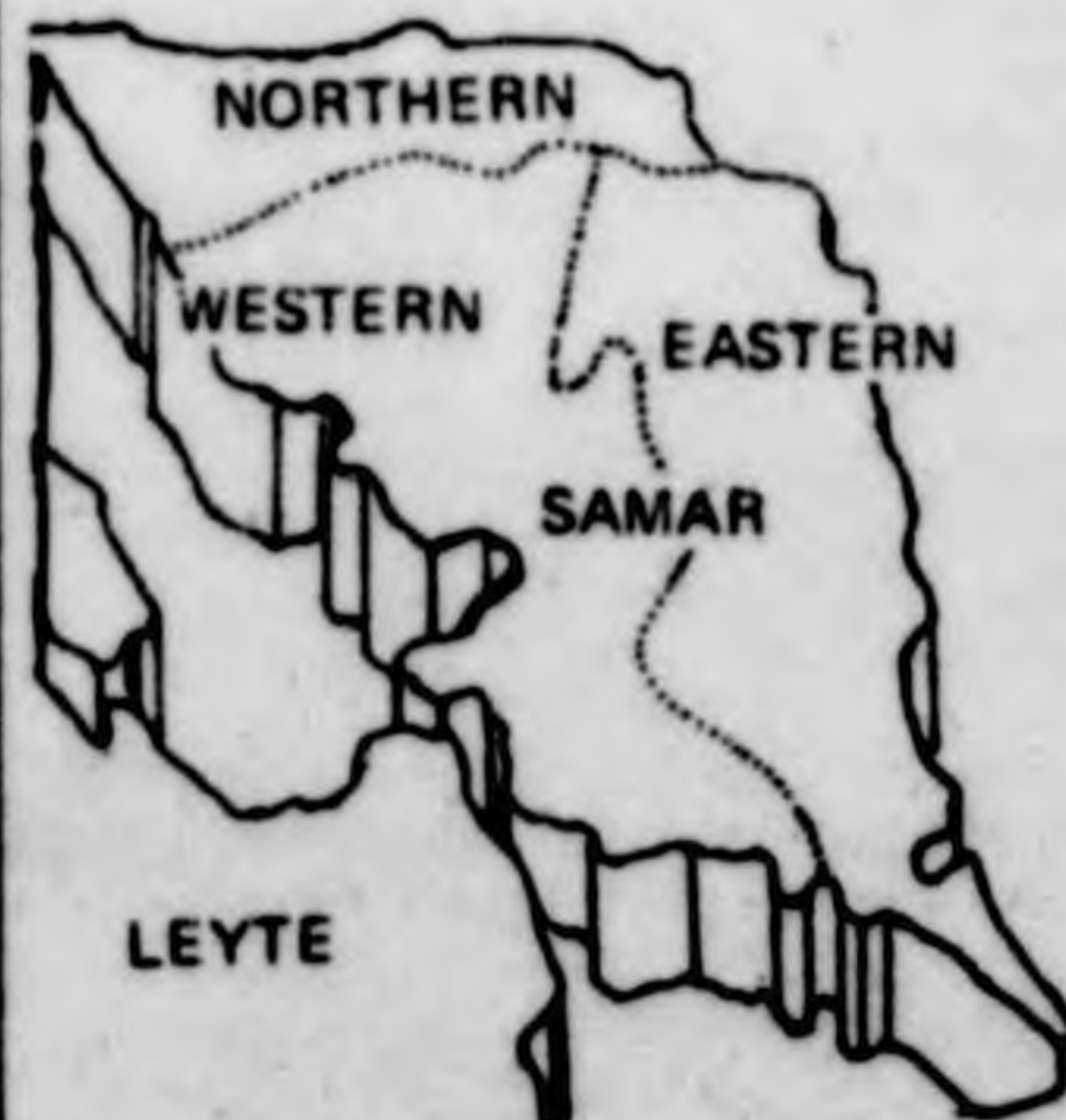
Right after the declaration of martial law, a small group of cadres initiated organizing work in the coastal and interior barrios of southern Samar. The following year, in 1973, two more teams were formed and assigned to the eastern Pacific side and the northern valley of the island. These pioneering efforts were achieved by a handful of people who consider themselves "children of the First Quarter Storm."

In an interview with LIB, Elgin, a poor peasant in the upland area, reminisced about those early days. He recalled being afraid of the NPA because of what he heard on the radio about them and the persistent rumors spread by the military that guerrillas were no different from bandits. Then, one afternoon, a group of six people, one of them a woman, arrived in his mountain abode.

"They were very polite and courteous," Elgin related. "It was obvious that they were not from hereabouts, but I could feel sincerity within them. When they requested to stay for the night, I agreed. After dinner, we talked some more, while one of them played the guitar and sang songs so different that I could not help but listen. Then

someone asked me what I thought about the NPA. When I told them that they were to be feared, they laughed heartily.

"They admitted casually that they were members of the NPA. I talked with one of them till three o'clock in the morning. That was the beginning of my becoming 'pukaw.' I was to meet them several more times until I



Bastion of the revolution

became a courier. What they did concretely was to rid our place of bandits; they also taught us to become revolutionaries," Elgin said.

The first squad of the NPA was an armed propaganda unit consisting of about seven members. It was formed from the original core of cadres that operated in the south. They acquired their firearms by going after cattle rustlers and seizing the latter's weapons; another batch of firearms was confiscated from policemen who the unit overwhelmed in a chance encounter.

In May 1974, this NPA unit staged its first ambush at the Nabutasan River. About 50 members of various barrio militias, armed with bolos and "pugakhang" (homemade rifles), joined this first tactical offensive against the military. In later years, the NPA would execute river ambushes with such proficiency that soldiers would avoid moving in numbers in the artery of Samar waterways, oftentimes the only transportation route available.

In May 1975, two squad-size units of the NPA, reinforced by a barrio militia, made the first successful raid of a municipal hall in the town of Maslog. The raiding party stayed for several days in the poblacion. The NPA in Samar would later on acquire an impressive reputation for this type of operation.

Good intelligence work and precision planning allowed the guerrillas to take over the town halls of Arteche and Matuguinao without a shot being fired. The neighboring municipalities of Gamay and Mapanas were raided simultaneously in one coordinated action. Then, in 1984, the NPA accounted for 11 such offensives, an approximate average of one town hall raid per month.

A guerrilla front was designated by the National Democratic Front in all existing and potential areas of revolutionary activity. Not long after, the Philippine Constabulary (PC) started a massive battalion operation in eastern Samar that lasted for about four months. In the course of this military effort, a wide swath of the Dolores municipality was declared "no man's land" by the PC.

Intense repression

Peasant families had to abandon their residences and farms, many of them fleeing to the poblacion area where children were stricken with diseases due to poor health and sanitary conditions. The majority of the population in eight barrios evacuated to the forests. What they left behind were ravaged by soldiers: houses were made uninhabitable, domestic farm animals slaughtered, the crops burned. NPA



Peasant woman greeting a Red fighter: A guerrilla army sprung from the people

suspects were tortured or killed.

Dadong, a former Kabataang Makabayan activist and now commanding officer of the First Guerrilla Front, recounted a bleak experience: "Our unit went to the affected barrios hoping to help the people, but they were not there anymore. The villages were simply devastated. Even the dogs we found were simply emaciated, with nothing to eat. We decided to follow the people who went to the forests."

On this occasion, the fledgling NPA unit in the area organized the barrio-folk who had resettled in the forests. Since food was scarce, production teams were formed to hunt, forage and sneak back to their abandoned farms in a bid to recover remaining crops. Labor teams were assigned to build shelters and to devise useful implements for survival. A militia was tasked to maintain security and to forewarn the evacuees of military intrusions.

The NPA unit took the opportunity to educate the people, besides taking on the responsibility of patrolling the

area and even staging tactical offensives. To improve their capability to defend the people, the guerrillas acquired more firearms by ambushing PC troops and policemen; the more memorable ones took place in the towns of Paranas and Lawaan.

Due to the intense militarization, the NPA units operating separately in the southern and eastern portions of the Front lost all contact with each other. Meanwhile, the NPA in the east increased its force to three squads, many of the volunteer recruits coming from the evacuees in the forests.

Early in 1976, when the military operations waned, a squad was appointed to reopen lines of communication with the southern unit. It had to travel for more than a week in search of their comrades. The southern unit, it was determined later on, also had to cope with another military operation, so severe that the guerrillas subsisted on coconuts and guavas for almost a month.

In an assessment meeting by the

NPA front units, it was decided that the guerrillas must always maintain their mobility and should not be tied down to protecting just a few communities. Evacuees were urged to return to their barrios. Once settled, the people were assisted by NDF activists and cadres in developing their local capacity for unarmed struggles.

Anti-feudal campaign

The NDF, working closely with the Communist Party, launched an anti-feudal campaign to give substance to the revolutionary participation of the masses. Peasant organizations mushroomed, venturing on a program to eliminate usury and reduce land rent. The traditional practice of "tiklos," or communal farm work for mutual aid, was revived and obtained new meaning. Farms abandoned by big landlords were redistributed to tenants. Middlemen who used to prey on the peasants during harvest time, could no longer impose low buying prices.

The NDF, representing the alliance of revolutionary forces, expanded its operations throughout the entire central portion of Samar. Base-building became the main thrust: area committees of the NDF were formed; mass work was systematized; and the anti-feudal campaign systematized in relation to people's war.

After consolidation activities in 1977, the NPA deployed full-time guerrilla units. With this improvement in defense capability, a second guerrilla front was opened. (A front is normally equivalent to the size of a province, with each front divided into three politico-military districts.)

Expansion work towards the north accelerated. Propaganda Organizing Teams (POT) took over the maintenance and long-term functions of the

armed propaganda units. Through the POTs, peasant and sectoral organizations became forums of decision-making and planning by the masses. In the far northeast area, 11 months of work resulted in the organization of 200 barrios. The complementary activities of the NPA and the POTs encouraged the community organizations to set up socio-economic projects in line with the anti-feudal campaign.

Battling counter-insurgency

Partisan units were also deployed in urban and town centers. The intelligence gathering and military operations of the NPA partisans widened the scope of guerrilla warfare. Dadoy, an activist from Tondo who was later assigned to "white area" organizing work in Calbayog City, related his experience: "The local crime syndicate felt threatened by the presence of activists and cadres. As the citizenry became 'pukaw,' the syndicate's influence was slowly eroded and its thriving business in marijuana traffic and extortion were undermined."

"Since some military groups were actual partners of the syndicate," Dadong said, "it became part of counter-insurgency efforts to unleash the lumpen dregs on us. A number of comrades lost their lives. So we started cooperating closely with the partisans. They neutralized the notorious factions of the syndicate. The people were happy. I was inspired by what we did in Calbayog. Now, I'm a member of the main guerrilla unit of the First Front."

From 1979 to 1981, the government instigated a counter-insurgency campaign that involved different branches of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). In one particular

period, there were 11 combat battalions supposedly going after the NPA.

The AFP troops were supported by paramilitary groups under the Civilian Home Defense Forces (CHDF), who were mostly recruited from the ranks of local toughies and criminal elements. Quasi-religious cults were also armed by the military after their fanatical leaders came back from a Mindanao conference where soldiers preached about the "godlessness" of the revolutionaries.

In 1980, the notorious Lost Command from Mindanao was imported to the island to protect San Jose Timber, a logging corporation owned by ex-Minister of Defense and now Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile. The Lost Command terrorized barrios in eight municipalities so that logging activities could proceed unhampered and to prevent the masses from organizing against the corporation.

Despite the counter-insurgency scheme of the Marcos regime, the NPA was able to build its forces into company-size formations and surprise the enemy, time and again, in tactical offensives. The movement in Samar even provided resources to nearby provinces in the Visayas; cadres and war materiel were transferred for expansion operations in other islands.

The NPA also experimented with establishing its own production area to support some of its economic needs. However, after an assessment of this undertaking, it was decided at that time that maintaining such an exclusive area of production diminished the ability of guerrillas to perform their primary task in armed struggle and also limited the NPA's political interaction with the masses.

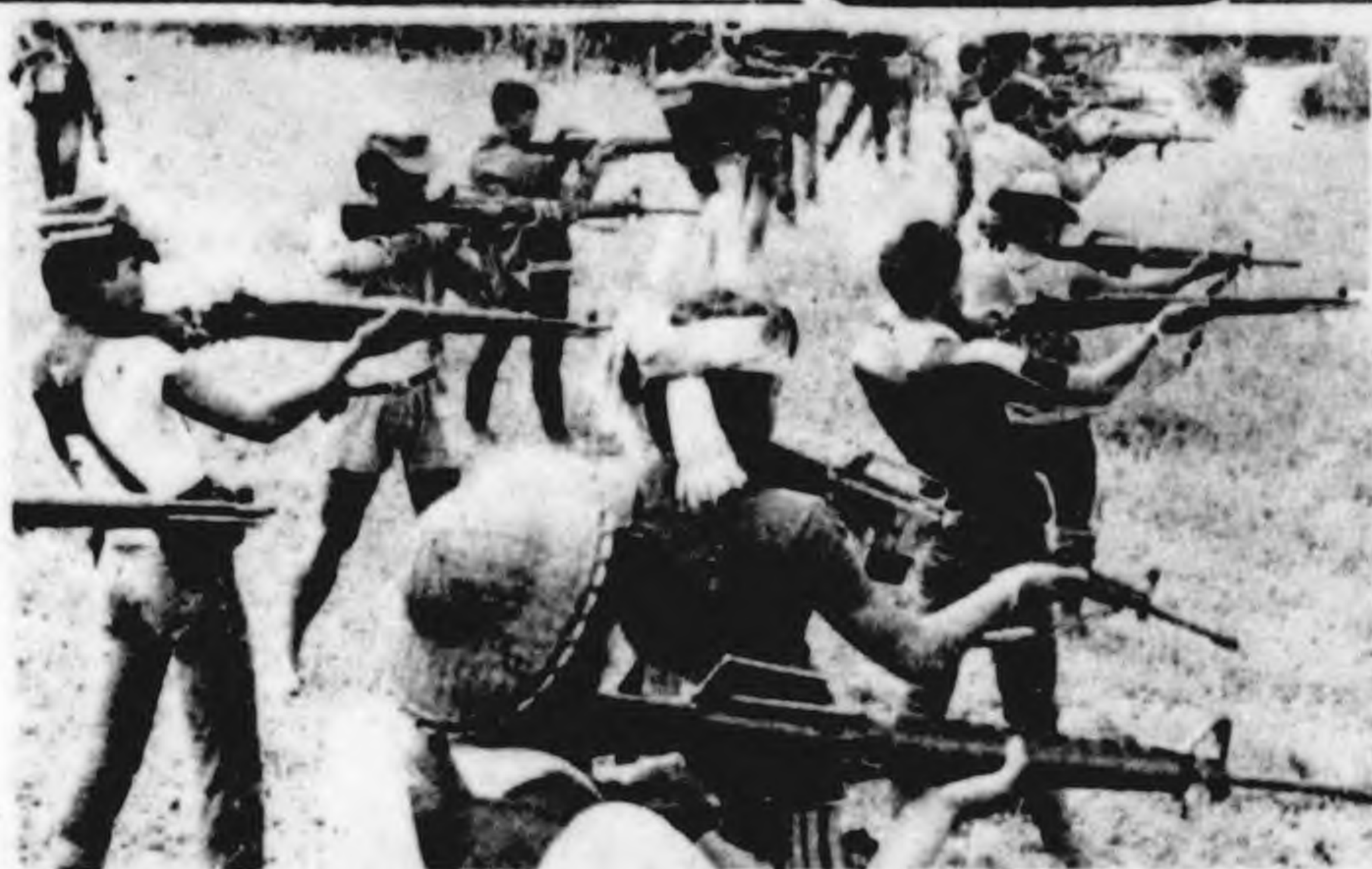
The production base experiment was scrapped. Instead, the NPA and

the Communist Party formulated a policy of "integration with the masses." This meant that guerrillas would devote a portion of their time in helping the peasants undertake productive activities, such as clearing the land for cultivation, planting, and even in the making of abaca fiber. In this manner, the NPA retained its character as an army of the masses.

The NDF instituted a program of improving production in the revolu-



Dramatizing their forte: Samar fighters drilling near a waterway



LIBPHOTOS/PCA

Samar's best: Dalugdog (thunder) unit training in a mountain clearing

tionary zones. Agricultural experts were invited to test soil conditions, study traditional farm practices and implements, recommend alternative food and cash crops, and conduct market feasibility studies. Cooperatives were initially formed to allow the peasants to hone skills in production and marketing management.

Revolutionary practice

The counter-insurgency campaign of the AFP failed. The exploits of guerrilla units in the First Front — Kidlat (lightning), Dalugdog (thunder), Buhawi (cyclone) and Linog (earthquake) — became legendary among the masses. Wherever they went, the NPAs were welcomed with enthusiasm. Each successful tactical offensive became an occasion for holding joint cultural presentations of poetry, songs and interpretative dance.

In turn, the NPA practiced a principled relationship with the masses. The guerrillas' code of conduct includes the following provisions: whatever is borrowed should be returned; whatever is damaged should be repaired; and whatever is acquired should be paid for. In barrios where a guerrilla unit stays for days, it is a usual practice that the NPA holds a public session of criticism-and-self-criticism with the barrio assembly before leaving the place. This forum is followed by cultural presentations which have become an integral aspect of barrio life in the revolutionary zones.

It was George Orwell in his essay "Homage to Catalonia" who wrote: "In practice, the democratic revolutionary type of discipline is more reliable than might be expected . . . It is based on class loyalty, whereas the discipline of the bourgeois conscript army is ultimately based on fear . . ."

Revolutionary discipline depends on political consciousness — on an understanding why orders must be obeyed."

There is a story still told among the guerrillas. It is about a PC officer who was directly responsible for the loss of the lives of two comrades during the raid of a detachment in Lawaan town in Eastern Samar. The guerrillas chose not to execute him. "Prinsipyo (a matter of principle)," said Tommy of Dalugdog unit. "He was already badly wounded and could not fight anymore. There was a battle where we lost some of our men and the enemy lost some of theirs. 'Prinsipyo' dictated that we take care of his wounds. The fact that he recovered and is again fighting against us does not diminish the reason why we allowed him to live at that particular moment. He might not understand 'prinsipyo,' but we do."

In 1983, the third guerrilla front in the north was opened by the NPA. The entire island of Samar became an area of influence by the NDF. Coinciding with this development, consolidation work started towards the creation of Barrio Revolutionary Councils (BRC), the grassroots government units of the NDF. In terms of political structures, the BRC would evolve from the peasant associations which coordinate the activities and programs in the barrios, including those of the youth and women's organizations.

The various committees of an association have the following functions: promotion of revolutionary social practice (e.g., prohibition of gambling and drunkenness, discouraging harsh physical punishment of children by their parents, mediating quarrels among neighbors, etc.); planning and implementing economic projects (e.g. establishing cooperatives, promoting

organized mutual aid farming, providing assistance to NPA units, etc.); planning and implementing health projects (e.g. construction of sanitary toilets, promotion of acupuncture and herbal medicine, setting up a modest barrio drugstore, etc.); holding literacy classes, especially for children; militia-building; promotion of revolutionary culture; and coordinating with various revolutionary groups.

Delivery of social services

Today, the NDF in Samar has institutionalized some basic social services. The Regional Health Group, for instance, services the NPA and the communities. It has a two-fold program: preventive health care, especially against the outbreak of epidemics; and medical services with emphasis on the use of appropriate technology. It has already drafted a health curriculum for paramedics and its six-month health course has been tested among "scholars of the masses."

Mothers are the principal target of preventive health care because of their role in the home and their vulnerability to traditional and feudal health practices. According to Nelia, one of the supervisors of the paramedic course: "Our curriculum involves basic orientation on health in relation to dialectical and historical materialism, the mass line and principles of leadership. Advanced training is given on surgery, herbals, acupuncture and anaesthetics. Specialized education on malnutrition, malaria, schistosomiasis, leprosy and goiter is also offered because of their prevalence in Samar."

Literacy classes are also regularly held among NPA units and in communities where peasant associations have been organized. In the NPA, such classes are integrated into their political education program. Usually, educated members of the unit are assigned to tutor their illiterate comrades on a one-to-one basis. In the communities, school-age children who are deprived of formal learning are the priority targets.

To supplement literacy and propaganda work, the NDF supports the publication of the mass newspaper known as "Larab" (blaze). First printed in 1977, "Larab" currently has a network of correspondents from the barrio organizations. Correspondents assigned to the municipal and district levels of the NDF have undergone basic training in journalism.

According to Mando, political officer of Kidlat in the First Front, "The revolutionary movement does not only conduct guerrilla warfare. We are all engaged in a process of building a new government and sustaining a new way of life." Juan Picas

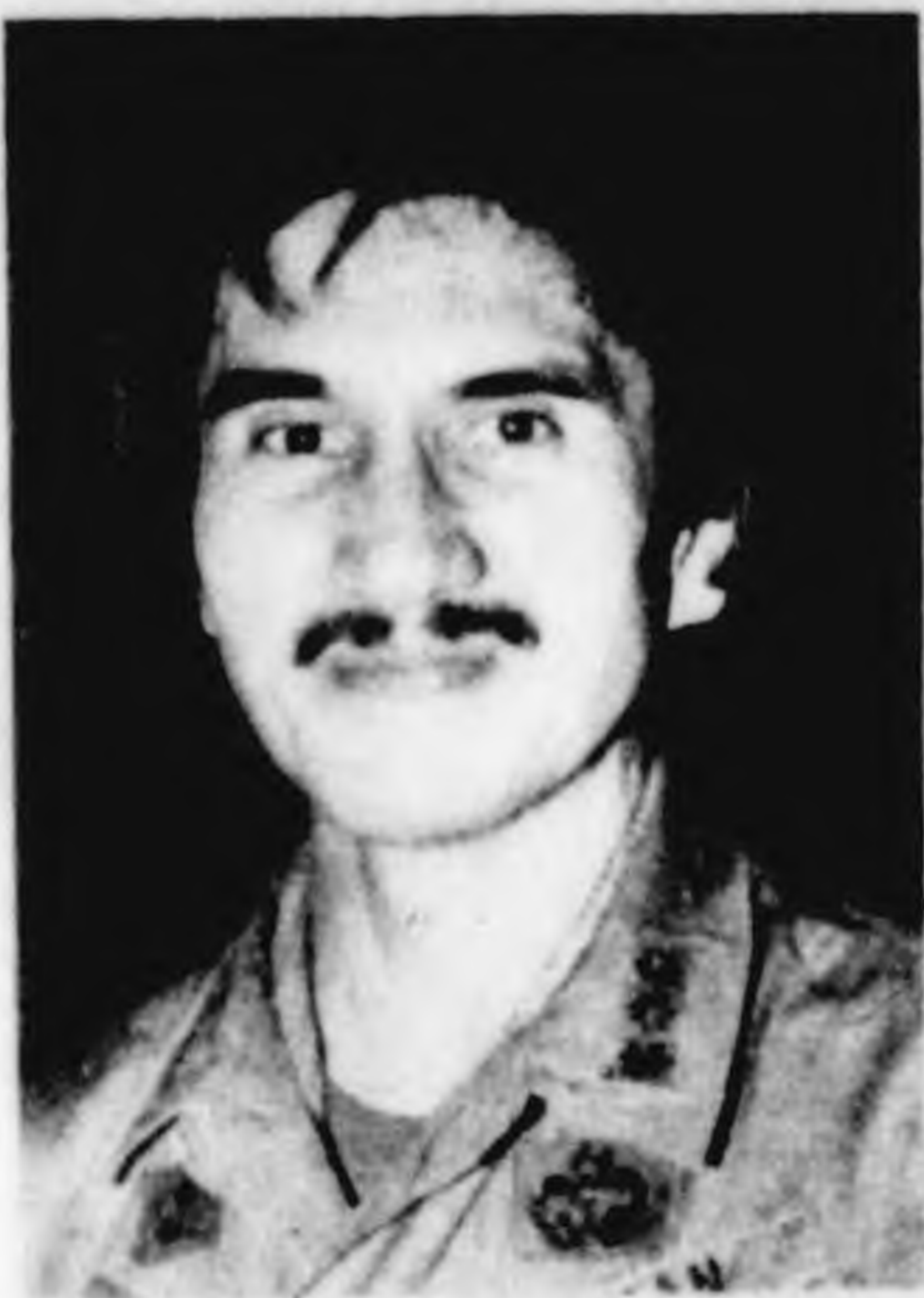
VIEWPOINT

Contributions from readers

Konsolidasyon o panghihina?

Ilang tanong at mungkahi hinggil sa pagsusuri ng kalagayang pampolitika bago Agosto 28

Ang sumusunod na artikulo ay kontribusyon ni Simplicio Lagdameo, isang political analyst. Inaanyayahan ng **LIBERATION** ang mga mambabasa na magbigay ng kanilang reaksyon sa artikulong ito.



Coup leader Honasan: Crisis catalyst

Simple lang ang paghusga sa kawastuhan ng alinmang pagsusuring pampolitika: umaayon ba ito sa talagang nagaganap sa lipunan?

Ang nabigong *coup d'etat* noong Agosto 28 at ang krisis na ibinunga nito sa gubyernong Aquino ay maaaring gawing sukatan ng katumpakan ng ating pagtanya sa sitwasyon bago ang Agosto 28. Higit na magiging makabuluhan din kung matutukoy ang teoretikal na balangkas at *assumptions* na kaakibat ng gayong pagsusuri. Kung hindi gagawin ang ganito, lagi tayong matatali sa *post-mortem analysis* ng mga pangyayari sa halip na maagang mapaghandaan ang pagdating ng mga ito.

Malinaw na ipinakita ng mga naganap mula Agosto 28 ang patuloy na lumalawak, lumalalim at nagiging marahas na hidwaan ng mga reaksyunaryo; ang humihinang kontrol ng rehimeng Aquino sa buong reaksyunaryong estado; at ang lumalaking papel ng AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) sa takbo ng gubyerno at sa galaw ng buong pulitika sa bansa. Ang lahat ng ito'y palatandaan ng lumuluhang krisis ng buong naghaharing sistema kahit sa ilalim ng isang bagong

gubyerno na popular at may posturang liberal. Ang ganitong kalagayan ay nagbibigay ng napakainam na pagkakataon sa mga rebolusyonaryong pwersa para palakas ang sarili at panghinain ang mga reaksyunaryo.

Pinalubha ng rebelyong militar ang bangga sa pagitan ng AFP at gubyernong sibilyan, pinasidhi ang pagkakahati sa loob ng AFP gayundin ang hidwaan sa loob ng gubyerno. Bunga nito, tuluyan nang nabasag at nagkahihiwalay ang orihinal na koalisyong mga pwersang nagluklok kay Aquino sa kapangyarihan. Sa halip na pagtuunan ng pansin ang mga rebolusyonaryong pwersa, nauubos ang lakas ng mga reaksyunaryo sa mga panloob nilang away.

Hindi man nagtagumpay ang armadong paghamon ng RAM (Reform the Armed Forces Movement), niyanig nito ang pundasyon ng gubyernong Aquino. Sa halip na parusahan ang mga pasimuno ng kudeta, ang mga ulopang nasa gabinete ang gumulong. Nakinabang nang husto ang buong AFP sa mga konsesyong ibinigay ng gubyerno sa hangad nitong kunin ang *loyalty* ng mga opisyal at sundalo.

Walang mabisang kontrol si Aquino sa AFP. Malawak ang suporta ng RAM sa hanay ng mga opisyal at kawal. Halos bale-walain ni Fidel Ramos ang mga utos ng kanyang punong kumander sa mga kritikal na oras ng kudeta. Kung mayroon mang grupong maka-Aquino, hindi ito naging mapagpasya sa pagbigay ng kudeta. Muling iginiit ng AFP na ito'y isang pwersang nagsasarili, kapantay kundi man mas mataas pa sa gubyernong Aquino. Hindi nanormalisa ang mga prosesong demokratiko dahil nanatiling buo at malakas ang pwersang anti-demokratiko na ngayo'y nagbabanta pang pangibabawan ang mismong gubyernong sibilyan.

Tuluyan nang nabasag at nagkawat-watak ang naghaharing koalisyong. Sa pagsunod ni Laurel sa yapak ni Enrile, nabawasan nang malaki ang dakong Kanan ng koalisyong. (Maganandang palatandaan ng nagbabagong direksyon ng hanging pampolitika ang kilos ng mga oportunistang tulad ni Laurel.) Sa pagpapatalik kina Arroyo, nabawasan nang malaki ang liberal na bloke ng koalisyong. Kumitid na ang organisadong suporta ng gubyernong Aquino. Kahit ang moderatong kampo ay higit na magiging kritikal sa nakikita nilang pagkiling ng administrasyon sa Kanan.

Tuwing mabibigo ang mga naunang



AFP troopers: Government concessions to buy their loyalty

tangkang kudeta, wari'y laging nada-dagdagan ang lakas ng gubyernong Aquino. Subalit sa nakaraang paghamon ni Honasan, lumaki na ang pag-aalinlangan — kapwa ng mga lokal at dayuhang *political analysts* — sa kakayahang ni Aquino na makapanatili sa kapangyarihan kahit hanggang sa pagtatapos man lahiang ng kanyang panunungkulan. Ang mga pahayag ng ilang malalapit sa administrasyon na posibleng muling ipataw ang *martial law* o kaya'y *state of national emergency* ay pag-aming bigo ang *political alternative* na iniharap ni Aquino.

Sa bagay na ito, hindi maiiwasang maalaala — at seryosohin — ang wari'y simpleng hakahaka ni Jose Ma. Sison noong 1986. Ayon sa kanya, dalawang taon lamang ang itatagal ng *democratic space* — at ng rehimeng Aquino. Iisang taon at kalahati pa lamang na nawawala si Marcos sa Malakanyang.

Ilang tanong

Sa kalahatan ay tama ang pagtingin ng NDF (National Democratic Front) at CPP (Communist Party of the Philippines) sa katuturan ng nakaraang kudeta. Ito'y palatandaan ng malaking paglubha ng mga kontradiksiyon sa hanay ng mga reaksyunaryo at ng krisis ng buong naghaharing sistema. Ang ganitong kalagayan ay dapat samantalahin ng mga rebolusyonaryo upang palakasin ang kanilang sarili at lalong papanghinain ang mga reaksyunaryo.

Gayunma'y hindi maiiwasang sumulpot ang ilang tanong tungkol sa pagbasa ng *Revolutionary Left* sa sitwasyon bago ang Agosto 28 at ang relasyon nito sa sitwasyon ngayon.

Una, gaano kawasto ang pagsusuri na ang rehimeng US-Aquino ay nasa huling yugto na ng konsolidasyon ng paghahari nito? Na ang AFP mismo ay nasa ilalim na ng kontrol ng rehimeng Aquino? Nasaan ngayon ang bunga ng konsolidasyong naturan?

Hindi kaya masyadong natuon ang pansin natin sa mga pormal na prosesong demokratiko (konstitusyon, eleksyon, atbp.) na sa katunaya'y mga palamuti lamang ng reaksyunaryong estado? Nakaligtaan natin ang talagang nangyayari sa mismong AFP na siyang tunay na haligi ng makauring paghahari. Minaliit natin ang lawak at lalim ng paksyonalismo sa AFP na tulad ng pagbale-wala natin sa paglitaw ng RAM.

Ikalawa, maaari bang sabihin na konsolidasyon ang pangunahing tunguhin ng rehimeng Aquino bago ang Agosto 28 subalit makalipas ito ay pangunahin na ang pagkakahati-hati at panghihina? Ang konsolidasyon ba ay isang pangunahing tunguhin sa loob ng isang mahabang panahon samantalang ang kudeta ay palatandaan ng pagtindi ng kontradiksiyon sa hanay ng mga re-

aksyunaryo sa mas maikling panahon?

Subalit anu-ano ang malalaking pagbabago sa kalagayan upang ang dati'y pumapangalawang tunguhin (pagtindi ng alitan sa reaksyunaryong kampo) ay maging pangunahin? Hindi kaya nadala tayo ng kung ano ang *apparent*? Hanggang Agosto 7, may opisyal na pagtaya na ang taktikal na sitwasyon ay patungo pa rin sa konsolidasyon ng rehimeng Aquino.

Ikatlo, sa pag-aaral ng sitwasyon, hindi kaya nabigyan ng sobrang diin ang intensyon at balak ng rehimeng Aquino at imperyalismong US na patatagin ang paghahari dahil sa pangangailangang harapin ang lumalakas na rebolusyon? Hindi ba't ganito rin ang tinukoy na kahinaan sa pag-aaral ng kalagayan bago ang eleksiyong Pebrero?

Ikaapat, sa pagkakatantad at pagkabigo ng grupong Honasan, napalakas ba nito ang rehimeng Aquino tulad ng pagtingin sa pagpapatalik kay Enrile noong Nobyembre 1986? Ganito rin ba ang pagtingin natin sa paghiwalay ni Laurel sa naghaharing koalisyong?

Ikalima, kung ang pagtingin natin sa

gumagarantiya sa istabilidad ng estado. Sa Pilipinas, matagal nang binasag ng NPA at BMA (Bangsa Moro Army) ang monopolyo ng AFP bilang *coercive authority*. Nakasandig ang mga rebolusyonaryong sandatahang pwersang ito sa mas malaking bilang ng mamamayang hindi na kumikilala sa kapangyarihan ng reaksyunaryong estado. Naba-bahala ang mga reaksyunaryo sa paglakas ng rebolusyon at hindi magkasundo kung paano ito haharapin.

Noong 1950s, ang hidwaan ng mga reaksyunaryo na naging mahayap sa eleksiyong presidensyal ay humupa dahil sa unti-unting pagkatalo ng HMB.

Ang NPA ngayon ay tuluy-tuloy ang paglakas samantalang ang BMA ay muling nakapagpapalakas.

2. Sumisidhi ang krisis sa ekonomya at pulitika. Minana ng rehimeng Aquino ang buong bigat ng pagmamalabis sa ekonomya ng diktadurang Marcos. Sa kawalan ng saligang pagbabago sa mga problema ng ekonomya, lumulubha ang krisis sa ekonomya. Napakalimitado ng mga rekursong bagong ad-



US-Aquino regime: Consolidating or disintegrating?

rehimeng Aquino noon ay nakokonso-lida, hindi kaya may sobrang pagtaya naman tayo sa aktwal na kakayahan nitong maglunsad ng "total war" laban sa mga rebolusyonaryong pwersa?

Ikaanim, kung ang pagbasa natin sa sitwasyon bago ang Agosto 28 ay kagayat na lumulubha ang hidwaan sa mga reaksyunaryo, may pagkakaiba kaya ang taktika nating itinakda? Sa bagong kalagayan ngayon, ano ang mga kinakailangang pagbabago sa taktika?

Malalaking sagabal

Gaano man ang paghahangad ng rehimeng Aquino at imperyalismong US na magpatatag ng paghahari ay mabibigo dahil sa mga sumusunod:

1. Nakapanatili at nakapagpapalakas ang mga rebolusyonaryong pwersa at ang New People's Army ay nakapagsasagawa ng matatagumpay na opensibang militar kahit sa ilalim ng bagong administrasyon.

Sa normal na kaayusan ng lipunang makauri, iisa lang ang lehitimong pwersang panupil (*coercive authority*) na

ministrasyon para "bilhin" ang kooperasyon ng mga tao. Hindi katakatak na kahit sa kasikatan ng rehimeng Aquino, pumuputok ang mga welga ng mga manggagawa at empleyado.

3. Ang AFP ay may malawak at malalim na impluwensya ng ideolohiyang pasista at may pagtinging ito'y kapantay ng gubyernong Aquino sa pag-ukit ng pulitika sa bansa.

Ang pasistang ideolohiya ay mahirap tumanggap kahit ng pabalatbungang postura ng liberal na demokrasya. Mula Pebrero 1986, tinapos na ng AFP ang mahabang tradisyon ng pagpapailalim ng militar sa awtoridad sibilyan. Kahit napailalim ang AFP sa gubyernong Aquino, ipinalalagay ng AFP na ito ay isang pwersang katuwang ng mga sibilyan sa pagluklok kay Aquino sa kapangyarihan. Mahirap patatagin ng rehimeng Aquino ang sarili nito sa ganitong klase ng sandatahang pwersa.

4. Malawak ngunit buhaghag ang mga pwersang pampulitika na bumuo sa koalisyong nagpabagsak sa diktadu-

rang Marcos. Ang mga pwersang ito'y pinagbuklod lamang ng simpleng layuning patalsikin si Marcos sa Malakanyang. Matapos ito, kanya-kanyang lakad na rin sila. Matindi ang bangayan ng mga reaksyunaryong humalili sa pangkating Marcos dahil sa limitadong yaman na pag-aagawan.

Kagyat na mga problema

Wasto ang pangkalahatang panawagan ng NDF at CPP na samantalain ang hidwaan ng mga reaksyunaryo para palakasin ang mga rebolusyonaryong pwersa at lalo pang patindihin ang banggaan ng mga reaksyunaryo. Angkop ang panawagang pasiglahin ang mga opensibang militar at mga pakikibakang masa.

Ang malaking problema ay kung paano ang taktika sa pakikipag-isang prente sa pakikitungo sa iba't ibang paksyon ng mga reaksyunaryo. Sapat bang maghalukipkip tayo sa away ng mga reaksyunaryo tulad ng pagdistansya natin sa hidwaan nina Arroyo sa isang panig at ng militar, malalaking kapitalista at mga kamag-anak ni Aquino sa kabilang panig? Hindi ba dapat ay may pag-iba-iba (*differentiation*) sa iba't ibang pangkat ng mga reaksyunaryo upang wastong mapakitunguhan ang mga ito sa taktikal na sitwasyon?

Konklusyon

Hindi layunin ng artikulong ito ang paggawa ng isang masaklaw na pag-aaral sa nakaraang kudeta. Ang mas pangunahing interes dito ay malaman kung paano natin pinag-aralan ang sitwasyon bago ang Agosto 28.

Ang ating tantiya sa sitwasyong pampulitika bago ang kudeta ay malayo sa naging takbo ng mga pangyayari dahil sa ilang kahinaan ng ating teoretikal na balangkas at *assumptions*. Maluwag ang ating gagap sa saligang konsepto ng estado kaya't naipagkamali ang mga palamuti nito sa talagang haligi ng makauring paghahari. Hindi natin lubos na napahalagahan ang papel ng mga rebolusyonaryong pwersa — lalo na ang sandatahang bahagi nito — at ng krisis sa ekonomya sa kagyat na pagtindi ng mga reaksyunaryo at sa katatagan ng naghaharing sistema. Hindi natin mahigpit na sapul ang *peculiarity* ng rehimeng Aquino. Malawak ngunit napakabuhagang ang koalisyong nagluklok kay Aquino sa kapangyarihan. Walang mabisang kontrol ang gubyernong Aquino sa AFP na pinaghihina naman ng paksyunalismo.

Batay sa mga obserbasyong ito, iminumungkahing bigyang pansin natin ang pagpapatalas ng ating *conceptual tools* sa pag-aaral ng sitwasyong pampulitika. Higit sa lahat, pahasayin ang paggamit ng mga ito sa aktwal na pag-susuri ng mga pangyayari sa ating bayan. **Simplicio Legasmeo**



US militarist policies: Menace to world peace

The NDF released the following statement last May 21 declaring its support for the Soviet Union's recent proposal for nuclear disarmament in the Asia-Pacific region:

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines welcomes the initiative of the Soviet Union to dismantle their medium-range missiles in the Asian part of their country, provided that the United States likewise removes all US nuclear weapons in the Philippines, Japan and South Korea.

The NDF believes that this constructive proposal of General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev would be a major step in halting the continuing arms buildup which has caused grave tension among the world's peoples and intensified the threat of nuclear catastrophe. We firmly support his proposal as a necessary step towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons and as a commendable contribution to the struggle for world peace, security and stability.

In our country, the Filipino people directly feel the danger of nuclear annihilation because of the presence of US military bases with nuclear weapons on our soil. For many years now, our country has involuntarily served as a nuclear weapons storehouse for the US — with the knowledge and toleration of successive Philippine governments. Recently, US President Reagan had signed a secret memorandum authorizing the stationing of 467 nuclear bombs in other countries. Of these, 227 are to be stationed in the Philippines.

The NDF, since its establishment 16 years ago, has consistently taken the position that the US military bases in the Philippines must go. We have also taken the position to prohibit the entry or maintenance of nuclear wea-

pons in Philippine territory.

The US bases violate the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of the Philippines. They provide the US with a proximate means of actively interfering in our internal affairs and are the main guardians of US military, political and economic interests in the Philippines and in neighboring countries. They have, as a matter of record, been used as launching pads for wars of aggression in Asia and elsewhere.

We are not surprised why the US continues to reject constructive proposals for the radical reduction of nuclear weapons in Asia and other parts of the world. Neither are we surprised why the US persists in covering up the existence of nuclear weapons in US bases in Asia, including the Philippines. This attitude and policy only reveal its true colors and real objective — to pursue the US arms buildup in order to recover the US' declining political and economic domination of the world. This dangerous policy is the principal source of international insecurity and is the biggest obstacle to world peace.

As we support the proposal of the Soviet Union for immediate steps towards nuclear disarmament, the National Democratic Front of the Philippines will continue to mobilize all our organizations and resources to remove the menace of US imperialism in our country and to promote the worldwide struggle for a just and lasting peace.

Human survival and the future of the world are more important than one nation's goal for strategic superiority. Peace, freedom and security are incompatible with the nuclear arms buildup and US imperialist aggression. The forces of war and mass destruction must never be allowed to rule the world. ■

Forging an anti-imperialist front

NDF extends messages of solidarity to the peoples of Libya, Nicaragua and Algeria

Libya

"Getting rid of all vestiges of colonialism"

This September 1, the National Democratic Front greeted the Libyan people on the occasion of the 18th anniversary of the revolution which overthrew the corrupt monarchy of King Idris and ushered in a new era for Libya. The NDF said that with their similar experiences of colonial domination, the Filipino and Libyan peoples can learn much from each other.

The NDF particularly cited the removal of foreign military bases from Libya and the nationalization of economic resources, including oil, within the first year of the Libyan revolution as a "notable lesson in getting rid of all vestiges of neo-colonialism."

Earlier, the NDF sent a delegation led by NDF international representative Luis Jalandoni to the Mathaba Conference of Progressive and Revolutionary Forces and Peace Movements in the Pacific Region, which was sponsored by Libya from April 17 to 21. The presence of the NDF there signified its solidarity with the Libyan people in protesting the US bombing of Libya on April 15 last year.

During the gathering which was held in the city of Misurata, Jalandoni also hailed the participation of the Moro National Liberation Front. The MNLF delegation was led by its information officer Abdurasad Asani. Said the NDF envoy, "The Moro people have valiantly resisted Spanish colonial rule for three centuries and US colonialism as well. Up to now, they are courageously waging their struggle for self-determination. The NDF reiterates its support for the Moro people's right to self-determination including their right to secession. It is their weapon against national oppression."

To contribute to the discussions in the conference, the NDF also presented its positions on Southeast Asia and the Pacific and on the need to establish a region-wide anti-imperialist movement.

Nicaragua

Defending hard-won freedom

On July 19, 1979, the Nicaraguan people won their national liberation after more than eight decades of struggle against the US colonizers. Most notable of the heroic figures of this historic endeavor was Gen. Augusto Cesar Sandino who led the revolutionary armed struggle against US aggression in Nicaragua. The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), named after him, was pivotal in the last phase of the struggle directed against the repressive US-backed Somoza dictatorship. The NDF and the Filipino people are tremendously inspired by their example. Following is the statement of the NDF on the eighth anniversary of the Nicaraguan victory:

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines earnestly joins the Nicaraguan people and the world over in celebrating the eighth anniversary of the Nicaraguan revolution.



The NDF salutes the heroic effort of the Nicaraguan people to defend their hard-won freedom from United States intervention, ever determined to make new sacrifices the way they did in the armed struggle against the Somoza dictatorship.

As their struggle is just, the Nicaraguan people have dealt the Contras and their American masters major political and military blows. As the "Iran-Conagate" scandal would indicate, the US imperialists have found themselves increasingly isolated in their Nicaraguan project.

In due time, the Nicaraguan people will be victorious over the United States' aggression. The NDF is confident that under the leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front and their government, the Nicaraguan people will be able to overcome their current difficulties and proceed to the task of building a prosperous, peaceful Nicaragua.

Long live the Nicaraguan people!

Long live the solidarity of the peoples of Nicaragua and the Philippines!

Algeria

"A beacon light"

The NDF sent the following message to the people and government of Algeria to mark the celebration of the 25th year of their independence from French colonial rule:

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines conveys its solidarity greetings to the National Liberation Front of Algeria (FLN) on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Algeria's National Independence Day last July 5.

Under the leadership of the FLN, Algeria has made great strides in land reform, people's health and women's emancipation. In the course of pursuing its national goals, Algeria has steadfastly defended its national independence and sovereignty.



dence and sovereignty.

In the field of foreign relations, Algeria has served as a beacon light of the Non-Aligned Movement — consistently opposing colonialism, imperialism, racism and Zionism even as it extends concrete solidarity to the just struggles of the oppressed peoples of the world. In other international forums like the United Nations, it has become a leading proponent of world peace, a new international economic order, South-to-South relations and other Third World issues.

The NDF and the Filipino people regard the struggle and victory of the Algerian people against colonialism, as well as their achievements in national reconstruction, as a source of inspiration in their own struggle for national independence, genuine democracy and social progress.

TRIBUTE

Life and struggles of revolutionary martyrs

Courage above grief fervor above mourning

Leandro Alejandro (July 10, 1960 - September 19, 1987)



Lean Alejandro: In life and in death, he moved thousands to overcome sorrow and pain, indecision and uncertainty.



It was as if darkness had so much treachery to accomplish. Shortly before sunset, at about 5:30 p.m. on Sept. 19, Leandro Alejandro, secretary-general of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN), was murdered in an ambush in front of his organization's headquarters in Quezon City. Just a few hours before this, he had warned the people of the full resurgence of fascism.

But while darkness seemed to have immediately descended upon Lean's youthful body, every moment that has since ticked away has served only to immortalize the brilliant rays of his short life. As brightly, intensely and briskly as he lived his life, Lean's memories instantly filled the hearts of his wife and family, his friends and comrades-in-struggle, and countless others whose lives he touched. His passing filled them with courage above grief, fervor above mourning, and a firm will to stand by the cause for which he died.

Who was this young man, who, even upon death, could move multitudes into overcoming sorrow and pain, indecision and uncertainty? Who was Lean that even those who wept for him could still vow to meet head-on the challenges posed by his sudden departure?

Beyond his lifetime, Lean would stand as a shining symbol of unconsumable political resilience and strength in the national democratic movement. Even though he experienced tremendous difficulties in trying to immediately win over the greatest number to the side of national democracy, his record of unhampered involvement and all-rounded leadership betrays an undiluted commitment.

It is true that Lean did not live long enough to see the fulfillment of his dream to firmly unite the various progressive political forces and socio-economic sectors around the national democratic cause. But in his lifetime and even in death, he greatly contributed to the advance of the overall struggle for national democracy.

That the Aquino regime seemed to have been so shaken by the rise of a young yet motivating leader like Lean should inspire every comrade into overcoming the odds to achieve a more effective and consistent assertion of the national democratic forces' leadership over the open mass movement.

Through his unwaning contributions to the national democratic movement, Lean died with the same heroism as the NPA guerrilla fighters who fell fighting enemy soldiers. As a final act of tribute, the *LIBERATION* staff presented Lean's bereaved family with a message of condolence, an NDF banner and a floral wreath.

Personal and political history

Born in Navotas on July 10, 1960 to Salvacion Legara, a public school teacher and Rosendo Alejandro, a certified public accountant, Lean was known not only for his intellectual brilliance but also for his insatiable thirst for knowledge and his keenness in relating theory to practice.

Even as a child, it is said that he was already given to the ways of knowing what there was to know not only from books but also from people. "*Matalino 'yang si Lean at mahilig magkukuwento ng kung anong nababasa niya,*" remembers a grade school classmate of his. He devoured books on practically all topics - history, philosophy, literature, the humanities, science and mathematics - as much as he found time to talk and go out with childhood friends and classmates at the St. James Academy in Malabon where he finished high school.

sitions in campus organizations and in the national democratic youth and student movement. Lean served as Chairman of three student activity centers in 1980-1981 - the UP College of Arts and Sciences Student Council, the Youth for Nationalism and Democracy and the Anti-Imperialist Youth Committee. He became Chairman of the UP Student Council in 1983-1984 and concurrently represented the students in the UP Board of Regents. During the same school year, Lean also spearheaded the formation of the Alliance of UP Student Councils (covering all UP units and colleges), of which he later became founding Chairman.

Lean's remarkable leadership in the youth and student movement was soon to send him out into a more stra-

Justice, Freedom and Democracy (NAJFD, established in 1983) and the Coalition of Organizations for the Restoration of Democracy (CORD, 1984-1985).

Finally, when efforts to clinch multi-sectoral unity for the national democratic movement were started in 1985, Lean was elected founding Secretary-General of BAYAN. He held this crucial position up to his last breath, no matter the widely perceived difficulties BAYAN had to go through under the fast-changing political situation.

Hardly did he know it, but Lean almost leaped his way into becoming the open standard bearer for the national democratic movement. While he did not finish his schooling, he was nonetheless soon to be held dear by the

masses of the people and looked up to as among their ablest and most articulate political leaders.

Resolute

Coming from a family that was happy in sharing and caring for others, Lean was magnanimous in his personal ways. He did not seek to be treated differently from the humblest individual, which explains why people easily identified with him wherever he went. From the UP campus, to all the corners of the archipelago, Lean's wit



Lean with BAYAN chairman Tanada: Making a career out of serving the people

and candor had combined with a transparent and intense liking for people, to effect a presence that was hard to ignore. Not surprisingly, groups and individuals overflowing referred to him as "our beloved" in all the tributes that were offered to his memory.

The national democratic movement was to reap concrete gains from the charismatic leadership of Lean. During his time at UP, it is said that Lean made it quite easy for activism to break through the sheltered consciousness of "martial law babies." He contributed to the massive recruitment and development of student activists in the same way that he later on brought a good number of renowned nationalist leaders closer to the mainstream of the mass movement. The likes of Sen. Lorenzo Tanada and his son Bobby, the Diokno family and other political luminaries have come within quicker

Even while he made no bones about his political convictions, Lean was still to be welcomed by non-national democratic groups into their own ranks. He became a leading member of the KAAKBAY and the Claro M. Recto Foundation at the same time that he stood at the vortex of open national democratic multi-sectoral organizations like the Nationalist Alliance for

It came as no surprise to his family and old friends then, that shortly after entering the University of the Philippines in Diliman in 1978, initially as a B.S. Chemistry student, Lean would make his own presence felt in campus politics. At a time when there was a resurgence of student activism, the knowledge-thirsty Lean found it most natural to familiarize himself with the issues that were being raised in the campus, study them himself, and deliberately seek out the company of individual activists for frank political discussions.

Although by his own admission, Lean started out as a Marcos admirer, his political keenness would later lead him to join the national democratic movement. From being a features writer in the *Philippine Collegian* in 1979-1980, he rapidly rose to prominent po-

reach by the basic masses, significantly because of the unfailing bridge Lean had provided. It also remains true that the anti-dictatorship front that was formed after the Aquino assassination could not have achieved as much breadth and scope had not Lean and a few other colleagues persevered in forging political alliances earlier on.

It was truly unfortunate that the changing political fortunes of some people have caused them to cast Lean and his group out of what could have been a stronger united front for the advancement of more meaningful changes after the ouster of Marcos. But the keen and committed Lean refused to be daunted by the many hardships he had to undergo in asserting the nationalist and democratic aspirations of the people. Even while it may have hurt him more than it showed, he was to admit BAYAN's erroneous boycott policy in the February 1986 snap election. And although he may have shuddered upon hearing criticisms that he was party to the mishandling of the anti-fascist fever that led to the so-called 1986 "People Power Revolution," Lean was to take things in stride in the political ebb that followed.

The unchanged reactionary character of the state would later evoke from Lean the same steadfastness in bringing back to form the open protest movement. As resolutely as he led the first "post-martial law" student march to Mendiola in 1983 and countless other mass mobilizations to Liwasang Bonifacio, Camps Crame and Aguinaldo, the US embassy and other seats of reactionary rule during the time of Marcos, he also became instrumental in bringing the basic masses' just demands to the doorstep of Malacanang and other centers of power in Metro Manila under the Aquino administration. Having witnessed the Mendiola Massacre in January 26, 1987 and the increasing incidence of violent state reprisals against peaceful mass mobilizations, he would later unhesitatingly summon the people to more intensified political battles. Even while he openly grieved for the loss of lives in the struggle, Lean had fully accepted death and suffering as necessary sacrifices to achieve eventual victory for the national democratic struggle.

"Hindi man niya kayang tiisin ang luha lalo na ng kanyang Nanay," a close friend said, "Lean had always been prepared to give his all to the struggle." A one-time political detainee, Lean had also endured all forms of brutal dispersal operations against demonstrators — truncheon-beating, teargassing and open fire assaults.



A people's hero: Death and suffering were a necessary sacrifice

When asked how they viewed Lean's death and all-out involvement in the national democratic struggle, Nanay Sally and other close kin would uniformly say: "Noon pa man tinanggap na namin; tinanggap na namin ang

prinsipyo't pakikibaka ni Lean. Naisin man naming lagi siyang makapiling, nakukumbinsi niya kami sa kanyang pananaw tungkol sa pagpapakasakit." "Ika nga ni Lean," said Nanay Sally, "maliit lang ang mga sakripisyong ini-

“Lean's unflinching show of courage and leadership made him shine above most others in moving the people to achieve a great deal of political breakthroughs. His death was met by groups and individuals alike with a solemn pledge to carry the torch of the national democratic struggle through darkness on to eventual victory.”



Carrying on Lean's legacy of struggle

aalay ko, kung inahambing sa paghihirap ng sambayanan. Mula nang ikinulong siya noong Pebrero 1985, inihanda na namin ang sarili namin sa kung ano pang maaaring mangyari sa kanya.”

Lean's unflinching show of courage and leadership made him shine above most others in moving the people to achieve a great deal of political breakthroughs. And because he had meaningfully touched the lives of so many people, his death was met by groups and individuals alike with a solemn pledge to carry the torch of the national democratic struggle through darkness on to eventual victory.

Said the NDF: "Itaguyod ang simula ni Lean! Makibaka hanggang matupad ang kanyang mga pangarap!"
J. L. Victorino

...and literature in the movement



They have not forgotten

THE
LIVES
AND

Through and beyond

Satur C. Ocampo

A peace plan for war



Friends asked me recently why the NDF had not commented on the Aquino regime's much-publicized appointment of a "peace commissioner" and his "systematic approach to peace." I replied that we saw no need for comment, because there wasn't anything really new in the government's so-called peace plan.

In the wake of the August 28 failed coup, a widely read columnist thought it opportune to urge us to go back to the negotiating table. He insinuated that unless the NDF did so we would lose by default to the fascists *for the second time*. The columnist erroneously recalled that "the NDF negotiators withdrew from the peace talks when Lando Olalia was assassinated by 'military agents,' claiming that Cory Aquino can no longer guarantee their safety from fascist militarists." He concluded: "The NDF lost by default, because they were not courageous enough to risk their lives . . . to achieve National Reconciliation."

Now, we have to correct that misrepresentation of the facts and the egregious conclusion it entailed. It may be good also to explain why we believe the Aquino regime offers nothing new from its original narrow framework for negotiating with the NDF.

The NDF withdrew from the peace talks towards the end of January 1987 (not when Lando Olalia was murdered on Nov. 14, 1986) basically because of two factors:

1) The Aquino regime was neither prepared nor interested in entering into substantive talks within a broad framework for achieving peace; it insisted on limiting the negotiations within the purview of the then draft constitution, which the NDF deemed inadequate to answer the fundamental issues we sought to resolve; and

2) The Armed Forces of the Philippines high command, specifically its chief of staff, Gen. Ramos, had committed a fundamental breach of the agreement and bad faith. Ramos had issued implementing guidelines to the state troops that distorted some provisions of the ceasefire agreement, so as to give the AFP undue advantage over the New People's Army. We fully documented that charge.

“The Aquino regime has not swayed from its original intent: to try to liquidate the armed and unarmed national revolutionary movement led by the NDF and the one led by the Moro people”

A newspaper report later substantiated our first reason for withdrawing from the peace talks. Then Executive Secretary Joker Arroyo has not denied the report that he told the government negotiators in early January not to worry about their lack of back-up papers for the substantive talks, that he advised them simply to freeze the talks until February 2, when the draft constitution would be ratified by plebiscite, and thus put the NDF in a bind.

And how does the Aquino regime now intend to approach the peace process?

In the paper he submitted to Mrs. Aquino and which was approved by the latter on July 22, Alran Bengzon, the "peace commissioner," outlines four major elements of what he calls a "systematic approach to peace." These are: 1) formulation of a national program for peace; 2) negotiations and dialog; 3) implementation of programs with an immediate impact for peace; and 4) organized collaboration with all supportive non-governmental groups. *These four elements are to be integrated with military initiatives on the level of the president.*

The formulation of a national peace program and strategy is assigned to the national security director and his staff. The program would include socio-economic and political developments which still have to be spelled out. It also includes "clarifying the process of integrating alienated communities into the national mainstream (read: how to process "rebel-returns")."

On negotiations, the paper refers to face-to-face discussions with "groups that are threats to peace" to "pinpoint grievances that can be remedied." It stresses that negotiations are *only a part* of the peace process, not to be equated with the whole process.

Programs with an immediate impact for peace pertain to various reforms and projects "that can create a climate positive for peace." In a newspaper interview, Mr. Bengzon cited as examples of these programs the health department's expanded immunization program, potable water and roads projects, improvement of local governments, legislators' projects for their constituencies, and programs carried out by various departments of the national government.

After the government shall have set the direction and momentum for the peace program, there would be a systematic process to enlist and work with all non-governmental groups interested in the peace process, notably the Church.

It is important to note that two of the assumptions that will guide the peace plan are both self-negating: 1) "the balancing of the need for public order and the demand for socio-economic change; thus peace is not security *nor is it accommodation*;" and 2) "the government will explore all means, all avenues, and all approaches to peace *but such explorations will have to be within constitutional constraints*."

From the above elements and assumptions, we can conclude that the Aquino regime has not swayed from its original intent: *to try to liquidate the armed and unarmed national revolutionary movement led by the NDF (which includes that of the Cordillera people) and the one waged by the Moro people*. Despite its having entered into previous negotiations with the NDF and the MNL, the Aquino regime now avoids mentioning either of the two Fronts as the parties it intends to negotiate with. Derisively, it calls for dialog with "groups that are threats to peace."

There is no indication of an intent to pursue serious talks towards a negotiated political settlement — the premise which the Aquino regime had agreed with the NDF to adopt for the substantive talks. Obviously, the regime is deathly afraid that the issue of the NDF's status of belligerency may be raised again. Thus, it wishes to reduce negotiations to a low level, only to "pinpoint grievances that can be remedied." This is a big retreat in the regime's approach to peace.

All told, the Bengzon peace plan merely weaves the element of downgraded negotiations into the components of the US-inspired "total war" being implemented by the regime, which includes foreign-funded impact programs, intensified military operations, massive building of anti-communist hysteria and riding on the popularity of Cory Aquino.

What then is the point for the NDF to consider this peace plan seriously? It's nothing but a systematic approach to war, not peace. ■

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