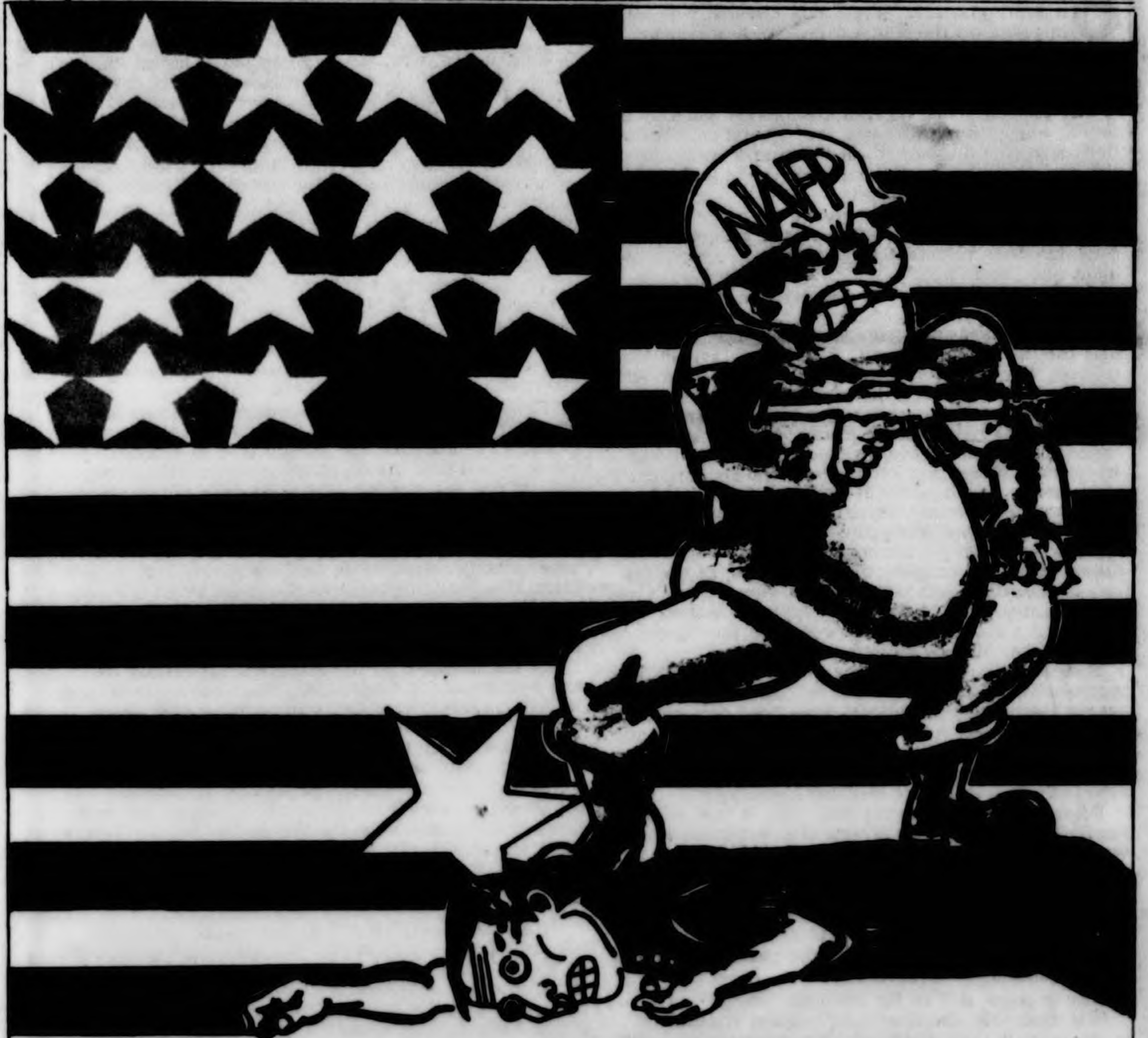


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**SHALL WE MISTAKE
TYRANNY FOR PEACE?**

NDF Statement on September 21

"Why is peace still so far from our reach?"



On September 21, 1972, open terrorist rule was imposed on the Filipino people by a regime whose use of brutal force, in behalf of foreign and domestic reactionary class interests, was unparalleled in the history of our nation.

For sixteen years, the Filipino people valiantly resisted, waging a popular war that combined efforts both armed and unarmed, in the countryside, the cities and abroad — until finally, the abominable Marcos dictatorship was ousted.

In the months that have passed since the installation of a new and broadly supported government, hope has been reluctantly giving way to disappointment and frustration.

In so many areas of the countryside, the unreformed AFP continues counter-insurgency operations that cause increasing losses of human lives and devastate the people's livelihood. The hated Civilian Home Defense Forces are maintained in the face of widespread clamor for their dismantling. Big comprador-landlords are forming well-trained private armies, even as other paramilitary groups are encouraged to strike against the civilian population. In the urban areas, state forces and other terror squads conduct illegal arrests, crush peaceful workers' strikes, and engage in other criminal activities like murder for hire, armed robbery and smuggling.

Until now, the people are still waiting for the new dispensation to complete the dismantling of the fascist structures and to take the first steps towards genuine reforms. For hadn't Cory Aquino pledged to give them a government that would be the "exact opposite of the Marcos dictatorship"?

Instead, the AFP — Marcos' main tool for political repression — has remained intact. None of the torturers and murderers in uniform have been removed. In fact, they now hold key positions and commands. The same policies set by the US-Marcos dictatorship are those that are followed today by the AFP in carrying out its anti-people military operations.

President Aquino has repealed only a few of the many repressive Marcos decrees that her closest advisers had denounced so vehemently before coming to power. Hundreds of political prisoners of the Marcos regime still languish in jail.

Forces loyal to the ousted dictator are allowed to run berserk, abetted by powerful civilian and military officials and emboldened by the passivity of President Aquino and her advisers.

Why is peace still so far from our reach?

It is clear that the reactionary forces are seeking to consolidate their hold on the Aquino government and to set it irrevocably on the path of war against the people. They are determined to use it, as they have used previous regimes, to preserve their vested interests and to stop the advancing movement for fundamental social, economic and political changes.

US imperialism continues to dictate government policy, ensuring our country's dependence, impoverishment and backwardness. It is putting heavy pressure on Mrs. Aquino (now in the United States pass-

ing inspection as every other Philippine president before her has done) to extend the stay of American military bases beyond 1991 and to adopt a mailed-fist policy against the people's revolutionary forces, in exchange for promises to assist her economic recovery program.

The people's desire for peace has been expressed through their wholehearted support for the peace negotiations between the government and the National Democratic Front. Yet the Defense Minister has actually called on the AFP to prepare now for all-out confrontation with the New People's Army.

These threats — tempered though they may be by Mrs. Aquino's protestations that she would reject US pressures to abandon the pursuit of a negotiated peace — call into question the government's perception of the basic causes of the people's armed struggle. These are, namely, the unabated rule of US imperialism, feudal oppression and bureaucrat capitalism.

These are the three evils that continue to breed mass poverty, corruption, military abuses and the political disenfranchisement of the majority of our people. Unless the Aquino government breaks away from these evils, it stands in danger of losing popular support.

On the occasion of the infamous anniversary of the declaration of martial law, the National Democratic Front, therefore, calls on all patriotic and democratic Filipinos to save our country from a bloody confrontation by resolutely opposing the forces of resurgent fascism and continued militarization.

We urge the patriots in the Aquino government and the President herself to protect the gains of the February uprising and resist the forces pushing her government towards the fascist right. We urge the upright leaders in the government to continue the struggle against fascism and firmly dismantle its apparatus of oppression.

This — the complete overthrow of the tyrannical Marcos regime — was in fact the main core or demand of the February people's uprising, and not just the mere downfall of the dictator Marcos. We now call on the patriots in the Aquino government, including President Cory Aquino herself, to keep their covenant with the people, on the basis of principle rather than political expediency.

Together, we must unite and vigorously advance the struggle against US imperialism and local reaction, oppose their scheme to foster war and fully impose repressive rule. No better time is there than today, September 21, to reaffirm this unity and commitment.

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT
September 21, 1986

An open letter to the people



“We remain committed to pursue the peace talks”

Your National Democratic Front Panel remains committed to pursue the peace talks with the Aquino government, as well as to find ways of immediately abating the armed clashes between the New People's Army and the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The disagreement between the two panels on how to approach the question of ceasefire is not a hindrance to the continuation of the preliminary discussions leading to the substantive phase of the negotiations. The government panel shares this view.

Your panel objected to the Aquino government's pressure for the NDF to agree to its sudden proposal for an immediate *unconditional* 30-day ceasefire (that is, without prior discussion of its basis, mechanics and guidelines for implementation). We stressed to the government panel that such a ceasefire is fraught with dangers for the troops of both sides and for the civilian population. For without mechanics and guidelines, the truce is liable to be broken so soon and rendered useless.

We pointed out the need first to remove certain specific conditions that are the immediate causes of the continued fighting. We suggested that a step-by-step removal of the hindrances to peace can work better than an immediate ceasefire based on no more than good intentions.

In a press conference last Sunday, September 14 (we were impelled to call one because the Aquino government pressured us through the media), we identified four steps that can immediately abate or stop the fighting and set the basis for a workable ceasefire:

1. Removing all AFP detachments and checkpoints from the barrios and interior town centers, and their advance or tactical staging posts within and near areas of control of the NDF. In turn, the NPA will confine its forces in the barrios and interior town centers within the NDF areas of control;
2. Dismantling all units of the CHDF;
3. Disarming all private armies of warlords and fanatical groups;
4. Returning control over the police forces to the local government authorities.

Meantime, we intend to pursue our pending proposals for safety and immunity guarantees and for an office and residence of your Panel and its staff. We submitted these proposals on August 18, but Mr. Ramon Mitra Jr. and Mr. Teopisto Guingona Jr. would not comment on them in writing as we requested.

Mr. Jose W. Diokno, who has resumed his leading role in the government panel, has promised to study our proposals and to send us his comments soon. We are hopeful that the discussions on our proposals can be completed posthaste and lead to an agreement. Then we can proceed to the substantive phase of the negotiations.


SATUR C. OCAMPO


ANTONIO ZUMEL

NDF resolution endorsing Ocampo and Zumel

- WHEREAS,** the Government of Mrs. Corazon C. Aquino has invited the revolutionary forces to enter into a dialogue and negotiations to discuss and resolve outstanding political questions and the military conflict between the two sides;
- WHEREAS,** such invitation has been accepted by the National Democratic Front as the political representative of the Filipino people's revolutionary movement for the attainment of genuine independence, democracy, progress and peace;
- RESOLVED,** that the undersigned, in behalf of the organizations affiliated with the National Democratic Front, hereby designate Satur C. Ocampo and Antonio L. Zumel as authorized representatives of the National Democratic Front in the dialogue and negotiations. Any and all agreements that Mr. Ocampo and Mr. Zumel may enter into with the authorized representatives of the Aquino Government will be fully subscribed to and implemented by the herein represented organizations.
- RESOLVED FURTHER,** that the National Democratic Front may designate additional representatives to the dialogue and negotiations as the need arises.

SIGNED, this Eleventh Day of August 1986.

Andrés Macías Andres Macias
Chairman
National Council
NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT

Emmanuel Salvador Emmanuel Salvador
Chairman
KATIPUNAN NG MGA SAMAHANG MANGGAGAWA

Raul Maglaya Raul Maglaya
Chairman
PAMBANSANG KABAHAN NG MGA MAGBUBUKID

Vidal Rubio Vidal Rubio
Chairman
KABATAANG MAKABAYAN

Ma. Teresa Valero Ma. Teresa Valero
Chairman
MAKABAYANG KILUBAN NG BAGONG KABABAIHAN

Ruben F. Martres Ruben F. Martres
Chairman
COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE PHILIPPINES

Juan Liwanag Juan Liwanag
Chairman
REBOLUSYONARYONG KONSEHO NG MGA UNYON

Ezekiel Bautista Ezekiel Bautista
Chairman
CHRISTIANS FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION

William "Bill" Bileg William "Bill" Bileg
Chairman
CORDILLERA PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC FRONT

Laloy Abelard Laloy Abelard
Chairman
KATIPUNAN NG MGA GURONG MAKABAYAN

Melvin Paz Melvin Paz
Chairman
MAKABAYANG SAMAHANG PANGKALUSUGAN

Fidel P. Almon Fidel P. Almon
Chief
GENERAL STAFF, NEW PEOPLE'S ARMY

Adel Maudora Adel Maudora
Chairman
ARTISTA AT MANUNULAT NG SAMBAYANAN



Sacred offering for peace: Seminarians performing at a protest rally

"Let justice flow"

CNL supports NDF negotiations for peace

"The armed resistance was not conceived for the sake of violence and personal viciousness by some, but rather as a defense of a people whose voice was stifled and (in a situation) where parliamentary measures proved futile." Thus spoke the Christians for National Liberation in a recent statement on the ceasefire which we are publishing here. The CNL, a national democratic underground organization of church people and Christians, is a member of the NDF.

We, the members of the Christians for National Liberation, laud the call of President Aquino for a ceasefire agreement. Ceasefire appears to us as a timely instrument of peace and reconciliation, as long as it is based on truth and justice. This is consciously heeding the prophetic imperative: "... let justice and righteousness flow like a river that never runs dry..." (Amos 5:24) President Aquino says she aims (to protect) the life of our people. Choose life and opt for a ceasefire, if she indeed does not want to toe the fascist pattern set by the deposed dictator Marcos.

However, let ceasefire be not equated with the laying down of arms. Our brothers and sisters who have opted for armed resistance are the embodiment of sacred offerings to our Lord of History, selflessly shedding blood so that genuine justice may reign. We believe that our brothers, like ourselves, want to end the war through a political solution, if this is at all possible. But the question remains: do the military forces accept this too? As long as there is an escalation of bombing, hamletting, food blockades, armed ICHDFs, accusations of human rights advocates as communist, how credible are the assurances of peace and security (being) mouthed by military leaders?

The call for ceasefire elucidates the basics: that insurgency is not the problem but rather the effect of an unjust and oppressive system. Fundamental changes in the economic and political system must be instituted.

At this stage, we support the NDF's and the NPA's attitude towards the call of President Aquino: "... her call for ceasefire has not fallen on deaf ears... Like her, we also want peace." Such statements warrant the sincerity and willingness to work for total liberation of our Filipino people, especially our basic masses.

We also laud Bishop Fortich's active response to the freedom fighters' request for dialogue. We are grateful for his courageous reiteration to the public of the NPA's conditions for a ceasefire which include some elements of land reform. We even go a step further than the NPA's demands, recalling to mind the radical words of a Church Father, St. Ambrose: "You rich are not making a gift of what is yours to the poor man, but you are giving him back what is his. You have been appropriating things that are meant for the common use of everyone. The earth (the land) belongs to everyone, not to the rich."

We challenge reactionary Church leaders to take a closer look at their brand of Christendom which is quickly losing its ability to (retain) a society structured on terms of inequality. We appeal to the liberal Church leaders to let their Red scare and isolationist tactics be melted into the ploughshares of unified action... Can we do less than our Master, Jesus Christ, who was not scared of forming a coalition of different forces including some zealots?

We call on all the faithful to guard themselves against the simplistic propaganda labeling our revolutionary brethren as nothing but "godless ideologues," particularly by the rightist section of the New Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Fostering the future of the humanity of the Filipino people, is that not fostering the dream of the God-become-man? Let the interest and loyalty to the legitimate struggle for freedom and democracy be the guiding principle. Christians for National Liberation (CNL)

Teachers for peace

KGM endorses NDF officers Ocampo and Zumel for the peace talks

The Katipunan ng mga Gurong Makabayan (KAGUMA), the national democratic underground mass organization for teachers, recently endorsed Satur Ocampo and Antonio Zumel to represent the NDF in the forthcoming peace talks between the Aquino government and the revolutionary forces.

The underground teachers' group drafted the resolution during a meeting by its National Council last Aug. 30 to 31 in Manila. The KAGUMA thus became one of the first NDF member-organizations to officially endorse Ocampo and Zumel as negotiators.

In its resolution, the KAGUMA expressed concern over the destruction of schoolhouses and the dislocation of schoolchildren and teachers in the countryside caused by the AFP's continuing counter-insurgency operations. It said the peace talk initiative by the present political leadership is a "serious step towards the attainment of justice, freedom and democracy in our beleaguered country."

The KAGUMA National Council met to assess its gains since its National Congress in May 1985. The 14 council members who attended the meeting noted that there had been an increase in the number of KAGUMA activists in the past months. At present, it has at least 600 members spread out in more than 80 cells and chapters based in schools, communities and various teachers' organizations all over the country.

The Council moreover cited a significant increase in both the number and membership of legal teachers' organizations led and influenced by the KAGUMA. It said the KAGUMA now leads at least 30 legal teachers' groups nationwide with a combined membership of more than 11,000.

The National Council reports also showed that the underground teachers' organization continues to play a role in the launching of sectoral struggles for teachers' economic welfare and democratic rights. In addition, said KAGUMA, an increasing number of teachers had also been mobilized for broader political issues and struggles.

The KAGUMA, which went underground when martial law was declared, was founded in 1971 as an open national democratic mass organization for teachers. Its first formal national congress since martial law was held in May 1985, and was attended by more than 40 teacher-delegates from Northern Luzon to Mindanao. It is an NDF founding member. □

“Insurgency is not the problem”

MSP urges the Aquino government to study the real roots of insurgency

The Makabayang Samahang Pangkalusugan (MSP), the underground revolutionary organization of health professionals, students and workers, declares its wholehearted support for the initiatives taken by President Corazon Aquino and the National Democratic Front (NDF) to negotiate a lasting and meaningful peace in our country.

We fully endorse the NDF as over-all representative of the national and democratic forces still waging a determined struggle against all forms of foreign and domestic oppression that persist despite the overthrow of the Marcos fascist dictatorship.

Many of us in MSP began to be aware of the social ills of our country by constant exposure to the life-and-death struggle of our people with poverty, hunger and disease. We realized that no matter how competent we were in treating our individual patients, we would not be able to undo the harm inflicted on our people physically and morally — by the thoroughly corrupt, greedy and murderous US-backed Marcos rule. We eventually came to a conclusion that the way to a just and prosperous Philippine society with healthy and happy citizens lies in waging a people's democratic revolution.

In those 17 years of relentless struggle, the ranks of the NDF have steadily grown. Today, national democrats are spread out over almost the entire archipelago and despite a 270,000 man AFP, our armed comrades are able to operate in 25% of the country's barrios. Even the most skillful counter-insurgency experts cannot cover up the fact that the armed revolutionaries have made greater inroads in winning the hearts and minds of the people than they could ever hope for.

The gains of the revolution cannot be just counted in terms of the number of successful tactical offensives launched against enemy targets. More importantly, it has made possible in our guerrilla fronts such gains as the lowering of land rent, eradication of usury, and punishment of abusive military and civilian officials.

In the cities and countryside, highly politicized and militant mass organizations of workers, peasants, youth, women and professionals which have figured significantly in the struggle to end the dictatorship, continue to reap economic and political gains for the people and are fast growing in number and influence.

In place of the unresponsive and oftentimes repressive government machinery, the people, together with the revolutionary forces of the NDF, have set up their organs of political power. With limited resources but boundless enthusiasm they have grappled with the problems of low farm productivity, illiteracy, and poor health. For example, health committees at barrio to regional level are being set up, undergo orientation and skills training, and actually render free medical services.

To defend these gains against armed assaults of the reactionaries, we must hold on to our own arms. Thus even as we declare our willingness to talk, we firmly assert our right to bear arms in self-defense, especially with the continuing aggressive posture adopted by the NAFP. We will enter into negotiations for a ceasefire towards a peaceful settlement of what we are convinced are the just demands of a long exploited and oppressed people. But we are not surrendering our principles nor our guns.

We enter into the ceasefire talks in earnest. We want to find out if the democratic gains achieved by the February uprising could be pursued so as to achieve genuine land reform, assert our national sovereignty against US imperialist domination and protect the basic human and political rights of the masses.

President Aquino has shown that her regime is different from that of the deposed autocrat Marcos, particularly in the area of political reforms. She has released many political prisoners even against the advise of her defense minister and AFP chief as well as the not so subtle pressures

of US officials. She has installed into her Cabinet liberal democrats committed to more than cosmetic reforms in government and in society.

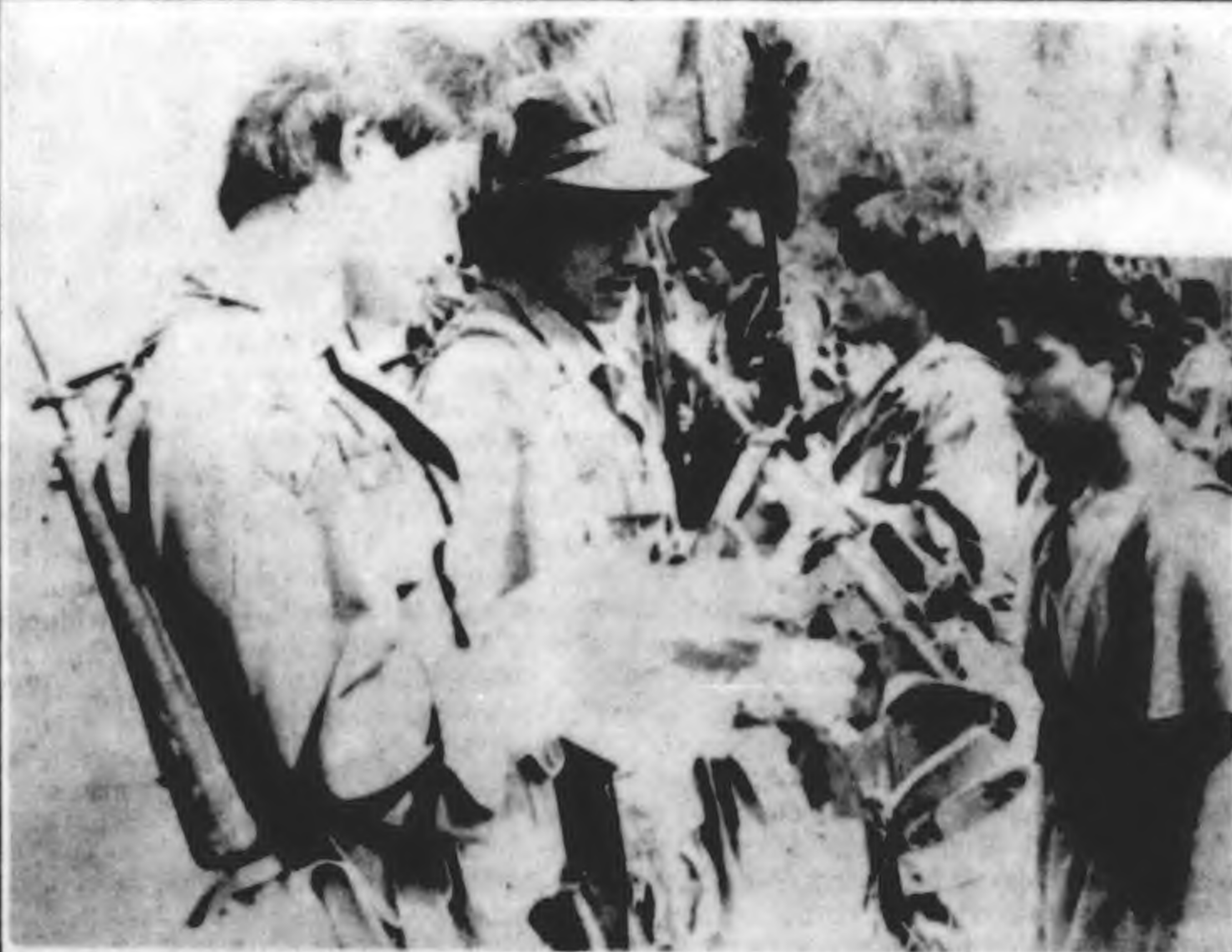
We have also taken notice of her policies which seek to promote rather than suppress militant expressions of the people's will and sentiments. She has thus earned the respect and support of many of our people.

In the face of these positive characteristics of the Aquino leadership and her avowed commitment to a political settlement of the armed conflict, we have not turned a deaf ear. We wish to reciprocate her efforts of an “honorable peace” — a peace based on justice.

We are heartened by President Aquino's steadfastness in rejecting the Marcos or fascist solution to the so-called insurgency problem. We know that the forces of fascism in and out of government are active, having been assured of US support and sporting a “democratic” facade. We urge President Aquino and other upright leaders in her government to look beyond the insurgency as the problem and look for the real causes which continue to fuel it even with the ouster of Marcos.

We look forward to the ceasefire negotiations as a rare opportunity to speak to our people especially those in the urban areas. We wish to present our revolutionary program to the Aquino government, the Filipino people and the peoples of the world so that they may see for themselves, without the distortions from years of carefully nurtured anti-Left bias, that we have the interest of our people at heart.

Makabayang Samahang Pangkalusugan (MSP)



News from home: NPA fighters reading letters from their families

In pursuit of war

Massive counter-insurgency drives continue in Cagayan, Negros and Davao

Nothing could be more ironic than the name given to a newly created military task force headed by Col. Rodolfo Aguinardo: "Kappia." "Kappia" is the Ilocano word for peace. And yet, the people of eastern Cagayan, where Task Force Kappia operates, have known very little peace ever since its creation. In the AFP's attempt to crush the eastern Cagayan guerrilla front in Cagayan and convert the area into a "white map," it has unleashed a force of 2,000 PC troops, Scout Rangers and CHDFs against the peasant population, who compose the NDF's revolutionary mass base.

The latest counter-insurgency campaign in the region is the "Eighth Encirclement and Suppression Campaign," also known as Oplan Pegasus. Its components include comprehensive infantry, artillery, armored personnel and air support. With the help of the Joint US Military Advisory Group, it has introduced "low intensity warfare," first developed by US military strategists in El Salvador at the start of the decade. This concept supposedly lays stress on the non-military aspect of counter-insurgency. Under Oplan Pegasus, military action is accompanied by hourly demands over the radio for the NPA to surrender. But the absence of surrenderees and the people's unshaken support for the revolutionary forces have led the AFP to increasingly rely on armed means to crush the guerrillas. Interior barrios, now turned into "no man's lands," are subjected almost daily to bombings, machine gunfire, and patrols by military armored cars.

Providing support to the regular military forces in Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) are some 3,500 CHDFs, whose firepower had been boosted recently with the shipment to Cagayan of 252 high-powered arms from the Defense Ministry. To deodorize the paramilitary group's stinking image, the AFP plans to rename it the People's Local Security Forces (PLSF). But as proven by the unchanged fascist orientation of the "new" AFP, changing the CHDF's name to PLSF will not alter the paramilitary group's sordid image.

Aside from the CHDFs, there are the private armies of the Enrile-Lim-Puzon group and 24 other warlords. Together, there are over 10,000 AFP troopers, paramilitary forces and members of private armies sowing terror in Cagayan. Since 1981, 243 barrios have been hamletted, 150,000 peasant folk forcibly evacuated in 10 towns and 150 barrio residents killed.

Over in Negros, after the infamous 13-day mortar bombings of several interior barrios in Sipalay (see LIB, July-August 1986), the military continues to be on a



Peasants join anti-militarization rally

war footing. Elements of the 6th IB-PA have stationed themselves at the Maricalum Mines in Sipalay, where they have set up mortars aimed at suspected NPA camps.

Brushing aside numerous protests from barriofolk and human rights groups, the military in Negros threatens to launch another offensive soon. In an interview with LIB, NPA officer Delmar of the southern Negros guerrilla front cited the ongoing military training of the Maricalum Mines security force as evidence of AFP plans to stage another massive attack on the revolutionary forces and organized masses. Meantime, from Aug. 15 to 18, an entire PC company complete with an 81-mm mortar went on a search-and-destroy mission in Barrio San Jose and Tabo in Kabankalan, presumably to penetrate

suspected NPA bases in the interior. Despite their show of force, they were unable to encounter the guerrillas.

At present, there are already four combat battalions (7th IB, 11th IB, 6th IB and 22nd IB) deployed in Negros, aside from one Artillery Scout Ranger company, two provincial PC commands with about 1,000 men, another two battalions each of paramilitary troops and policemen, plus two Army Reserve Command units.

The sustained military operations have resulted in the displacement of thousands of barrio residents. But despite several eyewitness accounts from refugees who have fled to the town and barrio centers to escape the bombings, the military still has the gall to deny involvement in the mortar attacks. A week after the assault, AFP officials in Negros even held up the distribution of 100 sacks of rice to refugees, claiming that the food supplies were meant for the NPA. It was only in August, after protests from local and church officials, that the food aid reached the hungry refugees.

In Davao del Norte, the AFP showed its true colors, when it refused to recognize a ceasefire agreement forged between the local NPA command and the civilian government in August. The ceasefire, which took three months to negotiate, was as good as broken when AFP troops continued with their counter-insurgency operations. Reports reveal that up to three battalions of Scout Rangers were deployed to the defined ceasefire area, with some coming from as far as Agusan del Norte. When the military refused to heed the NPA's repeated warnings and persisted in conducting search-and-destroy missions in the area, the NPA had no choice but to defend themselves and the masses by ambushing the Scout Rangers last Aug. 27.

As in other cases, the military chose to portray themselves as the underdogs, conveniently omitting the context within which the ambush took place. Certainly, the AFP's incessant counter-insurgency drives, which it pursues in the name of a perverted concept of "peace," do not bode well for the efforts of the NDF and the Aquino government to find a lasting solution to the "insurgency." □

NPA warns against fascist restoration

The New People's Army General Staff accused the "ultra-rightists" in and outside of government of attempting to topple the Aquino government and restore fascist rule in the country. In a statement dated Sept. 16, the NPA also charged Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile of engaging in "crude maneuvers" to destabilize the government during and right after President Aquino's visit to the US.

The NPA moreover charged Enrile with "whipping up anti-communist hysteria among the people by blowing out of proportion" recent violent incidents and linking these to the revolutionary movement. The guerrilla group said that "fake ambushes, attacks on military camps and assassinations would be staged by the AFP and the blame placed on the NPA." It cited the shooting last Sept. 10 at Camp Aguinaldo where "it was made to appear that the gunman was an NPA partisan and the incident was part of a plot to attack military installations in the metropolis." Earlier, the NPA had issued a statement denying involvement in the Camp Aguinaldo incident.

Said the NPA: "We will not engage in acts that would unduly jeopardize the ongoing (peace) talks or be used by the fascists in their bid to return to power."



Giving weight to evidence: NPA guerrillas discuss the case of a military informer

MAINSTREAM

Developments in the people's movements

Protecting the masses

Revolutionary system of justice flourishes in NDF territories

Marketgoers in a town in southern Negros often chance upon a hard-working tricycle driver named Dodong. He brings housewives from the *mercado* or public market to their homes. He is always courteous to passengers and never fails to help them carry their heavy loads.

Berto is a genial and industrious farmer who grows corn and coffee on his small plot of land in one of the town's outlying barrios. He hails from a barrio in another town but he has since sent for his family who now lives with him in a house built with the help of neighbors.

A few years ago, however, the people in this area would not have found Dodong and Berto such pleasant persons to live with. They were known to be cocky *istambays* who liked to use foul language when they had too much to drink. The organized masses in the barrios were especially angry at them. During political mobilizations in town, Berto, Dodong and other goons would taunt and harass rallyists and confiscate their placards. In the interior barrios, they would join in raiding the homes of persons suspected of supporting the NPA and steal money, clothes, livestock and other personal belongings from them.

Dodong and Berto used to be abusive members of the hated Civilian Home Defense Force (CHDF) under Mayor Pablo Sola of Kabankalan, Negros Occidental. (Sola, who was behind the salvaging of seven peasants in his town, was killed in an ambush by the NPA in March 1982).

But their own personal encounter with people's justice some years ago caused them to turn over a new leaf. They are today among those rehabilitated by a revolutionary system of justice now being implemented by the national democratic movement in many consolidated barrios in southern Negros and elsewhere in the country.

Criminal procedure

The revolutionary judicial system operates in areas where local organs of political power of the NDF have been set up at various levels. The base of these proto-governments are the barrio mass organizations of peasants, women, youth and the people's militia. Composed of part-time volunteers from the barrio people, the people's militia is responsible for maintaining peace and order in barrios under NDF control. It has the power to arrest and detain enemy spies and other "bad elements" who have committed crimes against the people.

The masses themselves, however, also have the authority to effect "citizen's arrest." As in other legal systems, a procedure has also been set up wherein standing committees are empowered to decide whether there is enough evidence against an accused person for him to stand trial in a people's court. The NDF heads and administers these standing committees and the people's courts which are also composed of representatives from the local NPA unit, the CPP and the mass organizations in the area.

In Dodong's and Berto's case, it was the masses themselves who captured them. They did it by pretending to celebrate a fiesta, thereby luring the two CHDFs into the barrio. Upon having them in custody, the people then proposed to the barrio revolutionary committee that a people's court be held to try the two captives. The convening of a people's court is one of the many instances wherein the masses in the barrios are able to directly take part in meting out revolutionary justice to criminal elements. The barrio committee studied the evidence presented by the masses and submitted its findings to the district committee. After deliberations, the district committee gave its approval for a people's trial.

Before holding the trial, however, the district committee reminded the people to follow certain guidelines that would ensure a fair trial. First, they were asked to consider the various mitigating ("*pampagan*") and aggravating ("*pampabigtan*") circumstances involved in the case. The mitigating factors, they explained, would serve to lighten the penalty for the crime. These would include involuntary commission of the crime ("*napilitan lang*") or the fact that the accused may not yet have been reached by revolutionary propaganda warning him to mend his ways. Aggravating factors, on the other hand, add to the gravity of the crimes committed. These include having caused the death of comrades or barrio people (incurring "blood debts"), inflicting much harm on the masses and their livelihood and having caused the arrest of comrades or the masses.

Second, the accused would be allowed to air their side and confront witnesses. The masses were also cautioned against letting their emotions color their decisions, since judgment was to be given on the basis of the individuals' records, and not merely on the basis of their membership in the CHDF.

The trial was by jury, with members elected by the various mass organizations. Since the accused operated in three barrios, each barrio had representatives in the jury. All in all, there were about 30 jury members. A person was also chosen to preside over the proceedings.

The trial

The trial was held in public, with the accused directly confronted by the masses. When the captives were brought in with their hands tied, a barrio resident asked that their bonds be removed to signify that the accused had full authority to be heard.

The trial itself consisted of having the witnesses and aggrieved parties come forward one by one to testify for or against the accused. So great was the masses' anger, however, that even while one barrio resident would recount his ordeal with the two CHDFs, other aggrieved parties would

simultaneously cry out about their own cases, with most ready to pounce on the captives.

Faced with such a hostile crowd, Dodong and Berto knelt before the masses in fear while babbling apologies amid profuse tears. "*Talagang unatungal na parang bakla, nag-iyak, labas pati sipon, at nagmamakaawa sa mas. Huwag daw silang patayin at mayroon silang amwa't mga anak,*" said Belen, a cadre from the district committee. "*Ang sagot naman ng mas, 'Noong kami ang nagmamakaawa, hindi ninyo kami pinansin!'*"

In these instances, the presiding officer would restrain the masses and call for order by reminding them of a policy not to maltreat captives. When the air became too highly charged, however, it was time to call for a cultural presentation to relieve the tension. Said Belen, "There were so many tense moments, that I lost count of the number of songs and poems that were presented. The trial itself lasted for several hours."

The jury's deliberations were held in public. During the discussions, Dodong and Berto were surprised to hear some of the jury members argue in their defense. Among the factors cited in their favor were their reasons for joining the CHDF — they were hard-up and needed the extra money. A jury member also said that the two CHDFs were not the real enemy but were merely being used by the military and local warlord-politicians.

Based on all the evidence gathered, it was ascertained that the two had never actually led any attacks against the masses. "*Nadala lang sa grupo,*" said Belen, "*hindi sila nangunguna.*" The jury decided that the death penalty would be too harsh a sentence. After hearing a more balanced assessment of the cases, even the angriest barrio residents accepted, if grudgingly, the verdict. It was then decreed that Dodong and Berto would undergo "barrio arrest" for one year.

Barrio arrest

Being under barrio arrest meant that Dodong and Berto would not be allowed to leave the barrio for a year. Their families were duly informed that the two men were being detained by the NPA, but were not told in which barrio. Dodong's wife, upon learning of what had happened to her husband, even remarked, "*Mabuti nga at nam NPA, para magbago na siya.*"

During their year of detention, Dodong and Berto underwent education courses and were instructed on the goals of the national democratic revolution. For their upkeep, they were given a small plot of land to till and were even provided with seedlings. When their crops were ready for harvesting, neighbors would come to help them. A portion of their harvest was sent to their families in the other barrio. Often, they were allowed to participate in the activities of the mass or-

ganizations.

Dodong's and Berto's exposure to the workings of the revolutionary movement and their many educational sessions with the cadres and masses in the barrio eventually paid off. After a year, their cases were reviewed and both were pronounced sufficiently rehabilitated. The barrio arrest order was lifted, and a cultural program was held to celebrate their release.

After this, Dodong turned to the more honest trade of tricycle driving. Once, he was arrested by soldiers of the 7th IB and ordered to guide them into the interior barrios. Dodong refused, even after being threatened by the troopers.

Berto, on the other hand, had grown to love the place of his detention. He sent for his family, and convinced them to settle in the barrio. Later, members of the barrio mass organizations, who were his neighbors, helped build a small house for him and his family. Berto has also expressed his desire to become a Red fighter.

News of what had happened to Dodong and Berto spread fast among the other CHDFs in the area. Many became convinced about the merits of surrendering to the NPA. Others resigned. One CHDF not only surrendered his firearm to the Red fighters but also gave information on the location of arm caches in the town.

Other cases

Most of the time, however, ordinary wrongdoers immediately respond to the warnings given by the NPA and desist from continuing their bad deeds. "Three

warnings are given. It is only those who deliberately refuse to heed these warnings who are arrested, brought to trial and punished," said Lando, an NPA cadre from Central Luzon. Among the bad elements targeted by the revolutionary movement in Central Luzon are drug pushers. "But we make a distinction between those who push drugs and plant marijuana on a full time basis, and those who, because of economic difficulties, are forced to do so," explained Lando.

"For ordinary planters, the general policy is amnesty," he added. "But they must tell us where and how many marijuana plants they have cultivated, so we could uproot or burn these plants. Then we give political education to the farmers, explaining to them the many negative effects of drugs on the youth. We also help in the upliftment of their economic plight by providing them seeds for other crops."

But there are instances when the criminals involved are incorrigible and the crimes committed, too grave to merit lenient treatment.

Teryo, for one, was the cruel *encargado* (overseer) of a despotic landlord. Through his strong connections with corrupt politicians and the military, he was able to grab the lands of hundreds of poor peasant families in three barrios in southern Negros and make them mere tenants. Teryo's task was to implement the landlord's harsh policies and to collect the exorbitant land rent being exacted from the tenants. When the peasants would plead for consideration because of difficulties, Teryo would respond by ask-



Job well done: NPA fighters return to their camp after a mission

ing the 7th IB to conduct military operations in the area and harass the peasants.

During such operations, it was Teryo himself who led the soldiers and CHDF into the barrios. On many occasions, he would beat up those who complained about him, and would accuse them at once of giving their harvests to the NPA. At times, Teryo also acted as an informer for the 7th IB, pointing out suspected activists, and causing their arrest and brutal torture. Teryo merely ignored all the repeated warnings given him by the NPA.

One afternoon, the masses and the people's militia espied him doing his usual rounds of the farms, but without his firearm. He was seized and held for trial. During the trial, which proceeded in much the same way as that of Dondong and Berto, Teryo was found guilty of grave crimes against the people. Although he had not yet committed actual blood debts, his heinous acts struck deep into the very lives of the peasants he abused. He was meted the death penalty.

In Central Luzon, carabao rustlers who refuse to mend their ways despite repeated warnings are also punished severely. The reason, said Lando, is because the carabao is a beast of burden crucial to the economic livelihood of farming families. "*Alisan mo ng kalabawang pang magsasaka, at para mo na rin siyang pinatay,*" he said.

Other criminals, however, who have incurred blood debts but who are not yet in custody, are tried *in absentia*. If found guilty, a "standing order" for their execution is issued. One example is Eddie Locsin, the barangay captain who issued the authorization for the military to arrest nine youths from Langoni, Kabanalan in May 1984. The young men were later salvaged by their military captors.

Locsin was also found to have established a network of informers in several barrios. The informers, working under the guise of field officers of the Ministry of Human Settlements, actually undertook counter-insurgency tasks for the military. His network also included a schoolteacher who spied on students, and children of some town mayors. More than a year after the massacre of the "Langoni 9," Locsin was seized by the NPA, who carried out the death penalty that had been meted against him earlier.

The implementation of the revolutionary system of justice was aptly explained by Lando: "*Sa bukirin, may tumutubong palay at masamang damo. Kung pababang tumubo ang damo, mamamatay ang palay. Kailangang bunutin ang masamang mo upang lumago ang palay.*" By exercising their political power in the people's courts, the organized masses in the barrios are sure that their harvest of gains in the revolutionary struggle is given protection and further advanced. **Victoria Manalo**



Barefoot doctor: MSP activist administering injections to NPA guerrillas

Curing a sick society

MSP-Metro Manila chapter redefines its role in a special conference

The doctor who sincerely wants to cure the sufferings of his people must not simply attend to the diseases of the human body. As he must use his stethoscope to hear the heartbeat of a patient, he must listen and understand as well the pain in the hearts of millions of other Filipinos.

This responsiveness to the suffering of a people who have long been oppressed is what the Makabayang Samahang Pangkalusugan (MSP) is all about. The MSP is an underground revolutionary organization of doctors, nurses, medical and dental students and non-medical employees. A member-organization of the National Democratic Front, it seeks to actively involve the health sector in the revolutionary movement and help establish a responsive revolutionary health care system for the people.

In pursuance of these aspirations, the MSP-Metro Manila chapter called a special conference last July, to assess the present political situation in the country and to redefine the role of MSP. Some 40 representatives from the various health sub-sectors attended the conference. All of them are officers of the leading committees in each sub-sector.

Healthy debate

The conference began with a collective discussion of the political situation. Allan, a doctor and a member of the Provisional Executive Committee, presided over the discussion, which centered mainly on the February uprising.

On the positive changes brought about by the ouster of Marcos and the rise to power of Cory Aquino, many participants said they were "not enough." A health worker stated the fundamental problems in the Philippine society still exist and

that little is being done to solve them. The country, he said, is still semi-colonial and semi-feudal, with the economy and politics controlled by a small traditional elite.

The conference participants characterized the Aquino government as a "fragile coalition government." Said Eric, a UP medical student: "We should not look at the government as a single force. The Aquino government is made up of persons who come from a wide political spectrum. They hold different views on how to solve the country's problems and are disunited on basic issues such as the US bases and land reform. Because of this disunity, it is not accurate to label the entire government reactionary."

A practicing dentist, however, countered: "I think the Cory government is liberal in form but in essence still reactionary, because it is dominated by the ruling class whose interests contradict those of the workers and peasants."

Meanwhile, a plump girl raised her hand and asked, "In view of all the changes in the government and the considerable democratic space which we now enjoy, is armed struggle still necessary? Couldn't changes be now made mainly through legal means?"

Eager hands raised in unison to respond: "Yes, it is still important because armed struggle is still the most decisive means of fighting for the people's rights and freedom." Another delegate said, "The armed struggle that we have been waging for 17 years played a significant role in the polarization of society which eventually led to the people's uprising against Marcos and his downfall. The revolutionary movement helped to expose and fight oppression and to stir up public opinion against the oppressors." At pre-

sent, he said, the instability of the government and the political situation is enough reason to continue with the armed means of defending the gains of both the 17-year struggle and the February uprising.

A doctor added, "The so-called democratic space that we now enjoy is still very limited. The underlying roots of the people's sufferings have not been resolved yet. Why should we now give up?"

Defining MSP and its tasks

Afterwards, the conference discussed and voted on resolutions redefining MSP membership, reformulating the forms of struggle and setting the MSP's tasks. It was decided that the basic requirement for membership is training in any health skill in an institution. However, the delegates also voted to keep the membership of MSP open to traditional healers who do not adopt practices which are harmful to the patients. The delegates said they must help teach better methods of curing diseases and at the same time learn from their experiences and use of herbal medicines.

On the forms of struggle, instead of citing armed struggle as primary and political struggle as only supportive, the participants said they must recognize the distinct importance of political struggle. The delegates said that based on the lessons of February and past experiences, the best form of struggle should be "a close combination of armed and unarmed struggles and the unity of all oppressed classes and sectors in Philippine society."

Six urgent tasks were identified:

- ▶ to arouse, organize and mobilize members of the health sector to fight for national freedom and democracy, and for the establishment of a democratic coalition government;
- ▶ to lead the struggle of the health sector to promote its interests and aspirations;
- ▶ to directly respond to the health needs of the NPA, the revolutionary mass organizations and movement in the national urban center;
- ▶ to give financial, technical and material support to the NPA and other revolutionary forces;
- ▶ to help in improving international solidarity work; and
- ▶ to consolidate and expand the membership of MSP.

To carry out these tasks, the MSP-MR chapter decided to form an education committee to ensure the political education of all MSP members and allies. The delegates also decided to issue statements on significant issues such as the peace talks between the NDF and the Cory government. They also passed resolutions to regularize meetings of MSP chapters and cells, and to consciously set targets for expansion.

The delegates also assessed their organizing work, identifying eight sub-sectors where organizing has begun and the five

others still to be reached by MSP. All delegates from each sub-sector agreed that the February uprising has hastened MSP work. Many in the health sector are now showing greater interest in political discussion, unlike before when the main reading fare of doctors and medical students were medical books and journals.

Billy, a doctor-organizer, said, "Some have even gone so far as recognizing the need for armed struggle because they see the poverty of the majority of Filipinos. Others, who may directly participate, said they respect the right of a people to use arms, if necessary, to defend themselves."



NPA medic at work

However, the problems of organizing medical students and doctors were also tackled. Billy said the issue of tuition fee increases does not bother the students much because most of them come from the affluent classes. Doctors are even more difficult to organize because they are often too tired to attend meetings. "About 80% of their time goes to their study or work, and 20% to personal needs and relaxation."

Yuen, a nutrition graduate and another MSP organizer, added however that once they are organized, the resources and services they open to the underground are a great help. Some of them even help to organize other hospital personnel while some have volunteered to be deployed in the countryside to look after the needs of revolutionary forces there, including the NPAs. "Tuwang-tuwa kami rito pag may nage-request na ipadala roon (countryside)," Yuen said, smiling.

Ailing health system

The MSP conference also succeeded in bringing to the fore the gloomy picture — "funereal," said an MSP member — of the Philippine health system, as well as the equally urgent needs of the members of the revolutionary movement, including the NPA. Allan, in an interview with LIB, during merienda breaks in the con-

ference, traced the roots of the health problems to mass poverty and continuous government neglect of the health needs of the people.

There are also two other contributing factors, according to Allan. The training being given in health institutions encourages students to practice their professions abroad because of better working conditions and higher wages there. This is why the rate of turnover of personnel, particularly of nurses, is very high in Philippine hospitals. Very few volunteer to serve in the provinces where formally trained medics are more needed but where there is less opportunity and even less money.

The other contributing factor, said Allan, is that the people play very little role — if any — in decision making on health issues. The people are seldom consulted when the government decides to undertake health projects, which during the Marcos regime, served only as show-cases for the First Lady.

In addition, according to MSP, US domination has extended its greed over the sector through varying forms: from blatant control of the health industry to pervasive influence on health education and government health programs. Through their import control of 95% of medical equipment, US multinational companies dictate the prices of their products. They protect their profits at the expense of the already starving Juan de la Cruz.

Truly, health is an issue that cuts across class and political barriers. It however, strikes deepest against the poor, who are the primary victims of the oppressive health system. "An integral part of the unjust social structure, health problems can not be solved as long as the country is chained to imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism," said Allan. "The struggle against these three problems is also a struggle for a national democratic health alternative."

According to an MSP primer, such a system must be responsive to the needs of the broad masses. It must be controlled by the people and be free from foreign dictation. Health programs must be based on the country's concrete conditions, experiences and resources. Moreover, a national democratic health system must be scientific. It should promote a comprehensive and holistic approach to health.

"This health system must be democratic," stresses the MSP primer. "It must be founded upon the people's right to determine their own fate, and must be committed to the welfare of the majority, rather than on personal gain. The people must be involved in the process of identifying, analyzing, implementing and evaluating appropriate health programs that respond to their needs."

This is what the MSP is all about. "As we organize among our brethren in the health sector, we strive to build the revolutionary alternative health care system for the people," said Allan. Liz Beltran

People's warriors

A collection of six portraits of NPA guerrillas

The NPAs have always been painted by military officials as ruthless bandits with long hair and unkempt beards. An NPA sympathizer quipped that this is perhaps why the military has failed to capture many guerrillas. "Their men probably search for people who look like Max Alvarado," he grinned. The guerrillas, however, neither look like bearded bandits nor movie villains. The NPAs, in fact, come from all walks of life and could look like your next-door neighbor or your own sons and daughters. To learn more about them, LIB staffers interviewed NPA guerrillas while covering the activities of the underground movement in the countryside. This report is the first part of a series.

LARRY

A member of the NPA General Staff



There are many contradictions in Larry's life. He is tall, dark and muscular and could pass for a stevedore in the North Harbor or a model in a beer commercial. His eyes often wear a glint that suggests optimism and an irrepressible sense of humor. But when he talks about the armed struggle, his eyes become serious and he speaks slowly, like a wise old man.

Only 33 years old, Larry is an ex-seminarian from Mindanao. He is a member of the Political Section of the NPA General Staff. This section is tasked with the internal political and military development of the guerrilla army. It supervises and programs the political education of the Red fighters, and conducts military training.

Larry came from a deeply religious family and was constantly in the company of nuns and priests since he was small. This exposure to church leaders influenced him to enter a seminary. But in 1971, at 18 and in his second year in college, he was exposed to student activism. Larry terms it as "tilamsik ng FQS" since their province was far away from Manila, the center of student protest. When he suggested to the Jesuit rector in their seminary that they should get politically involved, the conservative rector replied that such involvement could expose them to temporal matters and hamper their spiritual development.

But Larry strongly believed that clerics should integrate with the people and not be confined to teaching catechism every

Sunday. He then decided to leave the seminary. This created an uproar as other students with the same outlook threatened to follow suit. The case was elevated to the Bishop who summoned Larry to talk him out of his decision and even offered him the privilege of living outside the seminary. Larry refused the offer and decided to join the revolutionary movement instead. In 1973, he became an NPA guerrilla.

Narrating his early years in the NPA, Larry would shake his head after almost every other sentence. "Ang hirap ng kundisyon noon, kakaunti pa lang ang NPA, wala pang mga baril. Limang piso lang ang badyet sa isang buwan. Ang higpit din sa security dahil sa martial law," he recalled.

With his comrades, Larry lived with the masses, helped them build their houses, plow their fields, harvest their crops and set up farm cooperatives. They warned abusive landlords and government officials and punished those who refused to reform. They also organized the masses and taught them their rights and how to fight for them.

Today, 15 years since he left the seminary, Larry continues to fight for the people.

SIMON

A victim of landgrabbing



Simon, 35, still bears the scars from bolo wounds he sustained when he fought men who wanted to grab his land. Like many of the inhabitants of the interior barrios of southwestern Negros, Simon was a settler who opened up a homestead in a forested area. He cleared the land himself and planted corn, camote and

vegetables. One day, a big landlord's goons offered him a measly sum for his land. With all the hard work he had poured into it, Simon felt insulted with the offer; besides, he had grown attached to the land and would not part with it. The men then tried another approach. They threatened him and his family and told him that they could take his land anyway, because they had connections with some influential politicians and the military.

The next time the men came, this time to drive him away forcefully, Simon fought back. He engaged one of the men in a bolo fight but was himself subdued by two others. Somehow, Simon was able to free himself, and killed one of them. Having no money to pay a good lawyer who would be able to prove that the killing was in self-defense, Simon was sentenced to eight years in prison.

Six years later, after enduring the pain and humiliation of incarceration, Simon was paroled and he returned to his barrio where he opened a new homestead, and lived quietly for some weeks. But soon, he was visited by the slain man's friends, who renewed their demand to give them his land. A heated argument ensued. Another bolo fight took place. This time, his adversary did not die. But Simon could no longer return to his house. Being a parolee, the incident was enough to send him back to prison.

Simon made a big decision. He decided to accept a long-standing offer by a friend to join the NPA. He participated in a month-long military training of the guerrillas. Most of those who joined the training were able to finish it, but some of them were not able to withstand the hard life of a guerrilla. Simon, however, stuck it out. He now belongs to the Main Guerrilla Unit and is one of the oldest and bravest Red fighters in the region.

RAMIR A Dumagat



Ramir, 25, still clearly remembers an incident which happened to some 30 women in their province, four of whom are tribal Filipinos like him. The women were arrested by the military for being alleged NPA sympathizers. They were released the following day but only after

they were made to spend the night inside goat pens.

Despite his difficulty in speaking in Tagalog, Ramir could not hide his indignation at that incident. It crystallized his resolution to fight the military and state oppression of his people. He said he had wanted to join the NPA years ago but his responsibilities to his family prevented him. Ramir only finished third grade in a public school because his family could no longer afford the daily fare from their barrio to the town center where the school was located. Since then, he had helped to augment the family income by gathering *yantok* (rattan) from the mountains and selling them to basket weavers. But now, he said, his younger brother is old enough to take over his responsibilities.

Dark-skinned and kinky-haired, Ramir worked as an organizer of the Dumagat tribe in his area before he was sworn in as a full-time guerrilla last April. He has not yet adapted to the life of an NPA and his extreme shyness has prevented him from fully integrating with his comrades. But with the encouragement of other Red fighters, especially the other *minorya*, Ramir is slowly overcoming his timidity.

ROEL,
A former Ateneo student



Roel would probably have been an engineer by now had he not chosen to go to the Sierra Madre mountains instead.

He was 17 years old and studying at the Ateneo de Manila when he was recruited into the *Kabataang Makabayan*, the underground organization of youth and students and a member-organization of the NDF. In September 1982, he requested to be assigned in the countryside. There, he continued with his organizing work, this time among peasant youths. His dream of serving in the revolutionary movement as an NPA came true in 1984 when he became the political officer of an armed propaganda unit. From January to August 1985, he briefly served as a partisan carrying out "*agaw-arms*" operations and dismantling the military's intelligence network. Later on, he was transferred to the district guerrilla unit.

Far from looking scared, his eyes twin-

kled when he remembered his first defensive operation. Their location was tipped off to the military by an informer and they were forced into a fight. There were 16 NPAs versus 15 troopers; three enemy soldiers died and two others were wounded, but Roel's entire unit was left unscathed.

Roel noted the difficult adjustment he had to make from an easy and comfortable urban lifestyle to the extreme poverty in the rural areas and the formidable conditions in the mountains. About lessons he gained since he became a Red fighter, Roel said, "*Dito ko napatunayan ang kawastuhan ng mga teoryang nabasa ko noong nasa Maynila pa ako.*"

Another thing which he also gained was the affection of a girl named Lyn, a fellow revolutionary to whom he became officially engaged only a few months ago. The couple has not made any plans yet, but Roel said that even if they were to marry, he does not intend to leave the NPA. "It is where I can best serve the people and further advance the NDF's revolutionary program to uplift their basic conditions."

LOREN,
An NPA medic



Tall and fair-skinned Loren, 25, is the daughter of a rich farmer. She has been an NPA medic for three years now. Four years ago, she went on a vacation to her brother's house in southern Negros. While she was there, her brother, who is a peasant organizer, arranged for her to take some of the educational courses being offered to peasants.

Loren was soon convinced of the justness of the revolution's goals and decided to stay and become a full-time member of a propaganda-organizing team. After some months, she joined the NPA when it issued a call for more recruits.

At first, she could not sleep nights, wondering if she had made the right decision. Then one day, it dawned on her that she would accept any task offered her, because this was what she had dedicated her life to.

From being a squad medic, she rose through the ranks to become the medical officer of an entire NPA company. As such, she supervises medical work in several squads totalling almost a hundred

Red fighters. She has taken the advanced course for medics given by a volunteer doctor. Topics include basic anatomy and simple surgery. Loren herself also gives training on common diseases, acupuncture and herbal medicine to other medics as well as to peasants' medical teams.

Interestingly, the worst medical cases Loren has encountered among the guerrillas are not battle wounds, but typhoid fever, hepatitis, amoebiasis and tuberculosis. "Red fighters rarely get wounded or killed in military operations," she explained. "In many cases, it is the wounded soldiers who receive treatment from us."

DEXTER,
A poor farmer



Dexter, 20, is known as the best chess player in a front guerrilla unit (FGU) in Central Luzon. With teasing eyes and hair that always looks wind-swept, Dexter is also the vice commanding officer of the FGU.

Dexter joined the NPA in 1982. He was first assigned to an armed propaganda unit in Nueva Ecija and later transferred to a district guerrilla unit. In 1984, he was promoted to the FGU.

Nationalism runs strong in their family as Dexter's father is also an NPA guerrilla. His father joined the revolutionary movement in 1977. In 1981, the first meeting between father and son after several years of separation was arranged. The arrival, however, of enemy soldiers interrupted their reunion and it was sometime before another one could be arranged. During that second meeting, his father explained to him what the NPA was all about and why the revolution was necessary. Four months later, Dexter too became a Red fighter.

A painful experience for him was when news reached him last year that his father's unit was wiped out in an encounter with military troops. "*Binigyan na ako ng leave para ayusin ang bangkay nang may dumating na namang balita na buhay pa pala ang tatay ko,*" the young guerrilla recalled. His father survived several days alone in the forest, suffering from multiple gunshot wounds. He was the only one left alive in his unit.

Narrating the incident, Dexter attempted to dismiss it with a philosophical shrug, saying, "*Parte iyon ng rebolusyon, ng pagiging Hukbo.*" □

Warlord of the North

Juan Ponce Enrile succeeds Marcos as Far North Luzon political kingpin

Juan Ponce Enrile's burning desire to grab the presidency of the Philippines has prompted him to turn the "Solid North" into his personal political and economic base.

Last June 19 and 20, while purportedly on an anti-insurgency campaign check, Enrile toured Regions 1 and 2. He met old Marcos reliables in Abra, La Union, Cagayan, Isabela, Batanes and Nueva Vizcaya, relishing their lusty cheers of "our new father." He addressed the Cagayan Valley Peace and Order Council meet at the same place where the "revitalized" Nacionalista Party convention was held.

The names which easily secured his backing are familiar ones: Ablan and Farinas in Ilocos Norte, Puzon in Apayao, and Dy in Isabela. These are the same political warlords upon whom ex-dictator Marcos relied for oppressing and terrorizing the Far North Luzon folk. In addition, there are the Loyalists for Marcos in Ilocos Norte and the Group of 77 in Cagayan which Enrile can count on in imminent tussles with the liberals and progressives within and outside the government.

This early, Far North Luzon—comprised of Cagayan, Apayao and Ilocos Norte—is fast sliding into the status quo ante: a place sharply divided into the conservative, nay, reactionary Right, and the progressive democratic and revolutionary forces, many of whom are allied with the National Democratic Front.

Marcos protégé

Enrile was only one of the many politicians who were developed by Marcos in the latter's quest for power. After being elected Senate President in 1963, Marcos broadened his influence in the north by associating with Tito Dupaya of Cagayan, Floro Crisologo of Ilocos Sur, Conrado Estrella of Pangasinan, Leonardo Perez of Nueva Vizcaya, and others.

Enrile was given technocratic portfolios such as Customs Commissioner, Finance Secretary, Justice Secretary and Defense Secretary. Groomed to be a political leader, Marcos fielded him in the 1971 senatorial race but he lost even in his home province, where the Dupayas were still more influential. But back in his post as Defense Secretary, Enrile rose to be a powerful and feared man during the early martial law years, when he functioned as

the top martial rule administrator.

By the late '70s, there had emerged a distinct political bloc which the Marcos camp fondly called the "Solid North." Enrile was part of this, having developed his political base in Cagayan over the years. (He was able to dislodge the Dupayas in the 1980 local elections and install his men in provincial and municipal posts.) However, Enrile, by then had become interested in the presidency.

His quarrel with Imelda Marcos is now public knowledge. As Enrile himself narrates, that feud paved the way for a major rivalry within the establishment, pitting Marcos-Imelda-Ver against Gen. Fidel Ramos, the RAM (Reform the Armed Forces Movement), and himself. That contest climaxed last February; the rest is incomplete history, though, as Enrile continues his quest for the presidential throne.

Towards this objective, he has been

unsequestered and, owing to their benefactor's influence, the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) has been forced to train its guns elsewhere.

As an expected gain, Enrile, since February, was able to assume a commanding position in the logging industry through the Taggat Industries Inc. of Lim and the Veterans Wood Industries. Taggat alone grosses some P356 million annually from its 800,000-hectare concession in the Cordillera mountains. How this was made possible is a case for investigation, a case which the PCGG or the government itself, fearing Enrile's wrath, is probably wont to ignore.

The Taggat concession is responsible for the denudation of the Cordillera and Sierra Madre forests, bringing drought and flooding in the whole Cagayan Valley and pestering the lives of Ilocanos, Ibanags and Itawes along the Cagayan river banks.



Finding common cause: Enrile (left) and Marcos loyalists (right)

marshalling a faction within the military, his vast economic holdings and the pro-Enrile Nacionalista Party, as well as reviving the "Solid North" to serve as his mass base. Already, Marcos loyalists are switching allegiance to him. Certainly, the politics in Far North Luzon—especially in Cagayan—will be significant as political realignments in the country sharply shift.

Last February's revolt could be a preview of whatever Enrile plans to stage in the future. As an example, more than half of the 500 troopers who secured Enrile and Ramos' mutiny came from the Cagayan PC and the Army Brigade based in his home province.

Enrile's gang of cronies

To boost his political stock, Enrile—taking a lesson from his former mentor Marcos—has been protecting the economic interests of his newfound allies. These include former Marcos cronies Alfonso Lim, Antonio Carag, David Puzon, Alfonso Reyno and Rodolfo Farinas. The companies and business interests of these men remain

The entire logging business in the region, in fact, has been responsible for impoverishing the people of Cagayan and Apayao, while the Enrile-Lim-Puzon group and the imperialist corporations of the US, Japan and Australia pocket huge profits from it.

With the backing of their *padrino* Enrile, the local military has also used the logging industry as their milking cow. Col. Rodolfo Aguinaldo (PC Cagayan), Col. Eduardo Bataña (Recom 2), Brig. Gen. Manuel Ribo (RUC 2) and other former military officers like Tomas Manlongat and Alexander Felix are some of the corrupt uniformed men who derive benefits from it.

Since May 1986, however, the revolutionary movement and NPA forces in Cagayan Valley have halted logging operations under "Operation Lapat" (*lapat* is Apayao for forbidden)—long before Enrile and Natural Resources Minister Ernesto Maceda recommended the suspension of such operations. In the process, the NPA too has seized or sabotaged nearly P200 million worth of machineries owned by some 15 companies controlled

by or linked with the Enrile-Lim-Puzon group. This is part of the revolutionary movement's objective to dismantle the economic and political apparatus of the Marcos regime and its corrupt cronies.

According to the NPA Cagayan Valley Operational Command, Enrile and Maceda never desired to stop the logging but had no choice. Enrile nevertheless used it to fleece loggers of money for the Nationalista Party Convention, while Maceda kept mum after being bribed P10 million by Lim's Taggat men, whose facilities are now the training ground of Marcos loyalists.

There are other Enrile cases blanketed in secrecy, mostly "development projects" initiated by such imperialist institutions as the IMF-World Bank and the Asian Development Bank: the Cagayan Sugar Corporation (CASUCO), Cagayan Integrated Area Development Project (CIADP), and the Ilocos Norte Development Project (INDEP). Someone has to investigate Reyno, who should account for some P25 million from CIADP funds. The P300 million bankruptcy of the CASUCO, which covers 12,000 hectares of prime agricultural land, is another subject for query. CASUCO is reportedly now managed by Enrile's notorious son, Jacky.

Until now, the 1,500 heads of Australian-bred cattle which were shipped through the Animal Dispersal Program of the Marcos regime's Ministry of Agriculture, remains unexplained. Those cattle found their way in Gonzaga, Cagayan, and in the Itawes-Mallig region controlled by Enrile, Carag, Felix, Manlongat and other former Marcos cronies. David Puzon's Agricultural Development Inc. (PADI), which occupies 5,000 hectares of Cagayan land, is another item which forms part of unexplained properties and business interests ill-gotten during the Marcos years — and which remain intact today mainly because of Enrile.

Scuttling the "Solid North"

If the "Solid North" before revolved around Marcos and Enrile, certainly the latter now intends to keep it solely for himself. He has so far tried the same formula Marcos used, and to all intents and purposes has assumed the title of "Apo" (Father), the same title Ilocanos addressed the deposed dictator.

As Enrile moves to lay the foundations of a sturdier North, both progressive and revolutionary forces need to unite to stop the consolidation of the fascist structures Marcos left behind, said the NDF in Cagayan. "The 'Solid North' Enrile is trying to revive is the expression of these structures, and should be the primary target of organized opposition and action."

Although the many progressive groups in Far North Luzon surely have their own views on how to build a democracy, the threat posed by a revival of the infamous "Solid North" creates a common cause for those who oppose another autocracy in the making. Karlos Magdiwang



Vena is a L... recently... Sierra Madre mountains to observe... NPA military... deeply touch... dedication she witnessed... from the Red... for them. She also said that... she... during the evening and she is... offering this...

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