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The AFP's 13th year

Striving for a
meaningful
peace



"The question of peace can be solved now"

The National Democratic Front wishes to reiterate its willingness to explore all avenues which may lead to the cessation of armed hostilities and the attainment of genuine peace in our land. It has been consulting on this matter with concerned Filipinos representing different interests, classes and sectors of our society, aside from taking certain steps as would facilitate the initiation of an actual dialog with representatives of the Aquino government.

Two facts however stand out. First, the Aquino government has not officially declared a ceasefire. And second, the Armed Forces of the Philippines have not eased, but rather escalated, their offensive actions against the masses and the revolutionary movement.

President Aquino talks about declaring a ceasefire at some time in the future. Individual AFP field commanders talk about actually having unilaterally declared a ceasefire in their areas of operation. General Ramos says there has been no ceasefire.

The Aquino government thus speaks with many voices. The reality is that since Mrs. Aquino assumed office, the AFP's military and paramilitary forces have not only been kept intact, but their ranks have been beefed up to conduct military operations. General Ramos himself partly confirmed this when he said that six combat battalions and 42 armored vehicles which used to be deployed in and around Metro Manila have been thrown into "counter-insurgency" operations.

This is further confirmed by reports we have been receiving from the field, including Kalunga-Apayao, Cagayan, Misamis Oriental, Ifugao, Nueva Vizcaya, Davao and the Bicol and Southern Tagalog regions. In these areas, AFP units and paramilitary forces have been perpetrating killings, torture, hamletting and food blockades, looting and burning, bombings and strafings, and tong collections at highway checkpoints.

On the other hand, the AFP high command to this day has not acted upon President Aquino's order (as reported in the press) to dismantle the notorious Civilian Home Defense Forces. No decisive move has been made against local warlords and their private armies. Neither has the AFP done anything to confiscate more than a token number of the thousands of high-powered firearms illegally held by Marcos loyalists and other reactionary forces.

No wonder that the "New AFP" continues to be rejected



"You can't shake hands with a mailed fist"

by the people. Mere words do not suffice to convince the masses that the old puppet repressive army has indeed changed its nature, and won the right to their allegiance as the people's defenders.

From all indications, warmongering and anti-democratic interests here and abroad are systematically attempting to sabotage efforts that further the cause of peace. Their motive is to make President Aquino abandon her avowed objective of seeking reconciliation and peace based on justice, and to get her to commit herself firmly to fascist terror like the dictator Marcos.

Foremost among these saboteurs are the Enrile-Ramos faction and US imperialism. They scheme and work in cahoots with one another. It is not mere coincidence that while the Enrile-Ramos military clique pursues its terrorism against the masses and the revolutionary movement, the Reagan administration has been prodding Mrs. Aquino to "modernize" the AFP and launch unrelenting "counter-insurgency" campaigns.

This early, these vested interests are determined to impose their will upon a government that is just starting to come to grips with the enormous problems left behind by the deposed regime. They are bent on shielding and preserving the remaining repressive structures of that regime which are basically intact and considerably strong. They want to make the people's armed movement a scapegoat that can always be blamed for the deterioration of economic and social conditions in the country. In this way, they conveniently evade their own responsibility for such a deterioration, which would undeniably enhance their chances of grabbing power for themselves and excluding the democratic forces from meaningful participation in the task of governing the nation.

The National Democratic Front earnestly calls upon the authorities concerned to immediately halt all oppressive and punitive actions by government military and paramilitary troops against innocent people in the countryside. It appeals to the patriotic officers and men of the AFP to dissociate themselves from those among them who would serve a master other than the Filipino people.

We firmly believe that the question of peace can be solved. And it can begin to be solved even now.

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In this issue, LIB discusses the NPA's close ties with the people, and provides an overview of its current state, tasks and prospects.

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The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDF) serves as the organizational framework and channel for the unity, cooperation and coordination of all anti-imperialist and democratic forces in the Philippines and for progressive Filipino and solidarity groups abroad. It traces its beginning to the establishment of the Preparatory Commission for the National Democratic Front on April 24, 1973. LIBERATION is the official publication of the NDF.

17 years of service to the people

NPA celebrates its 17th anniversary amidst many gains and challenges



NPA guerrilla and son: Fighting for the future

It was the first of its kind in Central Luzon, cradle of the first guerrillas of the New People's Army (NPA). For the first time in 17 years, NPA commanders based there — the best and the brightest — conducted an NPA military officers' training course. Held somewhere in the Sierra Madre mountains, the training course coincided with the 17th anniversary of the NPA last March 29, 1986. The training turned out to be a

joyful occasion.

But in the beginning, it wasn't. Training had barely started when the trainees, mostly platoon- and company-level commanders, agitated for deeper discussion about the February "snap revolution" and the Aquino government's call for a ceasefire. Apparently, they were painfully aware that the new developments had put into question the necessity of continuing

the armed struggle as well as the continued existence of the NPA itself.

The first part of the training, a lecture on the new situation, had failed to allay their consternation. They became disturbed upon hearing the new guidelines issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines concerning the conduct of tactical offensives. The guidelines had called for the dismantling of the fascist remnants of the Marcos dictatorship but urged a slowdown in big tactical offensives like raids on townhalls. Questioned one guerrilla: "How can you strike at the CHDF and dismantle them without attacking the town center? *Eh, sa munisipyo ang base ng mga 'yan.*"

As the lecture continued, the trainees only became more agitated. Finally, they asked for a break. "*Teka muna. Teka muna,*" they said. "*Break muna tayo. Mag-usap muna tayo at magkalinawan. Ano pa ang halaga ng training kung ganito lang ang mangyayari sa NPA?*"

For the whole day, the entire camp then sat down to an open and frank discussion. Everyone took part — the training command from the NPA General Staff, the trainees, the security detail, the kitchen staff, the medical unit and the masses in the surrounding area. "*Walang ranggo-ranggo,*" said one participant. "*May panel na magsasalita mula sa training command at may moderator, tapos free for all na ang talakayan.*" Added Miguel, an instructor and member of the NPA General Staff: "*Tirang kapitan talaga.*" Lifting his cup of coffee, he quipped: "*May tunay pang kape.*"

During the discussion, the guerrillas and the masses raised questions about the role of armed struggle under the new situation. They also asked: What is a ceasefire? Does it involve a laying down of arms or surrender? What is the basis for entering into a ceasefire? What is the nature of the Aquino government? What is the role of the NPA under the new conditions? What is our assessment of the national democratic movement's boycott policy?

The instructors led by Miguel explained that although the Aquino government has made some democratic changes by restoring civil liberties and releasing many political prisoners, the oppressive and exploitative social structures that in the first place gave rise to the NPA still remain intact.

"The peasantry continues to suffer feudal exploitation from despotic big landlords," said Miguel. "Warlords con-



Hamming it up for the camera: NPA fighter with masses in training camp

tinue to terrorize peasants in the countryside. The military's counter-insurgency drive persists, wreaking havoc on the people's rights and livelihood. Military-armed fanatic cults roam the countryside at will, striking fear among peasant communities. Overall, US imperialism continues to intervene in the country and support reactionary elements in society who in turn ensure the protection of the US military bases and their economic empire." He also said the US-supported AFP, which had been Marcos' main instrument of repression throughout his 20-year rule, has survived the change in government leadership virtually unscathed, and remains a potential threat to the progressive and liberal tendencies of the Aquino government.

For these reasons, the trainers said, the NPA cannot lay down its arms and disband. "The people's army is duty-bound to protect what the revolutionary movement and the masses have gained after 17 years of fighting," they stressed. "It is justified to continue waging armed struggle against the repressive remnants of the Marcos regime and certain reactionary elements inside and outside the government who are determined to preserve the old oppressive structures of society and wipe out the people's gains."

After the free-wheeling discussion, everyone felt reassured that their training was not an exercise in futility. They now fully understood that so much still remains to be done to remove the main roots of the people's impoverishment and suffering. As one guerrilla said, "For 17 years, we have been fighting for the people's interests. Our struggle is not yet over."

Earning the people's support

Indeed, the struggle is not yet over for the NPA, which has emerged as Asia's fastest growing insurgent army. The new political situation, however, has spurred the NPA to adjust its tactics. To show the people the continuing justness and necessity of armed struggle, the NPA presently gives high priority to military operations that have a big political impact and which serve to disrupt the fascist machinery. The NPA's main targets of attacks now are more selective, striking principally at key holdouts of the old regime like the CHDF, private armies of warlords and other paramilitary units as well as detested fascist leaders and units.

This adjustment in tactics has affected the intensity of tactical offensives. From nine times a week in 1985, the rate of tactical offensives dropped to twice a week immediately following the February uprising.

Only with the escalation of counter-insurgency operations in the countryside, has the NPA been recently forced to continue its tactical offensives. It has taken an active defense posture to more effectively protect the masses and revolutionary forces from relentless military assaults.

The NPA certainly has much to protect, considering the many political and economic gains it has reaped after 17 years of struggle. In the 59 guerrilla fronts throughout the country, NPA forces have helped tremendously in transforming exploitative relations in the countryside and building the people's faith in their own capacity to change oppressive conditions. No amount of military black propaganda can erase these innumerable

positive contributions of the NPA.

In fact, in their concrete service to the people lies the NPA's greatest strength — and the military's greatest weakness. The NPA, for one thing, could not have grown to pose such a formidable challenge to the previous regime were it not for the people's strong and deep support. Today, the product of the guerrillas' painstaking work is inscribed in the confident strides of peasant men, women and children in every guerrilla front.

In an interview with LIB, NPA cadre Miguel discussed the NPA's concrete contributions in improving the people's welfare and in helping them to assert their rights, especially in the advancement of the agrarian revolution in the countryside. He also discussed how the masses and the middle forces themselves, realizing the justness of the revolutionary armed struggle, have helped in building up the NPA.

Advancing the agrarian revolution

In implementing the revolutionary land reform program, the role of the NPA initially was to negotiate with the landlords. Landlords were persuaded to lower the land rent which they exact from tenants and raise the wages of their farm workers. In the frontier areas, the NPA also negotiated with concessionaires to allow the people to farm the idle lands within their concessions. These tasks went hand in hand with the NPA's political and organizing work among the peasantry.

"*Ngayon, supporting role na lang ang papel namin,*" said Miguel. "We only enter the picture when there are misunderstandings. It is now the farmers themselves, through their people's organizations, who do the talking and engage in

negotiations. *Iginiguit nila ang kanilang mga karapatan ayon sa pag-unlad ng sarili nilang lakas at sa antas na naabot ng kilusang masa sa area.*"

For example, in the coastal areas of Aurora province where the people depend on small-scale logging and making charcoal for a living, the organized masses through their own efforts were able to raise the price of *uling* from P17 to P22 per sack. Through the same process, Miguel said saltmakers in Central Luzon were also able to successfully demand higher prices for their produce. Another case, he added, is that of a group of workers from a big mining firm in Zambales who were also able to get their fair share in company profits. Through negotiations with the management, and their own concerted efforts, the workers got a P14 across-the-board increase — the biggest wage increase ever in the history of labor in the Philippines.

In Bicol, Miguel said the peasants would sometimes take over large landholdings of absentee landlords with the NPA's backing. "However, if the landlord is a resident, we approach him and bring to his attention the shareholders' demands. In our experience, it has been easy to strike a mutually satisfying agreement."

"The NPA has also helped the masses plan their mass actions," Miguel noted. *"Kasi dapat realistic din yung demands ng masa. Kung masyadong mataas halimbawa, ang hihingin nilang presyo para sa kanilang produkto, baka malugi o matakot ang mga negosyante at wala nang bumili. Ang masa rin ang kawawa. Tinityak natin na ang kabutihan ng higit na nakararami ang mananaig."*

In other cases, however, you have to be firm with the landlords, said Miguel. He cited the case of Marcos crony Eduardo Cojuangco and one of his logging concessions in Mindanao. He said its operations had caused much erosion and destruction to the land and its resources. "The company wanted to negotiate with us. Name your price, they told us. But the masses wanted them out because they were really very destructive. So we had to tell the firm to leave," said Miguel.

Also a part of the NPA's contributions to the upliftment of the people's economic condition is ensuring the integrity of the environment. "We discourage people from cultivating watershed areas," said Miguel. "We ourselves engage in tree-planting in eroded areas and we encourage the people to do the same."

The NPA has also greatly helped in improving the economic, health and socio-cultural life of the people in many areas of the countryside. The NPA provides seed money or farm animals for the people's cooperatives and also establish other economic projects. They also provide medical services and train medical workers. Today, many barrios inside



Peasant militia: Wellspring of NPA recruits

guerrilla fronts have their own "home-grown" medical units operated by the peasants themselves.

"In the past, people lived in fear of bandits, cattle-rustlers and other criminal elements," Miguel said. "Gambling and drunkenness were also rampant. But when we began organizing in these barrios, we removed the bandits and rustlers. We discouraged gambling and drunkenness." But in the latter practices, their initial efforts to discourage these failed. "This is because we did not offer alternatives to gambling and drinking. So the next time we went to some barrios, we brought along basketballs, volleyballs and nets. We also built basketball courts in some areas. In some places like Samar, we introduced indoor sports like ping-pong. Now, people engage in sports rather than gambling during their leisure time."

"*May joke nga ang militar tungkol dito,*" Miguel said, smiling. "*Basta makakita sila ng basketball court sa isang liblib na lugar sa bundok — NPA area 'yan.*"

Fighting alongside the people

The NPA's contributions to the peasant mass movement and the agrarian revolution have in turn spurred many poor peasants to directly join the NPA, and help build up its strength and influence in the countryside. The peasantry presently comprises the NPA's main force of 15,000 full-time and 20,000 part-time guerrillas. Miguel cited the direct contributions and participation of the peasant masses in actual combat and army-building.

"We usually request various forms of combat support from the people. But the people have gone beyond that. Thousands are offering themselves as fighters for the NPA," he said. "With the presence of so many volunteer fighters, our NPA cadres can now shift to and special-

ize in politico-military tasks."

The organizational expansion of the NPA has also enabled it to form special support groups. These groups mainly perform military tasks and are organizationally distinct from the mass organizations and territorial units in an area. They are organized along special lines of work like intelligence, logistics, ordnance and medical work.

Miguel cited many instances when the masses themselves not only gave combat support but actively participated in fighting alongside the NPA. "I can still remember the battle of Libay-Libay in Mindanao in 1983. The First Scout Ranger Regiment had established a base at Maco, Davao, 12 km. away from Libay-Libay town. At that time, the Rangers had not yet fought with the guerrillas and they were being touted as *'panlaban sa NPA.'*"

"One morning, hours before dawn, they entered Libay-Libay in search of us," Miguel narrated. "My comrades and I were then meeting in a mountain camp nearby, unaware of the enemy's presence. Since the masses were very vigilant, they searched for our camp and warned us of the enemy's approach. As each hour passed, another group of masses would come up to report on the enemy's movements until we were given a complete intelligence picture."

Miguel recounted that he and his comrades debated whether or not to attack the Ranger team. Two big factors going against them were their unpreparedness and unfamiliarity with the terrain. "It was the masses who finally convinced us to attack, assuring us that they would guide us, for they knew the area like their own backyard," Miguel said.

"So my comrades and I formed two groups, an assault force and a blocking force against more than 50 fully armed troopers," Miguel said. "But because



On guard: NPA squad breaks for news on enemy movements in the area

we lacked certain information, our assault force was not able to attack the enemy who ran smack into our blocking force. Unprepared, our blocking force was pinned down. We quickly sent our assault force to reinforce them. But soon, the Rangers also received reinforcements."

But Miguel said they had a big advantage the military didn't have — the masses' support. "By then, the masses were wondering why the battle was taking so long and were worried that we might be hungry. So they cooked food and brought this to us. Upon seeing us being attacked under heavy fire, they guided us along the unfamiliar terrain. They pulled out our wounded and carried them to safety on carabao-pulled carts. They picked up the guns of fallen troopers and comrades and used these themselves to fight back the Rangers."

After a four-hour gunbattle on uneven terrain, the enemy began to retreat. Inch by inch, fired up by the courage and support of the masses, the NPA persevered and won the day. "Without the masses there, we would surely have perished," said Miguel.

He also recounted the story of a three-day engagement in Bayog, a town in the Zamboanga peninsula, which likewise demonstrated the upgrowth of "people power" in the countryside in support of the NPA. "A district guerrilla unit (DGU) had been encircled by soldiers. Upon learning of this predicament from the masses, the front guerrilla unit (FGU) in the area reinforced their embattled comrades," said Miguel. "But reinforcements soon arrived for the soldiers which then encircled the FGU. Finally, the people's militia, supported by the masses, encircled the military reinforcements and harassed the enemy lines."

This encirclement and counter-encircle-

ment operation took three days. In the end, the soldiers got so tired, they gave up and retreated. Some gave away their guns to the people as they fled the area. Miguel said the generals were so incensed that they decided to punish the masses who supported the NPA. They bombed Bayog, killing a number of people, including children.

The role of the tribal masses is also exceptional in the Cordilleras. Here, there are the Seasonal Red Fighters who work nine months a year on their rice fields and three months during the rest of the year as guerrillas. During their full-time stint in the NPA, they play the major role in battles. They provide the main force in large-scale military operations that involve the occupation of municipalities and capitols.

"Through this special group of guerrillas," said Miguel, "sustained operations against enemy forces such as the 11th Infantry Battalion based in Cordillera are possible. *Talagang napapagod ang kaway.*" With the active involvement of the tribal masses and the people's militia, the NPA cadres' work has now been mostly to provide political guidance.

Miguel also cited the exemplary case of the masses of Bataan last year. "*Dito, sampok na sampok ang papel ng masa sa ginawang pagpapasabog ng mga transmission towers ng Bataan Nuclear Plant.* The NPA ordnance unit that carried out the demolition and sabotage operations was very small. But they received massive support from fishermen knowledgeable in the use of dynamite."

Nearer to the metropolis, the NPA partisans at the Manila Bay area in Bulacan have also gained headway in winning the masses' support. According to Miguel, many fishermen, using their own boats, have joined NPA operations there. "They team up with the partisans in dis-

mantling illegal fishpens in the bay area and in hitting back at abusive military and security guards employed by owners of large fishpens."

Coping with problems

These are only some of the many examples of the dynamic and mutually supportive relationship that has developed through the years between the NPA and the masses. But though the NPA and the revolutionary masses have reaped many gains, certain problems remain. These problems are mainly "problems of progress." One example is the problem of resources which cannot keep pace with the NPA's rapid growth.

"Our resources are inversely proportional to our gains in the field," said Miguel. "For example, whenever we gain 50 rifles from an ambush, we automatically have less ammunition in relation to our total supply of rifles. Most of our guns, ammunition and ordnance were acquired through tactical offensives. *Pero hindi tayo laging makaka-asa sa battlefield.* In the past, we tried to produce our own ordnance. But we found out that it is cheaper to buy bullets than to manufacture them on our own."

The average amount needed to maintain an NPA company, presently the highest formation level of the NPA, comes to around P30,000 a month. This includes expenses for rice, regular viands like *tuyo*, soap, cigarettes, etc. The cost of maintaining a Red fighter everyday runs to P4 to P17, depending on the conditions in an area. "*Mura, ano?*" remarked Miguel. "*Wala namang sekury sa atin.* As you can see, many of our fighters are lean and pale. *Kulang sa laga.*"

While there are progressive legal organizations and institutions which have economic programs in the countryside, Miguel said most of these, sadly, do not respond to the needs of the revolutionary army for adequate nutritious food. "We need more economic programs whose direct beneficiaries are the NPA. *Sana matugunan nila ang mga pangangailangan namin.*"

Another problem involves the upgrading of staff work and increase of personnel. The NPA needs specialists in their field who can help serve the growing needs of the revolutionary army. One such field is medical work where the NPA needs more skilled personnel.

The urgency of this problem is rapidly being felt as the guerrilla war advances. Miguel cited the case of a Bicol guerrilla unit which imposed a policy prohibiting offensives with a probable casualty rate of four. "*Dahil di nila ma-iguro ito, hindi sila nakapaghunad ng mga open sibo,*" he said. "*Kasi may mga kaso tayo na di naman fatal ang sama pero namisay ang kasama dahil hindi handa ang medical team.*"

The NPA presently needs doctors and

medical personnel willing to work under battlefield conditions, who can treat gunshot wounds and do field surgery, and set up and administer mobile field hospitals. Though the NPA has some skilled medical personnel and even doctors, many, because of lack of training in this type of work, are afraid to treat gunshot wounds with more than a four-inch penetration. To meet this problem, the NPA is urging progressive medical organizations like the Makabayang Samahang Pangkalusugan (MSP) to reorient their services towards the needs of guerrillas in the battlefield.

Another limitation facing the NPA is the training of qualified personnel to perform management and administration work in the guerrilla army. "Many of our army officers are fighting leaders," Miguel explained. "For a long time, they themselves led squad- and platoon-level formations which carried out relatively small military operations. But with the rise of the NPA's bigger formations like the company, our officers now not only have to lead their men to battle, they also have to master the skills needed in administering and managing larger formations."

At present, Miguel said there is a high casualty rate among NPA officers in the field. "*Ikaw na kasi ang namamahala, ikaw pa rin ang humaharap sa labanan,*" he said. "*Hindi halimbawa tulad ng AFP na ang mga opisyal ay utos lang nang utos at malayo sa labanan. Tayo, nasa forefront.*"

Other problems involve developing the NPA structure and recruiting more activists and cadres for special lines of work like propaganda (for the NPA paper *Pulang Bandila*), intelligence, administration and political guidance, ordnance and medical work. To meet these problems, and to further advance the NPA towards a higher stage of struggle, the Communist Party of the Philippines, the NPA's mother organization, laid down its new tasks late last year (see box).

To further project itself and attract more recruits, the NPA is presently trying to develop its own identity. "In many mass gatherings, journalists have been asking us why we don't have our own song (*Internasyunal* [the communist anthem] *din kasi ang kinakanta namin*) and our own flag," said Miguel. "*Noong unang lumabas ang Pulang Bandila, masayang-masaya ang rank-and-file namin.* At last, we have our own paper, they said. So we are now shopping around for our own logo, flag and song, and even a design for the NPA uniform."

Looking ahead

The NPA military officers' training course was designed to cope with some of these problems. Through this, the NPA has been able to further develop its officers and teach them combat skills, and more importantly, teach them how to manage and command large formations



Forest frolickers: Red fighters in a festive mood

according to the rising demands of a growing army.

Tasks of the NPA

Regularization is the main thrust of the NPA at present. To achieve this, it is pursuing the following tasks:

- ▶ the establishment of companies and even battalions as the principal formations of the NPA;
- ▶ the development of guerrilla units, partisan units and people's militias to company formation;
- ▶ the establishment and strengthening of territorial commands on the regional, provincial and front levels;
- ▶ the systematization and further strengthening of political work within the NPA;
- ▶ the establishment of permanent military schools to train company- and battalion-level cadres;
- ▶ the drawing-up, dissemination and development of regular and special military courses;
- ▶ the step-by-step development of extensive and intensive guerrilla operations leading to the launching of military campaigns and counter-campaigns;
- ▶ the expansion and consolidation of existing guerrilla fronts and partisan fronts;
- ▶ the development of guerrilla bases within the guerrilla fronts;
- ▶ the expansion of the NPA to remaining strategic areas and big islands; and
- ▶ the expansion and systematization of political work among enemy military ranks.

Every national democrat activist and supporter can do much to help the NPA shoulder these tasks and in so doing, further advance the continuing struggle for revolutionary change in society.

"You can understand then why the first officers' training course in Central Luzon, especially after their fruitful 'Kapihan,' was a big boost to the morale of the Red fighters there," said Miguel. In the end, the 17th anniversary of the NPA in Central Luzon proved to be the happiest — comparable to the region's first celebration of the NPA's founding anniversary in 1970.

The training course was a turning point for the Red commanders and fighters in the region. During the graduation rites, one could perceive a significant change in the trainees' behavior. Unlike the first day of the training, when most were quiet and shy, they were now more confident and voluble. When asked to give closing remarks by the instructors, all the trainees spoke even without prodding. Quipped one trainee who had overcome his shyness, "*Mas madali palang lumaban kaysa humarap sa publiko.*"

At the end of the graduation rites, which had lengthened to one whole day due to the long speeches, each NPA commander was called to receive his diploma and serial number. The best of the trainees were awarded honors amid much cheering among the masses.

On the 17th year of the NPA, the year of the people's uprising that toppled the Marcos regime, the graduates of the First Central Luzon Officers' Military Training Course went down a makeshift stage somewhere in the Sierra Madres to confidently take over their commands. Like NPA fighters in other parts of the country, they are ready to face the challenges posed by new conditions and negotiate for a meaningful ceasefire with the Aquino government. But they are just as prepared to continue protecting the Filipino people's interests and resist the rampaging counter-insurgency forces of the AFP.

Abdul Ulap

"The revolution has not been defeated"

NPA cadres present their views on ceasefire, amnesty and the NAFFP

In an interview with LIB, two members of the NPA General Staff, Ronnie and Miguel, discussed their views about one of the hottest topics in town today - ceasefire. Excerpts:

Q: What is a ceasefire? Does it involve the laying down of arms?

A: A ceasefire is the cessation of armed hostilities between warring parties. It does not mean surrender nor does it necessarily involve the laying down of arms.

A ceasefire can lead to either a truce or an armistice. A truce is a negotiated settlement arrived at after a dialog between the parties. An armistice is arrived at only after a truce had led to a long-lasting ceasefire.

Still, a ceasefire can be of three kinds: a unilateral ceasefire, a ceasefire arrived at after negotiations, and a ceasefire as a result of granted conditions but not necessarily of negotiations.

What we want is a negotiated ceasefire. But we have not attached conditions before negotiations could begin, and the government should likewise do the same. There should be no demand for either side to diminish its present strength such as calling for a laying down of arms.

Q: Will you enter into a ceasefire with the Aquino government?

A: The call for a six-month ceasefire was a call made by Cory Aquino even before she became president. We assure her that her call has not fallen on deaf ears. Like her, we also want peace.

However, it seems that within the Aquino government there are different views concerning the ceasefire. At present, we are unsure as to which view will prevail.

A reactionary clique within the military does not want a ceasefire. They want the civil government of President Cory Aquino to declare all-out war against the NPA. In this position, they are supported by the US. The US is pushing for more military aid to be used against us in spite of President Aquino's clear preference for more economic aid.

The people who supported Mrs. Aquino have high expectations concerning the institution of political and economic reforms. However, they also want to give the Aquino government a chance to advance its democratic initiatives. Yet Enrile has already criticized her policies towards insurgency and has told her to stop her "kid-glove treatment" of the NPA. It seems that Enrile and other reactionaries in the AFP do not want to give Mrs. Aquino a chance.

Q: Will you accept an offer of amnesty?

A: Political Affairs Minister Cuenco has presented a view of the ceasefire, the framework of which actually calls for the surrender of the NPA. In fact, in Region 11, Northern Mindanao, they are set to give amnesty to any rebel that will surrender. Cuenco has requested a budget for the rehabilitation of surrenderers by giving them jobs.

When you enter into a ceasefire with an opposite party, you recognize them as a force to reckon with - a force you deal with on an equal footing. There is no amnesty involved as it means a pardon for a political offense.

Why should we surrender and be given amnesty? Just like the opposition, we fought hard against the Marcos fascist dictatorship. Why should our efforts against the Marcos regime be considered as a political offense under the present dispensation? If that is the logic, then the present government should also grant amnesty to the opposition political parties.



Keeping in shape: NPAs doing their morning drills

This call for surrender and amnesty is an effort to split and demoralize the ranks of the revolutionary forces. RAM's (Reform the AFP Movement) Col. Red Kapunan has admitted this when he stated that the amnesty is meant only for the CPP-NPA rank-and-file and not their leaders and commanders.

Amnesty is also a trump card for the reactionary and criminal torturers and elements in the AFP. They intend to counteract the growing clamor to prosecute them for the human rights violations and atrocities they have committed. Their line now is that if Cory can be magnanimous with "communist terrorists," why can't she be magnanimous to them who were "only doing their duty" under the Marcos regime? But the people demand justice for their crimes. *Ang utang sa dugo ay dapat bayaran. Managot ang dapat managot.*

Q: Some say the armed struggle as a particular form of struggle has been put into question by recent events. Can you comment on this?

A: There has been no change in basic conditions. The basic problems which gave rise to the dictatorship remain. Changes however have occurred in the political field. Instead of open terrorist rule, we now have a liberal government in place.

The thing to look at is the local level. If liberal elements within the Aquino government succeed in replacing Marcos supporters or fascist holdovers in the local government with liberal or democratic elements who are against militarization, there may be changes then. The system of patronage and repression established by Marcos for 20 years will be destabilized.

Q: Will you continue your tactical offensives?

A: In deference to new developments and as an expression of our respect for the temper of the people, we have acted with restraint in carrying out tactical operations. However, rabid counter-insurgency campaigns against us continue. Soldiers enter our areas and go on rampages against the people. For example, in Bataan, there are only around 300,000 civilians but it is crawling with legions of soldiers, marines and other paramilitary forces. In Samar, notorious military and paramilitary units which are responsible for mass killings are still around.

We have to fight regular troops who enter our areas and make trouble. If we are attacked, we will counter-attack. We are only defending the masses and ourselves.

Q: How have recent developments affected the morale of the NPA?

A: Our officers and men are raising questions. The effect has been to encourage them to study more and participate in discussions. *Hinihimay-himay nila ngayon ang lahat ng memo at study materials.* Through open discussions, they study the new situation and ask themselves, what is my role given the new situation? They realize that the armed struggle is still necessary. *Tuloy ang laban.* But there is a little bitterness among our men because they cannot move against the enemy as freely as before. Many also felt bitter that because of the boycott policy of the movement, *kumitid ang masang naimpluwensyahan natin noong eleksyon.*

Q: Why, what is your assessment of the movement's boycott policy? Has this and the February uprising itself, set back your timetable for a strategic counter-offensive?

A: We failed to properly project our role during the February events because of the boycott call. We missed the opportunity to lead or seize the initiative or play an influential role in the turn of events.

But we have learned from our mistakes. At present, our ranks are as enthusiastic as ever. They are resolute in pursuing the revolution. We have not received any reports of surrender. Our forces are intact. The revolution has not been defeated.

Q: As a result of their participation in the February revolt, the AFP is said to have acquired a new image. They, in fact, call themselves the New AFP. What do you think of this?

A: Generally, the people are apprehensive that the chief architects, administrators and implementors of martial law continue to retain power. Ver and his generals were removed or retired, *pero sino ang pumalit? Hindi ba may kasalanan din?* Take for example RAM's recruiting officer, Col. Hernani Figueroa. He has committed a number of atrocities. He cannot hide his involvement in the murder of Dr. Bobby dela Paz in 1982 since at that time he was Gen. Mison's intelligence officer in Samar.

The new AFP image projected by the media is just that — an image. It has no substance and is very far from reality. Notorious officers remain in place.

Q: What can you say of Col. Gringo Honasan's comment that the NPA is a destabilizing force?

A: As far as the Marcos dictatorship was concerned, yes, we were a destabilizing force. Even they, in the last instance, joined in destabilizing Marcos. But as far as the Aquino government is concerned, *dapat ibalik sa kanila ang tanong.* When we expressed our openness to a ceasefire, it was Honasan and his group who said that a ceasefire is not possible. Who really is destabilizing whom?

Q: Honasan also asked where you were during the February Revolution?

A: There is no question that their participation in the last instance was crucial to the fall of the dictator. True, we were not there at the critical juncture but our struggle was a major factor in politically weakening the Marcos dictatorship. The February Revolution was part of the long struggles waged by the Filipino people long before. We were in the midst of that fight.

In truth, the fact that their military rebellion succeeded because of the masses' support proves what we have been saying all along. Only the people themselves combining armed and unarmed forms of struggle can liberate themselves.

Now we ask Honasan, where were they in the darkest days

of the dictatorship? *Hindi ba sila ang naghahasik ng lagim?* They were spreading darkness.

Q: Honasan also claims that the NPA is now isolated.

A: Isolation is difficult to gauge. He says that one indication of our isolation is the release of political prisoners. *Pano nangyari iyon?* The people received very warmly the release of Joma (Jose Ma. Sison) and Dante (Bernabe Buscayno). I doubt if that signifies that we are isolated.

Furthermore, this move by Cory has the full backing of the people. It was they, the reactionaries in the military, who were blocking the release of political prisoners. In the end, they had to concede due to Cory's insistence and popular pressure. The truth is they want to isolate the revolutionary movement which has long been fighting the Marcos dictatorship.

“We assure Mrs. Aquino that her call for a ceasefire has not fallen on deaf ears. . . Like her, we also want peace.”

Q: What are your personal views concerning the ceasefire?

A: I am speaking here in my personal capacity and not for the NPA. I think the movement should seriously consider entering into a negotiated ceasefire. We can make the negotiations — given the media coverage it will attract — a forum to present our demands which are actually the people's just demands. We know that the people want to give the Aquino government a chance to institute reforms. The negotiations will give the Aquino government a chance to prove its sincerity.

The US and the reactionaries within the government and the AFP do not want a ceasefire. Precisely because they don't want our just demands to be made public, they don't want to blunt their proposition that the NPA only wants violence for violence's sake. They are moving to pressure the civilian government to declare an all-out war against us. Their line is very similar to Marcos' pronouncements in his recent interview by Rafael Yabut. Marcos said that the Philippines as a partner to ASEAN has a traditional role in the security of the region. He also called for unity with Cory against the CPP and the NPA. This is the very same line being peddled by the reactionaries in the AFP.

The US, on the other hand, through the Weinberger visit, is pushing for more military aid inspite of the clear preference of the civil government for more economic aid.

These things show that the military and the civil government have opposing views concerning the ceasefire. We are not sure if Cory Aquino and the civil government can handle the military. We do not know whose views will prevail. But we cannot allow the reactionaries to sow intrigue and let them pressure the government to declare all-out war against us. We have to seize the chance to at least ventilate the people's calls and demands.

To prove our sincerity, we can enter into a truce with certain reasonable conditions that can be met at a given period of time. Possible short-term or realistic conditions for a negotiated settlement are the abolition of the CHDF and dismantling of warlord's armies. In principle, the civil government is agreeable to these.

Negotiations for a ceasefire would involve an agreement on the agenda of the negotiations, the venue, the panel of negotiators, the mechanics of the ceasefire and the political conditions for a ceasefire. How to maintain the ceasefire itself has to be discussed. How long the ceasefire and the talks would take also have to be discussed. ■

One with the NPA

A story of how the middle forces in Mindanao support the NPA

It is not only the peasant masses who have been steadfastly supporting the NPA. Increasing numbers of people from the middle classes have also been rendering support to the guerrillas, in the form of medical services, research and propaganda work, financial and material assistance as well as by directly serving as cadres and activists for the NPA. In this article, NPA cadre Miguel narrated the positive experiences of one of his comrades with the middle class in Mindanao.

In 1983, a raid was conducted against military elements in a sugar plantation in central Mindanao. The road leading to the plantation was studded with military detachments. A unit of ours entered an area between two detachments and succeeded in penetrating the area's first line of defense. But upon entering the enemy's second line, one of our comrades, Peping, was hit in the head by a bullet from a Thompson submachinegun.

His comrades, thinking he was dead, were about to leave him behind. This was until they realized that Peping was still breathing. Concerned for him, they made a snap decision to bring him with them.

Putatagan na lang ng loob. In spite of the dangers, they went straight to the white area and sought out other comrades there, who in turn quickly contacted a businessman who owned a vehicle. This person willingly lent them his vehicle so they could transport the wounded guerrilla to the nearest city almost 200 kms. away.

Upon their arrival, their contact there sought out a doctor he knew. The doctor arrived promptly. But after examining Peping, he shook his head and told the guerrillas he could not operate on their comrade because it was a complicated case. "You need a specialist," he said. Since the comrades did not know any specialist, their doctor-contact referred them to one of the best doctors in that city, an expert in his field.

The comrades then called on this doctor. The latter, upon examining the patient, said that it was possible to operate on Peping but it would cost over P20,000. At their wits' end and worried about their comrade's condition, the comrades decided to do something drastic. They admitted to the doctor that they were Red fighters and as such, they had no money. They pleaded with the doctor to operate on Peping and promised to pay him later.

Upon learning their identity, the doctor took pity on the guerrillas. He agreed to operate on the wounded man in his clinic. However, he said that afterwards, the wounded guerrilla would have to be brought to a hospital so that he could recuperate in a place where there were ample facilities.

Relying on all possible contacts among the middle class in the city, the guerrillas



NPA medics treating wounded Red fighter

were able to find a nun who had access to a hospital. With her help and that of other supportive church people and allies, Peping was safely transferred there and provisions for his wife and the comrades who looked after him were also arranged.

After his brain operation, Peping regained consciousness, but had lost part of his memory. Though he could recognize his wife and the comrades who visited him, he could not remember how they met or what had gone between them. All he could do was to hold their hands, look at them and try to remember as tears streamed from his eyes.

After a year, he recovered partially. Today, he still has memory lapses but is much better. What proved to be the most positive thing about his experience is that NDF organizing among medical and health workers in that city has picked up since. ■

Exposing the AFP's lies

NPA fighters in Bicol unmask the military's black propaganda campaign

"It was 1:10 in the morning when our commanding officer ordered us to march forward. A count-off was made. I was 67th out of the total of 84 men that marched, single-file into the darkness of that chilly morning. I was part of a New People's Army unit on its way to the national highway in Binagsakan, Guinobatan, Albay to ambush a military vehicle that was expected to pass early that day, March 3. Each of us brought our own baon, consisting of rice and dried fish wrapped in palm leaves, two pieces of bread and three pieces of candy. It was an added burden to my already heavy pack that seemed to gain weight as we marched on. Every so often, I heard someone slipping or stumbling on all fours because of the steep trails that we had to traverse in the darkness. We were asked to limit the use of our flashlights and to keep as quiet as possible. I had to concentrate on the lightest-colored part of clothing of the person in front of me to guide me while marching."

Thus spoke Mike, an activist from Manila who went on an exposure trip to a guerrilla zone in Bicol and who actually witnessed an NPA offensive which later became the object of the military's black propaganda.

The target of the NPA operation was a six-by-six truck carrying PC-INP troops. They came from the Regional Unified Command Headquarters (RUC-5) in Legazpi City and were on their way to their headquarters in Polangui, Albay.

The NPAs positioned themselves as early as 4 a.m. to wait for the truck which arrived four hours later. Roads leading to the ambush site were blocked to prevent innocent civilians from venturing into the firing zone. Meanwhile, the residents of three houses near the highway were also temporarily transferred by the NPA to a safer place. But despite the precautions taken by the revolutionary army, the driver of a vehicle carrying civilian and military passengers refused to stop at the roadblock and was able to slip through the guerrillas manning it. The vehicle was caught in the exchange of fire between the NPAs and government troopers. Thus, aside from the 14 policemen killed, a civilian also died.

The Red fighters, on the other hand, lost one comrade. Kasamang Jun was hit at the first burst of gunfire from the en-

emy. The medical team was able to drag him to safety but he died three days later. On March 9, a *pulong parangal* or memorial meeting was held for him. Comrades offered songs, short drama skits and speeches. Instead of lowering the morale of the Red fighters, his death gave them more reason to persist in their revolutionary work.

But because the ambush was the first big operation staged by the NPA after the February revolution, and because of the big number of casualties and arms confiscated (23 M16s, two M14s, one Browning Automatic Rifle and one M60), the military decided to take advantage of the opportunity to discredit the NPA. It launched a concentrated propaganda attack against the guerrillas and charged them with "engaging in violence for violence's sake." There was full media coverage of military statements and press conferences. Facts were distorted and manipulated to make the NPA appear as power-hungry monsters with total disregard for the lives of other people. The military attempted to persuade the masses to stop supporting the armed struggle. Appeals were made to the NPA "who are not hard-core" to come down from the hills. It claimed in addition that the troopers who died in the ambush were "innocent civilians."

The military's massive black propaganda campaign prompted the Public Information Office of the NPA-Bicol Command to issue a rejoinder to defend both themselves and the masses who have faithfully supported them throughout the years. The statement, published in several regional and provincial newspapers in Bicol, said: "It is not NPA policy to kill civilians. It is on record that in our past offensives, we have always done everything to safeguard civilian lives under the most difficult conditions, even endangering the lives of our fighters. We give ap-

propriate disciplinary action towards comrades who, in any way, hurt even the smallest interest of the people. It is also on record that the military, taking advantage of this internal policy, forces civilians to ride with them knowing the NPA would rather let soldiers go than hurt civilians."



Discussing current issues

The NPA also explained that the high-caliber arms confiscated during the offensive belie the military's claim that those slain were "innocent policemen." The ambushed policemen actually belonged to the PC-INP Field Force, a unit specially trained for counter-insurgency and equipped not just with .38 revolvers but with high-powered rifles such as M16s. Previous to this, the policemen had been assigned to the notorious Presidential Security Command.

On the continued operations of the NPA after Marcos' ouster, the Bicol command said: "The continuing propaganda of the military has sought to project us

as engaging in violence merely for violence's sake. They presuppose that there are no basic structural defects within the society. Hammering on Marcos as the only issue, they contend that his ouster now means the cessation of armed struggle. (But) nothing could be farther from the truth."

According to the Bicol command, in all the long and arduous years when the NPA evolved from a weak to a relatively strong army of the people, "we have always maintained that *Marcos is not the only issue*. He is only the most visible, most concrete manifestation of the issues that go beyond him. For this, it is entirely wrong for the media and the military to presume that with Marcos' ouster, we may now lay down our arms and abandon our armed struggle."

The Bicol command, however, categorically stated that it is not closing itself to ceasefire negotiations. And while it is keeping its options open, "we have to continue our armed struggle in order to mop up the remnants of the Marcos fascist machinery and to assert the people's national and democratic interests. Our tactical offensives against the AFP are our means to nullify the overwhelming advantage of a US-nurtured fascist military riding roughshod over our people."

On the continuing belligerence of the AFP, the NPAs asked: "How are we to defend ourselves? By all indications, the (military) hunt continues. Shall we wait for these butchers to slaughter us like cattle?"

Indeed, had the military really wanted national reconciliation as proposed by President Aquino, they would not have sent the special PC-INP Field Force. Nor would Gen. Fidel Ramos have called for intensified counter-insurgency operations in the Bicol region. As added proof of the military's hypocrisy, another battalion of troops was airlifted to Bicol last March 4 to beef up the anti-NPA drive.

Other tactical operations

Before the February presidential elections, the NPA-Bicol had launched intensified operations against military troopers and civilians with heavy blood debts to the people. The Red fighters raided the armory of the Sta. Rita hacienda in Pili, Camarines Sur and confiscated four shotguns, six .22 rifles, ammunition and office equipment. Pursuing marines and local police forces failed to capture the guerrillas or recover any of the arms.

On Jan. 26, the municipal hall of Camalig, Albay was attacked by the NPA. The Red fighters seized nine high-powered rifles and rounds of ammunition from the surprised troopers without firing a single shot. Two days later, the NPA returned to Camalig town, this time raiding the police station. The raid took only 10



Assailing a lingering problem: Anti-militarization rally in Bicol

minutes, again without a single shot being fired. Nine M16s and ammunition were taken. Newspaper accounts from *Vox Bicol* said the NPA stopped all vehicles 50 meters from the town hall in accordance with the NPA policy of protecting civilians. The station commander was aboard one of the buses stopped by the NPA, not knowing that his station was under siege. He arrived only after the Red fighters had left.

Based on the people's requests, the guerrillas also punished notorious elements with many crimes against the masses. Last Jan. 30, an NPA sparrow unit killed Mayor Lorenzo Padua of Goa, Camarines Sur. Padua was a staunch anti-revolutionary who had led several raids against the NPA and the rural masses. Two days before the elections, the NPA partisans also shot a policeman charged with the murder of a barangay captain in 1983.

In another NPA ambush staged in Oas, Albay on April 19, 20 soldiers were killed and eight were wounded. Reports said the troopers were travelling in a convoy and had just come from a meeting with AFP vice chief of staff Brig. Gen. Salvador Mison.

To this day, the RUC-5 in Bicol is still trying to deceive the people, claiming that the NPA in the region has sent feelers of surrender. This announcement was met with amusement by both the NPA and the people. To the masses, history had already proven to them to which side their enemy belongs and which side sincerely represents their interests. Mike, who witnessed for himself the life inside a guerrilla zone, described the warm response of the people to the guerrillas and the effects of the February revolution on the NPA:

"I was in Manila at the height of the 'people power' revolution. I was with those who flocked to Camp Crame in defiance of the dictator's tyrannical domination. Right after Marcos' downfall, I proceeded to a guerrilla zone in Bicol. I stayed there for three weeks, and after my interlude with the people, I found out that their grasp of the situation was deeper than I realized. They understood that Marcos was not the only problem. They knew nothing has changed in the socio-economic structure that continues to serve the interests of the United States and the very wealthy Filipino oppressors. In fact, they knew that Marcos' main instrument of oppression, the military, has remained intact.

"After the Guinobatan ambush, the masses greeted the guerrillas and shook hands with them as they filed past. One peasant even had a trayful of glasses filled with water ready. Food, also prepared by the masses, awaited us at the camp. The people were clearly one with the NPA. The NPA's victory was also their victory." ■



In position: NPA harassment and sniping team in Misamis Oriental

Battered but not beaten

NPAs in Misamis Oriental resist mounting counter-insurgency operations

To the battered town of Claveria, 50 km. from Cagayan de Oro City in Misamis Oriental, it is hard to grasp the meaning of ceasefire. Continuous bombing, shelling, house-burning, strafing and forced evacuation of civilians by the AFP have turned seven barrios of the town into a virtual "no man's land."

Claveria, once touted as the vegetable bowl of Mindanao, is turning out to be the military's pilot area for counter-insurgency operations in the country. Since March 17, fresh troops have been pouring into the town, along with a parade of armored personnel carriers, Huey helicopters, mortars and V-150 chemite tanks. This heavy influx of military personnel and heavy armory actually began last year when the Marcos regime escalated its counter-insurgency drive in Misamis Oriental.

The AFP's objective, it seems, is to stop the NPA from expanding its mass base in northern-central Mindanao and from recovering areas it had lost a few years ago following intense anti-NPA operations. The military hopes that by concentrating its attacks in Misamis Oriental, it will break the growing influence of the revolutionary movement in that part of the island.

But this strategy, using Vietnam War-style population and resource control techniques, has exacted heavy costs on the people of Claveria. In the process of trying to flush out the guerrillas, 30 houses were burned down by soldiers and

more than 2,000 people have fled their homes. According to a local human rights group, another 2,000 families have been rounded up by soldiers to a hamlet in Pelaez, Claveria, where intestinal and bronchial diseases have broken out. So intense have the military operations been that Misamis Oriental today ranks No. 2 in the human rights groups' list of provinces with the most number of salvaging cases. No. 1 in the list is Enrile's home province of Cagayan.

The justice and peace situation in northern Mindanao has not, in fact, changed despite the ascension of a new government to power. LIB correspondent Celso Matutum reports that there has only been a slight reshuffle in the regional military command which has long been notorious for military abuses. RUC 10 chief Brig. Gen. Madrino Munoz has been replaced by former Recom 10 commanding officer Brig. Gen. Benjamin Ignacio. Munoz's other post as 4th IB commander was handed over to Brig. Gen. Mariano Adalem, while Lt. Col. Baylon Platon, commanding officer of the 2nd Scout Ranger Battalion directly engaged in the terrorism in Claveria, continues to hold on to his post.

To further augment the troops, armed fanatical groups that serve as paramilitary forces — such as the Tadtads and Kabisigs — continue to roam the barrios and sow terror. Together, these groups add up to 30,000 fully armed members. Likewise, private armies of KBL warlords —

such as those of Mayor Porfirio Roa of Balingasag, and Mike Paderanga of Gingoog, are still intact.

Lately, the military has resorted to the widespread use of ordinary farmers to act as informers or infiltrators into the NPA. According to reports, the practice has caused some peasants to be hostile to the NPA and servile to the military. In Quezon, a remote, mountainous barangay seven km. from the highway in Balingasag, Misamis Oriental, certain sections of the population have "imbibed some unpleasant actuations and movements of the military," according to the Bagani People's News Agency (BPNA), media arm of the revolutionary movement in eastern Misamis Oriental. *Bagani* is the local term for tribal warrior.

These people have put up checkpoints in boundaries between their villages and other mountain barrios, harassing outsiders and confiscating their goods, and even intimidating other villagers who happen to cross their village borders. Usually, said the BPNA, these people are paid by the military and Mayor Roa with a measly sum to betray the Red fighters or simply sow terror in the barrios. These activities have forced the Red fighters to detain 10 farmers suspected of being informers, and who have not heeded the NPA's constant warnings to the people to disengage themselves from such counter-revolutionary activities.

But, in a letter to the public, the NPAs assured the farmers' families that these suspected informers will be dealt with justly, and that they were being treated humanely — contrary to the AFP's brutal treatment of its captives. The NPA said that an investigation is being made by the guerrillas assigned to the case. "Revolutionary justice shall be dealt them swiftly, and there are no plans to hold them for long."

Those found guilty or who may have caused grievous crimes against the revolutionary movement shall be punished accordingly, the letter said. On the other hand, those with minor offenses shall be given appropriate considerations. The Red fighters pledged a "policy of compassion" to those who would opt to abandon acts of treachery, including informing on the people and engaging in sabotage, as well as to those who would surrender and pledge to renounce counter-revolutionary activities.

"Nobody is to be blamed for the farmers' detention," said the NPA, "but the local fascist mayors and the military back-up machinery who recruited them. The arrest and detention of these local informers and paid agents are not only meant to punish these poor peasants-turned-traitors but also to dismantle the repressive machinery of Mayor Roa in the province."

Misamis Oriental is the same province where earlier "hostaging and detention" incidents had been reported in 1985 and early 1986. On May 5, 1985, a top-rank-

ing intelligence officer, Commander Ruben Domingo of the Philippine Navy and vice-president of Minsteel, was held by the NPA in western Misamis Oriental for 105 days in exchange for "some sensitive tactical information" and for some money considerations.

A group of Kabisig workers from the Ministry of Human Settlements was also held shortly after by the Red fighters after they were found to be engaging in propaganda and training about the fascist New Filipino Ideology of the deposed dictator Marcos. In the latter part of 1985, an Australian national, part of an advance team for a mining survey for the Australian government, was similarly held,

of military repression. As in their letter explaining the detention of 10 Quezon farmers, the NPA also made political gains in projecting their demands.

The NPAs holding the 10 spies, for example, demanded some concessions for their release. These are the pull-out of the 2nd Scout Ranger Battalion from Claveria to put a stop to their "senseless rampage by continuous bombardments and burning of houses." They also called for the dismantling of all local CHDF units and pseudo-religious cults, all checkpoints as well as a halt to harassment.

For the Misamis NPAs, it was also an opportunity to articulate their views on the government's call for a ceasefire: "It



Mass meeting: Red fighters mingling with barriofolk

but later released. Also, 14 Ministry of Public Highways employes were detained by the NPA after they were found to compose an advance team of the Engineering Battalion tasked with sabotage operations in Gingoog City.

All these detainees, however, had been released, after they were treated humanely, said Pancho, a leading NPA cadre in the Misamis Oriental-Bukidnon area. These included Commander Domingo, the Navy intelligence officer.

Apart from the necessity of giving these people a lesson, said the Red fighters, these detention activities have resulted in gains for the NPA. For one, they dispelled military propaganda that the NPA is a "bunch of bandits" out to sow terror and senseless violence. According to Pancho, these NPA activities also enabled them to extract "some tactical information from those active informers and agents, and even win them over after explaining what the NPA and the NDF are all about."

In other cases, the detention of spies has resulted in a temporary halt to military operations against civilians and the payment of just compensation to victims

is ironic that while Cory Aquino is calling for a ceasefire, the military establishment under Ramos and Enrie continues to declare war on the guerrilla fighters and put the civilian population under continued military attacks."

The guerrillas added: "Against these military attacks, it is only just and incumbent upon us to fight back in the defense of the people's interests." Last March 13, at barangay Bulahan, Claveria, the guerrillas acted true to their word. According to LIB correspondent Celso Matutum, three Rangers, including a captain, were wounded when an armored personnel carrier escorting their withdrawing convoy hit a land mine planted by NPA snipers. As the mine exploded, the Red fighters, hidden behind the bushes, opened fire and destroyed the vehicle.

Days after, newspapers in Manila played up the ambush. But what they failed to report was the rejoicing of many barrio people in Claveria who, in the words of Matutum, "believe that the NPA must not let the military terrorists go on a rampage unopposed." ■



Anti-dictatorship protest: The underground movement serves as its backbone



NPA guerrillas: They constitute the main armed force

NDF STANDPOINT

Elaboration of the NDF position on various issues

Facing up to new challenges

The NDF sums up gains and lessons in its 13th year of struggle

The Marcos dictatorship has finally been toppled. Through a combined popular uprising and the revolt of an extremely disgruntled military, the Filipino people have rid themselves of a reign of tyranny whose record of repression and greed stands unparalleled in Philippine postwar history.

As we look back over the fourteen years since 1972, when the US-Marcos dictatorship openly declared civil war on the Filipino people by imposing martial law, two things stand out. First, the imposition of a repressive dictatorship was the product of irreconcilable contradictions in Philippine society. Second, from a few hundred nationalists and democrats, the popular resistance against the Marcos regime developed into a mighty storm that brought millions of our countrymen to heed the call for militant struggle.

In 1972, the crisis of the prevailing semi-colonial and semi-feudal order had reached a degree of intensity that could no longer be assuaged by the routine workings of traditional politics. This crisis could no longer be assuaged by congressional legislation designed to control the upsurge of a nationalist and democratic consciousness among the people. It could no longer be assuaged by a judicial system that was incapable of providing even elementary justice to the people. And neither could it be assuaged by a Constitutional Convention which, earlier billed as the "last hope for democracy," fell far short of the people's expectations and fell afoul of even Marcos' own ambitions.

In short, US imperialism and the local ruling elite under Marcos could no longer rule in the old way. To secure the crumbling social order, they instituted barefaced terrorism by imposing martial law on Sept. 21, 1972.

But as the adage goes, repression only breeds greater resistance. If anything, the cruel martial law years taught the people the correct path of struggle — vigorous, united and militant struggle. In the countryside and cities, in the open and underground movements, inside the country and overseas, through armed and non-armed means, the Filipino people moved as one. The armed counter-revolution that was mounted by US imperialism and its premier puppet was eventually scuttled by a people's movement that culminated in the events of February.

The National Democratic Front developed in the midst of this broad anti-dictatorship movement. It was on April 24, 1973 that the NDF first aired its revolutionary Ten-Point Program. Though extremely repressive conditions and the inadequacy of resources forced the NDF to mimeograph only a limited number of copies of the program, it boldly issued the call: "Unite to overthrow the US-Marcos dictatorship!" The NDF program affirmed the road of people's war as the people's revolutionary response to combat the Marcos dictatorial rule.

In the course of 13 years, the NDF served as the broad and comprehensive revolutionary united front organization that fused and mobilized various sectors and organizations, galvanizing them into a powerful force. Under its leadership,

workers and peasants, students and teachers, progressive church people and professionals, businessmen and even people in the government, took their positions at the frontline of the struggle to end dictatorial rule and to achieve national freedom and genuine democracy.

With the help of the NDF, underground mass organizations were set up or reinvigorated in key sectors to further advance the anti-dictatorship struggle. These included the Kabataang Makabayan (KM) for youth and students, the Christians for National Liberation (CNL) for church and lay people, the Katipunan ng mga Gurong Makabayan (KGM) for teachers and the Makabayang Samahang Pangkaluagan (MSP) for the health sector.

Many of these sectoral organizations have established provincial and regional chapters, convened their national congress and elected national officials. In the process of formalizing the national structure of their organizations are the Makabayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan (MAKIBAKA) for the women's sector, the Pambansang Kaisahan ng mga Magbubukid (PKM) for the peasantry, and the revolutionary organizations for the workers, the urban poor, lawyers and businessmen.

The NDF also played a major role in institutionalizing the people's militant efforts through a revolutionary army that has steeled and developed itself in the service of the people. From the very start, NDF member organizations and committees at various levels have provided political, material and even cadre and personnel support to help build up the New Peo-



med force within the NDF



Trailblazer: NDF-Mindanao Provisional Council holding press conference in April 1985

ple's Army and strengthen its influence in all of the major provinces of the country.

The expansion of the NDF's grassroots base enabled the formation of NDF leadership bodies at the municipal, provincial and regional levels. Working jointly with the Communist Party of the Philippines (which is an NDF member) and its military organization, the NPA, the NDF has established numerous organs of political power in the guerrilla fronts in the countryside, through which the people actualize revolutionary self-governance. So far, two islands — Mindanao and Panay — have already set up provisional councils. Other regions of the country are also set to formalize soon their own councils which will prepare the way for the formal establishment of regular and elected NDF councils in their territories.

During the dark days of the dictatorship, these NDF councils and committees were instrumental in consolidating the people's organizations in the legal and underground spheres and in coordinating political and military offensives against the dictatorship. In many big cities like Davao, the NDF was pivotal too in developing the *wet-gang bayan* or people's strike as a new form of mass struggle which combines the paralyzing impact of labor and transport strikes with street and community barricades, student boycotts and demonstrations, and even with small-scale NPA partisan actions.

This year, as the NDF enters its 14th year of struggle for basic revolutionary change, it is determined to eliminate all vestiges of fascist rule and foreign and feudal domination — the very same problems which it had vowed to battle 13 years ago. It extends the hand of cooperation to all progressive forces — even to those within the present government — who would sincerely work for the attainment of genuine national independence and democracy. □



A forward step: Setting up the NDF-Panay Provisional Council in July 1985



Youth activists: Convening the KM Fourth National Congress in November 1984

SPARKS

Newsbriefs about people's struggles

WORKERS UNITE TO MARK LABOR DAY

It was a red-letter day for over 25,000 workers who massed up at the Rizal Park last May 1 to mark the centennial anniversary of Labor Day all over the world.

For the first time, different labor federations forged a broad coalition to uphold workers' interests. The major participants were the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), Trade Unions of the Philippines and Allied Services (TUPAS), Federation of Free Workers (FFW) and the erstwhile Marcos-controlled Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP).

Main speaker was President Corazon Aquino who addressed the workers for the first time after her victory. Among her key policy pronouncements in her May Day speech were the promotion of the rights of workers and employees to join or form labor unions, the lifting of restrictions on the right to strike and the suspension of PAG-IBIG contributions.

RELEASE OF 500 MORE DETAINEES URGED

WENDS - TO GRAND REUNION



Ex-political detainee Jose Ma. Sison speaking at SELDA meet

More than 300 members of the Samahan ng mga Ex-Detainees Laban sa Detensyon at Para sa Amnestiya (SELDA) appealed for the release of 562 other political prisoners still kept in jails all over the country. The call was aired during a reunion of former detainees last April 6 at the grounds of Channel 4 in Quezon City. During the get-together, the SELDA members also adopted three other resolutions — the first, thanking President Aquino for fulfilling a campaign pledge to release them; the second, conferring on her honorary membership in SELDA; and the third, proposing the installation of historical markers at various sites where "prisoners of conscience" had languished.

PROTEST DEMOS GREET WEINBERGER

The Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy (NAJFD) along with militant youth groups held a series of picket-rallies to protest the visit of US Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger last April 6-7. During the protests, which hounded Weinberger at every point of his itinerary, the NAJFD distributed manifestos belying the US' claims that it played a key role in the February revolt that led to Marcos' ouster. The NAJFD accused the US of being the principal sponsor of the Marcos dictatorship and of "blinding itself to the terror and plunder of the Marcos regime." It demanded that the US prove its sincerity in helping the Philippines by paying reparations

instead of offering increased military aid.

KMP ASSAILS MITRA POLICY

The 500,000-strong Kilusang Magbubukid sa Pilipinas (KMP) has criticized the proposal of agriculture minister Ramon Mitra to promote "plantation agriculture" as a means of increasing farmers' incomes. KMP chairman Jaime Tadeo said in an interview last April 4 that Mitra's scheme, which involved conversion of farmers into "contract growers" for foreign markets, is no different from the Marcos regime's IMF-World Bank-inspired export-oriented agricultural development policies which have caused much poverty and exploitation among peasants.

The KMP instead urged Mitra to heed the peasantry's call for genuine land reform and to veer away from policy impositions made by foreign institutions. The KMP also called on Mitra to redistribute to peasants government-sequestered plantation lands in Mindanao which belonged to Marcos cronies Eduardo Cojuangco and Antonio Florendo.

AFP TOLD TO PRODUCE FR. ROMANO

Some 1,000 members and supporters of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) in Cebu City held a rally last April 11 demanding that the military produce Fr. Rudy Romano and youth activist Roland Levy Ybanez. Fr. Romano, a Bayan official, and Ybanez were kidnaped in broad daylight by military elements in July 1985.

NEW ALLIANCE FORMED

Various cause-oriented groups and individuals from Southern Tagalog formed this month a broad coalition called Solidarity for People's Power (SPP). In a statement published April 10, the SPP declared its "unwavering support to the pro-people programs of President Aquino's government." It also hailed the new government's efforts to dismantle the "last vestiges of the dictatorial Marcos regime as manifested in the release of political detainees, the promulgation of Proclamation No. 3 (declaring a revolutionary government) and the abolition of the CHDF." The SPP condemned the move of traditional politicians to convene a rump parliament and urged all "freedom-loving Filipinos to safeguard the victories won through the people's power and carry on the fight for a truly democratic and sovereign government."

FACT-FINDING MISSION EXPOSES MILITARY ABUSES

The Kalinga-Apayao Fact-Finding and Medical Mission exposed in a symposium in Manila last April 9 the 54th IB's role in committing gross violations of human rights against civilians in the lower Apayao area. After conducting investigations from March 12 to 16, the mission, which is under the Committee on Human Rights, reported its findings which indicated violations ranging from forced recruitment to the Civilian Home Defense Force (CHDF) to salvagings. It said the entire community of Sta. Maria, Kalinga-Apayao was undergoing hamletting operations by the military, and that military abuses were frequent against people suspected of being NPA members. The mission urged President Corazon Aquino to order the immediate pullout of the army unit.

QUEZON PEASANTS PROTEST MILITARIZATION

More than 3,000 peasants belonging to the Samahang Mag-sasaka sa Bondoc Peninsula held a seven-hour anti-militarization rally last March 29 in Calauag, Quezon. The rallyists, mostly residents of the towns of Guinayangan, San Narciso, Lopez, Tagkawayan, Buenavista, Pitogo, Mulanay, General Luna and Cytanawan, denounced military abuses and assailed the downward trend in copra prices which has wrought havoc on their livelihood.

CRACKS

Indicators of economic and political crisis

WEINBERGER IS A WARMONGER



The Reagan administration has left little doubt as to its real intention in the Philippines when it sent Caspar Weinberger, the US' hawkish defense secretary, a-calling on the Aquino government last April 6. Sure enough, Weinberger came with offers of increased US military aid, despite Aquino's expressed preference for more economic assistance.

Apparently, the new president's belief that the "insurgency" could best be ended by socio-economic reforms, does not sit well with US officials, who want to convince Aquino to declare an all-out war against the revolutionary forces instead.

Before this, the president had met with US Armed Forces Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral William Crowe, US Pacific Forces Commander-in-chief Adm. Ronald Hays, Undersecretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs Gaston Sigur and Reagan adviser Richard Holbrooke. And just in case this retinue of officials doesn't impress Aquino well enough, the US has scheduled in the next two months another array of visitors led by US State Secretary George Shultz.

REDS UNDER CORY'S BED

As if this isn't enough, Col. Hernani Figueroa (a.k.a. "the man who ordered Dr. Bobby dela Paz killed") has also gone on to stage a star performance of his own. Reeking of liquor, he boasted to newsmen covering Malacanang this month that he and other military "reformists" would one day lynch Presidential Spokesman Rene Saguisag and Executive Secretary Joker Arroyo, whom he branded as "leftists." Saguisag and Arroyo have both been vocal about their stand against the military's violation of human rights.

Before this, a RAM press statement warned that the Aquino government was "infiltrated" by "communists" out to "spread lies about the military." The RAMists did not mention names, but erstwhile labor minister Blas Ople blurted out a list of "radicals" consisting of Saguisag, Arroyo, Ateneo law dean Fr. Joaquin Bernas and justice minister Neptali Gonzales. Ople was obviously sore at them for having been proponents of



the Bataan's abolition, where he was an assemblyman. But the military? Their tantrums recall Marcos' old red-baiting tactics which branded as "communists" anyone who veered even slightly to the left of him. When it comes to witchhunting, there's not much to separate RAM from FM, after all.

(UN)TRUE CONFESSIONS



Currently under fire for their sins of omission are Bureau of Internal Revenue commissioner Bienvenido Tan and finance minister Jaime Ongpin. Tan was criticized for failing to disclose

that he fronted for former energy minister Geronimo Velasco. Up to late March, Tan held P2.2 million worth of stock (equivalent to 40%) at the *Manila Times*.

Ongpin, on the other hand, has raised eyebrows with the puzzling tale that he never knew for sure that it was Imelda's brother Benjamin "Kokoy" Romualdez who owned the controlling shares of the Benguet Corp., a giant mining firm. Ongpin had served as board director and president of Benguet for 12 years prior to his appointment as finance minister. His fellow board directors at the firm, however, averred that Ongpin knew all along about Romualdez's ownership of Benguet. For himself, Ongpin has skirted the issue by saying that anyway, he had always "run the company professionally."

OFF-SEASON SANTA



There's word going around in media circles that a traditional politician turned Cabinet minister is once more acting true to his nickname "Santa Claus." So-called because of his bushy beard, he has taken to showering newsmen with gifts of "goodwill" money, thus being among the first to recover from the initial spate of honesty sparked by the presence of a squeaky-clean president at the helm. This off-season gift-giver who should probably be called Old Nick rather than St. Nicholas, has introduced an innovation to the art of the payola — he dispenses with the customary envelope and gives out unadorned, cold hard cash. You see, he doesn't believe in "envelopmental journalism."

GRINGO'S POWER PLAY

Attempting to go one step beyond his pretty boy-macho image, Col. Gregorio Honasan of the Reform the AFP Movement (RAM) has begun to reveal how his mind works. Honasan has gone on record saying that the only real issue between the AFP and the revolutionary forces is "power." "We are in power and they (the CPP-NPA-NDF) want to grab it from us." He claims the revolutionary forces are driven to revolution neither by adherence to lofty ideologies nor by indignation at the violence of structural injustices. Honasan even refused to call them revolutionaries, preferring perhaps to bestow the dubious honor on himself and his ilk.



The RAM leaders' fixation with "power" has even led them to utter the ludicrous statement that "Anything below two million is not people power." An insinuation, no doubt, that mass mobilizations of less than this number are not true expressions of people-power, much less of the people's will. By the way, when Honasan says "We are in power," who is he referring to? Is it the Aquino government, or, heaven forbid, the RAM leaders?

COUNTERCURRENTS

The Philippine government and the US

Political tug-of-war

Can Cory Aquino surmount the serious challenges to her government?

It was a disconcerting rumor, one that can easily jolt the citizen who has seen the unexpected happen in two months. Barely 60 days after Corazon Aquino came to power, it spread out thick and fast: the Reform the AFP Movement which helped oust the 20-year Marcos regime was planning another coup.

The rumor turned out to be . . . well, a rumor. But despite the assuring statements of Presidential Spokesman Rene Saguisag, the fact remains that, unless Aquino can fully control the AFP, it will take control of her government when the opportunity comes.

The military after all, is the single biggest organized force within the uneasy, loose coalition government of Aquino, who came to power through a popular uprising and military rebellion in late February. Other parties and forces with different — often contrary — interests were accommodated in the coalition for their role in the anti-Marcos struggle, but have not consolidated their ranks to match the strength of the military. This includes the United Nationalist Democratic Organization (UNIDO) and the Laban ng Bayan alliance which jointly sponsored Aquino's candidacy, big businessmen and church leaders and liberal personalities who figured prominently in the mass movement that overthrew the Marcos dictatorship.

Conflicts and contradictions

This early, disturbing wranglings have arisen among many forces: reformist soldiers threatening to "lynch" the liberals in the Aquino government, Marcos loyalists convening the rump Batasan, bickerings among members of the UNIDO and PDP-Laban, finance minister Jaime Ongpin's and Bureau of Internal Revenue head Bienvenido Tan's ties with Marcos' men, factions in the AFP's own RAM, defense minister Juan Ponce Enrile's efforts to ward off investigations on his hidden wealth, and so on.

The conflicts are showing up regularly, and are likely to intensify unless Aquino consolidates her own power base — the very people-power that put her at the helm. Of course, the president herself is aware of these contradictions within her coalition government. She once told a foreign journalist who was pressing for a position on land reform: "Do you want my government to fall in 10 minutes?"

Aquino's immediate problem is how to dismantle the well-entrenched institutions of the Marcos dictatorship, and answer the pressing problems of a people who are now more politicized and impa-



Cory Aquino: Walking a political tightrope

tient not only for a fresh start and a clean slate, but for basic changes in government and in society.

Initially, the Aquino government appeared to have responded well. Last March 2, in a thanksgiving rally after the four-day rebellion, the popular Cory Aquino called on the people to organize citizen watchdog committees in the grass-roots "to preserve the gains of the revolution." At present, she is considering building up a solid mass base by creating an umbrella group of all pro-Aquino parties and organizations.

Overcoming stiff opposition from certain quarters, Aquino and the liberals in her Cabinet also pushed for the release of the military's prized political prisoners, restored the writ of habeas corpus, tried to purge the military by retiring 22 generals, and offered ceasefire talks with the New People's Army. While her labor minister issued pro-labor statements, she lowered prices of oil products.

In a bold, though somewhat hesitant move, she also abolished the Batasang Pambansa which was dominated by KBL Marcos loyalists, declared a "transitory" or revolutionary government giving her broad emergency powers, announced the convening of a commission to draft a new Constitution, and appointed officers-in-charge to replace corrupt local government officials.

The last move drew frenzied reactions. Marcos' men in the KBL, and some conservatives in and out of her government, criticized her moves and branded her a "dictator." But cause-oriented groups immediately declared their support for Aquino. An untried politician who won

on a platform of sincerity, good government and democratic reforms, Aquino clearly has the moral authority and the popular mandate to arrogate unto herself extraordinary powers.

Such pro-people moves have gained positive support among the ranks of the national democratic forces, some of whom had earlier branded her "bourgeois." Though her initial moves have not changed that fact, Cory Aquino's long suffering under the Marcos dictatorship has put her closer in league with the Filipino masses. If anything, her experience must have strengthened her liberal tendencies, and certainly made her an ally of the Filipino people where restoring basic freedoms and democratic rights are concerned.

The conservative bloc

Not surprisingly, opposition to her initial policies has come from the UNIDO Party under whose banner she ran against Marcos in the snap elections immediately before the revolt. Headed by vice president Salvador Laurel and his brother Jose, the UNIDO is largely composed of conservative and traditional politicians, many of whom formerly served under the Marcos government and cast their lot with the opposition only in the late '70s.

UNIDO, through its secretary-general Rene Espina, called Aquino a dictator, echoing the charges of Marcos from his haven in Hawaii and his KBL henchmen. UNIDO disagreed with the new government's abolition of the Batasan whose opposition MPs were mostly from the UNIDO, the declaration of a transitory government and the appointment of OICs in local and government posts.

Irrked over what it considered the meager placing of UNIDO men in key positions, made by local government minister and PDP-Laban head Aquilino Pimentel,



Marcos loyalists: Who's behind this rowdy bunch?

Espina also lambasted the liberals in government, whom the UNIDO suspected were behind the decision to declare a revolutionary government, which they believe undermines their politically conservative influence among the people.

In protest, UNIDO members of parliament in the Batasan agreed to join the rump session of the dissolved assembly with the KBLs. But the heart of the discontent soon surfaced, as the displaced UNIDO members backed out of the rump session when they were promised positions in government.

On that basis, it would be difficult for UNIDO to resolve factional strife with Aquino's coalition of those liberal political parties which include PDP-Laban. To gain greater influence within the government, the UNIDO therefore is patching up an uneasy alliance with other conservative blocs and personalities like the KBL and defense minister Enrile.

Pro-US elements in the government, meantime, have come under increasing attack from cause-oriented groups. Two of them, Jaime Ongpin and Central Bank governor Jose Fernandez, were unable to keep their cool when Economic Planning minister Solita Monsod proposed to repudiate part of the external debt of the Marcos regime — especially those loans which did not benefit the Filipino people.

Ongpin is one of the true blue-blooded compradors in the new government. Before his appointment, he was president of Benguet Corp. and an effective middleman for American big businessmen and Leyte governor Benjamin "Kokoy" Romualdez who held the majority stocks in the corporation. The same could be said of Fernandez, who built up his fortune as a broker for US transnational banks. Of course, he is better known for messing up the economy, together

Perils to the presidency

Political observers say an "unseen hand" seems to be behind the spate of anti-Aquino demonstrations being launched these days. The rallies, too concerted to be seen as spontaneous expressions of "pro-Marcos sentiment," are said to be laying down the scenario for a destabilization move designed to overthrow the two-month old Aquino government. There are a number of educated guesses as to whose hand is orchestrating the anti-Aquino plot:

1) **The Marcos family:** The motives of the deposed dictator are obvious — to get himself back in power. He still has the means and the power base to attempt a takeover. As for Imee, she has been reported as saying she doesn't care if she spends all her money, so long as she could get back at the Aquino government, but especially at Juan Ponce Enrile for his treachery against her father.

2) **Eduardo Cojuangco:** Not only does this erstwhile Marcos arch-crony have the ambition, but also the wealth and the necessary connections to bankroll and coordinate a destabilization scheme while in exile. Reports have it that he has earmarked at least P20 million for a summer blitz of rowdy "loyalist" rallies in Manila. The funds are reportedly being coursed through Rolando de la Cuesta, a former colleague in the coconut industry. Cojuangco, however, may not necessarily be paving the way for his own but someone else's ascension as President. And his protégé may be no other than close friend and business associate Johnny Enrile.

3) **Juan Ponce Enrile and the RAMists:** Their own plans for an anti-Marcos coup had to give way to an accommodation of a liberal and populist government led by Aquino. But they are also growing jittery by the day with Aquino's pronouncements that human rights violators in the military will be investigated and prosecuted.

4) **Blas Ople:** His presidential ambitions were nipped in the bud with Aquino's rise to power, but he now has seen fit to use the President's declaration of a revolutionary government as an excuse to assail the new administration's "illegitimacy" and "unconstitutionality." He has even founded his own political party, the Partido Nacionalista ng Pilipinas (PNP), hoping perhaps to harvest enough disgruntled anti-Aquino people to add to the KBL remnants who now comprise the PNP.

5) **Salvador Laurel:** Known as the Man-who-would-be-President, but whose own realization of his unpopularity forced him to accede to being No. 2 man to the more well-liked Aquino.

6) **US imperialism:** Always the dotting Godfather to reactionaries and the sworn enemy of liberals who dare espouse the "wrong policies" on Clark and Subic. It seems that the US, already fretting about Aquino's personal non-committal stand towards the bases, has been discomfited anew by an uncharacteristically independent foreign policy speech recently delivered by foreign affairs minister Laurel on the issue of the bases and nuclear arms. (Reports have it though, that the speech had the imprimatur of not Laurel, but the more liberal S.P. Lopez). Also, alarms have been raised by US big business against the profit-sharing proposals made by labor minister Augusto Sanchez. So worried, in fact, is the US, that it can give the go-signal for the coup to be staged in the near future. That is, unless people's power once again wreaks havoc on the coup-plotters' timetable.



with the Marcos regime's technocrats.

Both are apparently out not only to block Monsod's proposal, but to continue the country's dependence on the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Ongpin had shown his true colors earlier, by endorsing IMF-WB policies favoring agro-based exports and giving more credit and tax incentives to large domestic and foreign agri-business corporations. Fernandez, for his part, is pushing the so-called IMF recovery program which is dedicated toward the collection of foreign debt, no matter how it hurts the economy and the Filipino people.

Along with its henchmen, US imperialism is moving fast to control the political and economic scene. Things had hardly settled down in Manila when US defense secretary Caspar Weinberger paid a hasty, somewhat wrong-timed visit to the country on April 6. Appearing grim throughout his stay here, Weinberger must have realized that because of the US' unabashed and full support for Marcos in the last 20 years, anti-US sentiments were still running high in the Philippines.

Weinberger left hastily, and the newspaper reports reported he did not discuss the US bases issue. But not before he had promised massive military aid to both

Aquino and Philippine defense officials. His promise unmasked the real intent and most immediate concern of US imperialism in the Philippines: more military aid for a more efficient and "professionalized" AFP to crush the revolutionary forces. With such aid, US imperialism hopes to eliminate the only serious challenge not only to its strategic military bases in the Philippines but also to its hegemony over the country and Southeast Asia as a whole.

The reactionary AFP

The key to US interests in the Philippines is, of course, the AFP. The role of the Reformists, the dominant faction in the AFP, in the four-day rebellion that finally ousted Marcos deodorized the military's stinking image overnight, and saved itself from going down with the dictator it had religiously supported for over 14 years. But it did not take the AFP long to expose its basically reactionary character.

In a move revealing their views toward progressives, Enrile and chief of staff Gen. Fidel Ramos strongly opposed the release of leftists Jose Ma. Sison, Bernabe Buscayno and two suspected NPA members. Although both insisted that Aquino, as commander-in-chief of the armed forces, has effective control over the military, they also tried to block Aquino's move to promote Col. Adelberto Yap, an independent-minded officer who has publicly admitted he does not trust the RAM.

In another move denoting the military establishment's mistrust of progressives, RAM officers issued statements echoing the line of deposed KBL stalwarts — that "radicals" within the Cory government are gaining the upper hand. The Reformists were obviously referring to human rights lawyers now in government who have consistently battled them in court in behalf of political prisoners during the Marcos years.

Although they quickly disowned such statements, it was clear that the Reformists viewed the liberals as a threat to the full implementation of the military's counter-insurgency program. RAM member Col. Hernani Figueroa, a notorious torturer, was reported by a daily to have even bragged that he would lynch the lawyers.

Disowning such statements also fueled the growing impression that there are indeed factions within the ranks of the Reformists. Some observers see divisions in the movement: those identified with Enrile, another group with Ramos, and a third group of genuine Reformists. The most visible of these RAM officers, who constitute the Philippine Military Academy Class '71, denied that the threats came from them. But in unguarded interviews, they expressed their alarm over the liberal tendencies of the new government.

Privately, RAM officers have expressed apprehension, even anxiety, over the formation of the Presidential Committee on Human Rights headed by Sen. Jose Diokno to investigate violations of human rights committed during the Marcos regime. Since most RAM officers were involved in the dirty war, they are now beginning to exert pressure on the Aquino government to forestall the committee's investigations. They maintain that since President Aquino has offered "amnesty" to the NPA, the AFP's crimes against humanity must likewise be pardoned.



"NAFP": Deodorized, but not for long

But the wounds of 20 years of unparalleled repression cannot be healed in four days. They cannot be simply purged from popular memory with a stroke of a pen granting blanket amnesty. As things stand today, the people will not allow the perpetrators of gross human rights abuses under the Marcos regime to go unpunished. As the Aquino government itself has declared, "Reconciliation must be based on justice"; consequently, military violators must therefore be brought to the bar of justice.

Other challengers and allies

The Marcos loyalists could also pose serious challenges to the new government. Even the military itself has to presently contend with loyalist troops under its command who are secretly consolidating their ranks. In mid-April, military authorities said they uncovered a plot by Marcos loyalists — in and out of the AFP — to destabilize the present government and bring back Marcos. Some 700 soldiers and agents of the defunct National Intelligence and Security Authority (NISA), the stronghold of former AFP chief of staff Gen. Fabian Ver, have also not been accounted for.

Another most visible threat to the fragile Aquino government: are the political

warlords and their private armies which have not been thoroughly disbanded. Warlords have not surrendered to the AFP their massive hardware, arms and ammunition and continue to lord it over the countryside.

In Metro Manila, a particular source of irritation are the KBL politicians who continue to openly defy the new government. Pocket demonstrations which followed Marcos' broadcast from Hawaii, the determination of KBL MPs and local officials to hold on to their positions, and the vast reserve of Marcos' wealth and that of his loyalists could help destabilize the shaky government.

Some quarters even foresee a wild scenario where loyalist troops in the armed forces, along with the warlords could stage a coup, topple the Aquino government and bring back Marcos or any member of his family or clique. Although that seems remote at present, it nevertheless is a distinct possibility.

To stem these loyalist holdouts as well as the ambitious military forces led by Enrile, Ramos and RAM, Aquino and the liberal bloc in her government could probably count on her closest allies before the February revolt. These include the Catholic Church hierarchy led by Jaime Cardinal Sin which exerted considerable influence on the people and some independent businessmen, hoping that these forces will not complicate conflicts in her multifarious coalition government.

The revolutionary forces, on the other hand, could hold back their full support of the Aquino government due to the progressive bloc's inability to consolidate the entire government — especially in gaining control of the AFP. As moves to thoroughly dismantle the repressive structures of the previous regime and implement basic changes sputter along weakly, this could discourage the revolutionary forces from entering into a ceasefire with the government. But positively, many elements in the Aquino government do not regard the revolutionary forces as an enemy, much to the despair of the United States and its reactionary allies in the AFP.

The NDF, the NPA and the CPP, on the other hand, have assured Aquino that her call for a ceasefire has not "fallen on deaf ears." They have adopted an attitude of critical support towards the regime, and have pledged support so long as the Aquino government continues along a pro-people course.

More importantly, the Left's target of attacks has been narrowed down to the US-supported reactionary AFP (as differentiated from patriotic soldiers with progressive tendencies, the remnants of the Marcos fascist dictatorship and, of course, that perennial scourge of the Filipino people — US imperialism.) All three constitute the strongest threats to the fragile Aquino government. **Pen Guerrero**



Never too young to fight: Hauling away equipment seized in raid (left); posing with Papa's rifle (middle, right)

Children of the revolution

Stories of youths who fought the Marcos dictatorship

The Marcos era is over, leaving behind the wounds and scars of a battered people. But in the final analysis, they say, it is the children who are the Marcos regime's most hapless victims, for it is they who have suffered not only the loss of their loved ones, but have also been robbed of their hopes and denied their future. LIB interviewed seven children from the countryside and city, and their stories show how they view the cruel Marcos years. But more so, their stories also tell of simple acts of courage and defiance that helped in no small way to end the dictatorship.

IRENE

The seven girls and three boys in Irene's *barkada* — all aged between five and seven — usually behave like any other group of barrio waifs. When not at home helping in the household chores or in the fields planting root crops, they cavort around their tiny village, playing games like hide-and-seek and *baril-harilan*.

But they also happen to live in the interior of northwestern Samar, a heavily militarized area where salvagings and other military atrocities have become a part of life. It is the AFP's way of dealing with the barrio folk who staunchly support the NPA.

In such conditions, Irene and her young friends play a special role. They have been organized into a group whose task is to alert comrades in the barrio of approaching enemy forces. Being mostly children of Red fighters and activists, they need no prodding to do this. Though far away from their parents who have placed them under the care of supportive families, they understand what their parents are fighting for. They also grew up with an almost instinctive desire to

protect comrades.

Being the eldest in the group, Irene became the team leader. She leads the



She fought for her father's freedom

other children in singing songs about the *Ba HuBa* (NPA) — "*Ang BaHuBa nagmamartsa/ Aawayon an pangontra/ Aambuson, rorondahon/ Kampo nera susulungon.*" (The NPA marches/ To fight the enemy/ To ambush and raid/ and destroy their camps). She and her friends also join discussions with the adult comrades and listen to stories such as "*An Lagas na Uwat*" (The Foolish Old Man).

"Villagers laughed at an old man who said he could remove three huge mountains that blocked the sun from shining on his house," Irene recounted. "But the old man said, 'I will do it. And when I am gone, there will be my children and my children's children to do it.' And with their perseverance, the mountains were removed."

When asked what the story meant, Irene answered much like a diligent schoolgirl: "If we unite and work hard enough, we can defeat even the strongest enemies. The three mountains stand for imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism."

Irene's young mind may as yet be hard put to fully understand such -isms. But there is one word whose meaning she has fully grasped: fascism.

She still recalls how she and two other friends crept away, then half-ran and half-stumbled towards their barrio to warn comrades about advancing enemy troops from another village two kilometers away. In their hurry, they had dropped along the hilly trails, the *pan de sal* they had bought from the other barrio, where the nearest sari-sari store was.

It did not matter that they lost this rare chance to eat bread — the comrades had to be reached on time.

When the soldiers finally arrived, the comrades had gone. But along the way, the troopers had chanced upon a 16-year-old boy whom they accused of being a courier. Irene and the other barriofolk were made to watch as the soldiers mercilessly beat up the boy to force him to point out which of the barriochildren were sons and daughters of Red fighters.

As darkness fell, the people were ordered to stay in their homes. Meanwhile, the troopers dragged the boy to an animal pen underneath the house where Irene and her foster parents lived, and continued beating him up till well into the night.

To this day, Irene remembers the peasant boy's cries of pain that kept her awake all night, and her feeling of helplessness at not being able to stop the beating. By dawn, the boy, all bloody and barely conscious, was ordered by the soldiers to run. Irene saw how he was shot as he staggered away, only a short distance from the house. To the end, he had refused to betray her and the other children.

As soon as the soldiers had left, comrades came to take Irene and her 4-year-old and 8-month-old brothers to a more secure barrio farther into the hinterlands. For a whole day, Irene walked with the adults along rocky mountain trails, stopping only for a meal of camote when they reached a forested area. Both her brothers, too young to walk the distance, were placed inside woven baskets which the comrades slung over their shoulders like backpacks.

For 7-year-old Irene, words were unnecessary to explain the meaning of fascist brutality. But deep in her heart, she had also learned the meaning of revolutionary courage.

JON-JON

The young boy was wary of this stranger who was so intent on asking him questions. "*Si Tatay kag Nanay, nag-uuman*" (Father and Mother are farmers), he simply answered, when asked what his parents did. As he said this, beads of sweat slowly formed on his forehead.

Thoughtfully, his adult companion put his arm around the child's shoulders. "Don't be nervous. You may answer her questions truthfully. She is a *kaupod* (comrade)."

Upon hearing this, the boy's eyes sparkled and he flashed his impish smile. Giggling, he gave the comrade from Manila a fleeting but warm handshake and said his nom de guerre, "Jon-Jon." It was the customary way revolutionaries in the Negros countryside greeted visitors to their guerrilla zones.

Born and raised in one of the more consolidated barrios in southern Negros, the ways of the *rebolusyonaryo nga ka-*



Jon-Jon (right) with friends



Botyog (left) with a Red fighter

hukbagan (revolutionary movement) have always come naturally to Jon-Jon. Though only 8-years-old, he already has a basic understanding of what ails his country. "*Ang mga kasaway, mga PC, Ranger, Army,*" he said.

Why so? "They are bad. I have seen them hurt people."

Are there other enemies? "Yes. Marcos . . . Imelda . . . and their close friends," he continued. Anyone else? Jon-Jon grinned, "*Mga Kano!* Because they give arms to Marcos that are used to kill our people."

All of the *Kano*? "No, just some of them."

The answers decidedly differed from what an ordinary city-bred 8-year-old would have given. But Jon-Jon's childhood wish would set him even farther apart.

"I want to join the *hukbo*, like my father. Also, like my mother, I want to sit in meetings and talk to the barrio people."

What else do they do in the NPA? "They ambush enemy soldiers. Sometimes, they snipe at them."

When does he intend to join the NPA? "When I'm big and strong enough to carry a rifle," he said, in all seriousness.

Meantime, Jon-Jon's task in the revolution is to bring letters to comrades which mostly contain information about an approaching enemy.

But what if he himself sees soldiers coming? What would he do?

"I would go to the comrades and tell them what I saw."

Why not write a letter and pass it on to another courier?

"I don't know how to read and write. I had to drop out in my first grade. We had to leave the barrio because Tatay and Nanay were being hunted by the military."

Doesn't he miss school? Especially his playmates?

"Not really. I see them once in a while. Many of them have parents who are Red fighters too. When we are together, we play our own games, like racing across the bridge (the "bridge" is a huge tree trunk felled by a recent typhoon.)"

Doesn't he want to learn to read and write?

"Of course I do. Next year, Nanay said I could go to a school in another barrio. Meantime, the comrades can teach me. They can teach me many things, besides reading and writing. They have taught me this poem," Jon-Jon proudly said, reciting it in Ilonggo:

*"We are the children of the kaigangan
Born of the masses oppressed
For long, we have suffered
From the clutches of the greedy.
Come comrades, fellow oppressed,
Let us be brave and gather strength
Let us follow the path of armed resistance!"*

BOTYOG

Six-year-old "Botyog" is Jon-Jon's bosom buddy. He is at first, painfully shy with people he doesn't know. But when he warms up, a toothy grin lights up his dark rounded cheeks, and he stares at a visitor in wonder, with eyes as wide as platters.

Botyog's father and stepmother are both Red fighters. "My real Nanay died of illness when I was very young. But now I have a new Nanay. She is a medic,"



At 4, already a Camp Crame veteran



Tomorrow's freedom fighter: Peasant boy stands guard over elders' weapons

he said haltingly.

Barely more than three-and-a-half feet tall, Botyog is a courier for the New People's Army.

Getting messages to NPA camps across the *igang* or hills of jagged rock is not however mere child's play to Botyog. "It's all right in daytime. But I get really scared when I have to deliver a letter at night."

Why? "Because I'm scared of the dark and I'm so little," he said with downcast eyes.

Then why does he still do it? "If I don't, there will be much fighting . . . And if caught unprepared, many comrades might get killed," he noted.

Like his friend Jon-Jon, Botyog wants to be a Red fighter when he grows up. The reason, he explained with child-like simplicity: "When there's fighting, it's the *hukbo* that wins. I don't want to be with the PC. They always end up dead."

Why else does he want to join the NPA? At this, Botyog sadly looked away. "I want vengeance," he whispered, and grew silent.

Days later, we were to learn from other comrades why Botyog reacted that way. Years before, soldiers raided the house where the boy and his family lived. When the troopers came, they ransacked the place and pushed everyone around. Botyog's baby sister, who was then sleeping on a mat, began to cry, but the soldiers paid no heed. Later, one of them stepped on her tiny body with his heavy, black boots. Botyog saw how the trooper quickly silenced his sister's cries. And the memory of that tragic night has stayed with him ever since.

MARIVIC

Like other members of the revolution-

ary mass movement in the barrio, she has acquired a *nom de guerre* of her own: Marivic, and she responds to it as she would to a nickname.

For more than two weeks early this year, she was busy performing tasks other than routine household chores and farm work. When the NPA's Kidlat (Lightning) and Dalugdog (Thunder) units conducted military drills in a clearing near her barrio, Marivic and her best friend Rose were among the young women who volunteered to cook meals for the Red fighters. The girls asked the guerrillas to unload their rice supply and vegetables at designated houses. The night before, the Red fighters had come down from their mountain base with food provisions and Marivic was placed in charge of this.

In fact, Marivic is one of the few residents of the barrio with direct access to the NPA's mountain camp in a guerrilla front in central Samar. She acts as liaison person between the barrio people and the guerrillas. Because of her familiarity with the area, she also sometimes joins teams of Red fighters in digging for root crops. There are also times when she would join the NPAs in the camp to share in the camaraderie.

Marivic never runs out of revolutionary songs and she feels for the guitar as she would for a long-lost friend. To mime the songs in interpretative dance is also second nature to her. She is one of the few members of the barrio youth organization who performs cultural programs. They usually present these after a joint assessment of the barrio peasant organization and the guerrilla units, or during special occasions such as the anniversaries of the NPA and the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Marivic is 13. She grew up in another barrio in Eastern Samar, then together



Young boy acts as NPA's guide

with her sister she traveled to the central highlands to escape the atrocities of the military in the plains. Her sister is married to a Red fighter. In their new home, the terrain is so treacherous that farming is done without the advantages of a *carabao* or plow. But in their mountain barrio, her revolutionary consciousness has blossomed among peasants who have learned to wage open and secret struggles against the enemy, and among the guerrillas who have made it possible for people to transform their lives with confidence and conviction.

"One day I will also join the *hukbo*," she vows. To her, it is all so clear. First, she will join an NPA medical staff and then she herself will become a Red fighter. Her lack of formal education will be remedied by the literacy classes and revolutionary courses offered regularly by the guerrillas. In truth, the choice is very clear not only to Marivic but to the other peasants of Samar: either one is simply a victim of a corrupt society or one becomes a revolutionary who will help in bringing about a just society.

HENRY

His 14-year-old sister preferred to listen to KB 89 during the four-day siege at Camp Crame, but not Henry. After walking his dog Butch around the block in the upper middle class village where he lives, he would join his mother, father and the household help in listening to Radio Veritas and later, Radio Broadcast. When Channel 4, the Marcos TV station was taken over by the people, he joined them in watching many of the impromptu programs too.

Brown-eyed Henry is 10, and a fifth grader at the exclusive Ateneo de Manila. His mother is Filipino, while his father is a European who works as an executive in a transnational corporation. Henry's father had been worried about joining the "people power" rallies because he is a foreigner. But he was finally convinced when his wife pointed out that there were many other foreigners present, taking video tapes and photographs of the events. Everyday, Henry's parents went to Crame, and at one time, his mother also brought along their household help with her to join the barricades at Channel 4 and Channel 7.

On Feb. 24, the day before Marcos fled, Henry tagged along to Crame and brought his camera with him. It was his first time to see so many banners and placards, and so many people packed in one place. "It was exciting," he said.

Henry's mother and father had never joined any of the other rallies before, but they had always had anti-Marcos sentiments. "During the election campaign, when we received a letter from Malacanang telling us to vote for Marcos, my Mom just tore it up."

Henry believes his family's dislike for Marcos dates back to the time his father had their family car brought over from Europe, where they used to live. "Some Marcos crony saw it at Customs, took a liking to it and kept it for himself." For three years, Henry's parents wrote letter after letter, presented papers and offered to pay any duties asked for, but it was no use. "They kept telling us our papers weren't in order," he said.

Henry also remembers the name of (Quirino warlord Alfredo) Dulay being mentioned in his parents' conversations. "They said he's like Marcos. He ordered

his men to kill two UNIDO campaigners in his province."

At Crame, with his trusty camera, Henry took as many pictures as he could of the mass of people, the soldiers, the tanks, the placards and banners. Why all the snapshots? "Just like my Mom said. We shouldn't miss this. It's history," he answered.

Asked if he had any parting words, he smiled, "Yes. Two lines" — flashing the Laban-sign with two fingers.



Will he finally know the face of freedom?

DONDON AND LUZ

Eleven-year-old Dondon recalls being a bit angry when told of how his mother died, seven years ago. "Nagkaroon daw ng barilan, at namatay siyang nakikipaglaban." There was, after all, only so much that his four-year-old mind could comprehend. All he knew was that his mother, whom he remembers as *mabait at matulungin sa mahihirap*, was shot dead by some faceless enemy. For what reason, he could not understand.

Dondon's sister, 9-year-old Luz, remembers even less. The memory she holds on to is a photograph of her mother. "*Kamukha ko*," she says, and a quick glance at her sweet, gentle face beside her mother's portrait shows that there is a striking resemblance.

Dondon and Luz are the children of a student activist turned NPA guerrilla who was slain in 1979 in an encounter with military forces somewhere in Northern Luzon. Their father, who continues to work full-time for the revolutionary underground, has left them in the care of supportive grandparents, who sometimes

rekindle in the children fond memories of the mother they were too young to know.

Vague though the memories are, Dondon and Luz have grown to know their mother and the cause she died for through MARTYR, an organization that brings together relatives of revolutionaries slain by the fascist regime.

Thrice, they have appeared in programs honoring the memory of their mother and other martyrs to freedom. With other martyrs' children, they sing a song that always nearly brings them to tears. The song speaks of remembrances past, and the pain of losing their loved ones. But it also speaks of a priceless legacy their mother has left them, and pride in learning that in many ways, she fought and died so that others, including they, her children, might live in freedom. Against those responsible for her death, the song gives more than a hint of defiance. There is also a yearning to follow in their mother's footsteps:

*Kay sarap halikan at ginugunita
Ang kahapong kayo'y aming kapiling pa ...
Dumating ang katawan ninyong bangkay
Di mapigil, luha'y bumukal ...
Iniwan ninyo sa amin ang pamanang taglay
Na simulain namin sa paglalakbay ...
Aming nauunawaan at dinadakila
Na kayo'y nakipaglaban para sa aming
mga bata ...
Humanda silang mga halimaw na sa kani-
lang pinaslang
Ngayon at lalo sa paglaki, kami'y makiki-
paglaban ...
Susunod kami sa inyong yapak, Inay
Itutuloy ang inyong mga yapak ...*

When asked what they wanted to be when they grow up, Luz could only give a shy smile, all the more taking on her mother's visage. But Dondon, he with the clearer memories, was more forthright: "*Gusto kong maging scientist o kaya lawyer para makatulong sa marami. Kung lawyer, tutulongan ko yung mga manggagawa at magasaka na may kaso.*"

His answer would have done his mother proud.

What future lies in wait for these children, many of whom have known only the bitterness of strife and the suffering of the oppressed? The relentless counter-insurgency drive in the countryside has assaulted their lives and in many ways robbed them of the simple joys of childhood. But with their elders, they have learned to fight, in the hope that peace and justice may someday reign in their land. Will the new government that has taken over in Manila finally make a difference in mending their war-torn lives? This is the question that is asked by the Ireces, the Marivics, the Dondons and Luzes of this country. **Victoria Manalo and Juan Picas**



National democrat activists: Grappling with a variety of forces and events

VIEWPOINT
Contributions from readers

“Politics is innovation”

Reader urges broad-mindedness and flexibility in the revolutionary leadership

We received the following letter in our mail from a reader, Ernesto Roque. In printing his letter, we seek to encourage other readers to freely share their views about the recent February events as well as other issues now confronting the national democratic movement.

The success of the so-called EDSA Revolution last February offers fresh evidence that real life is stranger than fiction and richer than even the most advanced revolutionary theory.

The rapid-fire chain of events seems unreal. People massing up around Camps Crame and Aguinaldo, blocking tanks and ignoring threats of bombs and cannon fire. For what? To build a buffer between “rebel” and “loyalist” factions of a military establishment that for decades had served as Marcos’ main instrument for suppressing the people.

But it happened. As a result, the Marcos regime fell and the Aquino government rose to power.

Political analysts will be dissecting the events leading to Marcos’ downfall for years. But for national democrats, some immediate lessons are clear. For one, there are more ways than one to topple a dictator. Specially one who held on to power for so long and committed so many abuses that he earned universal condemnation.

Few, if anyone at all, anticipated that the people-power uprising could have had such an impact so quickly and decisively.

But, if what happened hadn’t, something else would have. By the post-election period, the seemingly invulnerable ruling system that the Marcos clique

had set up was under stress at so many points that if the Enrile-Ramos rebellion had not occurred, something else would have snapped out elsewhere in the system. Some other spark would have ignited the uprising at some other time in some other way.

“That some national democrats were stunned by events is understandable — but regrettable. . . Eyes were open, but they did not see what was happening.”

That some national democrats were stunned by events is understandable — but regrettable. It is now easy to talk, having the benefit of hindsight. Still, the *direction* of events — if not their precise form and pace — was predictable.

It appears though that some people failed to see which way the wind was blowing because the unfolding events did not assume a recognizable form. Eyes were open, but they did not see what was happening. Which only corresponds to the biological fact that we do not see with our eyes but with our brain.

People have to discard mind-sets that keep them from seeing what is actually happening and acting accordingly. Theory must constantly grapple with forces and events that do not fit familiar patterns. Politics is innovation. Political leadership demands broad-mindedness and flexibility.

Such a shift is needed right now to guide the continuing struggle for national democracy. For while the dictator has fallen, the structures that breed dictatorship still stand. **Ernesto Roque**

Kalatas mula kay Ka Andres

Mga dakilang aral ng kasaysayan mula sa bayani ng Katipunan

Mga Kapatid,

Halos siyamnapung taon makalipas ang makasaysayang pagtitipon namin sa Pugadlawin, minarapat ko ang lumiham sa inyo, nang taglay ang dalawang mahalagang layunin.

Una, nais kong marubdob na bumati sa inyo sa makasaysayang pag-aalsa na nagbagsak sa tiranong nag-angkin ng ating yaman at suklam. Sa ipinamalas ninyong kagitingan ay ikinarangal namin ang mapabilang sa inyong mga nuno. Ang kahandaan ninyong mag-alay ng dugo alang-alang sa Inang Bayan ay patunay na wala na ngang pag-ibig na darakilang higit pa sa iniuukol natin sa tinubuang lupa.

Pangalawa, nais kong maghatid ng ilang muni hinggil sa patuloy na paghukbang ng bayan tungo sa kalayaan at demokrasya at tunay na kapatirang amin na ring minithi at ipinakupaglaban.

Hinggil sa paggamit ng dahas upang ilaban sa dahas. Malabis kaming nasasaktan sa ginagawang paglilit ng ilan nating kababayan sa paggamit ng armas laban sa armadong lakas ng pagsasamantala’t pang-aapi. Tulad ko, na naging masugid munang tagapagtaguyod ng mapayapang palatuntunan at simubin ng La Liga Filipina, ang mga mandirigma ng kasalukuyang himagsikan ay hindi sumasandig sa sandata nang dahil sa payak na pag-irog sa karahasan. Namulat nga lamang sila, tulad namin noon, na hindi mapapawi ang pagsasamantala at pang-aapi, laluna sa nakararaming anakpawis, nang hindi ginagapi ang hukbo ng mga nang-aalipin. Nawa’y maliwanagan ang ating mga kababayan sa kaibhan ng karahasang ang layon ay kasamaan at yaong karahasang lumalaban sa kasamaan. Inasahan namin ang ganitong kaliwanagan sa pag-iisip ng mga dumadakilang sa nahabang kasaysayan ng kabayanihan ng ating lahi.

Hinggil sa mga mapang-alipin, natanto na namin noon na ang isang gobernador-heneral ay siyang pinakapinuno at pinakasagisag ng mapagsamantala’t mapang-aping palakad, kahima’t hindi naman nakukulong sa kanya lamang mga pasya at layunin ang palakad na ito, alalaong-baga’y ang kahaliling mga gobernador-heneral, sampu ng mga prayle at iba pang makapangyarihan, ay nagsasapakatan sa pang-aalipin sa atin, nagsasalusalo sa kanilang mga pangangamkam. Sa inyo ngayong kalagayan, nabagsak ninyo at napalayas

ang kinasusuklamang tirano, ngunit naiwan, at naisama pa nga sa humaliling kapangyarihan, ang matagal niyang mga tagapagpahirap ng marahas na kasamaan. Kalingat nawa kayo sa mga ahas at hunyango na nagbabalatkayong mga bayani ng taumbayan.

Hinggil sa makataong pamahalaan, sa karanasan namin ay nagkaroon ng mabilis na paghahalinhinan ang pamahalaang naghihigpit at yaong nagkakaloob ng kaluwagan. Mangyari pa, ikinagagalak ng mamamayan ang pagkakaroon ng maluluwag na pangasiwaang katulad ng kay Gobernador De la Torre na kaylayo naman sa kalupitan ng mga pangasiwaang katulad ng kay Gobernador Izquierdo. Lamang ay hindi makaasa ang sinuman na mapapatagal ang isang mapagkalinga o may-kaluwagang pamamahala hangga't hindi pa nakakamit ng mamamayan ang sariling kakayahang ang ganito ay itayo at ipagsanggalang. Idagdag pang ang kaluwagan sa ilalim ng pangasiwaang kawangis ng kay Gobernador De la Torre ay hindi rin tunay na tinamasa ng masang anakpawis na nanatiling kuba sa bigat ng pagsasamantala ng mga panginoong dayuhan at kabalat.

Minamahal naming mga kapatid, ang ipinagtagumpay ng katatapos ninyong pagaalsa ay maipagpatuloy nawa nang may maliwanag na pag-iisip at pagkilala



“Hindi mapapawi ang pagsasamantala at pang-aapi nang hindi ginagapi ang hukbo ng mga mang-aalipin.”

sa mga kapanalig at sa mga kaaway, at pagkakaunawa rin sa tunay na mga adhikain ng sambayanan na hindi pa nakakamit sa payak na pagbagsak ng isang masakiting halimaw.

Malabis na masalimuot ang inyo ngayong kalagayan, sapagkat sa tising pamahalaan, ay nagsasama-sama ang may sariling magkakasalungat na layunin. Maging mapagsuri nawa kayo at pag-ibayuhin ang pagmamatyag. Patibayin at palawakin pa ang hanay na nagkakapit-bisig,

at paulit-ulit na ipamalas ang tapang at pwersa ng Lakas-Bayan. At habang humahakbang palapit sa pagsalubong sa bukung-liwayway, huwag sanang mawaglit ang isang pagunita ni Dr. Rizal — huwag kalilimutan ang napakaraming nangalugmok sa napakatagal na kadiliman!

Ang sa inyo'y nagmamahal at sumusubaybay,
Ka Andres

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY
Resistance and struggles abroad

US: the real arch-terrorist

NDF assails US bombing of Libya as an act of aggression

The National Democratic Front vigorously condemns the US air attack on the Libyan capital of Tripoli which caused hundreds of casualties, most of whom were civilians. This is terrorism of the most despicable kind, the terrorism of a jingoistic bully gloating over small and weak nations. It is also an act of aggression, pure and simple, against a sovereign state, which contravenes the spirit and letter of the UN charter. The immediate condemnation of the US air attack by most governments only shows up the holiness of the Reagan administration's claim of its "right to defense against terrorism."

The use of a US military base in Britain in bombing Libya focuses anew the actual nature and use of the US bases in the Philippines. The bases are here to protect US interests in Asia and the Middle East. Under the RP-US Military Bases Agreement, Clark and Subic may be used as launching pads for staging US imperialist attacks on other countries, thereby drawing the Philippines into a war not of its own making.

We must not allow ourselves to be used by US imperialism which is the international arch-terrorist itself. History will



German protest placard says it all

recall its genocidal war against the Vietnamese people which resulted in millions of casualties. It has also supported and armed the most notorious butchers of today's world — Pinochet of Chile, Suharto of Indonesia, the Shah of Iran, Somoza of Nicaragua, Duvalier of Haiti,

Chun Doo-Hwan of South Korea, and our very own ex-dictator Marcos.

In the case of Libya, it is clear that the Reagan administration conducted earlier provocative actions to justify more attacks. Through this, the US hopes to destabilize Libyan socio-political structures in preparation for a coup d'état to topple the anti-US imperialist regime of Col. Moammar Khadaffi.

The US aggression against the Libyan people forms part of US imperialism's current thrusts to contain the further crumbling of its world empire and to regain lost areas of imperialist domination. It is also a political offensive directed at the American people to convince them to support the military-industrial complex in the face of a serious crisis in the US' financial and economic system.

The NDF calls on the Aquino government to secure the safety and welfare of more than 6,000 Filipinos who, with the Libyan people, are now under siege from US aggression. It also urges the Aquino government to express solidarity with fellow Third World peoples by condemning US imperialist attacks on the Libyan people.

The NDF likewise calls on the Filipino people to protest this latest act of US terrorism. Let us redouble our efforts to dismantle the US bases in the Philippines and other vestiges of US domination over the Filipino people. Let us unmask and kick out the real arch-terrorist from our midst! — NDF

CULTURAL

Art and literature in the underground

History in pictures

Review of *Isinalarawang Lipunan at Rebolusyong Pilipino*, 1981, 222 pages

The following book review was submitted by Librado Narrador, a member of a national democratic collective of literary writers, artists and other cultural activists based in Metro Manila

Philippine Society and Revolution (PSR), written by Amado Guerrero in 1970, has withstood the test of time. Fifteen years after its publication, it remains the most comprehensive presentation of Philippine history from the historical materialist point of view; its analysis of the social structure and contradictions in Philippine society stands unchallenged; the strategy and tactics of the people's democratic revolution which it proposed — and which is now in action — remains the guiding light of the national democratic movement.

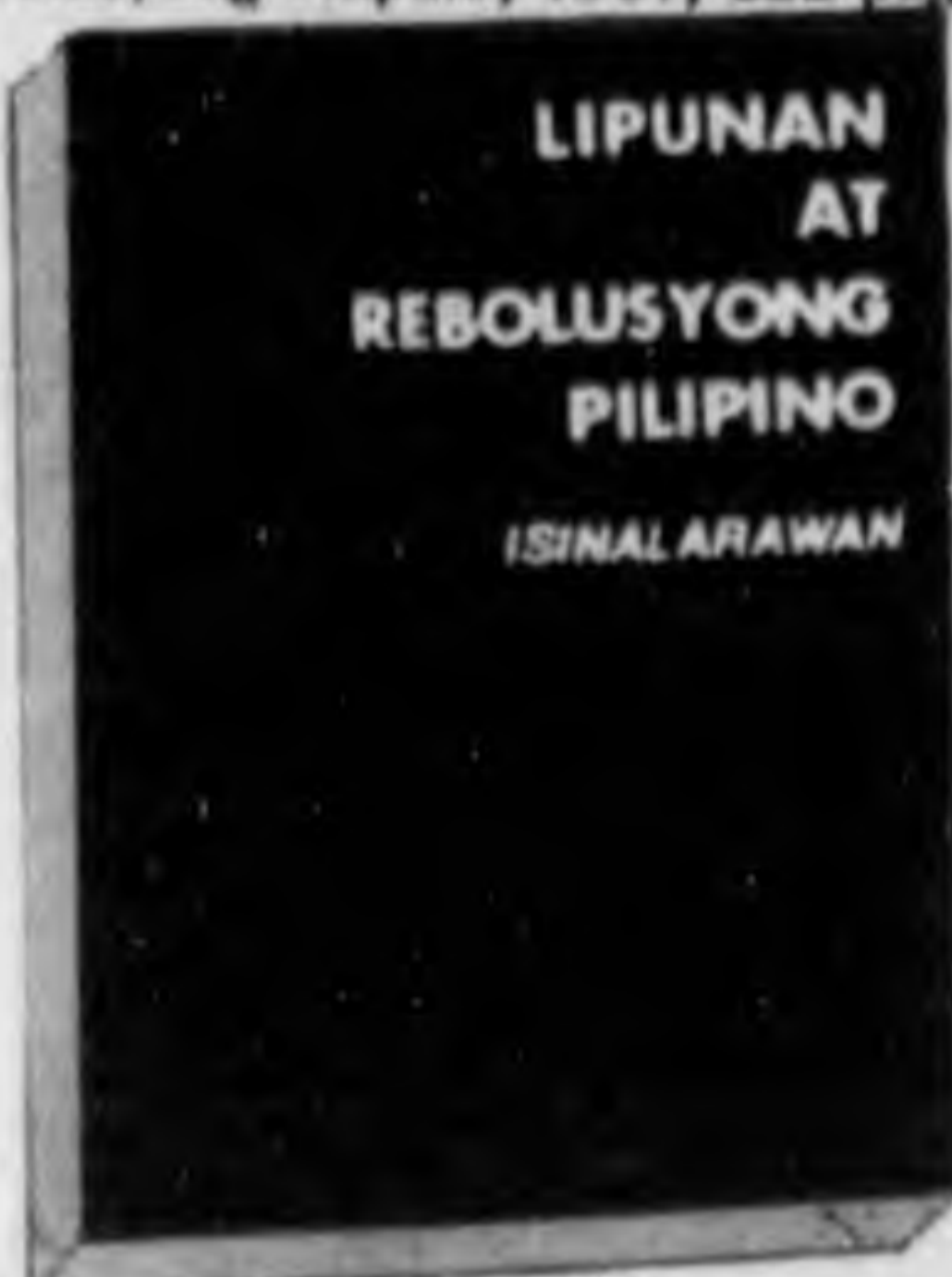
The *Isinalarawang Lipunan at Rebolusyong Pilipino* or ILRP (1981: Palimbagang Sentral, 222 pages), is the translated and illustrated version of the PSR. Updated by the CPP's Education and Propaganda Commission, the ILRP upholds the theses set by the PSR that:

- ▶ Philippine society has a semi-feudal and semi-colonial economic base;
- ▶ the primary contradiction in Philippine society is between US imperialism, supported by local feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, versus the proletariat, the peasantry and other classes and sectors;
- ▶ social change can be achieved by seizing state power, primarily through armed struggle under the leadership of workers organized under the Communist Party, with the peasantry as the main force and in alliance with other social classes and sectors under the national united front;
- ▶ the Philippine revolution has two stages: the national democratic stage, to realize anti-imperialist and anti-feudal goals; and the socialist, to fulfill anti-capitalist aims.

However, there seems to be some differences in their organization of ideas. The PSR, said Guerrero in his introduction, was envisioned as a "primer," meant to be "studied in three consecutive or separate days." Accordingly, its three chapters are distributed proportionately, more or less a hundred pages per section.

On the other hand, the ILRP devotes 176 pages to ancient and recent history, 11 pages to class analysis and the basic problems of the Filipino people, and 33 to the principles of the people's democratic revolution.

There are two reasons for this. First, the 14 pages devoted to the Marcos regime in the PSR were expanded to 42, undoubtedly in response to the immediacy of current history. Secondly, the ILRP



A visual representation of history

addresses the workers' and peasants' need for a "simple and popular" primer on society and revolution," and thus puts stress on "heightened visual impact" (*mapatingkad ang tratong biswal*). Presumably, the thorough visual treatment of the historical portion was meant to give workers and peasants who, unlike those in the upper classes, have had limited access to historical iconography and information. Thus, if the primer were to be taken up by a study group, more time would have to be devoted to the historical portion.

A structural defect of the ILRP is its lack of a table of contents or any formal division into sections. Some sort of structure could have been helpful to readers, and particularly to discussion facilitators who as it is would have to make their own lesson plans.

As an illustrated history, the ILRP on the whole is painstakingly authentic and well-researched. Such shortcomings as the drawing of a 19th century ball scene (p.22) in the 16th-17th century section, and the late 19th century bowler hat and costume of a landlord which are 80 years too early, are minor and forgivable.

As propaganda, the ILRP's dramatic illustrations effectively focus the readers' attention on the masses as the leading force of historical change. Unfortunately, the artists occasionally lapse into the stereotype presentation of abstract ideas such as corpulent, loering *frailes*, obese feudal landlords with knee-length boots, safari suits and hats (did they ever wear those here?) and cigar-chomping, fat-cat imperialists. Perhaps these could have been avoided.

Another shortcoming of the ILRP is its repetition of certain theories which were more acceptable in 1970 when PSR

was first written, than in 1986. ILRP reinforces the late Otley Beyer's "waves of migration" theory (p. 5) which was debunked by A. Evangelista (1967) and by Landa Jocano (1975) in *Philippine Prehistory*. Another questionable statement is the reference to the datu "owning" slaves (p. 7) which has been disputed by W.H. Scott in an essay on indigenous class structures in *Cracks in the Parchment Curtain* (1982). Another essay by Scott takes issue with the theory of "limited inter-island exchange" (p.11). J.F. Warren's *The Sulu Zone* (1985) should revise our "semi-communal and semi-slave" and "semi-feudal" description of pre-Hispanic Philippine societies. These theoretical questions will have to be resolved eventually, although the re-thinking of Philippine prehistory will not substantially affect the correctness of Guerrero's analysis of class contradictions in our own epoch.

A minor slip is the separation of the Ayala and Zobel families (p. 210), which is in fact one, the Zobel de Ayala clan. The same reference enumerating some of the big comprador bourgeoisie noticeably fails to mention the biggest one of them all, Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco.

There are some awkward Anglicisms, such as the translation of millet as *milet* (p. 9). Usually, non-indigenous terms are transposed into the Spanish equivalent and Filipinized orthographically, as in the case of imperialist and *imperyalista*. Following this rule, millet should be *mityo*, after the Spanish "millo." Another inconsistency is the shift into Filipino orthography in the names of some places (Rusya, Estados Unidos, Byetnam, Gitnang Luzon), but not in others (Cavite, Nueva Ecija, Celebes); or as in *ispya*, but not in *empresa*. On the whole, there is a tendency toward academese or university Taglish; thus the choice of *repinerya* over *ripinrya* or *repinahan*, *empresa* over *negosyo*.

Despite these minor shortcomings, the ILRP has, and will continue to make, a powerful impact on our generation.

The National Democratic Front should give some thought to a short illustrated "monograph" on the decade 1976-1986, beginning with the discernible revolutionary surge of the mid-'70s, through the mock lifting of martial law and the "New Republic," to the downfall of the Marcos regime and the establishment of a liberal government.

Thankfully, ILRP eliminates the PSR's idolizing accolades to China's "Great Proletarian Revolution" and the "iron bastion of socialism," which can today only make Re-establishers and First-Quarter-Stormers blush. After all, some 18 years after Dec. 26, 1968, our own experiences in the ongoing Philippine revolution are rich enough for us to draw inspiration from. We don't need another hero — the Filipino masses have been heroic enough. Librado Narrador

"The whole truce and nothing but the truce"

Old habits die hard. In the nearly 20 years that Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile had served the deposed dictator Marcos, he had played his part well like a top-rate actor. In fact, until now, he hasn't kicked the habit. While he and his men continue to unleash terror in the countryside, he talks of ceasefire like a real peacemaker. If ever Inday Badiday decides to guest him in her show, we suggest that she change its title to "The whole truce and nothing but the truce."

Meanwhile, if Enrile could have his way, or Marcos loyalist soldiers make good their threats that they would create trouble and launch a coup d'etat, May could well become the season of coups. Already, Enrile has been singing his version of "La Paloma:" "Coup-coup-ru-coup-coup, Paloma."

We've heard that movie offers are pouring in for Reformist Col. Greg "Gringo" Honasan. In case he cannot accept any of the offers because he's too busy directing "counter-insurgency" operations somewhere, we suggest that Redford White take his place. (They look alike, don't they?) Johnny "The Kid" Enrile, who hates Cory Aquino's "kid glove treatment" of the New People's Army, can very well produce (what with his hidden wealth) or direct the movie. Suggested title: "Gringo Rambo."

Q: Why was the PLDT sequestered by the Commission on Good Government?

A: Because Marcos keeps calling from Hawaii.

Q: What was the motto of the Tantocos?

A: "The best things in life are dirty-free."

A European magazine recently drew up a scene from Hawaii, showing the dictator Marcos consoling his cry-baby wife Imelda. Marcos' lines: "How many times will I have to tell you? We can't buy Pearl Harbor. It's not a necklace!"

Marcos loyalists are charging that the United States kidnaped the dictator from the Philippines at the height of the February uprising. We wonder what the Americans should ask for ransom. Imelda's 3,000 pairs of shoes, perhaps?

Incidentally, the loyalists have also expressed readiness to return the 2,000 black bras to the kidnapers in exchange for the dictator.

Anti-riot policemen were comparing notes at a recent loyalists' rally. One said he was missing pro-Aquino rallies held during the pre-Marcos fall, where women were "fresh-smelling, sexier and more beautiful." Not to be outdone, some loyalist women offered to strip if policemen tried to disperse them. The threat must have horrified the police, who did not disperse their demonstrations until two weeks later.

A military intelligence agent attempting to mix with KMU workers during the Labor Day rally, did not seem to be intelligent at all. His shirt, which exposed not only his purpose, but also his big round belly, screamed: "Uzi does it!"

Local Governments Minister Aquilino Pimentel has come under heavy fire of late, mainly because he appears to have no systematic way of appointing officers-in-charge. Many are therefore beginning to think that he is "an expert at creating chaos out of disorder."

Squatter 1: Mabuti pa ang mga businessmen, mayroong Ministry of Trade and Industry. Ang mga manggagawa, may Labor Ministry. Ang mga estudyante, may MECS. Tayo sa urban poor, wala.

Squatter 2: Dapat mayroon nga, at si Rene Seguisag ang dapat na Minister.

Squatter 1: Bakit siya?

Squatter 2: Kasi siya ang pinaka-poor sa Cabinet.

