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THE NEW PEOPLE'S ARMY

ELIGIBLE FOR  
MILITARY SERVICE

DANTE L. ANDROSIO  
KOLEKSYON

APRIL 1984

# A call to arms

It is time to draw the line between illusion and reality, a time to discard wishful thinking and take stock of one's position from the viewpoint of history. This is of great urgency today to various anti-dictatorship forces in order to forge higher unity and advance in leaps and bounds.

Let there be no warped notions. The Marcos regime would not hand over power or substantially share it with the genuine democratic legal opposition in the coming elections. Neither would it step down in the face of massive peaceful demonstrations. Neither, too, would the US - whose vast military and economic interests are syndicated with those of the ruling clique - sweep Marcos out of power through elections or by granting major concessions to the legal protest movement.

In our experience under the dictatorship, one lesson stands over the rest: the present regime has ruled by armed force and can only be brought down by the people's own armed force. Without the AFP, the Marcos regime could not count on anything else to impose its will. Without their own guerrilla army, the people would not have anything by which to assert their rights and freedom.

That the New People's Army, the Communists, the MNLFBMA and the Gerilya Anak-Pawis have been the most strongly attacked and the most maliciously maligned among the broad range of forces at loggerheads with the dictatorship, betrays the regime's own fear of armed resistance and the growing popular support for it. For it is in this sphere that the people can forge the most potent sword with which to strike at their enemies. Unlike elections where the rules are formulated by the regime itself, or unlike the urban legal protest movement where the dictatorship too sets the optimum permissible limit, in a battle, the side that has the initiative has the upperhand. And, in particular, in a guerrilla war, guerrillas fight no battles where the initiative is not theirs.

Fifteen long years of persevering and fruitful armed resistance by the New People's Army has proven this point. Comprised of a handful at the start, this guerrilla outfit, through popular support and correct application of strategy and tactics, has today transformed itself into the most formidable force confronting the dictatorship. Through intensifying small- and medium-scale offensives nationwide, it has annihilated hundreds of the AFP's scattered outposts, convoys, foot patrols, consequently strengthening itself in the process.

Steady progress of revolutionary armed struggle mainly in the

Philippine countryside has been complemented by an upsurge of the urban-based protest movement and the emergence of a broad anti-dictatorship front following Aquino's assassination. These anti-dictatorship forces have taken big strides in forging unity to advance the open democratic movement. This movement has aroused and mobilized hundreds of thousands and has greatly isolated the dictatorship. This is not enough, however. The current open democratic mass movement risks decimation anytime. For the regime, driven by desperation could, in one fell swoop, arrest, detain, kidnap the present legal mass leaders and activists and outlaw open democratic organizations and parties.

It is high time, therefore, that side by side with pushing ward the open democratic mass movement, various anti-dictatorship forces should as well unite around the task of advancing armed struggle and developing the organizational strength and resources for promoting it.

Various options for promoting armed resistance are open to all forces who want to bring down the US-Marcos regime. They can go into active armed struggle either by setting up their own armed groups or joining established guerrilla groups.

Armed struggle can be promoted too by setting up a wide network of support organizations which can handle such important functions in warfare such as intelligence and surveillance work; procurement, gathering and production of weapons and other war materials; military research; and, liaison work. The underground network in the cities can serve as channels for recruitment and dissemination of revolutionary publications.

Even as every party, group or individual within the broad anti-dictatorship front has a free hand on how to develop and command its own forces for armed resistance, mutual help, cooperation, coordination and common planning among them would help in a big way to systematize the whole war effort against the dictatorship.

Despite the fact that all these years only a few parties and organizations have led in carrying forward armed struggle as the main form of struggle, today, the tempo of armed revolution has dramatically risen. It has gone a long, long way from its early beginnings fifteen years ago. If many other forces against the dictatorship will unite around the task of promoting armed struggle and pursue it relentlessly, would this not be a major turning point in the people's struggle to overthrow the regime?

## IN THIS ISSUE

Cover: NPA military training in Mindanao

**Cover story:** March 29 this year marks the 15th anniversary of the New People's Army. It marks as well the growing strength of a guerrilla outfit which has gained esteem as the only national armed force battling the dictatorship. By strengthening its regular units, the NPA this past year reaped many successful offensives against enemy troops. A special photo coverage of life in the NPA appears on pages 6 and 7.

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The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDF) is a framework or channel for the unity, cooperation and coordination of all national democratic forces in the country. It traces its beginnings to the establishment of the Preparatory Commission for a National Democratic Front on April 24, 1973. The 1973 NDF Ten-Point Program upholds armed struggle as the main form of struggle to overthrow the US-Marcos dictatorship. **LIBERATION** is the official publication of the NDF.



The NPA: "From small to big, from weak to strong"

## COVER STORY

# Armed struggle scales up

Stronger regular units and bigger, more frequent offensives mark NPA 15th anniversary

Had the 35-man first guerrilla outfit of the New People's Army (NPA) that operated in the border of the provinces of Tarlac and Pampanga been annihilated during its first months of existence in 1969, who would have cared about March 29 today? The anniversary day of the New People's Army would not have mattered at all except for a handful of surviving founding members. But to the contrary, March 29 has become a most significant date for a growing number of Filipinos: for the 20,000 NPA guerrillas themselves who have every reason to be jubilant for having grown this strong; for tens of millions of inhabitants in NPA operational areas covering 530 municipalities in 53 provinces who have willingly shared in the task of stepping up guerrilla warfare; and for millions of others in the cities and abroad, whose hopes for an end to the present dictatorship buoy up with every news of the NPA's triumph over the regime's armed minions.

No doubt, March 29 has become a red-letter date to many Filipinos. And rightly so. The NPA, an obscure ragtag guerrilla band in 1969, has steadily established itself as the most formidable and the only nationwide armed force

fighting the US-Marcos dictatorship. Today, this fact is even more indisputable. On its 15th year, the NPA winded up its last quarter with a series of big and bold offensives that highlighted the guerrilla army's growing might.

Last March 16, an NPA company pulled a daring raid on the 36th Infantry Battalion (IB) detachment in Bo. Rosario, Tubay municipality, Agusan del Norte. Three big teams blocked each of the three roads leading to the detachment while a fourth one assaulted it, killing two government soldiers and wounding four others. The guerrillas carted away 30 high-powered guns including two light machine guns and two grenade launchers.

Earlier, in Butuan City, on Jan. 22, another big formation of the NPA overran a nine-man detachment of the 36th IB in Bo. Dulag, seizing 10 M-16 rifles, one .30 cal. machinegun and one M-203. A week later, two more raids followed. In a well-planned attack, a 200-strong NPA force boarded 12 trucks, then blocked three points along the national highway on their way to disarming Pepsi Cola company guards. Subsequently, they raided the local police station and a PC detachment. The operation

yielded 20 high-powered rifles. (See LIB, Feb. 1984)

Since last year, daring town raids and large seizures of arms conducted by the guerrilla army have served notice of the guerrillas' vastly improved fighting capacity. Among last year's biggest raids were those in Liangga, Surigao del Sur (18 firearms); in Mabini, Davao del Norte (48 firearms); Aras-asan, Surigao del Sur (20 firearms); and Claveria, Misamis Oriental (50 firearms). In these operations, the NPA employed company formations up to undersized battalions, at times using commandeered vehicles to facilitate swift assault and withdrawal of forces. No less spectacular was the biggest vehicular ambush staged by the NPA in Godgod, Salug, Zamboanga del Norte, which killed 46 AFP troopers and resulted in the seizure of 49 rifles last Sept. 29.

Although the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)-designated regions in Mindanao island have spearheaded scaled-up offensives against the military this year, other regions too have scored big victories. In Cagayan Valley, the NPA bagged its biggest single arms haul of 15 rifles in an ambush on a 15-man team of the 111th PC Coy in



The people: Lifeblood of the guerrillas

Rizal. In Central Luzon, the guerrillas disarmed a Philippine Army (PA)-Civilian Home Defense Forces (CHDF) team in Lupao, Nueva Ecija and confiscated 10 firearms last Jan. 5.

#### The ace card: Revolution

Coming at a time of the Batasan Pambansa elections, the scale of NPA attacks has put the government in a serious fix. The worsening civil strife, particularly the government forces' bloody reprisals against civilians during counter-insurgency operations, has torn apart the regime's loud claim before the electorate that peace and order are its cornerstone achievement. But more than being a big blot on the regime's performance sheet, the recent scaled-up offensives have served as clear proofs for all and sundry that revolutionary war, not participation in the controlled electoral exercise and in the rubber-stamp parliament, is the ace card of the people in toppling the regime.

Aware of the dangerous implications of the current rise of guerrilla offensives,

Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile, in an interview with the defense press corps last Mar. 24, tried to downplay the NPA's recent strides. Enrile said, "The NPA has changed tactics from traditional small groups that they used to have, to massing attacks on seduced military and police detachments." He concluded that this change of tactics was "to give an impression that they (the NPAs) are strong and are all over the country." "But in reality, they have been merely transferred to make it appear that the rebels have grown in strength," Enrile added.

The minister's cunning distortion, notwithstanding, facts prove that the guerrilla offensives have not only become bigger, but more frequent. According to a partial tally made by *Ang Bayan*, the official publication of the Central Committee of the CPP, there were 60 NPA tactical offensives launched and 273 rifles and handguns gathered in the last half of 1983. This quantity of arms, together with the 1,000 rifles that the NPA gathered during its offen-

sives in the first half of 1983, make up the biggest annual arms seizure ever by the NPA.

Kasamang Homer, a leading member of the Mindanao Commission, the CPP's central organ for the island of Mindanao, revealed to **LIBERATION** that the NPA tactical offensives in the whole island from January to December 1983 reached a total of 234, averaging four to five offensives a week, a pace double the rate of twice a week in 1982. In these operations, guerrillas scattered in the 13 guerrilla fronts of the island collected a total of 800 high-powered rifles, surpassing their 1982 total haul of 400 firearms.

Meanwhile, in northeastern Luzon where the NPA is also fairly strong, 107 rifles were seized and 260 enemy troop-

## "People, not t

The story of the NPA in Cagayan Valley

Clutching a few dozen shotguns and automatic rifles seized in a raid on the Philippine Military Academy the year before, about 100 guerrillas of the NPA 1st Red Company lay huddled in a schoolhouse in Barrio Cayuseran, Benito Soliven, Isabela. They whiled away their time singing, and their song rang clear and strong, echoing through the mountains surrounding the barrio: "*Ang mga mamamayan, bindi ang mga bagay ang magpapasya!*"

Not far from where they were, some 7,000 AFP troopers lay scattered, stalking the forests, seeking out the Red fighters. The guerrillas continued with their songs. Though very much outnumbered, they were in high spirits and lay ready to face their stronger enemy. It was March 1972.

Twelve years have passed since. Now, when younger NPAs in Cagayan Valley listen to the older ones recount those difficult years, it is with more than a tinge of pride - for they know that they are carrying on the brave and gallant tradition of the first revolutionary fighters in Isabela who weathered the most severe blows inflicted by the AFP in its regional saturation campaign.

The first NPA unit in Cagayan was established in Isabela in 1969 when a three-man expansion team put up an organizing committee in Barrio Palawan, San Guillermo. By early 1971, the seeds of armed struggle began to grow with the formation of two platoons; by 1972, there were two company-sized units armed with low-powered weapons covering 150 barrios in eastern Isabela. Five other platoons were deployed in an area encompassing 200 barrios in Nueva Vizcaya, Ifugao and the plains of Isabela.

ers were killed in the whole year of 1983, according to an official release of the regional executive committee of the CPP.

After a brief lull during last year's end-quarter, guerrilla offensives have again picked up during the first quarter of this year. The NPAs have sprung at least 60 ambushes, raids, disarming operations and sparrow operations, seizing at least 120 rifles, according to a partial tally of *Ang Bayan*. The number of offensives and arms seizure for this quarter alone has already surpassed that of last year's first quarter total, the period when the fighting was most intense in 1983.

Many other regions have launched recently their own first quarter tactical offensives.

► In MacArthur, Eastern Samar last Feb. 23, NPA guerrillas killed two Army soldiers in a vehicular ambush.

► In Goa, Camarines Sur, NPA guerrillas ambushed and killed a notorious mayor named Padna and five police and CHDF men last Mar. 15, seizing four M-16s, two Garands and one .38 revolver.

► In Lasam, Cagayan, Red fighters ambushed and killed five Army soldiers including a lieutenant, last Mar. 18.

► In Malibcong, Abra, NPA guerrillas ambushed last Mar. 21 a 14-man PC-CHDF patrol and killed five soldiers; the guerrillas were able to seize some of the soldiers' rifles.

Continuous offensives mounted by the NPA in all regions of the country have put the pressure on the regime's

forces. This has prevented the AFP from concentrating its forces too long on contested areas without risking a dramatic rise of guerrilla operations elsewhere, proving beyond doubt the correctness of the NPA thrust to first spread guerrilla warfare nationwide rather than to develop only a few areas to the neglect of other regions.

#### Developing regular guerrilla units

These bigger and more frequent military offensives tread the heels of NPA successes in increasing and strengthening regular guerrilla units. For the past four years, the NPA has persisted in molding a full-fledged fighting force out of its armed propaganda squads which comprised the bulk of its forces in its first 10 years of operation, a per-

## Things, are decisive"

Cagayan Valley should once more spread out and establish roots in other areas in the region.

With 200 men and 70 arms, the NPAs went out on an expansion program throughout Cagayan and Isabela. Some other units established new guerrilla zones in the northeastern part of Central Luzon; when this area was consolidated, one platoon was left behind while a squad was deployed to do expansion work in Kalinga-Apayao.

But the NPAs had not been in Cagayan one year when the enemy unleashed Oplan Tag-Araw from March 1977 to May 1978. The counter-insurgency scheme failed and soon after, "Oplan Aurora Borealis" was launched in September 1978 "to crush the remnants of the NPA in Cagayan Valley," as boasted by Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile before the Batasan Pambansa.

But Enrile was soon eating his own words. Despite the regime's terror campaign, the armed struggle surged on in the region, to the enemy's utter chagrin. In 1981, NPA tactical offensives escalated, resulting in 44 enemy troopers killed and an equal number of rifles confiscated.

In reaction, the regime once more launched another counter-insurgency program, "Oplan Stardust," in 1981-1982. Two more battalions were called to reinforce the fascist troopers in Cagayan and Isabela. Again, Enrile announced that "the AFP will clean up the province of Cagayan."

It is 1984 today and no one is any more buying the regime's twice told lies. For despite the much superior weaponry and equipment of the AFP, the NPA is still going strong in the entire region. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd Red Companies may be mere memories now but for the inheritors of their proud and valiant tradition, their legacy is very much alive: People, not things, are decisive.



Red fighters: Inheritors of a brave and gallant tradition

By the time the writ of habeas corpus was suspended in 1971, these fledgling units had already been able to launch small, occasional tactical offensives, which the regime overdramatized to justify its terror campaign against the people and the revolutionary forces. When martial law was declared in September 1972, 50,000 people inhabiting the forested regions of eastern Isabela were forcibly evacuated by the military in a massive "base denial" campaign. But though cut off from their mass base, the Red fighters persisted in struggle and lived through the tight encirclement undertaken by more than 7,000 troopers.

For six years, bloody encounters erupted in the by-now uninhabited forest areas in Isabela between the 500 NPA guerrillas who doggedly fought the fascist troopers. So fiercely did

the three NPA companies and the few peasant masses who stayed on resist the enemy troopers that some AFP units assigned to Mindanao at the height of the MNLF-BMA offensive were deployed to Isabela to serve as reinforcements.

The outnumbered Red fighters were able to kill more than 1,500 enemy troopers in a series of running gun-battles that raged from Isabela to Nueva Vizcaya in the south and Kalinga-Apayao in the northeast. In this trying period, 300 guerrillas were martyred.

In 1977, the guerrillas decided to change their tactics from fighting from the uninhabited forest regions of Isabela to mobile guerrilla warfare which involved fighting without any fixed battle lines. The CPP conference held that year determined that the NPAs in

# Life in the NPA



Inside an NPA base, music is part of guerrilla life, keeping morale high. "Gate way" to an NPA camp, "Bambas" in the boondocks, fighting battles on a boat board; children imitating drills; a moment for reflection. (Photos by Antonio Balagtas)





Left column. Massing up for a journey, waiting for the two columns to catch up, barefoot march, morning gymnastics, preparing for a political lecture. Right column on military training. Jasec aims, drill, target practice, simulating assault, marching exercises before slaying a rañá (Photos by Antonio Balagtas)



Target practice: Ensuring that every bullet finds its mark

iod of preparing and expanding its mass base in the vast countryside. Last year, the NPA achieved ahead of schedule its three-year target of transforming a great majority of its armed forces into regular guerrilla units which are principally tasked with military work

Guerrillas in the five CPP-designated regions of Mindanao have shown the way in forming and strengthening regular guerrilla formations. From only 18 regular and over-sized platoons and 25 independent squads and small platoons in 1982, the NPA in Mindanao has built a significant number of company-sized main regional guerrilla units (MRGU) and secondary regional guerrilla units (SGRU). It has also increased the number of its regular and over-sized platoons.

Usually operating within a region or interfront territorial scope, these highly mobile formations enjoy greater initiative, fighting annihilation battles with the maximum objective of arms confiscation. In Mindanao, although teams of cadres and territorial committees of the local organizations have taken charge of the overall task of expanding and consolidating the NPA mass base in the guerrilla fronts, regular guerrilla units (GUs) also assist from time to time in organizing work. This is mostly conducted in enemy-infested areas which are too dangerous for non-combatant cadres. Regular guerrilla units also train and arm local guerrillas and militias and occasionally participate in propaganda and cultural work.

It can be said that by now the main thrust of the NPA has already shifted

from transforming irregular armed propaganda units into regular guerrilla formations. *Ang Bayan*, in its March issue on the 15th anniversary of the NPA, underscores this thrust: "Developments in the political and military situation now allow, and call for, the people's army to set up more guerrilla companies in the coming period."

The call to enlarge current formations to regular-sized companies was issued in the wake of the NPA's big advances in various fields: the formation of many full-fledged platoons, the dramatic increases in the number of high-powered rifles, the emergence of a sizeable crop of commanders and military cadres and the formation of combat support units for logistics, intelligence, communications and medical work.

Guerrilla fronts have at the same time expanded tremendously, favoring wide maneuvers for highly-mobile company-sized formations. These have covered not only mountainous areas, but also flatlands, coastal cities and town centers. At present, out of the 45 NPA guerrilla fronts nationwide, 30 are province-sized while 15 are district-sized. "To intensify guerrilla warfare at the present time and specially in the coming period...the key lies in the formation of NPA companies," *Ang Bayan* said. "This enables the people's army to strike at bigger targets, given the size of new formations (60 to 100 fighters each) and the reserve forces now available for use in changing battle situations."

Formation of guerrilla companies has acquired greater significance since the NPA's adversary, the AFP, has set

up regional unified commands with troops no smaller than a company deployed in each town covered by AFP operations. Meanwhile, enemy patrolling is conducted by formations no smaller than a platoon.

But even as the call to form guerrilla companies has already gained headway since last year in such relatively developed fighting fronts as in Mindanao and Samar, the NPA still stresses the formation of more and more guerrilla platoons, a prerequisite to the formation of companies. In Cagayan province, for example, the front guerrilla unit which started as an over-sized squad in 1981 graduated into a number of platoon-sized guerrilla units by the end of 1983. Meanwhile, in other places where armed struggle is less developed, like for example in Isabela province, the regular guerrilla units currently operating here are under-sized platoons. If the experience of enlarging GUs in Mindanao could serve as a rough gauge, in a year or two - barring any major setback - guerrilla companies are sure to rise in these and other provinces with similar conditions.

Hand in hand with the formation and strengthening of the GUs, the NPA has instituted strong and centralized commands for overall planning, systematic launching of coordinated military campaigns, and for sharing resources and personnel to expedite army-building. A distinct front command directs the operations of the front and district guerrilla units. From the guerrilla company, to the platoon and down to the basic squad formation, the command is made up of a troika - the commander, vice commander and the political officer.

Aside from discipline, dedication and overall ideological competence, experience is an important criterion for selection to the military command of the NPA. In Cagayan, for one, platoon leaders, platoon vice leaders and political officers usually have two to three years of service behind them. In Isabela where the NPA started out much earlier, their counterparts have a longer military experience.

To prove themselves equal to the demands of scaled-up offensives and intensified guerrilla warfare, the NPA has continually upgraded the knowledge and skills of its officers and men through regular political-military training. These formal trainings are usually organized by the regional and front military commands, conducted with the use of standard training manuals and handled by senior military and political instructors. In Bicol, a series of this type of training was given between September to October last year with all GU fighters attending. In Cagayan Valley, on the other hand, all the members of the GU also underwent a rigid two-week retraining course last year. Thistime, the training focused on bigger platoon maneuvers unlike the



earlier one which concentrated only on squad maneuvers and tactics.

In Mindanao, the NPA training program has become more varied and specialized. "To ensure the tip-top readiness of our men, aside from the regular military training, we conduct casual trainings. These are usually maneuvers and drills held before any offensive anticipating the particular type of operation the formation will conduct," Kasamang Homer, revealed. "We also hold training for the reserve forces of the GUs - militias and members of the district guerrilla units. And also, in recognition of the need to hone skills of NPA personnel in important specialized military disciplines, we are now drawing up various curricula and scheduling basic training for officers, ordnance, intelligence, liaison, bombs and explosives."

#### Overwhelming mass support

Great advances made by the NPA in arousing and organizing the people

people in the guerrilla zones receive regular and systematized political education on the logic, strategy and goals of the national democratic revolution. Here, the basic task of each major sector is clarified. Actual revolutionary practice is promoted to complement formal education sessions aimed at raising the people's level of political consciousness. This can be done through participating in and doing support work for guerrilla warfare, joining open mass activities, as well as through carrying forward the genuine agrarian reform movement. Thus, almost every man, woman and child becomes conscious of their revolutionary commitment and task; each is galvanized into becoming a part of the strong mass base of the NPA guerrillas.

The NPA's land reform program has cemented the guerrilla army's bond with the local people. In barrios under the NPA's clandestine control, land rent reduction, redistribution of lands of despots and notorious counter-revolution-

among the people in the localities has rarely been a problem. "Ang daming sumasampa. Minsan, pagdaan sa baryo ng FGU, sampahan na," said Ka Celso, a leading regional military cadre in northeastern Mindanao in an interview with LIB. "Marami-rami rin ang bindi na dumaraan sa mass organizations na isang dapat na criteria sa pagsali sa NPA. Dabil bindi ito mapigilan, binababol na lang ang mabilis na pagtaas ng kanilang pulitika kapag nasa sa bukbo na sila."

The popular campaign to join a highly esteemed people's army is at the same time accelerated by the military's own unbridled repression and atrocities in the countryside, as in the case of the mountain barrios of Apayao subprovince and the eastern section of Cagayan province (see page 16), observed Kasamang Lito, an FGU platoon leader in Cagayan Valley. "Sa mga baryong panay-panay ang pamamaslang at abuso ng militar, pami-pamilya ang sampahan sa bukbo," he said.

The boundless support of a politically conscious and solidly organized people has spelled the big difference in the war between the NPA and the AFP. Far inferior in personnel, training and war materials, the NPA relies on the people to support their revolutionary efforts. Without the people's support, the guerrilla army would have long been consigned to oblivion; but with their support, it has sustained and stepped up the guerrilla war.

Amid the rising tempo of guerrilla war in the entire archipelago and the faltering course of the regime's armed forces as well as the sharp deterioration of the dictatorship's overall political and economic strength, a question has often been asked: How soon will the armed revolution triumph?

Fifteen years ago, when the armed resistance was in its infancy, any attempt to answer this would have been like a shot in the dark. But today, in view of the situation, one can have a clearer vision of the road ahead.

How soon will the armed revolution triumph? As a great Asian revolutionary once put it so vividly, in reply to the cynics of his time: "It is like a ship far out at sea whose masthead can already be seen from the shore; it is like the morning sun in the east whose shimmering rays are visible from a high mountain top; it is like a child about to be born moving restlessly in its mother's womb."

Today, in our own country, the "masthead," the "shimmering rays," and the "restless child" - all tell-tale signs of imminent victory - draw distinctly closer every year, every semester, and even every day. All told, to visualize victory right after the present decade would certainly not be a wild guess.

Alfredo Amuyao



People's militia: Recruitment is rarely a problem for the NPA

in the countryside for armed revolution have propelled the progress of guerrilla warfare and the strengthening of the guerrilla army. In these two herculean tasks, the guerrillas have found overwhelming mass support from the people, especially from the peasant masses. At present, the fighting fronts of the NPA cover around 10,000 barrios all over the archipelago, each with varying levels of revolutionary mass organizations.

In thousands of barrios where political consolidation work of the NPA has gained ground, each household and each individual is organized. Thriving mass organizations of peasants, women and youth serve as channels where the great revolutionary initiatives of the masses are harnessed for direct participation and support for armed struggle and for uplifting as well, through collective endeavor, the economic and cultural life of the people. These revolutionary mass organizations also serve as the inexhaustible reservoir of recruits for the burgeoning guerrilla army.

In their mass organizations, the

aries, raising of farm workers' wages and the prices of the peasants' products and cooperative endeavors in agriculture have been instituted. These are done through vigorous secret mass campaigns or through open confrontations. In the provinces of Cagayan Valley, a region where feudal exploitation is most entrenched, the regional CPP leadership in its year-end message, last December, reported that a total of 4,000 peasants directly benefited from the revolutionary land reform program in 1983.

Because the NPA has paid consistent attention to land reform, the rural population - the overwhelming majority of whom are tillers - have come to regard the interest of the guerrillas and the armed revolution as their own and thus have willingly supported the overall war effort. They have enthusiastically helped - providing food and logistics, conducting intelligence-gathering and liaison work - all of which are indispensable components for heightening people's war.

Thus, NPA recruitment from

# Women in the warfront

Female guerrillas liberate themselves in revolutionary struggle

Ka Ana, 25, a former student, is a tall, dark woman. Sporting cropped curly hair and an easy smile, she regularly goes in and out of enemy checkpoints in the city. But once she reaches the guerrilla zone, the masses know her to be an able bearer of an M-16.

Ka Vicky, 31, a former worker, does not let difficulties daunt her. Four years ago, her baby died in childbirth. Not long after, her husband, who is a Red fighter, was killed in an ambush. To this day, however, she continues to work full-time in the underground movement in much the same manner as when her loved ones were alive.

Ka Lilia, in her 30s, is the lone woman in her squad. She is, however, recognized by her male companions as their military commander.

All three women, coming from different walks of life, are members of the New People's Army, performing various functions in a field that has traditionally been regarded as an exclusive arena for men. They have been in their lines of work for years, leading the risky lives of guerrillas in an intensifying war. But their presence in the NPA is not an exception; it has been part and parcel of a trend towards growing women's participation in the armed struggle.

Today, the number of female members is steadily rising throughout the country. Serving as regular warriors, they undertake tasks ranging from military work to medical service. Ever since the founding of the NPA in 1969, women have been recruited into it. And since then, women fighters have been battling the regime's army alongside their male counterparts. Their performance in the NPA fighting units has contributed in no mean measure to the guerrilla army's record of heroism and gallantry.

## Service in the army

NPA guerrillas can be assigned to combat service, mass organizing work, propaganda and education, liaison, finance and logistics, intelligence operations and medical service. In all these lines of work, women have easily excelled as well as men. According to Ka Ida, a cadre who served in the NPA despite having had two children, "There is no task in the army that women cannot perform, no rifle she could not carry."

During her stint in a regular fighting unit, Ka Ida said she had seen women walk



The new Filipina: Intrepid and resourceful

long distances with the same endurance and speed as men. These walks, which the guerrillas must take without sleep, are made even during rainy days. Having undergone the same military training, women can shoot as well as male comrades. "It is easy to fire a gun," smilingly drags Ka Vicky who, herself, is no more than five feet tall. Physical handicaps like dysmenorrhea and pregnancies are dealt with by allowing female guerrillas to take lighter loads temporarily.

"Women can still work up to the seventh month of pregnancy. They are allowed to take three months off after their children are born. After this, they may leave their babies to the care of supportive relatives or the masses," Ka Vicky said.

While in the NPA, women can also assume leadership positions. In many units within the NPA, women have been assigned the important role of political officer, whose task is to take charge of the political education of guerrilla fighters, to ensure that military actions serve the NPA's political goals, to promote discipline and democracy and to help solve personal problems of guerrillas.

As education officers, on the other hand, female guerrillas are charged with

the crucial task of raising the ideological consciousness of the members of a collective. They schedule and lead discussions on theoretical and current political issues that are periodically held by the group.

Women also perform remarkably well in intelligence operations. The reason for this is not hard to see. "We can easily go past the enemy lines without arousing suspicion. Somehow, fascist soldiers tend to cast their first suspicions on men rather than on women," Ka Ida noted. The importance of intelligence work can never be undermined. Through it, the security and survival -- of the NPA and other comrades are guaranteed. Through it, the number and size of enemy soldiers entering an area where there are underground members are immediately reported, thus enabling the latter to make their escape and oftentimes, even plan and execute an ambush. Through it, too, towns and barrios where fascist troopers concentrate are pinpointed and the proper measures taken.

In the realm of medical work, the service of women has been observed to be instrumental in causing the speedy recovery of sick and wounded Red fighters, underground activists and the masses. "Maybe it's because we are usually more patient, warmer in giving attention and more particular with details," said Ka Ida. Female doctors who have gone underground have imparted as much of their medical skills as can be absorbed by other cadres, guerrillas and the masses. The result has been an improvement in overall medical care in the countryside.

Women fighters could be assigned to either the NPA expansion areas or to consolidated zones. Women play a special role in places visited by the NPA for the first time. "Women tend to be more readily accepted by the masses," said Ka Ida. "They see more clearly the spirit of sacrifice displayed by the NPA especially in the hardships undergone by women fighters. Immediately, they take them to their hearts. Usually, barrio folks have great admiration for female guerrillas."

## Problems in struggle

Although women are encouraged and given every chance to develop themselves, to sharpen their skills and increase their contribution to the revolution through the NPA, the age-old fetters that security has foisted on them continue to stalk them. It is in this sense that the effort and sacrifice demanded of female fighters are doubled: they not only face the hardship of class oppression but they also have to rise above the limitations imposed on them as women.

# Women in the warfront

Female guerrillas liberate themselves in revolutionary struggle

Ka Ana, 25, a former student, is a tall, dark woman. Sporting cropped curly hair and an easy smile, she regularly goes in and out of enemy checkpoints in the city. But once she reaches the guerrilla zone, the masses know her to be an able bearer of an M-16.

Ka Vicky, 31, a former worker, does not let difficulties daunt her. Four years ago, her baby died in childbirth. Not long after, her husband, who is a Red fighter, was killed in an ambush. To this day, however, she continues to work full-time in the underground movement in much the same manner as when her loved ones were alive.

Ka Lilia, in her 30s, is the lone woman in her squad. She is, however, recognized by her male companions as their military commander.

All three women, coming from different walks of life, are members of the New People's Army, performing various functions in a field that has traditionally been regarded as an exclusive arena for men. They have been in their lines of work for years, leading the risky lives of guerrillas in an intensifying war. But their presence in the NPA is not an exception; it has been part and parcel of a trend towards growing women's participation in the armed struggle.

Today, the number of female members is steadily rising throughout the country. Serving as regular warriors, they undertake tasks ranging from military work to medical service. Ever since the founding of the NPA in 1969, women have been recruited into it. And since then, women fighters have been battling the regime's army alongside their male counterparts. Their performance in the NPA fighting units has contributed in no mean measure to the guerrilla army's record of heroism and gallantry.

## Service in the army

NPA guerrillas can be assigned to combat service, mass organizing work, propaganda and education, liaison, finance and logistics, intelligence operations and medical service. In all these lines of work, women have easily excelled as well as men. According to Ka Ida, a cadre who served in the NPA despite having had two children, "There is no task in the army that women cannot perform, no rifle she could not carry."

During her stint in a regular fighting unit, Ka Ida said she had seen women walk



The new Filipina: Intrepid and resourceful

long distances with the same endurance and speed as men. These walks, which the guerrillas must take without sleep, are made even during rainy days. Having undergone the same military training, women can shoot as well as male comrades. "It is easy to fire a gun," smilingly shrugs Ka Vicky who, herself, is no more than five feet tall. Physical handicaps like dysmenorrhea and pregnancies are dealt with by allowing female guerrillas to take lighter loads temporarily.

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Female guerrillas smilingly acknowledge that on some occasions, for instance, women still tend to gravitate towards kitchen work. Only with the most watchful and conscious efforts could they avoid the knee-jerk reaction of responding to "feminine tasks." It is on these occasions that the attention of male comrades is called. "They are always open to the idea of equality, though, and accept it in practice," said Ka Ida.

Such occasions usually elicit embarrassed reactions and hasty amends but other situations are not so easily resolved. The dilemma of raising children has always been a tough one to handle for a guerrilla with children, more so for the women. A female fighter, or any woman for that matter who decides to devote her full time to working for the underground movement, is always faced with the question of what to do with her children. Should she lessen her work load to give more time to child-rearing or should she forge ahead with her work and leave the task to trusted persons, knowing fully well that such is one of the exigencies of the revolution? Together, wives and their husbands decide the best course of action, the men sharing equally in the responsibility.

Ka Sally, who went underground when her children were just beginning to know her, said, "I thought it over and over and said to myself that in many ways, I was doing this for them. When this regime is toppled, my children do not have to work for the enemy or turn against their principles just to survive." Like many mothers, she always carries with her pictures of her children whom she has left to the care of trusted relatives.

Sometimes, when conditions make it difficult to take proper care of their children, guerrillas leave their children with sympathetic relatives. But when this is not possible as in the case of guerrillas without any relatives or whose relatives have no means of livelihood or are hardened reactionaries, they place them with the very people who have served as their inspiration and cause in the revolution: the masses. In making this decision, one mother who was raised in the city said, "It is difficult. You would rather leave your children to people you know. You would rather give them at least the same comforts that other children enjoy. But we trust that the masses will care for our children in the way they care for us."

Still, the choices have not always been that rigid. The Communist Party, to which many NPA fighters belong, sees to it that mothers and fathers who

must care for their children themselves, are assigned to areas and tasks where they could do this. A fruitful compromise is achieved so that both comrades are spared from unduly worrying about their children while they perform one of the many tasks that need to be done in the revolution.

Problems with families are then straightened out and work is done. But what happens when suddenly, one's family is gone? Ka Vicky, whom we met earlier, had gone through two tragic experiences in a span of two years: the death of her baby in childbirth and that of her husband a year later. Her husband, then a member of a sparrow unit, was in camp attending to education work when an enemy raid killed him. Her baby had died the year before because of inadequate hospital care.

She looks back to this period with sadness, but there is courage in her grief. "I talked my loss over with my comrades. I cried when I was alone. I kept asking myself why my husband was killed. We had a good relationship. Gradually, I was able to pick myself up. I began to look at the good that remained from it all: I was still alive and able to continue with the work he has so wonderfully started."

Today, Ka Vicky works in the technical staff of an NPA unit somewhere in the Bicol region. Before going into administrative work, she went through active military service. "You might call me a graduate," she said, smiling. Although born and raised in the Visayas, she has adapted and endeared herself to the masses in the region. When asked about her personal misfortunes while serving in the NPA, Ka Vicky said, "I have no regrets in joining the NPA."

#### Fulfillment in army work

That women should take the step towards rendering military service is not at all surprising for those who did. It represents the highest form of service to the revolution, the culmination of tasks that one has done in preparation for a deeper involvement that entails the supreme sacrifice of offering one's life, when necessary. Furthermore, a woman's experience in the armed struggle tempers her in the performance of other tasks besides direct military work. "The urgency of any task in the revolution becomes clear and the saying that revolution is a life-or-death struggle assumes a stark meaning," said Ka Ida. Having gotten in touch with the masses, lived with them and relied on them during one's most crucial hours, activists in the underground movement who have been assigned to countryside work assume new responsibilities with reinvigorated determination, creativity and discipline.

"You get to feel deep down that you're involved in a people's war. When the going gets rough, you remember how the peasant masses scoured their barren land to find food for the Red fighters, climbed hills and crossed enemy lines to deliver these to you, and ran for kilometers to warn you about approaching soldiers. After having witnessed this, the feeling never leaves you even when you're engaged in urban work," Ka Ida said.

Indeed, hardships temper women guerrillas in the struggle against the people's enemies and against those forces that oppress them. These also strengthen them to assert their role in society. By participating in the revolution, women move closer to their total liberation.

Minda Rodrigo



Motherhood in the NPA: The children are our future

## MAINSTREAM

# A march for boycott, a stride to freedom

LAKBAYAN marks a milestone in open mass struggles



Batasan Pambansa election.

The protest action, spearheaded by the Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy and participated in by various groups like the August Twenty-One Movement (ATOM), workers' groups and peasants' organizations, started March 1 with a kick-off ceremony at the Quezon Memorial Circle in Quezon City. At about the same time, marchers who had converged the night before in Concepcion, Tarlac in the north and San Pablo, Laguna in the south, started their own marches heading towards Manila.

A total of 25 smaller rallies were held in various areas in the provinces to draw support for the Lakbayan. These demonstrations, each participated in by at least 1,000 people, linked up with the mainstream of protesters in the march.

Singing songs of freedom and protest and urging residents to join them, the Lakbayan participants were greeted everywhere they went by city residents who flashed the Laban sign with their hands or clenched their fists. Not a few shouted back to the marchers, "Boycott din kami!" and "Mabubay kayo!" The roads where the marchers travelled were lined with tables filled with pitchers of water or simply with people offering a cool drink. Owners of fruit stalls, bakeries and grocery stores offered food to the hungry.

The toll of those who had fallen ill rose to about a hundred per day, most of whom were peasants whose ailments were compounded by the frailty of their malnourished bodies. Continuously walking for an average of 10 hours a day, they stopped only to rest for a few minutes and to eat a frugal meal consisting of eggs, tomatoes and rice. Such manifestation of sacrifice did not go unnoticed by the people. In several places, the marchers were warmly greeted - almost like heroes - such as when admiring residents of Pampanga offered seven white doves while sisters of Assumption Convent in that province rang the church bells in welcome.

All weariness seemed to have lifted by the time the estimated 60,000-strong marchers reached Rizal Park. Cheers of triumph tore the air as they took their places in the Grandstand and overflowed onto the greenery in front of it.

### A nervous regime

Although the worried dictator dared not order a blockade of the long march,

Walking for a cause: Rural and urban folk in joint protest; inset: Lakbayan route

At 5 p.m., the placid languor of Rizal Park was broken. From two directions, great masses of people carrying flags and streamers shouted jubilantly as they converged in front of the Grandstand. Banners of blue, red, yellow and green danced to the rhythm of the marchers' songs. Amid these ceremonies, the people cried out, "Ibagsak ang diktadurang EU-Marcos!" and "Sigaw ng bayan: kalayaan!"

It was March 7, the culmination of the seven-day people's march, dubbed as the Lakbay ng Bayan Para sa Kalayaan (Lakbayan) that saw thousands of farmers, workers, students, housewives and professionals weaving through 16

points in Luzon to make their opposition to the fascist regime known. The participants who joined the trek expressed their long-standing grievances against the dictatorship: the bane of military presence and atrocities in Bicol; the farmers' burden of oppression; the imposition of harsh government policies on tribal groups; the heightened difficulties of workers as a result of massive layoffs and diminished wages. It became fitting then that the Lakbayan marchers raised three issues: opposition to the continuous violation of human rights, protest against the people's abject poverty and other economic sufferings, and a call to boycott the regime's latest self-serving political gimmick, the

remembering too well what had happened at the Tarlac-to-Tarmac Run, his agents had resorted just the same to various acts of terror. Youths assigned to paste posters, collect donations and give out leaflets were harassed while some were arrested by military men in civilian attire. Jeepneyloads of residents who were on their way to join the march were stopped and prevented by soldiers from entering the site of the rallies. About 4,000 bags of foodstuffs intended for the marchers who were then in Sta. Rita, Nueva Ecija were also intercepted by soldiers while more than 40 participants from Maria Aurora, Quezon province were detained. Things were made no less easier for those who were able to march: the lights of the usually well-lit Grandstand were turned off for mysterious reasons.

the registration of flying voters to the inclusion of non-existent registrants.

The proliferation of such irregularities has prompted many volunteers in the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) -- a body formed by private groups to ensure a clean election -- to throw up their hands in disgust and join the boycott movement. As of latest reports, about 30 NAMFREL volunteers have shifted their efforts from poll-watching to actively participating in organizations working for a boycott.

#### Bigger strides ahead

Indeed, the boycott movement is heading for an irrevocable victory. This, in spite of the dictator's attempts at deception and harassment, and all because more people are now realizing the wisdom of engaging in political acts not entirely re-

thread of opposition to the dictatorship. Continuous and persistent, these protest actions have come to be characterized by growing intensity, breadth and scope.

The recently-held Lakbayan attests to the growth attained by the people's mass movement, a visible proof of the relentless efforts towards toppling the dictatorship. It is in this regard that the long march sets itself apart from previous mass actions as it marks a milestone in the history of the people's open mass movement. The breadth of the march, the diversity of its participants expressing and projecting the united call for the dismantling of the US-Marcos regime all contribute to make it a significant leap.

The sheer size of the protest action involving tens of thousands of marchers who walked for seven days across five provinces was itself an achievement that no government-sponsored rally could hope to equal. Disciplined and determined to reach their goal of coming to Manila to tell the dictator of their desire to oust him, the Lakbayan participants shattered the image of Filipinos as contented, docile citizens under martial law -- a false and denigrating picture fabricated by the regime.

The orderliness of the entire undertaking could only have come from the systematic efforts of the various people's organizations which planned and executed the mammoth march. Coordinating from several places in Luzon, the organizations succeeded in making the Long March "flow" from one point to another at the appointed time. Sundry tasks were given due attention such as the marchers' medical needs and food, the latter with much help from the supportive masses. By these considerations, the long march may well be said to be a landmark in the annals of the open protest movement.

As the NDF stated in a manifesto, "The People's March to Liberation," which was issued in tribute to the Lakbayan marchers: "Today, the Lakbayan ends but the struggle of our people is not yet over. . . Let us draw inspiration from the example of our revolutionary heroes who unselfishly placed the interests of the people above their own." The NDF cited a stanza from a Katipunan poem to "serve as a guiding light in our long march to freedom"

*"Lakad, aba tayo, itigisa ang birap  
tungubin ang bundok at kalawakan ng  
gubat gamitin ang gulok at sumpu ng  
sibat ipagtanggol ngayon Inang Pilipinas.  
(Let us, lowly men, walk on, each  
to experience hardship  
head for the hills and forests  
use our knives and spears  
let us now defend Mother Philippines.)*

Minda Rodrigo



At every stopover: A rousing welcome from the people

But if the dictator was angered by the snowballing movement against his regime, he was rendered even more frightened by it. Mainly because of the tremendous impact and pressure exerted by an angry populace, Marcos has been giving more concessions to opposition groups participating in the election while at the same time plugging all holes within his divided and graft-ridden political party, the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL). Much ado was created about the choice of candidates who would be included in the KBL ticket that political observers accustomed to seeing Marcos slithering his way out of tight predicaments were now surprised to see a beleaguered politico trying to catch up with a speeding train of political events.

But the concessions are fast proving to be nothing more than cosmetic touches. No matter how many "independent" men who have been appointed to the hopelessly discredited Commission on Elections and how many bogus oppositionists paid to run as "candidates" for the opposition, the unmistakable stench of a "lutong Macoy" still seeped through. For during the registration period alone, rampant irregularities were reported, ranging from

cognized, much less approved of, by the regime, and of joining movements initiated not by traditional politicians but by grassroot political organizations. The Lakbayan marks the culmination so far of the series of mass actions that developed since the Aquino assassination.

Although bereft of pomp and petty come-ons, the Lakbayan seized the people's attention and their imagination. They needed only to compare government rallies with those held by people's organizations to see the big difference. While Marcos' "rallies" were characterized by participants paid and fed to attend, people's rallies were called and attended by citizens willing to risk life and security just to make their opposition to the regime known.

Like previous rallies held in the early '70s and those after the declaration of martial law, the Lakbayan represented the Filipino people's true aspirations. Calling to mind the Poor People's March in 1970, the Anti-Imperialist People's March for National Independence in 1971, the anti-fascist rally in Samal, Bataan in 1980, the 12-kilometer march by Isabela townfolk in 1983, one could see a long stretch of events tied together by the connecting

# SPARKS

News about the resistance movement

## NPA FIGHTS HEROIC BATTLES

At least two heroic battles were fought by members of the New People's Army in separate incidents last February in Isabela.

In Dibilacan, this province, Red fighter Simeon Salazar, alias "Ka Erwin," found himself surrounded by 18 enemy troopers. Alone and armed only with a homemade shotgun, Salazar was killed but only after he finished off two soldiers.

In Benito Soliven town, another NPA guerrilla, Patricio Andayan engaged one of the PC soldiers in a "draw." A gun was already aimed at Andayan when he was able to draw his weapon and shoot the soldier first.

The soldier's companions then tried to get to the guerrilla. Andaya was taken alive, severely tortured and then shot. The Red fighter, however, was able to conceal his weapon and several CPP documents before his captors could get to him.

Also in Benito Soliven, NPA members successfully raided the longest-staying camp of the CHDF there. Their surprise attack terrified the CHDF members who scampered for their lives.

Later, the CHDF tried to ambush the NPA team in retaliation. This was, however, learned by the NPAs who positioned themselves along the route of the enemy and ambushed the group. One army sergeant was killed and two others were wounded in the attack. The NPA seized an M-16 and other materials.

## 8 KILLED IN KALINGA-APAYAO

Eight soldiers were killed last Jan. 24 by members of the NPA in Barrio Ableg, Pasil, Kalinga-Apayao. The slain troopers belonged to the 48th Infantry Battalion stationed in the province.

The attack prompted the deployment of a new batch of soldiers, the 41st IB which retaliated by salvaging four farmers in the barrio. In their effort to scour the area for the NPA, the soldiers enforced the evacuation of the entire barrio.

## WOMEN'S GROUP FORMED

About a hundred women paid tribute last March 6 to Gabriela Silang, female revolutionary fighter during the Spanish period, in a wreath-laying ceremony at her monument in Ayala, Makati. The activity, which culminated a series of events held in observance of Women's Week, also launched the newly-formed organization, the General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action (GABRIELA).

The organization seeks to draw Filipino women from all sectors into the mainstream of national life and articulate women's perception of their role in the present struggle. It also seeks to unite all women to join the nation in the struggle for truth, freedom, justice and true democracy.

## WORKERS FORM NEW COALITION

Two big labor groups, the Kiluang Mayo Uno (KMU) and Trade Unions of the Philippines and Allied Services (TUPAS), spearheaded the formation of a new workers' coalition, the Pambansang Koalasyon ng Manggagawa Laban sa Kahirapan (PKMK). The PKMK aims to uphold the workers' demands for higher wages, job security, humane working conditions and protection of their demo-

cratic rights.

The KMU also staged a picket last March in front of the Ministry of Labor and Employment to denounce military and police brutality committed against workers in the picketlines. Currently staging strikes are workers of Interpolymer Corporation, Balanced Foods Corporation, Aberdeen Court Inc., Philippine Electric Corporation, and Sinclair Philippines. Police and military agents harassed the workers and tried to break up their picketlines.

The KMU also demanded the repeal of all anti-labor laws, the raising of wages, an end to lay-offs and retrenchments, and the restoration of the workers' right to strike.

## GROUPS SEEK DELAY IN JAPANESE LOAN

The August Twenty-One Movement (ATOM) picketed the Japanese Embassy last March 16 to press the Japanese government to delay the granting of a \$230-million loan to the Philippines.

The picketeers said that the Japanese government should not grant the loan because this will only be used to prop up the oppressive Marcos regime.

Earlier, Agapito "Butz" Aquino, who led the ATOM rally, visited Japan and met with parliamentarians. He asked them to defer the granting of the loan until democracy has been restored in the country.

## ANTI-IMPERIALIST RALLY HELD

The Nuclear-Free Philippines Coalition (NFPC) held a rally last March 21 in front of the US Embassy to denounce the presence of the US military bases and the construction of the Bataan nuclear power plant in the country. The protest action, which was participated in by hundreds of workers, students and professionals, also exposed US meddling in the elections and called for a boycott.

## DAVAO TEACHERS STAGE MARCH-RALLY

About 3,500 members of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers in Davao City staged a rally last March 6 to demand an increase in their salaries. The teachers who earlier staged a work slowdown, also demanded a refund of salary deductions, the inclusion of a provision for hazard pay which would amount to 25 percent of the basic salary and a grant of longevity pay at P10 for every five years of service.

## SCHOOL COMMUNITY PROTESTS LAY-OFFS

The De La Salle University Employees Association (DLSUEA), student groups and teachers' organizations protested the arbitrary dismissal of about 80 non-academic employees. To express their support for the union, the students and teachers planned to picket the school.

## MERALCO EMPLOYEES STAGE MASS LEAVE

Employees of the Meralco Electric Company staged last March a mass leave and work slowdown to demand a raise in their salaries, adjustments in their retirement plans and grocery allowance and profit sharing.

The management of Meralco had refused to grant the workers' demands despite a 45.9 percent increase in profits last year. From P123.9 million earned as net income in 1982, earnings for 1983 went up to P180.8 million.

# CRACKS

## Indicators of the regime's crisis

### MARCOS' FEARLESS FORECAST

Who should be believed, the President's or the foreign business prognosis of the economy? Recently, President Marcos expressed optimism over the country's economic prospects for 1984. He cited the increase in exports and the progress in two government programs, the Kilusang Kabuhayan at Kaunlaran (KKK) and Sariling Sikap. This trend will remain for the whole year, he said.

Marcos' fearless forecast, however, was disputed by the *Institutional Investor*, an American business magazine, which cited a decline in the country's credit worthiness over the past six months. The magazine said the Philippines had the highest decline in the world, a fact which reflects the continuing disillusionment of businessmen with the regime, the magazine said. A banker also mentioned that the "economy (has) stumbled badly" and that "the assassination of opposition figure Benigno Aquino last summer really crystallized the nation's problems."

Contradicting analyses such as these are not uncommon. Between the two, from the point of view of its immediate implication for the country's economy, foreign business' perception is of course the weightier one.

### DEBT RESCHEDULINGS AFTER 1985 EXPECTED

In what amounted to an admission of the country's critical foreign exchange standing, Central Bank Governor Jose Fernandez said that a series of debt rescheduling is expected in the future. Because of the continuous shortage of foreign exchange needed to pay the Philippines' debts, the Marcos government has been negotiating for the rescheduling of loans due for payment since October last year up to the end of 1985. This "series of reschedulings" means that no improvement in the country's foreign exchange situation is forthcoming even up to 1985.

### TOP OFFICIALS OKAYED RESERVE OVERSTATEMENT

The overstatement of the country's foreign reserves was not a mistake after all. The Movement for Philippine Sovereignty and Democracy said the overstatement, which caused a great deal of embarrassment to the regime when it was uncovered, was sanctioned all along the way by top government officials.

KAACBAY cited Board Resolution No. 486 of the Philippine National Bank which was approved by its directors last June 20, 1983. The resolution authorized the PNB management and subsidiaries to conduct "conduit transactions," a move which made possible the overstatement of foreign reserves by about \$600 million.

One of the methods used in the "conduit transaction" was the "put-through arrangement." Exactly how the system works, only our financial think-tanks know, but this was already done in the past when \$215 million belonging to the Central Bank and deposited in the Philippine National Bank in London was "borrowed" by a government corporation, the National Investment and Development Corp. (NIDC). The NIDC then remitted the amount to the PNB head office in Manila which, in turn, deposited it with the local Central Bank.

The amount was then counted twice by the Central Bank people. Financial sources said the practice is usually done to enable a bank to engage in transactions and obtain loans by making it appear that it has more dollars than it actually has.

### NO ONE CAN OUTSPEND THE KBL

The Kilusan Ng Bagong Lipunan (KBL) proclamation rally last March 27 at the Rizal Park turned out to be a demonstration of wasteful spending of people's money for election campaigns. About P20 million was reportedly spent for the event to pay participants at rates ranging from P30 to P100 each. Government employees were coerced to join the rally and students were herded in buses. The rally, which was ignored by most people, promptly received full coverage in the controlled media.

The money spent for the affair reportedly came from the budgets of various government offices like the Metro Manila Commission, the Ministry of Human Settlements and the National Housing Authority. Because of the KBL bash, the purposes for which these funds have originally been earmarked were shelved, such as the local government employees' 10 percent salary increase, the development of relocation sites for the urban poor and other social services.

### NEW U.S. ENVOY HAS DUBIOUS RECORD

A new American ambassador was appointed to the Philippines to replace Michael Armacost. Named by Reagan was Stephen W. Bosworth who was described as chairman of the US Department of State Policy Planning Council.

Armacost, for his part, will be assigned to the US State Department as its third ranking officer holding the position of undersecretary of state for political affairs.

Innocuous as Bosworth's credentials might seem, his other previous and unpublicized jobs included stints in Latin American countries where suspected liberation movement members were kidnapped and cold-bloodedly killed by right-wing death squads.

### JUNE DEVALUATION LOOMS

Lewis Burrige, president of the American Chamber of Commerce, said that international lenders might have to force the Philippine government to further devalue the peso by 18 percent to 20 percent by June. He added that the \$630 million IMF standby credit facility and the \$1.6 billion loans from 350 foreign banks are expected to be given on the same month.

On the political front, Burrige said that the US is helping in the restoration of "a democratic climate and processes" in the country. He "predicted" that 30 to 40 percent of the Batasan seats might be given to the opposition, a concession that is doubtlessly aimed at "restoring democracy."

### SOLUTION TO NUKE WASTE PROBLEM FOUND

A grim solution to the nuclear waste problem has been found by the US and Philippine governments. Targetted as possible dumpsite for the Bataan nuclear wastes is an island in the Carolines group. The offer by the US has already been accepted by the Philippine government, said the National Power Corp. which owns the nuclear plant.

Not to be outdone, the Philippines' Regional Fuel Cycle Center (RFCC) has also suggested that certain areas in Mindoro and Palawan be transformed into nuclear dumpsites. This time, however, the sites will be offered to other countries with similar problems of nuclear waste disposal.





Outpost of US meddling: Where Armacost (right inset) serves as Reagan's mouthpiece

## CROSSCURRENTS

# Meddlesome Uncle Sam

US calls the shots in Philippine counter-insurgency programs

From the KOMPIL congress last January, to the PDP-Laban caucus and the meeting of top-level Unido leaders in February, and even at the oftentimes tedious hearings of the Agrava fact-finding board, one finds the single, disquieting presence of the barong-clad American. Most likely an observer from the US Embassy or the US State Department, he sits in somewhere, unspeaking, inscrutable, and seemingly impervious to stares from the curious public.

Another man about town is the formerly low-key US Ambassador Michael Armacost, who has gone out of his way to make the rounds of lecture forums in an effort to boost the sagging reputation of his government since the assassination of opposition stalwart Benigno Aquino Jr. His publicity people have also cooked up a carefully orchestrated public relations drive in the major dailies on Armacost's speeches.

Not a few eyebrows have been raised at the ubiquitous presence of these US official personnel at such gatherings. Many ask, why the sudden urge to be highly visible? Barely two months away from the Batasan Pambansa elections, the US seems to be as much compelled as any candidate running for office, to be seen and heard. In fact, their favorite line these days is the election issue, so much so that this has given rise to accusations of US meddling. This month, when Armacost's by now familiar voice was heard at a Philippine Association of Ambassadors function denouncing US government meddling in the current electoral exercise, the public reaction was: Who are they kidding?

### US meddling

In a go-for-broke move to make its own point about the elections, the US has launched its own campaign alongside that of the Marcos regime to drum up interest in the polls and dissuade actual and would-be boycotters from their stand. US embassy and State Department officials have approached many people, a move belying their pretensions of being merely "an intent but non-partisan observer of the current electoral process."

Since late last year, Philippine-based US officials have been summoning or seeking out top opposition leaders and maintaining personal friendships with them to secure vital information. Top Clark Air Base officials have reportedly talked to local politicians of Central Luzon to draw out their opinions on matters affecting US-Philippine relations and to encourage their participation in the coming elections.

Late last year too, US State Department representative Margaret Evans visited the country to "determine reactions, explore possible tie-ups with oppositionists and monitor developments." In the same period, Marjorie Niehaus of the US Congressional Research Service came over to "assess the situation both above ground and below." Even the Mindanao bishops were interviewed for this purpose.

Last December, US embassy officials also approached some members of the opposition, urging them to run. The opposition's demand for the repeal of Amendment 6 which empowers Marcos to make laws, said the American officials,

could better be served by winning the majority of Batasan seats and while there, work for its repeal.

Not a few of those approached have expressed disgust over such US machinations. On the evening of March 14, six oppositionists prominently identified with the boycott movement - Joker Arroyo, Abraham Sarmiento and his son, Jejomar Binay, Fulgencio Factoran Jr. and Fr. Jose Dizon (all MABINI lawyers except for Dizon) - met with US State Department Country Director Ulrich Strauss upon the latter's request. "The whole theme of that meeting was participation. The Americans were asking, why are we for boycott, what do we get out of boycott, and so on," Arroyo told a confidante. "Towards the end of the evening, we got fed up and we told the Americans, why do you keep pressuring us to participate? We are for boycott and we won't change our minds."

The Coalition of Organizations for the Restoration of Democracy (CORD) also exposed such unabashed US meddling in Philippine politics. CORD spokesman Armando Malay pointed to Strauss who, along with US embassy political affairs counselor Scott Hallford, spoke to representatives of Mindanao-based political alliances such as Katawhan and Lihuk as well as that region's Justice for Aquino, Justice for All (JAJA) chapter. These Americans urged them to put a halt to their anti-dictatorship activities since anyway, "the Reagan administration is not willing to abandon Mr. Marcos at this point without risking US interests in the Philippines."

US officials have even attempted to sow intrigue within the growing ranks of the boycott movement. Last February, Philip Roth, an aide of Rep. Stephen Solarz, chairman of the US House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, told boycott advocate Agapito "Butz" Aquino that he would be considered as a possible candidate in the 1987 Philippine presidential elections if he adopts a political stance more acceptable to the US. The next day after the private talk, Roth reported to the press that Aquino was wavering in his boycott stand in consideration of the offer. Aquino, in a press conference, later denounced Roth's divide-and-conquer tactics as a move to demoralize the boycott movement, and reaffirmed his stand to boycott the polls.

Still, US officials have adamantly stuck to their position that the US is not meddling in the May elections. Just this month, Armacost stated: "We have never concealed our belief that free, fair and clean legislative elections are desirable. But an interest in the process does not imply a partisan stake in its outcome."

### "Demonstration elections"

The hard reality of US interests, however, disproves the many repeated

disclaimers of US officials. Since Aquino's assassination last year and the subsequent upsurge of popular anti-Marcos protests, there has been in fact an endless stream of mostly solicitous statements from the Reagan government about political stability and the future of elections in the Philippines. Fearing the rising political unrest and the growing radicalization of a broad range of sectors, the US has tried to mitigate this by pressuring the Marcos regime to hold elections.

This is revealingly expressed in the US Congressional hearings of the House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs held since September last year. The hearings, chaired by Solarz, were called to investigate the effects of Aquino's assassination and map out appropriate government policies towards the Marcos regime. In their testimonies, US officials called to speak before the subcommittee proffered to a man what to them was the solution to the Marcos regime's political crisis - elections.

Elections widely seen as fair and equitable can contribute significantly to stability and the avoidance of political polarization." Monjo touched the meat of the matter when he said: "A free and fair electoral process in which Filipinos can place their confidence is the key to the resolution of the political problems left in the wake of the Aquino assassination."

Evidently, therefore, the US sees the electoral ploy as a means to check the dangerous polarization of political forces and their drift towards the "extreme left." The US also hopes that elections can arrest the heightening isolation of the Marcos regime from the Filipino people. In their own homefront, US officials are also dangling the bait of elections to convince the American public and Marcos critics in the US Congress that the Reagan administration backs the holding of democratic processes in the Philippines.

It will be remembered that last year at the height of protests against Aquino's

of thousands.

In the face of public outrage, the US sought not merely to underscore the strategic importance of such countries to its global economic and security interests. In at least three of these cases - the Dominican Republic in 1965-66, Vietnam in 1967 and El Salvador in 1982-84 - the US justified its otherwise untenable position by making the US-backed regimes in these countries institute the face-saving measure of elections.

A progressive American finance professor at Wharton School, Edward Herman, has a term for this: "demonstration elections." In an article entitled "The El Salvador Election in Historical and Critical Context," Herman noted that whenever the American public is restive and the US Congress becomes reluctant to appropriate large sums for military aid to repressive regimes, US officials start promoting demonstration elections. Their main function is to demonstrate to the US public that democracy really reigns in such countries and that the victim populations are not as repressed as they are made out to be. "These are primarily public relations (PR) operations carefully staged and managed by a foreign power (us) to influence its own population," said Herman.

The success of a demonstration election according to Herman, lies in the government's ability to manipulate evocative political symbols and the willingness of the mass media to serve the government in the staging process. "The most important symbol is the election itself, closely identified with democracy and which the public will react to positively," said Herman. "The good guys are those favoring the election and trying to make it work... This makes those who refuse to participate, the bad guys."

Thus, in characteristic fashion, the Marcos government has been calling those who will participate in the elections, the "true opposition," and those advocating boycott, the "radicals and communists." Playing on irrational anti-communist fears, the regime's controlled press has been manipulating the news against boycotters, attacking them as proponents of violence and anarchy. In this way, the government propaganda machinery seeks to deflect public attention from the real issues and smears the good name of the CPP, NPA and other revolutionary forces.

It is certainly interesting that US-backed elections are now taking place in two politically volatile countries enjoying US support: El Salvador and Brazil. In war-torn El Salvador, electoral charade is strikingly similar to the Philippines. Paralleling Philippine media efforts, the Salvadoran government-controlled media is keenly focusing on the surface mechanics of election procedures and other secondary matters and propaganda gambits, the most important being the alleged efforts of the revolutionary forces to disrupt the elections. And as in the Philip-




Hey, Jacques. I wonder where Uncle Sam is tonight?

"I don't think it is an exaggeration to say that the forthcoming elections in the Philippines may well be a watershed in the history of that country," said Solarz. "Over the course of the last two years, the Communist-dominated guerrilla movement, the so-called New People's Army, has managed to transform itself from a regionally-based insurrection on the island of Luzon into a genuinely national movement ... to the extent that the people of the Philippines (have) come to the conclusion that peaceful change is not possible, violent change will become inevitable." Warned Solarz, "And there will be growing support for the Communists if the Filipino people came to the conclusion that there is no possibility to work politically and peacefully for changes in their government."

Added Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia John Monjo: "Some moderate members of the opposition, frustrated by the (Aquino) murder, could become more willing to throw in their lot with the extreme left in their desire to bring about political change...

assassination, numerous demonstrations were held in major American cities assailing US support to the Marcos regime. Major American newspapers too similarly criticized the Reagan administration for its unequivocal support of Marcos. In one protest action in San Francisco, demonstrators had carried placards screaming: "America gave the gun and Marcos pulled the trigger!" The uncomfortable allegory must have caused worry to the Reagan administration, with 1984 also being an election year in the United States.

US support of elections in a Third World country like the Philippines, however, is not a first-time problem for the US. In past decades, it has had to answer criticisms of US support for regimes that were sympathetic to US interests but were unpopular because of their sordid human rights records. The US has, many times in the past, found itself in the difficult position of having to explain why US tax dollars were being used to prop up extremely repressive dictatorships known to be responsible for the deaths or disappearances



*US bases: Prime reason for supporting a repressive regime*

piners, the media and government candidates are carefully avoiding or downgrading issues such as the prior decimation of political oppositionists, death squads as an institutionalized phenomenon and the exclusion of vocal grassroots organizations from participation.

**Marcos, still US bet**

However, it is apparent from the tone of Solarz's and Monjo's statements that the demonstration effect of the May 14 polls still has to be felt not only by the American public but, more importantly by the increasingly incredulous Philippine electorate. Having fallen victims to repeated fraudulent elections in the past, Filipinos now view with skepticism any electoral exercise under Marcos.

On the other hand, the more conservative and election-oriented oppositionists are throwing their hat in the electoral ring, making no secret of the fact that US officials have promised them a significant number of seats in the Batasan Pambansa should they join the elections. Ernesto Maceda, Unido campaign chairman for Luzon, has gone on record to say that the US government is likely to support his party and some members of PDP-Laban in the Batasan elections in May because "(our parties) have an open mind on the bases issue."

Indeed, the issue of the US military bases in Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base strikes at the very root of US strategic interests in the Philippines and explains why the US is so keen on elections to stabilize Marcos' rule. Even the worst atrocities committed by the Marcos regime will not deter the US from lending support. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asian Affairs James A. Kelly said as much during the Solarz hearings last year: "There is no doubt...that the importance of these bases was not affected by the Aquino tragedy. The (Soviet) threat remains; our security responsibilities in the Western Pacific are unaltered; and our requirements for naval and air facilities are not less critical." Added another US official, "Our access to the Subic Naval Base and Clark Field is critical to the preservation of peace and security in Asia, the Pacific and the Indian Ocean. Instability—particularly when (it) breed(s) revolution—threaten(s) that access."

A visiting US official put it more candidly to a Filipino politician: "The US will not lose sleep over violations of human rights in the country although it may pro-

test, pass resolutions or send messages to Marcos." He challenged, "How could you ask us not to support the man who is for the bases? You are telling us to let go of Marcos while you are kicking us in the ass!"

Oppositionists, therefore, who believe and hope that the US is about to turn its back on the Marcos regime are living an illusion. To all extents, despite the international embarrassment of being associated with Marcos, the US is still standing by his regime. And why not? For it is Marcos who has a proven track record of supporting the bases and other US interests in the country. It is also Marcos, the rabid counter-revolutionary, who can guarantee a policy of continued repression against the national democratic forces in the country, who, being consistent nationalists, would never compromise Philippine sovereignty, once they win. If the going gets too rough for itself and its puppet, the US merely has to cook up a public relations gimmick like the elections.

On the other hand, the US also considers it to be much of a gamble to hand over the reins of power to a liberal democratic politician whose continuing sympathy for US interests is yet untested. Over the uncertainties of a bourgeois liberal democracy, the US prefers the certainty offered by the Marcos dictatorship.



*Uncle Sam: Logical target of protests*

It is in this light that certain moves seemingly indicating that the US is withdrawing its support for Marcos should be viewed. Among these recent moves: the delayed approval of a major \$650 million loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) where the US has the deciding vote and the reapportioning of the US aid package for the bases. Although none of the leading foreign creditor banks will commit funds to the economically ailing regime without the IMF loan approval which has been premised on the holding of free and fair elections, the regime has been receiving some "bridge financing" from the US government to tide it over until after May.

As for the so-called reapportionment of the US aid package, this is seen by US officials themselves as devoid of practical impact and more of a symbolic gesture to exert moral pressure on Marcos to clean up his act. Under the new bases agreement for 1985-89, the regime will receive \$900 million beginning Oct. 1 this year, and with yearly disbursements of \$180 million. The \$900 million package was originally broken down so that the regime would get \$125 million in military aid, \$30 million for foreign military sales credits and \$475 million in economic support funds (ESF). The Solarz subcommittee, however, slashed this February the Marcos regime's first year allotment for military assistance from \$185 million to \$25 million and jacked up the original \$95 million ESF to \$155 million—to signal "more support for the Filipino people and less for Marcos." Criticizing the altering of the aid mix, former US envoy to the Philippines William Sullivan said, "If we take the ESF out of one pocket and put it in another, the Filipinos will (simply) adjust their own pockets accordingly."

Indeed, for a regime known for its non-adherence to moral principles, it is doubtful whether moral pressure will have any effect at all. The truth is, for all the uproar that such moves have stirred, no real pressure has yet been called upon to bear upon Marcos. So far, US moves, especially during this election period, clearly point towards lending stability to the Marcos regime.

This coming May elections, like its predecessors, will tell nothing about the true sentiments of the people for it is not intended to ascertain public desires. With the regime controlling the entire electoral machinery and its military forces standing over the population, the election outcome will instead reflect the desires of a narrow reigning clique. Whatever percentage of seats the political opposition may be granted in the rubber-stamp legislature will be insignificant to the struggle to topple the regime—but significant enough in making the sham elections credible and, more importantly, in preserving the ruling system. And therein lies the real interest of the US in these elections.

Victoria Manalo

# The hidden general

US calls the shots in Philippine counter-insurgency programs

The scenes seem like freeze frames from a Vietnam war movie. A team of big, brawny Americans drilling brown-skinned soldiers in jungle warfare tactics. Snipers being trained to shoot at fixed and moving targets on the ground. Troopers clad in mottled green combat uniforms moving into assault positions, brandishing US-made automatic weapons. The scenes, however, are not reel- but real-life and the theater of war is not Vietnam but the Philippines.

Those actual military training exercises took place late last year in Cagayan Valley, hotbed of NPA guerrilla activity and scene of the regime's heaviest losses in recent months. The NPA newspaper in Cagayan, *Nalabaga a Gerilya*, reported that following a one-week conference with officials of the Northern Command in Isabela in August, US military advisers from the Joint US Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG) have stepped up their visits to and supervision of the regime's beleaguered troops in that region. The JUSMAG is a technical assistance mission that provides services ranging from advising the Philippine military in weapons procurement and distribution to assistance in upgrading its counter-insurgency capacities.

Upon their advice, the generals of the regional command launched widespread indoctrination and shuffled units at the company and provincial levels. Two counter-insurgency seminars were staged in Ilagan, Isabela, attended by officers from the rank of lieutenant upwards and officials from the government bureaucracy. The US advisers themselves trained the troops of the 52nd PC Rangers which was then broken up into local companies. They stressed the training of snipers to serve as the core of strike forces against the insurgents. At their behest, special mobile command groups were formed to lead and strengthen field units of the military. Police field forces were reinforced by the Civilian Home Defense Forces (CHDF) from the towns of Apayao and Cagayan.

The active presence of US counter-insurgency experts in one of the key trouble spots of the country dramatizes anew the grim reality of heightening US intervention in the Philippines. It buttresses accusations of US counter-intelligence, logistical and training support for military programs manifestly aimed at suppressing Philippine revolutionary forces. It affirms as well the Marcos regime's sponsorship of and operational ties with an undetermined number of US-backed operatives in the country to secretly train and equip the fascist armed forces. On the other hand, it is a revealing indication of the growing strength of the NPA and the burgeoning revolutionary movement in the country.

more trucks, armored vehicles and communications equipment for the Philippine Army; new fighter aircraft to replace the Philippine Air Force's "aging" ones; and the refurbishment and re-equipment of several of the Philippine Navy's former US naval vessels.

Although the US House Committee on Foreign Affairs recently slashed the military aid in the first-year payment to \$25 million and increased economic aid to \$155 million - to "send Marcos a message of concern for democracy in the Philippines" this has no substantial effect. Former US Ambassador to the Philippines William Sullivan huffily noted that the so-called cutback is just "tautology" and will



The AFP: A well-equipped army bankrolled by US funds

US officials have made no bones about their ulterior motives in jacking up direct support for Marcos' troops. They have pointed out the need to stamp out all revolutionary forces which pose a threat to US strategic military bases in the Philippines. "We must also be concerned about the impact of a possible Communist triumph in the Philippines and the loss of our facilities there which would have destabilizing consequences throughout the region," said Deputy Assistant Defense Secretary James Kelly last February before the US House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs. "Our security assistance will help the AFP improve their capabilities against the Communist insurgency with equipment which will also improve their capabilities to defend, with the United States, against external threats."

The "security assistance" Kelly was speaking of refers to the proposed military aid package for 1985 of \$85 million, part of the \$280 million first payment (\$95 million is for economic aid) under the new US-RP Bases Agreement's five-year pledge of \$900 million. Of the \$85 million package, \$60 million is earmarked for Foreign Military Sales Credit (FMSC) and \$25 million for the Military Assistance Program (MAP). In tangible terms, in the words of Kelly himself, this will mean

"merely complicate bookkeeping." "The Philippine government will presumably spend what it likes for military purposes and changing the components in external funds merely means a compensatory change in internal funds."

True enough. For in actual fact, congressional rhetoric on democracy has hardly dented the reality of continuing US support for Marcos' repressive regime. Despite pronouncements that it "continues to uphold human rights in the Philippines," the Reagan administration, under the current 1980-84 bases agreement, has fully disbursed \$50 million in MAP funds and \$250 million in FMS credit made available in \$50 million/year increments and has signed loan agreements totalling \$200 million. The final \$50 million for 1984 is in the pipeline.

In a further gesture of support for its loyal puppet in the Philippines, the US is boosting the International Military Education and Training (IMET) funds proposed for the regime in 1985 to \$2 million. The IMET program will provide selected junior and mid-level officers operational training in a variety of fields, including communications and electronics, logistics and management of the Philippine defense establishment. Most importantly, by providing

"better understanding of the US and its political institutions," the program seeks to strengthen US ties with a second line of loyal and subservient military elite.

#### Three-pronged counter-insurgency strategy

The calculus of counterinsurgency support, however, would not be complete without mentioning US economic assistance which in reality contributes to the consolidation of the Marcos dictatorship and the furtherance of counter-insurgency objective. More than half of the proposed \$900 million five-year package is in fact in the form of Economic Support Funds (ESF). Said Assistant Secretary of State Paul Wolfowitz, "We have significantly increased our ESF partly in recognition of the fact that providing government services to redress the economic and social conditions in rural areas which permit insurgencies to prosper is at least as important as military operations."

To a significant extent, US economic assistance allows the regime to divert resources otherwise earmarked for economic projects to military purposes such as improving armed forces and equipment levels. At the same time, US economic aid for socio-economic projects which are usually located in contested areas serve as a palliative to diffuse rural unrest and growing resistance. At the same time too, by increasing the economic component of US aid, the US government hopes to lessen opposition from liberal democrats in the US congress and the American public against US military support of dictatorships.

Not surprisingly, therefore, stripped of their developmental rhetoric, US economic aid projects have proven to be nothing more than thinly-disguised counter-insurgency schemes crafted to stall the advance of the NPA in the countryside. Formulated in the early '70s in reaction to the growth of armed resistance, the IAD programs aimed at four priority areas: Cagayan Valley, Bicol and Samar wherein the NPA was active, and Mindoro, which was considered a potential area for NPA expansion.

The IAD strategy is similar to the CORDS (Civilian Operations and Revolutionary Development Support) operations jointly conducted during the Vietnam War by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), US Agency for International Development (USAID) and US Defense Department for "rural pacification." Like CORDS, the IAD programs undertook agricultural assistance and road building projects which were clearly meant to facilitate military access to guerrilla strongholds.

When it became apparent that the



CHDF recruits: Cannon fodder for US counter-insurgency programs

programs were not winning peasant allegiance to the government and had hardly quelled the NPA's steady growth, in 1982, the Marcos regime with the help of US counter-insurgency experts drummed up a new scheme with broader economic goals and backed up by a massive public relations drive. This is the *Kilusang Kabuhayan at Kaunlaran* or KKK. Marking a higher level of counter-insurgency tactics, the KKK was designed to check rural support for the advancing revolutionary movement through economically uplifting the livelihood of poor people. But as current experiences show, only a small section of the rural elite (the rich peasants) and medium and big entrepreneurs have actually benefited from the KKK.

Today, the KKK - touted as the regime's centerpiece development program - is being carried out in conjunction with overt counter-insurgency military campaigns in the countryside. It stands alongside such outrightly repressive schemes as the strategic hamlets program, forced mass evacuation, massacres, salvaging and search-and-destroy missions of the military. While the strategic hamlets program and forced mass evacuation are aimed at denying guerrillas of their peasant mass base, the other schemes seek to "neutralize" the guerrillas and their supporters by the simple expedient of killing them. These schemes parallel the US-sponsored Operation Phoenix which was used during the Vietnam War to eliminate the Vietcong and became a ruthless means of suppressing political dissent.

Another important factor in the calculus of counter-insurgency is propaganda support. The government-controlled media serves as its public relations arm, manipulating the news to show and draw popular support for the military while besmirching the name of the NPA in order to isolate it. Using Orwellian double-speak, establishment

papers, which base their stories on the defense ministry's press releases, brand NPAs as "communist terrorists," picture them as losing the war and incurring high casualties while furbishing counter-insurgency operations as "civic actions that win the hearts and minds of the people." To ensure that battles are reported according to its set anti-NPA propaganda gimmickry, the regime requires provincial newspapers to first clear encounter stories with the local PC command before publication.

Under the US-Marcos regime today, Operation Plans Katatagan and Cadena de Amor illustrate the three-pronged counter-insurgency strategy of joint military and economic-political programs and a propaganda support campaign. Oplan Katatagan is in fact the flashpoint of the regime's internal security plan that envisages combined national security and development efforts by both civil and military sectors. In 1982, the year of its inception, 638 officers and 16,323 enlisted personnel undertook retraining and indoctrination in line with the new operation, according to the *Constable and INP Journal*.

#### Greater militarization, greater repression

A broad range of critics, however, belie military boasts that Oplan Katatagan marks "a drastic reorientation from traditional Armed Forces methods." They say that it's the same old dog but with a different collar. In truth, Katatagan has meant the stepping-up of militarization and repression on a wider and more systematic scale.

In Cagayan Valley, site of "Katatagan sa Cagayan," a massive military buildup is currently underway - the biggest since the saturation of 7,000 AFP troops in the province of Isabela in 1972. Three battalions of the 1st Brigade, 5th Division of the Philippine Army, were recently deployed to Cagayan province and Apayao sub-province following the escalating offensives of

the NPA. The other "occupation forces" in these areas are the 21st IB PA, 17th IB PA, 52nd PC Rangers, 111th PC, 114th PC, 186th PC, 4th and 5th Regional INP Field Force, one Philippine Navy platoon and 600 members of the CHDF.

The military buildup has virtually turned Cagayan and Apayao into one vast garrison. Of the 36 towns in both places (29 in Cagayan, seven in Apayao), 23 presently bristle with 94 military camps, 46 of which are located in Baggao, Gattaran, Alcala and Lallo. It is no accident that these Cagayan towns are the site of the regime's US-backed development projects: the pumping station of the Cagayan Integrated Area Development Project (CIADP), an airport, roads leading to Port Irene and the Export Processing Zone, and the offices of the Petro-Canada mining firm. It is no accident either that 19 military camps are located in eight towns which are the site of the Abulug Dam Project targeted to generate electricity for new factories and mines and irrigation water for 11,000 big farms.

As in other parts of the country, the essentially repressive and deceptive nature of these "security and development" operations of the regime have only fed the fires of protests. "*Ang Oplan Katatagan ay pagtiyak lamang na mapangangalagaan ang kaligtasan at pagsasakatuparan ng CIADP,*" charged the Nagkakaisang Cagayano para sa Hustisya at Demokrasya, a multi-sectoral alliance in Cagayan. "*Seguridad nga ang layunin nito, pero bindi para sa aming mga mamamayan kundi para sa patuloy na pagpapairal ng mapagsamantalang sistema at ang panamatili sa poder ng pangkating Marcos-Enrile-Reyno-Carag na siyang nagmomonopolisa sa kapangyarihang pampulitika at pang-ekonomiya sa probinsya.*" Enrile, of course, is the regime's defense minister, a Cagayano who has amassed huge land and business interests in the region; Reyno is the Cagayan vice-governor while Carag (Antonio) is Enrile's business partner.

With their rise to political dominance, it has also become easy for the military to enrich themselves, using "traditional Armed Forces methods." These are, of course, none other than the underhanded techniques of graft, extortion, protection rackets and landgrabbing. A typical case is Brig. Gen. Alexander Felix who has snapped up 800 hectares of prime pasture land in Conner, Solano and Pinukpuk towns. Not surprisingly, Felix energetically backs up the KKK program, a favorite source of graft these days for military and government officials. So pervasive has corruption become that it has spread horizontally and vertically to all military levels in Cagayan

Valley - a trend repeated many times over nationwide.

But the reason why the US-engineered Oplan Katatagan has failed to "win the hearts and minds of the people" stems from its high and frightening social costs. The index of repression can be measured in the mounting cases of salvagings, arson, hamletting, illegal arrests, imprisonment, torture and other atrocities spawned by military operations. The following data from Cagayan give an idea of the horrific scope of terror: the salvaging of 150 farmers in 1983 by regular troops; the hamletting of 80 barrios resulting in the displacement of 50,000 people; the forced surrender of 2,000 farmers in "peace rallies"; and the staging of strike operations and consolidation operations osten-



Food for the AFP

sibly against the NPA but which victimized thousands of civilians.

Down South, in strife-torn Mindanao, neither has Oplan Katatagan made headway in winning support for the regime. Although the island became the program's focal point in 1983 following the dramatic upsurge of NPA guerrilla operations early that year, Katatagan has only served to lose more "hearts and minds" because of its brutal "kill, loot and burn" campaign in the countryside. To date, the regime's annihilation of the NPA and its base among the rural population continues,

beefed up by a phalanx of armed forces spread throughout the island. While more than 45 battalions were concentrated in Muslim areas in 1977 to 1980, only 13 battalions were left in these areas by 1983 while 22 were redeployed to NPA-operated regions in Mindanao and the rest outside the island.

#### Another failure

LIB correspondents in the Quezon-Bicol zone report the failure likewise of Oplan Cadena de Amor to deceive the people and crush NPA armed resistance. Launched in May 1982, Cadena de Amor is a prototype of the more sophisticated and more encompassing Oplan Katatagan. The chain of military command posts snaking through the Quezon-Bicol area inspired the name "Cadena"; "Amor" refers to the various socio-economic programs (e.g. KKK) constituting the civil relations aspect of the counter-insurgency operation.

According to the correspondents, psychological operations and the formation of a spy network marked the first stage of the counter-insurgency plan. Comprising the "psy-ops" were the Kilusang Balik-Loob for forced surrenderees; "peace rallies"; activation of barangay organizations like the Barangay Council, Barangay Health Workers and Kabataang Barangay; medical activities of military civic action teams; and of course, the KKK program. In the latter stage of the operation, the true color of the enemy was revealed as they unleashed ferocious strike operations that inflicted greater hardships and suffering on the people.

At present, an estimated 1,868 enemy forces are being utilized by Oplan Cadena de Amor: 1,260 regular troops (three battalions under the 42nd IB PA), 108 local troops from the 233rd, 234th and 235th PC companies, 300 CHDF recruits and 200 police forces. Following the assassination of opposition leader Ninoy Aquino and subsequent massive demonstrations in Metro Manila, some troops were reportedly moved to the metropolis to bolster security. According to Kelly, two battalions or some 1,000 troops were in fact deployed out of the 155,000 in the entire armed forces. "(But) Given the relatively small numbers involved, we believe this development by itself has not significantly degraded the Philippine army's counter-insurgency effort in the countryside."

What with the enormous US technical and material assistance backing up the Philippine military, Kelly and other US officials have certainly little reason to worry over the mere shuffling of a handful of troops. Filipinos, however, have every reason to worry. The present counter-insurgency programs in the countryside, despite their appearance as



Ver (left), Ramos and Marcos (right): Military overlords fighting a losing battle against the revolutionary forces

## VIEWPOINT

# The losing course of the AFP

Military analyst discusses the changing ratio of AFP and NPA armed strength

For more than a decade, despite a huge and costly military buildup, the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique has failed to destroy the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army. The escalation of fascist terror has only served to rouse the broad masses of the people to armed resistance and strengthen the organized revolutionary forces.

The successes of the New People's Army are so resounding that a group of active and retired AFP officers has dared to publicly point out that the NPA is winning on all fronts and criticized the AFP high command and in effect the fascist dictator Marcos for running on a losing course.

The leaders of the legal opposition have acknowledged that the armed revolution has reached serious proportions and they have proposed to Marcos to adopt a number of half-way measures towards democratization. The highest leaders of the Catholic Church have also made their own proposals for the attainment of a just peace.

But the fascist dictator has rebuffed all these proposals and ordered his closest spokesmen to make vicious tirades against the proponents. He himself has repeatedly boasted that he can wipe the NPA out in a month's time if he were to engage in a genocide worse than he is already conducting and kill off the leaders of the legal opposition.

Increasing US military assistance is encouraging the fascist dictatorship to be intransigent in its belief that it can always terrorize the people and impose on them its tyranny. Direct US assistance in the form of military grants and sales as well as the economic support fund under the US-RP military bases agreement is being poured into Oplan Katatagan, a counterinsurgency scheme designed for the AFP by experts

of the US Defense Department and the US Central Intelligence Agency.

The scheme is patterned after Operation Phoenix which, during the late sixties in the Vietnam War, tried in vain to destroy the mass base and cadres of the Vietnamese revolutionary movement. One military arm is used to inflict atrocities on entire communities suspected of supporting the armed resistance. The other military arm is used to conduct "civic action" for purposes of psywar, intelligence, holding and construction of military facilities.

The scheme is not really new in the current civil war in the Philippines. The same operational principles have been used in the so-called base-denial campaigns against the NPA since 1969. Only this time, direct US funding and the scale of operations are far larger than ever before. At any rate, the revolutionary movement has so expanded and deepened that the scheme will no more than be a wasted effort.

The people and their army led by the Communist Party of the Philippines have grown stronger and gained more experience in the conduct of people's war. The present strength of the NPA is the result of the correct application of the theory of people's war which has repeatedly inflicted defeat on US imperialism and caused its general decline.

### Changing ratio of NPA and AFP strength

Let us trace the changing ratio of NPA and AFP armed strength. In this way, we can see how the NPA has fared and moved from one level of strength to a higher one against an enemy that has a big headstart in military personnel, logistics and training. We can see how, through the years, the gap between the NPA and the AFP strength has been reduced. The inexorable trend punctures the braggadocio of the fascist dictator.

a totally Philippine operation, represent the most significant sphere of US intervention in Philippine affairs. While few Americans may be openly or directly involved in them, these programs were actually designed, equipped and underwritten by the US.

To the countless victims of these counter-insurgency operations in the countryside, there is a necessary linkage between US aid, terror and economic projects. US funds pay for the guns and bullets used against them. US aid programs

support the expansion of the military units which arrested and tortured them. US advisers devised the strategic hamlets program that herded them out of their homes and into a life of squalor and desolation. And US planners conceived the economic "development" projects that necessitated their removal from their homes so that US companies could occupy their land.

However, there is one big thing which should worry the US and its client regime: the dismal failure of the US-created counter-insurgency programs in Vietnam. Far

from living up to its name as the mythical bird which rose from the ashes, Operation Phoenix collapsed in the ashes of US defeat in the Vietnam War without ever achieving its goal of eliminating the National Liberation Front. The rest of the counter-insurgency programs crumbled under the victorious onslaught of the Vietnamese revolutionary forces. But it looks like the US and the Marcos dictatorship refuse to learn from history and are now condemned to suffer the same fate in the Philippines.

Leon Fortaleza

#### AFP's combat effectiveness

Originally, the NPA had on March 19, 1969 only 20 automatic rifles and 15 handguns in the second district of Tarlac, one town in Pampanga and another town in Zambales. AFP personnel numbered 50,000. The ratio then between NPA riflemen and AFP personnel was 1:2,500. Certainly, the justness of the revolutionary cause, the people's all-round support and correct strategy and tactics more than made up for the dearth of arms on the side of the NPA. Otherwise, it would have been destroyed at that point.

At the inception of fascist rule in 1972, the NPA had only some 350 guerrillas armed with high-powered rifles against 100,000 AFP regular military personnel. The ratio was 1:285. The NPA was only in a few provinces, chiefly in Northern Luzon and Central Luzon. There were only a few armed propaganda teams in Bicol, Southern Tagalog, Western Visayas and Mindanao. Marcos' claim about the NPA then having 100,000 regulars with high-powered rifles was a blatant lie.

In 1977, the NPA rifle strength reached 1,500 against 150,000 AFP regular military personnel. The ratio was 1:100. The NPA was already well rooted in all regions of the country and in more than 40 provinces. The system of guerrilla fronts and zones was thriving. Continuously, the fascist dictatorship had made the ground more fertile for armed revolution throughout the country.

In 1982, the NPA rifle strength had reached 10,000 as against the 164,000 regular military personnel. The ratio was 1:16; the NPA had 36 guerrilla fronts consisting of several hundreds of guerrilla zones in more than 60 provinces. Since then, the NPA has reached critical mass and has launched tactical offensives on so wide a scale and at so high a frequency that Marcos and the AFP have been frantically begging for more military supplies from the US government and trying to cover up for their failure by inventing stories about Soviet supplies to the revolutionaries.

At its present rifle strength, the NPA is already more than three times larger than the peak strength of 3,000 rifles of the Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan (HMB) in 1950. There are now more riflemen in the NPA than there are in the regular corps of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). (The large number of loose clan-based armed groups of the MNLF is not taken into account.)

The military strength of the NPA does not consist only of the guerrilla fighters who are armed with high-powered rifles and who are mainly responsible for tactical offensives. There are armed propaganda teams and the armed city partisans who are irregularly armed with a mixture of rifles and handguns.

There is the militia which is several times larger than the full-time guerrilla force of the NPA. The militia personnel have firearms (including shotguns and other single-shot rifles and handguns) as well as common weapons like the bolo and the spear. They are the local police force of the revolutionary movement and the trained reserve force of the NPA.

In its areas of operation, the NPA builds and strengthens the organs of democratic power (committees of self-government), working committees in various fields (organization, education, defense, health, arbitration, etc.) and mass organizations for workers, peasants, women, youth, children, and cultural activists in order to bring into full play the people's support for the armed revolution.

At this point, a challenge may be flung at the fascist dictator. In keeping with your pretense that your plebiscites, referenda, and elections are not fake, why don't you distribute arms to all the barangays and try to finish off all resistance to your regime in a month's time as you threatened? You will not. Because you know that the people will certainly use these arms against you and your imperialist masters even if you assign military supervisors.

AFP claims of an armed strength of 250,000 or so include some 50,000 police and 50,000 Civilian Home Defense Force (CHDF) personnel. These police and CHDF personnel are hopelessly dispersed and alienated from the people. They are easily disarmed, often without the need of firing a single shot. Even small units of AFP regular personnel are as vulnerable to guerrilla operations.

In contrast, to the 10,000 guerrilla riflemen of the NPA, not all of the 164,000 regular personnel of the AFP are deployable for field combat duty. Many are tied down to other functions in military camps at various command levels and in urban areas. Forces under the Presidential Security Command and entire major services like the Air Force and the Navy (with the exception of the Marines) are in the main unfit for ground operations and cannot



*Sitting ducks: The army functions as Marcos' private army*

abandon positions, except through some rotation system.

Most Philippine Constabulary personnel are tied down to police and related functions in urban areas and trunklines. Only the PC ranger battalions are for sustained counterinsurgency operations. The regular PC territorial units can only occasionally sally forth into such operations. And the small PC detachments under the regular PC provincial commands are sitting ducks like the police and CHDF units.

The 67,000 troops (40 percent of the AFP) of the Philippine Army are the most numerous and prepared unit for prolonged combat duty. But the actual number of combat effectives is reduced by the noncombat assignments at various levels of command: national, divisional, regimental or task force, battalion and company. The higher the command level, the greater is the number of men assigned to desks and to service units.

Only about 50 percent of the total 164,000 personnel of the AFP are combat effectives. Of the 82,000 combat effectives, at least 60,000 are already fully deployed in NPA areas and some 20,000 in Moro areas. The actual balance of strength between the NPA and the AFP is therefore 1:6. At its present force level, the AFP cannot go up to a 1:10 ratio without abandoning the Moro areas to the MNLF and many major camps at several levels above the company level.

The combat effectives of the Philippine Army and the PC ranger battalions are so fully deployed that the Philippine



Air Force and Philippine Navy have been ordered to improvise battalions for counterinsurgency in certain areas. Because of his force limitation, the enemy can only attend to all NPA areas unevenly. He concentrates on areas where there is a high frequency of NPA offensives and leaves the other NPA areas relatively free.

Even in areas where they are fielded for combat, not all AFP personnel are devoted to effective military activities. Many are preoccupied with functions other than seeking out the NPA. Even those who go on active operations against the NPA are blind and deaf because the people do not support them and the NPA can easily pinpoint their intelligence agents and informers. So, out of frustration, the fascists vent their ire on the people and resort to arbitrary arrests, torture, massacre, bombing, extortion, looting, arson, forced mass evacuation and fake mass surrenders (actually forced oaths of allegiance).

The AFP is constantly faced with a dilemma. When it concentrates its force, it exposes its ponderous presence and leaves many areas relatively free. When it disperses its force, each part is susceptible to NPA offensives. Even when an enemy unit is too large to be defeated, the NPA can still, beyond relief, attack the small units that go out of the camp. The element of surprise and favorable terrain amplify the actual strength of the NPA.

#### Victory within reach

Because of the people's support, the NPA has been very successful in mastering the workings and surroundings of a small enemy unit for the purpose of a raid as well as in knowing enemy movements and in luring in small units for the purpose of an ambush. It actively looks for the weak points of the enemy to attack or creates the opportunity to attack by inducing him to commit mistakes.

At present, the NPA is already in the advanced phase of the stage of strategic defensive in its people's war. There are now about 400 towns within the scope of its tactical offensive capabilities. Several hundreds of battle-tested NPA units are now capable of launching tactical offensives with short rest periods in accordance with flexible campaign plans issued by the front, regional, interregional or national leadership. Guerrilla operations and campaigns are essentially decentralized under broad guidelines.

The present level of development of the NPA has been reached after so long - 14 years. But the number of rifles it could accumulate from 1969 to 1977 can now be seized in a matter of a few weeks. It is possible now for the CPP and the NPA central leadership to plan and order so many guerrilla fronts to seize a certain number of weapons within a certain period. The accumulated force of 10,000 rifles has a far greater offensive capability than previous levels of strength.

Having 25,000 rifles is no longer just a dream. It is within reach. At this prospective strength, the majority of the 1,500 towns and provincial capitals in the country would already be within the scope of NPA offensive capability. Certainly, with this rifle strength, the NPA shall have reached the stage of the strategic stalemate.

The strategic stalemate shall be characterized by a seesaw of battles for control of towns and provincial capitals until the strength of the enemy is exhausted in the process. The essential objective of the people's army shall not be to hold territory but to seize large numbers of arms repeatedly over wide areas. In the end, reactionary power shall collapse in these areas and the strategic offensive shall be launched against the last holdouts of the enemy that shall already be on the strategic defensive, such as Metro Manila and a few other strategic points.

#### Fatal weaknesses of the AFP

Although the AFP appears to be strong, it is rotten to the core. It has fatal weaknesses which are becoming more and more obvious as the fascist dictatorship insists on perpetuating itself and as the people expand and intensify their armed resistance.

1. The most fatal weakness of the AFP is that it is an *antipeople organization*. It is blinded by anticommunist indoctrination and is violently opposed to the national and democratic interests of the people. These interests are misrepresented by the US and local reactionaries to its components as communist-inspired. US imperialism controls the AFP as a puppet by being responsible for its mercenary tradition, indoctrination, strategic direction, logistics and officer training.

As adjuncts of US imperialism, the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class also control the AFP. But since 1972, Marcos has turned the AFP into a private army to serve his fascist puppet dictatorship and his scheme of becoming the biggest comprador-landlord. The broad masses of the people detest the AFP as the main instrument of the suppression of their national and democratic rights. The fascist dictatorship has viciously used it to intensify the oppression and exploitation of the people.

2. Marcos is always afraid that he will be taken to account for manipulating the AFP in order to usurp all governmental powers and establish a fascist dictatorship. In his perverse way, he continuously orders and encourages the AFP to commit abuses and atrocities so that his military minions become deeply involved in his own high treason and are obliged to side with him in the end. He extends immunity to his hatchetmen for their crimes so as to draw gratitude and maintain their special loyalty.

But it is precisely these abuses and atrocities that are goading the people to wage armed resistance and bring about

PC brigade troopers. Spreading demoralization because of high military casualty rate



the downfall of the fascist dictatorship. The ever increasing cases of arbitrary arrests and detention, torture, assassination, massacre, extortion, rape, arson, forced mass evacuation, re-concentration, fake mass surrenders and so on are sure ingredients for armed revolution. Tyrants never learn the lessons of history.

3. The AFP can never adopt any kind of strategy and tactics to quell the people's armed resistance. No amount of hired military personnel, modern equipment and training can ever defeat a people's army that takes up the basic interests of the people and is competent at waging people's war. The AFP can only expect defeat by perpetrating vicious acts of terrorism against the people and then pretending to care for them in press releases and superficial projects of "civic action" which are in fact a way of sharpening their butcher knives.



*Salvaging: Providing greater impetus for armed protests*

The entire archipelago and its countryside have become a wide area of maneuver for the armed revolutionary forces. And more importantly, the broad masses of the people support the guerrilla fighters. The armed resistance has so expanded and deepened that the AFP cannot expect to remove the water of a vast sea. This army against the people is no longer dealing with a mere fishpond or a small stream.

4. The economic crisis continues to worsen. Not even US imperialism can have limitless resources to spend recklessly. The fascist dictatorship has increasing difficulties in providing more resources for the AFP. The AFP is a parasitic force and is a major source of inflation. The more funds that the military take away from the government coffers, the more are the civilian employees enraged about their inadequate incomes; and the people about the extreme neglect of public education, health and other essential services.

The AFP itself is increasingly a victim of the inflation to which it is a major contributing factor. Even as appropriations for the AFP are still increasing and still top the budget of the reactionary government, the increases are no longer sufficient as to increase the equipment and the real income of its personnel. Officers and men have so great a difficulty supporting their families and their vices that an increasing number of them engage in criminal activities to raise their income. Even claims of families of dead soldiers and demobilized soldiers who have suffered serious injury cannot be paid promptly.

5. Corruption is rampant in the AFP. The highest military officials are involved in shady import-export deals through the Phividec corporations and the Philippine Veterans Bank; outright smuggling operations involving logs, textile, home appliances, US cigarettes, alcoholic drinks,

gold, foreign exchange, prohibited drugs, etc.; extortions from wealthy persons arbitrarily arrested and detained; operation of illegal gambling and prostitution dens; misappropriation of huge intelligence funds; overpricing of and fifty-percentaging on AFP purchases; smuggling of US goods from US military bases and so on.

Officers at various levels get their share from smuggling, illegal logging, unofficial levies at checkpoints, looting during counterinsurgency operations, illegal gambling, prostitution, marijuana plantations, drug trade, pilferage, bank robberies, kidnaping, extortion from drivers and vendors, and so on. Many officers are flagrant operators and protectors of crime syndicates and vice dens. Even the enlisted men are cheated of their food rations and allowances under various subterfuges.

6. Since the AFP has become a private army of the fascist dictator, he has placed his close relatives by blood and affinity in the highest and most lucrative positions in the AFP. Quite a number of them also hold high positions in lucrative civilian offices. After nepotism, regionalism is the most important consideration in the appointment and promotion of officers. The townsfolk of the Marcoses and Romualdezes are the most favored.

The favorites along the nepotist and regionalist lines are also repeatedly allowed to overstay in their high positions even after the age of compulsory retirement. Thus the chances of lower officers to be promoted are diminished. The more daring among them express their discontent. The timid are frightened by a counterintelligence network. AFP officers are encouraged to spy on each other and cut each other down to keep the commander-in-chief on top.

7. In the NPA, there is political, military, economic and cultural democracy. There is none of this in the AFP and the relationship that obtains between the officers and men is that of master and slave between higher and lower offices and between officers and men. Bullying is widespread. For any minor infraction, fancied or real, a subordinate can be hazed or put in a bartolina. The AFP idea of discipline is to bully and brutalize the subordinate so as to turn him into an unthinking robot that can be ordered around.

The result is that lower officers and enlisted men who are maltreated by their officers take out their frustrations and spite on civilians. They get drunk or take drugs and cause public disturbance. They bully and take advantage of suspects and captives. Worst of all, in the course of counterinsurgency operations, or in handling suspects in so-called national security cases, they engage in torture and murder. But then, in those instances, the highest combat and intelligence officers initiate and participate in brutal acts together with their subordinates.

8. As the armed struggle is rapidly expanding and intensifying, AFP casualties — killed and wounded — are increasing. The present casualty rate is already high enough to cause demoralization among a great number of officers and men. They realize that the armed revolutionaries are gaining ground and they are on the losing side or they find out that their relatives and friends are with the revolutionary movement. The fear of death or injury is also compounded by so many serious dissatisfactions within the AFP.

#### **NPA will win over AFP men**

As a matter of policy, the NPA is essentially more interested in disarming AFP officers and men than in killing or injuring them. When an ambush or any other form of battle is over, the winning NPA unit treats the captives leniently



*Antifascist calls: Hastening development of people's war*

and looks after the wounded. An explanation of the revolutionary cause is given; and the captives are allowed to choose their way - join the NPA, go home or even rejoin the enemy unit. When an enemy soldier is already disarmed by his own volition or by necessary force, he is not subjected to humiliation, torture or any worse harm. He is released as soon as possible or as soon as necessary.

Unlike the fascist dictator and his diehard minions (including those in the so-called Supreme Court), the NPA does not think that the side that kills more and commits abuses and atrocities will win. The brutal thinking and actions of the fascist dictatorship are leading it to its final doom. Even noncombatants and mere suspects are being tortured and murdered by the AFP in the course of inventing false victories.

As the revolutionary army of the people, the NPA recognizes through class analysis that most AFP personnel originate from the basic masses - workers, peasants, and petty bourgeoisie. These have joined the AFP because they have a low level of political consciousness, because they have been drafted or because they have simply been in need of a source of income. The NPA therefore gives them the chance to take the revolutionary or the side of the people or to simply abandon the side of the enemy.

Special efforts are taken to win them over. These include lenient treatment of captives, special educational materials directed to AFP personnel, assignment of cadres to penetrate the AFP, developing good relations with relatives and friends of AFP personnel, permission and safe conduct to individual AFP personnel visiting relatives and friends in NPA-controlled areas, direct and indirect purchases of arms and ammunition from them, persuading them to change sides completely and letting them win over other AFP personnel and weaken the AFP from within in every manner possible.

The NPA intends to win victory not only through deadly battles but also through the change of heart and mind by AFP officers and men. The NPA foresees that as the political, economic and military situation of the enemy deteriorates, its military officers and men will increasingly tend to abandon its side and become drawn to the just revolutionary cause of the people. There will be more and more cases of enemy troops going over to the side of the people wholeheartedly or surrendering whenever encircled by a superior NPA force.

AFP personnel who choose to side with the people or simply abandon the enemy side will have a share in the fruits of the revolution. A victorious revolutionary army does not only destroy the reactionary army in battle but also disintegrates it from within.

**A perspective on the fascist dictatorship**

The cumulative growth in strength of the NPA and the united front for armed struggle, including the National Democratic Front and the Moro National Liberation Front, is the sure guarantee for the ignominious downfall of the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique. Every advance made in armed struggle brings this regime closer to its grave.

It is difficult to predict when the revolutionary forces shall launch the strategic offensive and win total victory in the national democratic revolution against US imperialism and its reactionary stooges. But it is already predictable that within a short period of time, in a matter of a few years, the strategic stalemate shall arise to shake the foundations of reactionary rule as never before.

This strategic stalemate is certain to cause the downfall of the Marcos ruling faction. The strength of the NPA and all other revolutionary forces shall be such that all the fatal weaknesses of the AFP will be extremely conspicuous and a larger number of its officers and men will blame the fascist dictator Marcos and the AFP high command for utter failure.

Whichever political party shall be at the helm of the US administration shall be under strong and irresistible pressure from a wide range of political forces and from the American people in general to junk the Marcos ruling faction. The political and economic bankruptcy of this ruling fascist clique will be graver than ever. Its defeats in the battlefield will be stunning.

The Marcos ruling faction will either be eased out or kicked out. The process of easing out will probably involve the US Congress placing in direct as well as indirect assistance.

There is nothing awesome about the continuing and increasing US support for Marcos. US imperialism is in an irreversible process of general decline. It is wracked by ever worsening political and economic crises. Since its defeat in the Vietnam War, US imperialism has been impotent before the revolutionary peoples of Iran, Nicaragua and elsewhere. The American people continue to strongly oppose US intervention and aggression on a massive scale as in the Vietnam War. Only the victory of the revolutionary armed struggle can do away with the fascist dictatorship and establish democracy according to the best light and the best interests of the Filipino people.

US support for Marcos cannot be limitless. Although direct military assistance is increasing, it is not at the rate and to the extent that the fascist dictator would wish. The Reagan administration that praises him to high heavens is the same administration that cannot avoid adopting economic and financial policies that put a squeeze on the fascist dictatorship. Objectively distinct from the political wishes of Reagan and Marcos, the crisis of the US and the world capitalist system is ever worsening and cannot be solved.

As the strategic stalemate has not been reached and as US imperialism continues to support his fascist rule, Marcos will always be arrogant and pretend to be almighty before the Filipino people. Demands for democratic reforms addressed to him by the legal opposition and the broad democratic movement can only be useful and important by way of exposing the extreme fascist character of his regime and the imperialist character of his foreign master and in stressing the justness of the national democratic cause.

N.T. Umili

## Zone encounter

Deep into the warm glow  
 Of whispered welcomes and lamplit smiles  
 Our column enters,  
 The silent long march pauses for a while  
 In our home base of poor and middle peasants,  
 And our tiredness leaves with the rustling wind.  
 A village committee rests us on bamboo benches,  
 We lay down our packs and guns  
 And feel the aches that remind us we are  
 Of flesh and blood limited and unlimited in daring,  
 Like proud plowed earth of whatever is  
 And promises to be for the people.  
 The team is summoned to hospitality  
 Of word, water and wine,  
 To the healing of the brokenness of being  
 Once again.  
 New names are introduced. All are received  
 As beloved warriors in the common struggle,  
 Each bearing the living presences of comrades  
 Of other places, other times.  
 Slowly the house becomes a full granary,  
 A fat rice granary.  
 Our hosts tell us we control the hour,  
 The risks are well taken and the dogs do not bark.  
 We journey into our time  
 From the shared wash basin  
 And table of steaming rice, fish, tomatoes,  
 To an agenda of lost carabaos and teen-age marriages  
 And the formation of an organizing group.  
 Dialectics builds up and protracts into the night,  
 Patiently, intensely. We learn more of revolution  
 And the enduring grace of a ravaged land  
 And a tempered people.  
 Then there are urgent tasks to own  
 For man, woman and child. Gently and firmly  
 The Red star pulls the people together,  
 Tonight is another victory for mountain and barrio.  
 New trails lead from forest to field,  
 From heart to heart, unerringly,  
 In the encounter of the Party, the Army, the People.

Ka Jason



## Election mania

When asked how many people opposed the regime, Malacanang revealed that according to the latest poll survey, only a fraction were actually against it. The fraction: 9/10.

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No one believes Marcos whenever he denounces political dynasties. Just recently after he denounced this, his daughter Imee was drafted as KBL candidate for Ilocos Norte, where his son Bongbong is already governor. We hear that grandsons Borgy and Alfonso are next in line - to head the newly-organized Kabataang Barangay.

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Grandma Imelda is not to be outdone. Before the KBL proclamation rally last March 27, several "Draft Imelda" placards and streamers were prepared at the offices of the Metro Manila Commission. But the First Lady demurred.

You see, Imelda has her eyes set on 1987, the year of the presidential election.

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Several Metro Manila aides reportedly complained they didn't receive the P30 they were promised for attending the rally. Instead, they got only P10 or P20.

Someone in the Metro Manila Commission must have pocketed the money. Why not ask Metro Manila Vice Gov. Ismael Mathay Jr?

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But some people who didn't receive the P30 aren't complaining. After all, they did get to see their favorite teen stars perform at the KBL "Bagets" rally. They also made a killing buying Kadiwa goods which were sold at half-price. If this is what it's like, these people said, why not have a KBL rally everyday

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But there were those who didn't smile through the whole thing. How could they? That was P20 million of the people's money down the drain.

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Imelda's secretary tells us that the poor girl can't understand why there are so many old people in the country. The matriarch wonders how Filipinos could live so long under these terrible conditions.

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Faith healer Jun Labo is running for assemblyman in Baguio City. The post was reportedly offered to him after he was able to cure Marcos of his mysterious illness. Maybe Marcos thinks that if Labo was able to cure him, he could cure anything

But it'll take more than faith healing to cure the country's ills, Mr. Dictator.

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Hundreds of illegal registrants gave themselves away because they gave public markets, bus stations and non-existent streets as their addresses. But nothing beats what happened at a certain district in Manila. Illegal registrants with a high sense of humor zeroed in on the Big Boss himself when they gave their address as Malacanang Palace! Of course, they got away with it.

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Who says the government cares for the small soldier? Despite a shortage of doctors, the military hospital, V. Luna General, recently retrenched doctors from its staff. Reason: to provide money for the KBL election coffers.

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For countries with honest, professional soldiery, this quote rings true: Without the army, the people have nothing.

But for the Philippines, with its notorious, extortionist and thieving soldiers, this quote rings true: Without the people, the army has nothing.

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Marcos' financial advisers have reportedly found a way to save the government millions of dollars a year: they told the dictator to divorce his wife.

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And speaking of leaders, Jaime Cardinal Sin, head of the Roman Catholic flock in the Philippines, was once asked:

Reporter: Your Eminence, what are your chances becoming the first Filipino Pope?

Sin: With the Comelec counting the votes in the Vatican, how can I lose?

## THE AVSECOM MONKEYS

When called to the witness stand for the second time by the Agrava board, these were their answers . . .



SGT. LEONARDO MOJICA

"I didn't see who shot Aquino."



SGT. ARMANDO DE LA CRUZ

"I didn't understand the questions during the first hearing."



SGT. REYNALDO PELIAS

"I can't tell who the man in white was."