

LIBERATION

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NDF Socio-Economic Work

**Bearing fruit
for the people**

Extend concrete support to the countryside!

The revolutionary movement has always considered the improvement of the people's lives as integral to the all-sided advance of the people's war. Although it recognizes that the total uplifting of the people's living conditions cannot take place until state power shall have been seized by the people themselves, the revolutionary movement perseveres in fleshing out even now the vision of an independent, democratic, progressive and prosperous society through the realization of modest but tangible and immediate gains. Such gains, achieved through painstaking struggle, serve as a solid foundation upon which shall be built the society of the future.

In the revolutionary zones in the countryside, these gains have taken the form of reduced land rent, the abolition of usury, the raising of farm wages and in many areas, the free distribution of land to the peasants. The corresponding erosion of landlord rule has also enabled the organized peasantry to begin wielding political power through their village and municipal revolutionary organs of governance, and attend to their socio-economic and cultural needs, which have long been neglected by a succession of reactionary governments.

Raising the masses from the morass of poverty, illiteracy, disease and cultural backwardness also continuously nurtures the fire of revolution as the people fight to defend their gains and further advance the struggle towards final victory. The people thus become deep reservoirs of support for the armed struggle and bastions of the unrelenting anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and anti-fascist mass movement.

As the revolutionary forces prepare the requisites for the maturation of the people's war to the next higher stage, improving the well-being of the masses becomes an even more paramount concern. The revolutionary



movement has spearheaded activities to increase food production, raise family incomes, eradicate illiteracy and improve the delivery of health care in the NDF zones, but much more needs to be done to improve the people's welfare and enhance their capacity to participate in intensified politico-military struggles. The mindless destruction wrought by the AFP's "total war" against the people and their hard-won gains has also made it necessary for the revolutionary forces and the organized masses to redouble their relief and rehabilitation efforts.

In the recently concluded *NDF Conference on Socio-Economic Work*, increasing food production, especially of rice and corn, was identified as the top priority for the next two years, along with the need to improve health care and literacy among the masses in the NDF zones. In line with these targets, all resources and talents at the disposal of the NDF, its territorial units, member organizations and allies, should be harnessed to the full. Extensive networks and machineries that could provide a more sustained system of extending concrete support to NDF zones and guerrilla bases should be developed. In particular, teams of NDF activists and volunteers could be formed and dispatched for longer periods to undertake special missions or projects in the countryside. Apart from advocacy work, stress must be given to the delivery of concrete support in terms of the transfer of appropriate technology, the fielding of personnel and the allocation of financial and other resources to address the identified priority concerns and build the people's capability to manage their own socio-economic projects. ■

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDF) is an alliance of revolutionary organizations and individuals with roots in the various sectors and regions of the Philippines. Its long-term goal is to build a society characterized by national sovereignty, authentic democracy, social justice, progress and peace. It seeks to unite with all forces willing to fight to achieve these goals. LIBERATION is the official publication of the NDF.



A bountiful harvest:
Changing landscape in
guerrilla zones

Cherishing the people

NDF defines agricultural development as the main thrust of revolutionary socio-economic work

Ammumin nu kasano nga pagaduwen iti mula. Agad-adalen dagiti ubing ken ammudan ti agbasa ken agsurat. Awan unay ti ubbing a matmatay manipud idi addametten ti medik mi. Uray nu nagrigat pay ti bibiag mi, adu ti nagbaliwan manipud idi simmangpet iti kadkadua. (We now know how to raise our productivity. Our children now go to school and know how to read and write. The death rate among children has lessened because we now have our own medic. Life is still hard, but there have been many changes since the comrades arrived).

With quiet pride, the peasant woman spoke of changes she had seen in her tiny village in the north.

Elsewhere, in hinterland villages and highland barrios, the same story is being told by poor farmers whose lives have been touched by the revolution. Throughout two decades of fighting reactionary regimes, the revolutionary movement has reaped substantial gains that have already benefited millions of the poorest sectors.

Last September 30 to October 10, 35 delegates representing various regions and sectoral organizations nationwide convened the NDF's first *National Conference on Socio-Economic Work* to consolidate these gains and raise the movement's capacity to reach out to millions of other beneficiaries. Held in a guerrilla zone in Southern Luzon, the conference marked a high point in

the movement's continuing effort to systematize and advance its task of concretely addressing the immediate and long-term needs of the masses.

Concern for people's welfare

Socio-economic work (SEW) or *Gawaing Sosyo-Ekonomiko (GSE)* has been an essential part of revolutionary work since 1970 and continues to play a significant role in the course of the overall revolutionary struggle.

"In the early stages of the people's war," recounted Ka Deo who chairs the NDF People's Welfare Commission (PWC), "providing basic social services to the people was considered part of agrarian revolution and mass work in the countryside. With the guerrilla fighters as the primary

We have to continually modify and adapt our development tactics in the face of changing conditions of war. We have to be proficient in managing a war economy.

Grinding coffee beans: Cultivating cash crops for trading

implementors," he continued, "much of the revolution's socio-economic work was geared towards addressing the immediate needs of the masses. Comrades helped in raising agricultural production, improving health and sanitation and providing political education and instruction on reading, writing and arithmetic."

The upgrading of the basic material and economic conditions of the masses, along with organizing work, paved the way for the speedy formation and expansion of guerrilla zones, the rapid growth of the New People's Army and the setting up of revolutionary mass organizations in countryside and urban communities.

By the early '80s, guerrilla fronts had been established in all major islands and regions. The people's war had reached the advanced substage of the strategic defensive.

From 1980 to 1986, consolidation efforts heightened in anticipation of intensified politico-military struggles. During this period, stress was placed on the regularization of the NPA, the further advance of mass struggles and the consolidation of guerrilla zones towards the building of guerrilla bases. It was also at this time that several national democratic mass organizations were formed. Others, dormant in the early years of martial rule, were reorganized and revived. The anti-imperialist and anti-fascist movement, particularly in the cities and lowlands, was at its peak.

"At this stage in the revolutionary movement, socio-economic projects that responded to the material and other needs of the masses proliferated," said Ka Deo. "This was

particularly true in the consolidated areas where agrarian revolution had begun to reap success. Cooperatives and other forms of economic organization also mushroomed. Schools, mass clinics, cultural groups, communal farms, fishponds and livestock farms initiated by the revolutionary movement became common sights in guerrilla zones and bases."

In the urban centers, socio-economic programs of underground people's organizations were broadened to cover other aspects of SEW. Machineries were developed, with programs geared towards raising production, the use of appropriate technology, project management, training and services for the countryside.



SEW reaches a plateau

But the revolution was soon confronted with "problems of growth." Said Ka Deo: "The movement's rapid advance and the increasing complexity of revolutionary work overwhelmed us. SEW was among the lines of work that suffered." This, along with the swift deterioration of the basic masses' living conditions, intense militarization and the reactionary government's

direct, supervise and coordinate all socio-economic efforts in the countryside and urban areas and in the open and underground network. "Thus, in many instances," said Ka Deo, "programs of urban-based SEW support organizations did not correspond to the priority projects or needs of guerrilla zones." This was manifested in the sad lack of appropriate support services for the war effort, for food production, health care

against the people. Calling it the "total approach to win the hearts and minds" of the public, the new government's strategy ran the gamut of brutal and deceptive counter-insurgency measures. Gradual constriction, food and economic blockades, hamletting and search-and-destroy operations were laced with "socio-civic actions" aimed at coopting the revolution's mass base



Villagers bring food to NPA guerrillas in training: Enhanced capacity to support the armed struggle

worsening neglect of the people's welfare, made it increasingly difficult for the loosely organized SEW support machineries then existing to cope with growing demands.

Time came when the movement fell short in consolidating the gains of agrarian revolution and other socio-economic efforts. "Compared to the upsurge in other aspects of revolutionary work by the mid-'80s," said Ka Deo, "the development of SEW reached a plateau."

Such lopsidedness was attributed, first and foremost, to a "lack of appreciation among cadres and activists of the role and importance of SEW in the revolutionary movement's all-sided advance." Consequently, there were very few definite and appropriate structures at the territorial and national level formed to

and literacy, and for the rehabilitation of rural communities ravaged by natural disasters.

Without a proper appreciation of the importance of SEW, many regions also failed to allocate enough resources to beef up the skills of cadres and organizers. "There were very few cadres trained in project management, for instance, or specialized in specific lines of work such as agriculture, literacy and health care," said Ka Deo. On-the-job training became a catchphrase in many guerrilla zones. Often armed only with sheer determination and the beat of intentions, cadres and activists struggled to conduct SEW even in the absence of the necessary skills trainings.

Meanwhile, the Aquino regime which took over in 1986 had unsheathed the sword of "total war"

from what the AFP calls the "hard core" insurgents.

The revolutionary movement's problems in implementing socio-economic work had meantime led to the lack of tangible improvements in the people's lives. Along with the movement's other serious errors and weaknesses, this often dampened the masses' revolutionary fervor in many areas. "Combine these factors with the brutal repression unleashed by the state against the people," said Ka Deo, "and the inevitable result is a reduction in the mass base."

However, in areas where revolutionary work experienced a more all-sided advance, People's Revolutionary Organs of Governance (PROG) were set up or strengthened and battalion-size NPA formations established.

"Such developments demonstrated the crucial and integral role played by socio-economic work in advancing the overall national democratic struggle," said Ka Deo.

Since then, several conferences, assessments and summing-ups of experiences in the conduct of socio-economic work have been held. "Consultations were launched to thresh out differing concepts in the conduct of SEW," he said. "This resulted in better coordination of socio-economic concerns ranging from individual projects and programs to comprehensive area development strategies." Different curriculum studies on literacy, agricultural production and health care have also been developed and

industry, appropriate technology and commerce. Among the social services to be extended and developed are education, health and relief and rehabilitation. Of course," he continued, "we also have to set up the necessary infrastructure to promote these concerns."

Main thrust: Agricultural development

Since revolutionary socio-economic work operates according to the strategy and tactics of people's war, SEW should parallel the overall thrust of building and strengthening guerrilla zones and base areas. Thus, although town centers and cities also play a significant and strategic role in advancing people's war, their main

stable economic base that will sustain the livelihood of the people in the guerrilla zones and enable them to meet the demands of a protracted war."

In pursuit of this perspective, agricultural development should be the main thrust of SEW. "In particular," said Ka Deo, "our priority for the next two years is to increase the production of staple and survival root crops such as *kandol* and *aba* and high-nutritive vegetables and other farm products in guerrilla zones and bases." Other means of increasing food production cited were the promotion of livestock raising and aquaculture.

"We have also given priority to 'agro-forestry' or the use and management of forest resources," he contin-



Barrio SEW team at work: Drive to raise food production

SEW should parallel the overall thrust of building and strengthening guerrilla zones and bases

attempts at rationalizing the vast network of organizations involved in socio-economic work, undertaken.

It was at the NDF's SEW Conference, however, that delegates consolidated their experiences and discussed at length the orientation of revolutionary socio-economic work nationwide. "Based on the Orientation Guide drafted by the conference," said Ka Deo, "SEW's economic concerns include agricultural production, livestock raising, fisheries, small-scale

function is supportive in nature.

"Addressing the needs of the masses and the revolutionary forces in the base areas," said Ka Deo, "is therefore a fundamental and immediate concern. It is in the countryside," he stressed, "where the ravages of the regime's 'total war' are felt the most and where rapid advances in the people's war are being made."

"Following this line," said Ka Deo, "the decisive component in SEW is the attainment of a relatively

ued. "The integration of agriculture and forestry can provide alternatives to the practice of *kaingin* or *swidden* farming in many highland communities and reduce environmental destruction. As we all know," said Ka Deo, "the burning of forested areas along steep slopes causes erosion and destroys watersheds. This has led to flash floods in valleys and plains."

The promotion of organic farming and low-input sustainable agriculture, along with the use of

appropriate technology (appro-tech) is also being encouraged to maximize farm resources in rural areas.

"Promoting appro-tech," explained Ka Deo, "involves the conduct of workshops and the setting up of small factories capable of producing farm implements and machines." He continued: "We also have to set up infrastructure such as mini-dams for irrigation purposes; hydro-electric systems for alternative sources of energy; and food processing machines like driers, threshers and mills. In the drive towards self-sufficiency," he added, "other endeavors such as the production of soap, shoes, uniforms, cotton and other essential needs of the people and the NPA should also be developed."

Aside from appro-tech, Ka Deo cited the importance of developing facilities for the preservation, processing and storage of products. "This is a critical factor in transporting goods for marketing and in storing surplus products in times of intense military operations."

The problem of big merchant exploitation, he said, could be addressed by the development of marketing cooperatives. "Eventually, the peasant-producers should run their own cooperatives. They could later set up alternative trading systems with other guerrilla zones and outside communities."

The revolution's target of achieving self-sufficient economic bases in consolidated areas will also propel the development of PROGs. "As you lessen their dependence on outside support," he explained, "you allow them to maximize their resources to improve the well-being of their constituents and enhance their capacity to support the war effort." The movement, however, should take care not to foster among the people a sense of dependency on the revolutionary forces, stressed Ka Deo. "To do so would only replace the old feudal system of patronage with a new one." Thus, in all revolutionary socio-economic endeavors, it is the basic masses - the peasants, workers, fisher-

men, and national minorities - who should be the primary implementors and main beneficiaries. Other sectors that play a major part in the implementation of SEW are the NPA, the churches, teachers, medical workers, government employees, cultural workers, people's organizations, scientists and technologists, lawyers, enlightened gentry, women, youth, non-governmental organizations and international solidarity groups.

"In guerrilla bases and zones," said Ka Deo, "the NPA, which has the closest links with the masses, plays a leading role in assisting and supporting the people's socio-economic undertakings. This the Red fighters do even as they implement their own projects to support the needs of the growing guerrilla army."

But neither should the technological changes that often accompany SEW be forced on the people, said Ka Deo. "We must remember that many barriofolk are steeped in centuries-old ways of production. For instance," he explained, "I once had a hard time convincing peasant cadres in a remote village in Samar that using organic fertilizers is more effective in the long run than kaingin farming. I was stymied because I had been counting

on these cadres to help me reach out to the other peasants. Imagine my shock when they themselves resisted!" said Ka Deo.

"And then I realized that I could never convince them through lectures and mass meetings. Learning from my mistakes, I tried instead to demonstrate concretely the validity of my arguments by setting up a demonstration farm. It took some doing, but in the end, they were convinced."

In other cases, peasant organizations refused the setting up of demonstration farms in their barrios for fear of being singled out for harassment by the military. "Of what use are arguments on human rights to the AFP?" they asked. "How could we possibly explain the presence of such a well-organized farm, except to admit that it is a project of the revolution?"

"This is a legitimate issue," said Ka Deo. "Thus, in all cases, the masses' level of political awareness, organizational preparedness and capability to defend their socio-economic projects should be considered in the conduct of SEW."

Perspectives of SEW

Socio-economic work can continue being a key factor in

Technological changes should not be forced on the people



"Appro-tech": Threshing rice at a village cooperative

the revolution's advance only if it conforms to the realities and complexities of the intensifying civil war. "We cannot implement development projects as if it were peacetime," explained Ka Deo. "As projects are undertaken in the grassroots level and as farmers on occasion, set aside their plows to become fighters, all socio-economic endeavors and doctrines are put to the test. We have to continually modify and adapt our development tactics in the face of changing conditions of war. We have to be proficient in managing a war economy."

Because they often have to evacuate their farms to escape the depredations of the AFP, peasants in the war zones, for instance, have learned to cultivate crops that can survive with minimal care. Innovations are made in the designs of agricultural machinery so that these could be easily dismantled and carried away to safety in case of enemy attack.

Despite such difficulties, socio-economic work has borne fruit, as shown in the various success stories cited by the regional delegates themselves - stories that demonstrate SEW's immense impact on the people's lives (see related stories). Said Ka Deo: "In increasing the people's level of productivity and control over resources and improving their tools of production, SEW has helped strengthen the economic power base of the people. In helping establish alternative power structures and community mass organizations, SEW has fortified the people's political authority. And in addressing the logistical and economic needs of the people's army and militia, SEW has vitalized the people's defense capabilities."

To raise further the revolutionary movement's capacity to alleviate the people's living conditions and sustain the war effort, the conference

delegates resolved to promote nationwide the Orientation Guide on Socio-Economic Work and to strengthen the NDF People's Welfare Commission. "The PWC's task," said Ka Deo, "is to coordinate and systematize all efforts and initiatives of various networks and machineries involved in SEW. The PWC," he continued, "will also insure the active participation of regional and sectoral NDF bodies in deliberations and decision-making processes on vital issues regarding socio-economic work. It will likewise identify the



priority areas where immediate and urgent services are to be directed."

Along this line, the conference called for the formulation of a One-to-Five-Year Development Program that will address the people's short- and long-term needs while advancing the people's war. The delegates also urged the selection, deployment and training of cadres for socio-economic work and the adoption of measures to strengthen the people's capacity to participate in SEW, including the expansion of open and clandestine support machineries for this purpose.

"We would also like to stress the importance of fostering unity with the middle forces and encouraging their active support in revolutionary socio-economic work," said Ka Deo. He likewise cited the need to strengthen and expand solidarity relations with other countries to

solicit their support and learn from their experiences.

"But we must not have the illusion that we have all the answers when it comes to SEW," said Ka Deo. "We can enrich the theory and practice of SEW by studying the socio-economic projects, programs and policies of other political forces or governments and non-governmental agencies, including local and foreign institutions."

Sighed Ka Deo, "We certainly have our work cut out for us. Even as our socio-economic work reaps gains,"

he added, "we will continue to grapple with the destructiveness of the regime's 'total war' as well as internal problems like financial and organizational constraints and inadequate skills. Backward cultural traditions, low literacy levels and calamitous weather are only a few of the other factors that SEW cadres will have to contend with," he said.

But the proper attitude, stressed Ka Deo, is to view all these as

challenges rather than insurmountable obstacles. With this note of optimism, the conference closed with the upbeat rhythm of the SEW cadres' marching chant:

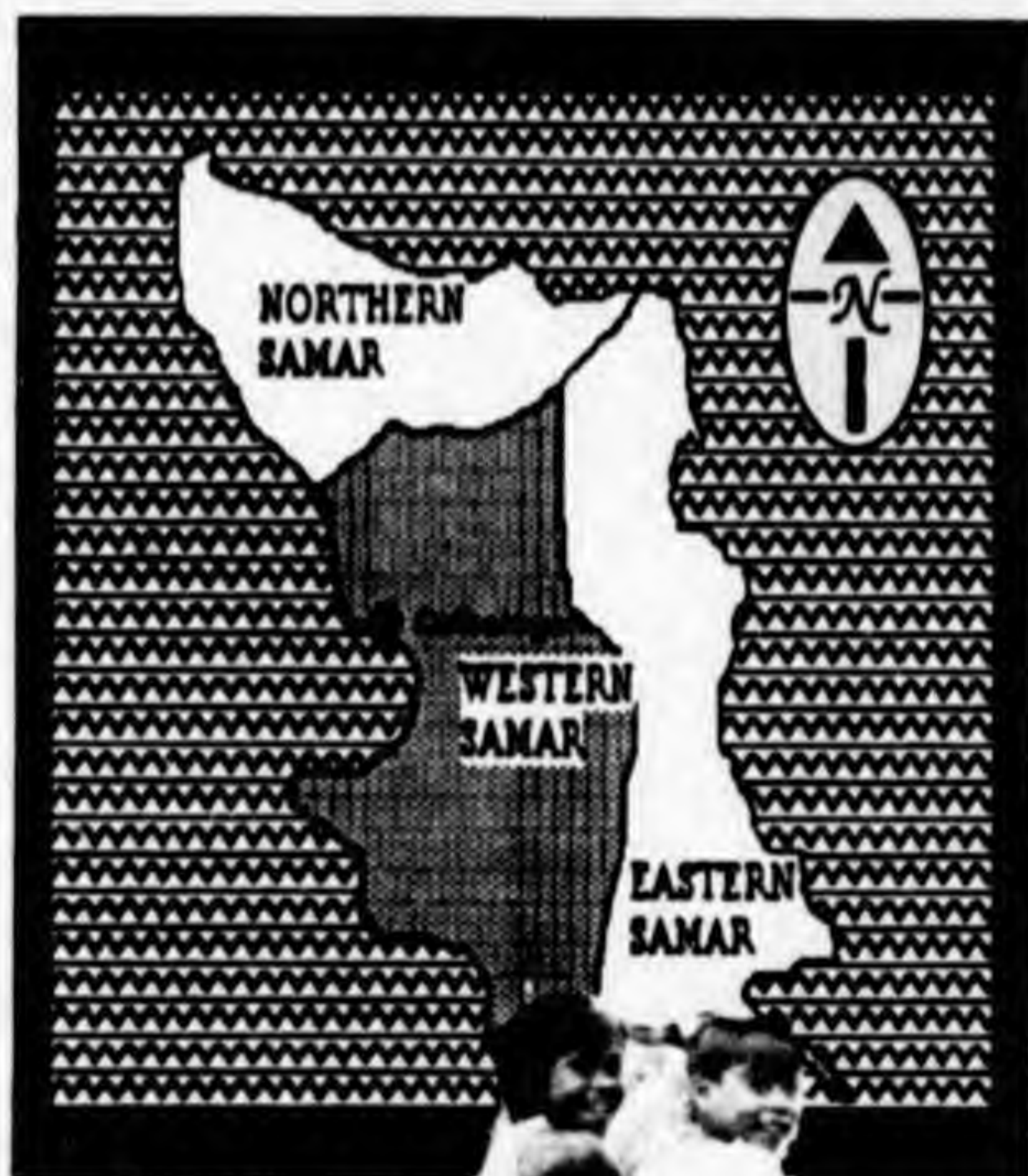
*Produksyon ay isulong
Pagdam't pagmulat
Kabuhayan, kahunggan
At tulong pandigmaan,
BIGYANG LAKAS!
Isulong natin GSE hanggang
wakas!*

[Advance production
Reading, writing
Livelihood, health
And the war effort
GIVE STRENGTH!
Advance SEW till victory!]

**Nicole Felipe and
Martina del Fuego**

Sa Samar, hindi pang-araro ang kalabaw

Tungkol sa kahalagahan ng programang sosyo-ekonomiko sa pagtatatag ng organo ng kapangyarihang pampulitika



Ang sumusunod na artikulo ay batay sa ulat-pagsisiyasat ng isang kadre ng NDF na namalagi nang tatlong buwan sa isang baseng gerilya sa Kanlurang Samar.

Sang-ayon sa ulat-pagsisiyasat, pinagpasyahan sa isang kumperensyang rehiyunal sa Samar na magtatag na ng mga organo sa kapangyarihang pampulitika (OKP) sa mga lugar na may baseng gerilya. Pinili ang naturang baseng gerilya, na isa sa pinakaabante sa buong Samar, para doon pasimulan sa malao't madali ang pagtatatag ng OKP na antas pandistrito.

Ang piniling baseng gerilya, kung saan nabuo at kumilos ang pinakaunang pitong-kataong iskwad ng Bagong Hukbong Bayan sa rehiyon noong 1973, ay binubuo ng 40 konsolidadong baryo sa kabundukan. Sa mga baryong ito, naitatag na ang mga organisasyong masang pansektor, at nasa antas munisipal na ang mga organisasyong magbubukid. Labing-apat sa mga baryong ito ay may nakatatag nang Komiteng Rebolusyong Pambaryo. May yunit milisya sa lahat na ng mga baryo, at marami sa kasapihan nito ay may karanasan sa labanan. Sa mga lugar na ito, tumagal at napanday ang masa at rebolusyonaryong pwersa sa maraming taon ng pakikibaka laban sa masasamang elemento, pagsasamantalang pyudal at matinding militarisasyon.

Napapaligiran ang baseng gerilya ng 157 baryo na bumubuo ng sonang gerilya o buffer zone. Lahat-lahat, may 197 baryo na bumubuo sa base at sonang gerilya.



Kalabaw: Hindi lang pambyaha, pang-araro pa



Di pa natutuklasan: Gamit ng kalabaw sa sakahan

Sa loob ng maraming taon, malalaking tagumpay ang nakamit ng rebolusyonaryong kilusan sa Samar sa gawaing militar, gawaing masa at pakikibakang antipyudal. Gayunman, lubos na nahuhuli ang pagharap sa aspetong sosyo-ekonomiko ng pakikibaka, laluna yaong may kinalaman sa kabuhayan ng masa.

Patuloy na naghihirap ang may 10,000 taong naninirahan sa loob ng baseng gerilya. Ang ani mula sa kanilang palayan ay sapat lamang para sa dalawang buwang pagkain. Ang nabibili nilang bigas mula sa kanilang pinagkakakitaan (pagtitinda ng gabi at mais) ay tumatagal lamang nang isang buwan. Samakatwid, nagkakabigas sila sa loob ng tatlong buwan taontaon; sa loob ng siyam na buwan, pinagtitiisan nila ang lamang-ugat. Kadalasan, ang kanilang inuulam ay dahon ng gabi.

Dahil sa kahirapan, 79% ng mga tao ay hindi makayanang magpatinig sa doktor; 56% ay hindi makabili ng gamot; at 100% ay kulang sa kinakailangang nutrisyon. Bumibilang ng 45% ang hindi nakatuntong ng paaralan; 33% ng mga nakatuntong ng

Greyd I at II ay hindi marunong magbasa't magsulat; 15% ng mga nakatuntong ng Greyd II at III ay hindi bihasang magbasa; 5% lamang ang nakaabot ng Greyd IV hanggang Greyd VI; at 2% lamang ang nakaabot ng hayskul.

Sa sonang gerilyang pumapaligid sa base, may malalawak na lupaing naghihintay bungkalin at taminan. Ang kakaunting bilang ng mga panginoong maylupa ay matagal nang nagsi-alisan sa lugar, at ang hatian sa ani, upa sa lupa, usura at iba pang pagsasamantalang pyudal ay napawi na. Gayunman, kahit sa mga lupang pag-aari ng mga magbubukid, 80%-84% nito ay nakatiwangwang at 16%-20% lamang ang nabuhungkal. Nakakayanang bungkalin ng bawat pamilya ang 1/4 hanggang 1/3 lamang ng isang ektarya.

Napakaaatrasado ng kanilang paraan sa pagsasaka. Bago magtanim, sinusunog nila ang lahat ng tumutubo sa kanilang bukid, na nakakasira sa produktibidad ng lupa. Mahihingang klase ng binhi ng palay at lamang-ugat ang kanilang itinatanim. Maliban sa pagbibiyahé ng mga produkto, hindi pinagtatrabaho ang kalabaw sa bukid. Gulok ang pangunahing gamit nila sa pagbubukid.

Sang-ayon sa ulat, ang tradisyunal na pagmamay-ari ng lupa sa lugar, na tinatawag na *kapuyungpuyungan*, ay tinatanyang magbubunga ng mga problema sa hinaharap. Ang *kapuyungpuyungan* ay lupaing nilinis sa gubat ng mga matatanda at ang kanilang angkan ang may karapatang magbungkal nito. Bawat ikalawang taon, kapag nasagad na ang produktibidad ng kapirasong lupang kanilang tinamnan, lumilipat na sa ibang pirasong lupa para muling magbungkal at magtanim. Bagamat kolektibo ang konsepto ng *kapuyungpuyungan*, ang umiiral na sistema ng paggawa ay indibidwalis-tang pagsasaka at di-matagalang paggamit ng lupa.

Sa kasalukuyan, ang anumang problemang iluluwal ng sistemang ito ay nakakayanang pigilan dahil sa pagkakaroon ng malalawak na lupaing hindi pa naipamamahagi sa pamamagitan ng rebolusyonaryong reporma sa lupa.

May mga panimulang pagsisikap na noong 1980-81 para sa pagpapahusay ng kabuhayan ng masa sa pamamagitan ng pagtatayo ng kooperatiba sa pagtitinda at pamimili. Gayunman, maliban doon sa mga

nasa mauunlad na baryo, ang mga kooperatibang ito ay nagaipagsara noong 1982-83, at hanggang ngayo'y hindi pa muling nabubuksan. Ang mga dahilan ng kabiguan ay ang masyadong mataas na gastos, di pagbebeyad ng utang, problema sa transportasyon at kawalan ng kasanayan sa pamamahala.

Mula naman noong 1986 hanggang sa kasalukuyan, may mga *non-governmental organizations* (NGO) nang nakakapasok sa sonang gerilya na nag-oorganisa ng mga magbubukid batay sa plano at programa ng rehiyon.

Nagtuturo sila ng mahuhusay na paraan sa pagsasaka at nagmumud-mod ng mga kalabaw, mahuhusay na binhi at gamit pansaka. Nagsasanay din sila ng mga tao sa baryo para

paggawa ay hindi maibigay ng mga tauhan ng mga NGO, na kakaunti na nga'y kumikilos pa sa buong lawak ng probinsya at nagbabase sa syudad. Bagamat nagsasanay sila ng kanilang mga kinatawan mula sa baryo para magpatupad ng programa, ang mga tauhang ito mismo ay nangangailangan ding mapalaya mula sa tradisyunal na mga konsepto't pamamaraan.

Sang-ayon sa ulat-pananaliksik, ang pagkaantala sa pagsusulong ng gawaing sosyo-ekonomiko ay dahil sa sumusunod na kadahilanan:

■ Maaaring nakapaghina ng inisyatiba ng kilusan ang umiiral na kalagayan, tulad ng operasyong militar, problema sa lohistika at pinansya at iba pang kagyat na problema;

minado at mapangahas tulad ng sa pakikibakang antipyudal at armado;

■ Hindi madaling gawain ang gawaing sosyo-ekonomiko. Bukod sa mga problema sa lohistika at pinansya at kalagayang pandigma, kinakailangang baguhin ang ilang konsepto at praktikang tradisyunal ng masa na nakakahadlang sa pagsusulong ng mga layunin. Kailangang maipatanggap sa kanila ang nababagay na teknolohiya. Ang pagbabago ay kailangang mag-umpisa sa hanay mismo ng mga organisador sa larangang ito. Aaahan din ang pagtutol, hindi mula sa kaaway sa uri, kundi mula sa hanay ng masa mismo, dahil ang ilan sa kanilang tradisyon at kultura ay kinakailangang mabago sa paraang matagalan at ganap.

Sabik ang tao sa bagong ideya at paraan sa pagsasaka



Makabuluhang pag-unlad: Tulung-tulong ang mga taga-baryo sa paggawa ng irigaryon

magpatakbo ng programa sa kalusugan.

Sabik ang mga tao sa mga bagong ideya at paraan, laluna sa pagsasaka. Gayunman, ang pangangailangan nila para sa mas mahigpit na pagsubaybay at sa naaangkop na kaparaanan para matanggap nila ang bagong teknolohiya at sulong na

■ Kamakailan lang seryosong nabigyang-pansin ang gawaing sosyo-ekonomiko;

■ Bagamat gumawa ang pamunang panrehiyon ng komprehensibong oryentasyon tungkol sa pakikibakang sosyo-ekonomiko, hindi pa nito napapaunlad at namomolibisa ang mga pwersa para maging deter-

Matagal nang obligasyon ng rebolusyonaryong kilusan sa masa ang pagpapatupad ng programang sosyo-ekonomiko. Kung wala ito, lalo na sa panahon ng konsolidasyon, maaaring maging mahirap ang pagbubuo ng rebolusyonaryong kapangyarihang pampulitika.

Silvio Bakir

A bubbling discovery

PROG in Northern Luzon embarks on soap-making venture



Processing coconut oil to make soap:
A step in the journey to self-sufficiency



Deep in the jungles of the Cordilleras, 35 peasant trainees from the five towns of Sta. Rosario* grappled for answers that would give substance and form to their very first endeavor in soap production.

In this town, where government services are virtually non-existent, a basic item like scented soap is considered a luxury. Thus, the People's Revolutionary Organs of Governance (PROGs) established by the villagers decided to conduct seminars on soap production as part of the PROG's program on self-reliance. Since ingredients for soap-making abound in the area, they felt that they should hardly have any trouble in manufacturing the product.

Thus, in August last year, a group of peasants who are also members of the *Socio-Economic Teams* of the PROG, proposed the project concept with a people's organization in Manila. After a series of consultations, illustrated kits were sent to the village for the peasants to pore over, while they awaited the arrival of an instructor.

But days passed without the resource person from Manila making an appearance. Military operations and bad weather had delayed his arrival. The peasants' excitement soon turned to impatience.

Confident with their seminar kit on hand, the peasants went ahead with the experiment without waiting for the instructor. One trial experiment led to another until a series of failures dampened their hopes for success.

When Ka Nestor, the volunteer-technician from Manila finally reached Sta. Rosario, skepticism was already widespread among the peasant trainees. They didn't so much doubt Ka Nestor's ability as they did their own. As one trainee remarked, "How could simple unschooled peasants like us produce such a precious commodity? We have to walk tens of kilometers and cross rivers and mountain trails just to be able to buy soap for our families."

* The name of the town has been changed to protect its inhabitants from military attack.

Our tools must be defective," a dispirited peasant remarked as he held the melted bar of soap in his hands. "No, there must be a missing ingredient," argued Ka Rosa. "Perhaps, only the *teknokrats* can produce this stuff," Ka Tonio, a fellow peasant finally retorted in frustration.

Ka Nestor, who lived most of his life with the peasantry, readily understood their anxieties. But he also believed in the villagers' capacities and boundless potential.



NDF-PMA

Buoyed up spirits: Support for the soap-making venture came in from other villages

communities, everyone has the right to learn, not just those who can afford to buy books or pay expensive tuition fees."

During the actual training, however, creeping self-doubts constantly threatened the peasants' confidence. For 15 straight days of theoretical grounding and step-by-step demonstrations, the constant fear of failure shackled their minds. But Ka Nestor's unflagging optimism and steadfastness kept these fears in restraint.

More than this, however, the support that had poured in from the war-torn villages of Sta. Rosario buoyed up their spirits.

Months before, barrio council leaders called for voluntary support for the soap-making project in mass meetings. The appeal yielded more than what

individual food budget. For tools, available metals, wood and kitchen utensils were improvised and assembled by a team of peasants and guerrillas.

The money needed to purchase some of the tools and ingredients was also shouldered in advance by the Red army to expedite the coco-project. The necessary funds were unavailable as yet because military harassment of people's organizations delayed the entry of material support from the cities and town centers.

As the seminar neared its final phase, the peasants' fears were slowly dispelled. Excitement grew and all eyes were glued to the soap mixture.

When the mixture was finally molded and cut, melodious cries of *oohs* and *aahs*, interspersed with cheers and laughter, broke two



NDF-PMA

Encouraging them, he pointed out: "I may have the formulas, but it is you yourselves who produce the resources right in your backyards necessary for the formulas to work. Given the right opportunity, you could discover other means of utilizing these raw materials in the same way that you have discovered many indigenous herbal cures. In your

they expected. Each family contributed at least two coconuts (coconut oil is the basic ingredient for soap-making). Even the Red fighters in the region responded with generosity. Despite their limited resources, each guerrilla in the area allotted a bottle of coconut oil for the project, produced either from the NPA's communal farms or from the fighter's

weeks of tension. Tidings of triumph spread fast among the villages. Soon, the training site was cramped with young and old, all wanting to have a touch of the final product and see if it was for real.

Womenfolk, in particular, shrieked with delight as they sniffed their own scented soap bars while their children frolicked around.



The making of rural "teknokrats": Trying their luck with oil extracted from wild boar

Said Ka Nestor: "It was like Christmas. Everyone was bubbling with energy and high spirits and clutching bars of soap."

From the total number of bars produced, the *Socio-Eco Team* distributed free samples to the participants and visitors. One hundred twenty bars were set aside for each NPA front while five pieces were allotted for each PROG official to show to their constituents. The rest were reserved for the families in the village.

A week after, the first batch of peasant trainees conducted the same seminar to a second group of trainees, who in turn shared their new-found skills with others.

From soap-making, the peasants embarked on the production of vinegar, coconut cookies and bread using the same ingredients. Later, Ka Nestor and the peasants also

successfully made use of oil extracts from carabaos, wild pigs, cows and snakes for soap production.

The team's next venture, Ka Nestor explained, is the extraction of essences from the plants available in the area so the peasants would no longer have to buy perfume from the town center.

The unprecedented economic venture led the villagers to commemorate their success by inaugurating their first coco-processing "plant" last September. The three-day affair was celebrated by 300 villagefolk and a platoon of NPA guerrillas. The ceremony commenced with the singing of the Philippine national anthem and the *Internationale* as the NDF and the Philippine flags were unfurled. Officers of the *Socio-Eco team*, the mayor of the PROG and other officials congratulated the partici-

pants and the NPA for their cooperation and commitment in developing the communities of Sta. Rosario.

Following the officials' opening address, the team of peasants demonstrated how to operate the plant. By the end of the third day, the plant was able to produce over 600 bars of soap, 1,000 coco-cookies, over 500 pieces of bread, about 100 liters of vinegar and several boxes of coco-candies for children and adults alike.

The peasant masses celebrated the plant's successful run with their traditional songs and dances. Among the festive crowd, the first batch of peasant trainees radiated most of the smiles, fascinated with the discovery that they could, after all, do things just as well as the *teknokrats* from the city.

Martina del Fuego



The making of rural "teknokrats": Trying their luck with oil extracted from wild boar

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Martina del Fuego

Rebuilding shattered lives

PROGs in war-torn and calamity-stricken villages prioritize relief and rehabilitation work

In the war-torn valleys of Northern Luzon, vicious attacks by the AFP that wreak havoc on the civilian population are compounded by natural disasters such as typhoons and the devastating earthquake of July 1989. Relief and rehabilitation (R & R) work has thus been on top of the list of priorities of the sub-municipal People's Revolutionary Organs of Governance (PROG) established in four base areas at the foot of the Sierra Madre mountains. The sub-municipal PROGs of Parang, Kabul, Candon and San Isidro* consist of three to six adjacent villages where at least three barrio revolutionary committees are active.

So intent is the military in destroying the revolution's political infrastructure that only one year after the sub-municipality of Parang was established in 1987, the AFP Northern Luzon Command launched Oplan Red Buster III which involved bombing runs and ground assaults on civilian populated areas. Where previously the population stood at 2,000, forced evacuations had left only about 700 people dispersed throughout the forested areas of the valley by the end of the year.

At Candon sub-municipality, where the PROG was already in place even before 1987, only about half of the population remain after intense military operations involving heavy aerial and ground bombardment, encirclement and suppression, forced mass evacuations and economic blockades were unleashed in the area in 1990. The sub-municipality had an original population of 600. **

In its rampage, however, the AFP has only succeeded in



decimating the people's already precarious livelihood. As the smoke of military atrocities cleared in Parang, four carabaos and four plows that the barriofolk had managed to hide were all that was left of their farm animals and implements. But these, too, were wiped out the next

Candon militia member with family: A dogged determination to survive

* not their real names
** mostly Ilog, Malauog, Rawas and Kalinga minority groups.

year when typhoon Guring lashed through the region, destroying the peasants' irrigation ditches and crops. A cholera-dysentery epidemic following the typhoon killed four children.

Ever resilient, the villagers have been quick to pick up the pieces of their shattered lives and rebuild their communities. The people of Parang take advantage of every respite from military attack to resettle their villages and begin farming anew. On the other hand, the people of Kabul sub-municipality who also suffered heavy agricultural losses due to the 1990 drought and incessant military operations, have embarked on an ambitious farm expansion drive to increase food production.

Kabul's 3,000-odd population, including the nomadic Aggay, live on upland farming and hunting. The sub-municipality's PROG has been undertaking a campaign since 1989, urging the people to open lowland farms. Through allies and supportive people's organizations, the PROG has helped provide technical training and resource personnel for the construction of irrigation systems and the manufacture of indigenous farm equipment such as mills and harrows.

Faced with the constant threat of military attack, the communities at the foot of the Sierra Madre are in effect living under a continuing state of calamity. Thus, relief and rehabilitation, including disaster-preparedness, is incorporated into the PROGs' general program of governance.

R & R is implemented by the PROGs despite meager resources, limited personnel and danger from enemy attack. Through solicitation and procurement of seedlings from outlying areas and sympathetic organizations, for instance, they have been able to disseminate the needed palay seeds for the next planting season.

In addition, the NDF international office in Utrecht, The Netherlands has issued a statement of support for the victims of the July 16 earthquake and



NPA forces: Downscaled operations to help in relief efforts

Lipson/ILC The

opened the *Earthquake Victims Fund* to facilitate the influx of aid from friends and allies worldwide. Relief goods and rehabilitation funds subsequently flowed and were coursed through the PROGs in the affected areas. Likewise, the NDF National Council made a call for relief and rehabilitation for the victims.

For its part, the New People's Army called for a downscaling of military operations in the worst affected guerrilla zones to enable its fighters to help in relief work. People's organizations, open and underground, also shared what they could in materiel and personnel.

Touched by the groundswell of support, the PROGs, however, continue to welcome help from allies and sympathizers to aid the rehabilitation of their areas.

Aside from the usual difficulties in resources and personnel, the single biggest obstacle in the PROGs' relief and rehabilitation efforts in the calamity-ravaged areas has been the Aquino government and military itself.

In a statement, the Chadli Molintas Command, the NPA unit operating in the Cordillera region, assailed the AFP for "concocting a tall tale about a non-existent relief operation being attacked" last July 24. The NPA revealed that immediately after the July 16 earthquake, units of the 130th and 193rd PC companies and

the 48th IB PA conducted pincer maneuvers in the vicinity of Barangay Nunggulunan, Hungduan in an attempt to encircle and smash a local armed guerrilla unit of the NPA which was counter-maneuvering itself out of the area to avoid combat. On July 23, the AFP started shelling the Nunggulunan area with 60-millimeter mortar fire and strafed the nearby forested mountainside, trying to drive the NPA unit into a pre-set ambush. In active defense, the guerrillas were forced to return fire, killing Vice Mayor Humiding of Hungduan who was with CAFGU elements under a Lieutenant Paclivar.

The Cordillera People's Democratic Front, in another statement published by its official publication, *Fetad* last December 10, deplored the Aquino regime's "superb incompetence and magnificent negligence" in responding to the pleas of victims for immediate R & R after the earthquake. It demanded the investigation and prosecution of local government and military officials who stole relief goods and funds for rehabilitation intended for earthquake victims in Benguet and Abra.

Bristled a PROG official: "The Aquino government has already caused much agony with its incessant military attacks. Then its corrupt bureaucrats aggravate the anguish when natural catastrophes strike."

Tara Go-Mios

Winning battles

People's support spells victory for NPA tactical offensives
in Eastern Visayas and Southern Tagalog

Liberalism Press



From the battle fronts of Eastern Visayas (EV) and Southern Tagalog (ST), *LIB* correspondents gathered some of the most outstanding tactical operations launched by the New People's Army (NPA) in 1990.

Sixty-seven high-powered rifles (HPR) and handguns with 50 boxes of dynamite sticks, nine rolls of detonating cord and 24 boxes of piston caps and wire were confiscated in the two areas of operation during the last quarter of the year. Combat casualties for the AFP totalled 70: 29 killed, 32 wounded, nine surrenderees and two captured as prisoners-of-war. The NPA lost eight men and suffered six wounded in action.

In the EV fronts of Samar and Leyte, commando raids were simultaneously launched last October 9 on the 18th IB PA Company headquarters in Brgy. Palanit, San Isidro, Northern Samar; the PC/INP (now Philippine National Police or PNP) detachment in Barangay Salvacion, San Isidro; and an Air Force outpost in Barangay Libho, six kilometers from the capital town of Catarman, Northern Samar. At about the same time, a squad of NPA guerrillas ambushed a 20-man armed patrol of CAFGU and vigilante conscripts in Barangay Baybay, Southern Leyte.

*Red fighters planning maneuvers:
Outstanding battles*

On September 2, at 4:47 a.m., the NPA overran a Philippine Army, police and CAFGU station in Marabut, Eastern Samar, 30 kilometers from Tacloban City. After a 30-minute firefight, the army camp and municipal building of the town was under NPA control. The guerrillas confiscated three M16s, three M14s, one M203, two Garand rifles, two .38 handguns, office equipment and thousands of rounds of live ammunition. Three CAFGU men were killed, while five wounded enemy troopers were administered first aid treatment.

Before the guerrillas withdrew, they captured two POWs: Sgt. Jaime Cardenal and Pfc. Mario Yape.

Revolutionary justice for the workers of Sta. Ines Logging Company in Sitio Rawis, Guirang, Basey, Samar came in the form of an NPA raid on the logging firm midnight of August 21. The company had failed to pay its workers for the last several months. Moreover, the firm's management denied possession of dynamite which they actually stored in bunkers near the workers' residential area, gravely endangering their families' life and limb. Said a forklift operator: "Maupay ito para umabat ini nga kumpanya ha kaburian han mga trabahador (This [raid] is good so the company will also feel the workers' woes)."

Meanwhile, after a month of surveillance and combat planning, the NPA in Southern Tagalog successfully raided the PC/INP/CAFGU detachments stationed in the town of Real, Quezon last September 5.

The plan was to launch a two-pronged attack on the detachment manned by a full squad of PC troopers and the municipal building nearby used as a garrison by two squads of INP and CAFGU conscripts. A tactical command was formed to direct a composite guerrilla force of over 90 Red fighters against the three enemy squads.

The guerrilla company was divided into Group A assigned to



NPA guerrillas: Victory after victory in its armed offensives

Liberal/PA

attack and control the municipal building and Group B which was to assault the PC camp aboard a government-owned truck.

By five o'clock in the morning, the two guerrilla groups were in position. At 5:05 a.m., the signal fire started. Thirty-five minutes later the PC detachment was completely under NPA control. Seven troopers surrendered after two others were killed in the first volley of gunfire. Twelve HPRs and one .38 handgun were taken.

At the municipal building, meantime, fighting was still raging. A PC soldier surrendered his M16 rifle after he was trapped by a team of NPA commandos. The others refused to budge from their entrenched positions. Fighting continued for two more hours. As sporadic firing and calls for surrender reverberated in the early morning's stillness, people were starting to gather at the town plaza. Propaganda teams led by the NPA's political officer explained to the public the purpose of the offensive and the revolution's objectives. Some local residents volunteered to facilitate the surrender of the remaining police and CAFGU men

trapped inside the municipal building.

But by then, 8:00 a.m., reinforcements were arriving from the Infanta PC and the 59th IB. The guerrilla's blocking force engaged the enemy until after all the raiding groups had safely withdrawn from the battle zone. Three Red fighters were killed in action while another succumbed to wounds sustained in combat.

The success of the tactical offensives, according to an NPA officer, lay not so much in the number of enemy soldiers killed or firearms confiscated. It was in the people's show of support - from data-gathering to such small gestures as giving water to a thirsty guerrilla firing at an entrenched enemy. ■



Sa Baryo Putol

SEBYO
CARLOS HUMBERTO



Halaw mula sa nobelang
Sebyo ni Carlos Humberto

Pagkatapos ng dalawang buwang pag-aaral at pag-aaralan-militar, inatasan ang iskwad ni Sebyo na organisahin ang isang baryo na kung tawagin ay Putol sa may paanan ng bundok Sierra Madre. Isang taga-baryo Putol, si Tasyo, na ngayon ay kasapi ng iskwad, ang nagagawa ng panimulang pagpiliyasat. Siya rin ang ugnay ng tatlong lokal na kontak na bubuo ng Komiteng Tagapag-organisa sa Baryo.

Limang oras na naglakad sina Sebyo pababa ng bundok bago sila nakarating sa bukana ng baryo Putol. Tumuloy sila sa isang kubo na naa pagitan ng gubat at ng isang maliit na bukid na sinasaka ng ama ni Tasyo, si Apo Dencio. Bukod sa pagasaka, si Apo Dencio ay umaekstra rin bilang karpintero.

Ayon sa plano, ang iskwad ay litigil muna sa nasabing kubo habang inaayos ang binuong komiteng tagapag-organisa sa baryo. Nagtayo ang iskwad ng isa pang kubo malapit sa kubo ni Apo Dencio. Tumulong ang iskwad sa pagasaka ng bukid. Dehil malayo sa sentro ng baryo, walang gaanong taong napapagawi sa lugar na iyon, at ang paglitigil doon ng iskwad ng NPA ay nalingid sa kaalaman ng mga taga baryo Putol.

Sa ikalawang gabi ng paglitigil ng iskwad sa baryo, dumating si Tasyo na may kasamang isang matabang babae. Ipinakilala ni Tasyo ang babae sa ngalang Aling Parang, na siyang kapitana del baryo ng Putol. Lumapit ang babae sa ama ni Tasyo.

"Apo Dencio, may ipagagawa sanang dalawang mesa ang manugang ko," ani Aling Parang. "Pumunta kayo sa amin sa makalawa."

Pagkatapos ng kumustahan, kinausap ni Menti si Aling Parang. Iniuulat ng babae na may sampung katao na ang komiteng tagapag-organisa. May ilan ding taga-baryo na naghihintay sa atas na itatakda ng komite. Sinimulan na rin ang pagbubuo ng mga samahan ng mga magasaka, kababaihan, at kabataan.

Tinanong ni Menti kung may mga delikadong elemento na masaring maging lepiya sa baryo. "May isa, ngunit hindi kami nakatitiyak kung talagang beyeran siya ng PC," wika ni Aling Parang.

Bago umalis si Aling Parang, napagkaisahan ng grupo na pupunta ang kumander ng iskwad, si Tiago, at tatlo pang kasama sa bahay ni Aling Parang sa susunod na gabi.

Ang kubo ni Aling Parang ay naa dulo ng Putol. Malaki ang kanyang kubo kumpara sa karamihan ng mga kubo sa baryo. Maraming elegang kambing ang kapitana na ikinukulong sa tabi ng kubo kung gabi. Labing-apat katao, apat na babae at sampung lalaki, ang nagkaisahan sa pinakasala ng kubo. Ang karamihan ay nakaupo sa mga bangkito, at may ilang nakaupo sa ashig ng kawayan. Bandang alas nuwebe ng gabi nang dumating si Tiago kasama sina Tasyo, Menti at Sebyo. Iainama ni Menti si Sebyo sapagkat gusto niyang matuto ito sa pakikipanayam sa mga tao.

Pagkatapos ng pagpapakilanan, nagsimulang magpaliwanag si Tiago kung ano ang NPA. Isang babae, na ayon kay kapitana Parang ay lider ng mga kabataang kababaihan sa Putol, ang nagtanong kung masari din silang maging mandirigma.

"Sa loob ng NPA, pentay ang pagtingin sa babae at lalaki," sagot ni Tiago. "Masari ding humawak ng armas ang isang katulad mo."

Gustong malaman ng mga taga Putol kung ano ang magagawa ng NPA sa kanilang baryo. Sinabi ni Tiago na tutulong sila sa pagpapalakas ng mga samahang itatatag sa Putol. Kailangang palakasin ang pagkakaisa ng mga magasaka leban sa mga panginoong maylupa. Ayon sa pagpiliyasat na ginawa ng kanilang iskwad, dalawang pang porsiyento ng mga maninirahan sa baryo ay nakikisaka sa lupain ng isang panginoong maylupa ng naninirahan sa Maynila. Bukod dito, mayroon ding nag-aalaga ng lupa ng mga panggitnang magasaka. Ang karaniwang laki ng mga lupaing ito ay mula lima hanggang dalawampung hektarya. May anim na panggitnang magasakang nagmamay-ari ng mga lupa sa Putol. Apat sa mga ito ay naninirahan sa bayan ng San Isidro na sumasakop sa Putol.

"Kung mapasunlad ang mga samahan dito ay hindi madaling magugulangan ng panginoong maylupa ang mahihirap na magasaka," sabi ni Tiago. Idinugtong niya na ang layunin ng Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas ay maglunsad ng malawakang repormang agraryo na mamamahagi ng libreng lupa sa mga kasama.

Halos ala-una na ng madaling-araw nang matapos ang pulong at magbalik ang grupo nina Sebyo sa kubo nina Tasyo. Nang mga sumunod na araw, marami pang pulong ang dinaluhan ni Sebyo. Di naglaon, naitatag ang isang samahan ng mga magasaka sa Putol. Pinairal nila ang kooperatibismo sa produkayon. Tulung-tulong sila sa pag-aalaga ng mga lupain, lalo na kung ang isa nilang kabaryo ay may sakit at hindi makapagpaka.

Hinarap din ng iskwad ang pagtatayo ng samahan ng kababaihan. Si Choding ang naging tagapagalita para sa NPA. Katulong niya ang isang dating estudyante ng nursing na tumigil sa pag-aaral dahil sa kawalan ng pera. Pinangunahan ng kababaihan ang proyekto sa pagpepanatili ng kalinisan sa baryo at ang pangangalaga sa kalusugan ng mga tagaroon.

Tumulong naman sina Pedring at Sebyo sa pagtatayo ng samahan ng mga kabataan. Lumahok sila sa aktibidad ng mga ito. Tinambakan nila ng mga bato ang mga putikang kalsada sa baryo. Ang ibang kasamahan nila ay nagturo sa mga bata upang bumasa at

sumulat. Di naglaon, pati matatandang hindi nakapag-aral ay tinuruan na ring bumasa at sumulat.

Isang araw, nagpulong ang samahan ng mga magasaaka upang talakayin ang partiha ng ani. Dumalo ang ilang miyembro ng lakwad. Si Ka Baste, ang pangulo ng samahan, ang nagpatakbo ng pulong. Sinabi niya na kailangang baguhin ang sitenta-trentang partiha na pinaliral ng panginoong maylupang si Don Tiburcio Simon. Si Don Tiburcio ay minsan lang sa dalawang buwan kung sumulpot sa Putol, at maawerte nang magtagal siya ng dalawang araw kapag dumarating. Mayroon siyang kapatas na nagpupunta sa Putol dalawang beses isang linggo at sinuubaybayan ang lakbo ng gawain ng mga kasama. Ang kapatas ay naninirahan sa bayan ng San Isidro at lito ang nag-aasikaso sa pagbebenta ng mga inani mula sa lupa ni Don Tiburcio.

"Maayado tayong agrabyado sa partiha," sabi ni Ka Baste. "kaya ipinakilusap sana namin sa mga kasama sa hukbo na kung maari ay tulungan kaming kumbinalhin si Don Tiburcio na ibaba sa kwarenta porsyento ang kanyang parte. Tutal, lahat ng trabaho ay sa amin. At hindi lang dito ang kanyang lupain. Marami pa siyang lupain sa ibang lugar. Darating siya rito sa makalawa, at nagkasunduan na namin na kausapin siya."

Pumayag si Tiago na mamagitan sa pag-uusap ng mga magasaaka at ni Don Tiburcio. Nang mabelitaan ng mga magasaaka na dumating si Don Tiburcio, agad silang nagpadala ng delegasyon sa malaking bahay nito sa San Isidro. Pinatuloy ng don ang pangkat ng mga magasaaka. Kasama ni Ka Baste sina Menti at Tiago. Ipinaliwanag ni Ka Baste ang tungkol sa hiling ng mga magasaaka na gawing alaenta porsyento ang kanilang parte at kwarenta porsyento ang parte ng don. Tumanggap si Don Tiburcio. Nagalita si Tiago at sinabi niya na kailangang magbigayan ang mga may lupa at ang maliliit na magasaaka nang sa gayon ay maiwasan ang samahan ng loob, mapeunlad ang lakbo ng pagasaaka, at huwag maligalig ang kanayunan. Malumanay ngunit matigas ang himig ng pananalita ni Tiago. Naramdaman ni Don Tiburcio na ang kausap niya ay hindi mga karaniwang magasaaka at lumambot ang kanyang loob. Sinabi niya na nauunawaan niya ang lahat at siya ay sang-ayon sa kahilingan ng mga magasaaka.

"Ano sa pelagay mo, Ka Tiago," tanong ni Ka Baste nang sila ay pauwi na sa baryo. "Di ba perang natakot sa inyo si Don Tiburcio?"

"Sa tingin ko'y bukas naman ang kanyang pag-iisip, at naniniwala akong tutuparin niya ang kasunduan," ani Tiago.

Nagtagal ang lakwad sa baryo nang halos dalawang buwan. Bukod sa pag-organisa, "nilinis" nila ang baryo. Lahat ng maaaring elemento ay kanilang binalaan na huwag gagawa ng anumang makapipinsala sa masa. Minsan ay nakatanggap sila ng sumbong na may dalawang taong nagnakaw ng kalabaw ng isang magasaaka sa Putol. Hinanap ng lakwad ang mga nagnakaw, ipinabelik ang kalabaw, at binalaan ang mga lito na huwag nang magpapakitang muli sa baryo, kung hindi'y pagbabakasyonin na sila sa buwan.

Unti-unti, nadama ni Sebyo ang halaga ng kanyang buhay. Sa unang pagkakataon, nagkaroon siya ng pagpapahalaga sa sarili, ngayong nakikita niya na may natutulog siya sa kapwa, lalo na sa mahihirap. Nagkaroon din siya ng ibang pagtingin sa sarili. Nakita niya na siya ay katulad ng karaniwang tao, hindi aba, hindi mataas. Kapantay lamang siya ng anumang naganais ng mga karaniwang bagay na sa pamamagitan ng makapagbigay-ligaya sa buhay.

Minsan ay nakaupo sila ni Pedring sa sahig na kawayan ng kubo ni Apo Dencio. Katatapos lamang nilang mananghalian. Ang iba nilang kasamahan ay natutulog. Mainit ang araw at tahimik ang paligid.

"Alam mo, Sebyo," wika ni Pedring, "hindi ko akalain na ako'y mapepasa rito. Sa totoo, ako'y tahimik na tao. Ayoko ng buhay na nagtagalo. Simple lang ang gusto ko. Bigyan mo ako ng ansupot na prihong mari habang nanonood ng sine na kasama si Choding at kuntento na ako. Pero, kailangan nang matapos ang peng-aapi sa atin, kailangan din nating isipin ang kinabukasan ng ating mga anak, di ba?"

"Oo nga," sagot ni Sebyo. Sa ipinagtapal ni Pedring, lalong lumapit ang loob ni Sebyo sa kanya. Katulad ko rin pala siya, anya sa

sarili. Simple lang ang kaligayahan. Akala ko, ang taong madaling magalit na kagaya niya ay mataas ang ambisyon sa buhay. Hindi naman pala.

Nalilig ang pag-iisip niya nang maramdaman siyang may patakbo ng dumarating. Lumingon siya at nakita niya ang isang batang hingal na hingal. "May patruya ng PC patungo sa Putol," sabi ng bata. "Mukhang kinuplong kayo ng dalawang nagnakaw ng kalabaw. May limang kilometro ang layo dito ng mga PC."

Agad nagtanda ang lakwad at ipinasundo ang iba nilang kasama na nasa baryo. Nang maipon ang buong lakwad, nagpaalam na sila kay Apo Dencio, at tumalak patungong bundok. Nang may sampung kilometro na ang kanilang layo mula sa Putol, nakarinig sila ng putok at humaginit ang isang bata sa kanilang lugar.

"Dapa, mga kasama," utos ni Tiago. Nagkubli sila sa malalaking bato at puno. Hindi na gaanong kabado ngayon di Sebyo. Pagkatapos ng mga naranasan niya sa kamay ng mga humuli sa kanya, ang ganitong engkwentro ay hindi na gaanong nakakagulat. Hinawakan niya nang mahigpit ang armaloyt at gumapang siya sa likod ng malaking bato upang silipin ang kinaroroonan ng kaaway. Nagputukan muli, at natantya ni Sebyo na malayo sa kanya ang tama ng mga bata. Isang kasama niya ang umakyat sa isang puno at mula roon ay nag-aniping. Narinig ni Sebyo ang ungol ng ilang sundalong tinamaan.

"Umaatras na sila," sigaw ng gerliyong nasa puno.

Ang karanasan ni Sebyo sa baryo Putol ay nasundan pa ng ibang pakikipagpapalaran ng kanilang lakwad sa ibang baryo. Unti-unting nahasa si Sebyo sa pag-organisa at nasaray sa pagtalakay ng mga layu. Ang mga tagumpay ng kanilang lakwad ay nakapagbibigay sa kanya ng malaking kaalaman, lalo na kapag nakikita niya sina Pedring at Choding na ebala rin sa paggampan ng kanilang mga tungkulin. Buhos na buhos ang kanyang kalooban sa mga gawaing iniatas sa kanya. Kung siya ay nagbabantay sa gabi, sinisikap niyang huwag mepikit ang kanyang mga mata kahit sandali. Sa tanang buhay niya, ngayon lang niya tunay na minahalaga ang isang grupo. Ngayon lang siya nagkaroon ng kapanatagan ng loob sa pagpasa sa isang kolektiba, kapanatagan mas higit pa sa nadama niya sa kanyang nasirang pamilya. Isang dahilan ay sa pagkat hindi pinagtatawanan ng mga kasama niya ang dati'y itinuturing niyang nakakahiyang ugali, tulad ng paminaan-minsa'y pagtulog maghapon kung walang ginagawa. Bagaman mayroon silang awyon ng tinatawag na "pagpuna at pagpuna sa sarili," hindi dinaramdam ni Sebyo ang paminaan-minsang pagpuna sa kanya kung nakakaligtan niya ang pagtupad sa maliliit na tungkulin, tulad ng pagtaka sa paglilinis ng kubo.

Masaya rin naman ang kanyang grupo, maraming biruan at kantyawar, lalo't kung may lalaki at babaeng nagkakagustuhan. Sina Pedring at Choding ay madalas ding kabiruan ni Sebyo. Minsan isang gabi, habang nagbabantay siya sa malapit sa malawak na ilog, nakarinig siya ng ungol at takbuhan ng mga paa. Nang magpapasal siya, may kumalabit sa kanyang likod at nagulat siya. Nakarinig siya ng mga pigil na halakhak at nang lingunin niya ay sina Pedring at Choding na may dalang nilagang mais. Napatawa din siya at nilantakan na lamang ang mga mais.

Habang kumakain, tinanong siya ni Choding kung ano ang balak niyang gawin pagkatapos ng rebolusyon. "Hindi ko alam," ang sagot niya. Para kay Sebyo, natagpuan na niya ang kapayapaan ng damdamin sa loob ng hukbo. Bukod sa lubusang pagtanggap sa kanya, marami nang pangyayari sa kanyang buhay na kaugnay sa loob ng hukbo na mahirap niyang iwanan: ang pagtuturo sa kanya, ang pakikipagpagpagan sa PC, ang gutom sa loob ng gubat, ang mas malalim na pagtakilala niya sa sarili, at marami pang iba, kaya ayaw niyang humiwalay sa hukbo at sa kilusan. Gayunman, hindi maiwasang pumasok sa isip niya ang isang malaking tanong: ano kaya ang kahihinatnan namin?

